

Tetzaveh

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It takes my breath away. Sometimes, when I just sit back and look at all the *seforim* on the shelves, thousands of years of Torah commentary by countless authors who had something else to explain, something else to add. It is so overwhelming.

Some of them just add depth to discussions in the Torah, which doesn't resonate with everyone. Most of them explain how to better perform the *mitzvos*, which apply to everyone. A *balachab* that might be taken for granted by the majority of people who keep it can take up columns on pages of very small and tight letters and words. Do I have to know all of that just to perform a *mitzvah* that might take me only moments to complete?

Well, yes. At least, relative to what you can know. As much as the Jewish people are supernatural, God does not take us to task for not doing the impossible, only for what we could have done, but didn't. Even *Kabbalah* points out that there are different levels of souls, some of *talmidei chachamim*, some of *ba'alei battim*, and some being the souls of *ammei ba'aretz*, simpletons. It is more than station in life that impacts the quality of our lives.

So, before you pat yourself on the back for your level of learning and understanding, maybe instead help someone less fortunate than you when it comes to both. No sense congratulating yourself for a gift from God. Before you berate yourself for leaving *Kollel* to "work for a living," realize that full-time learning may never have been in your cards, as hard as you may have tried to make it work.

As the *mishnah* says, "It is not for you to complete the task, but neither are you free to abandon it" (*Pirkei Avos* 2:16). But it also says, "According to the pain is the reward" (*Pirkei Avos* 5:23), which means at least doing your best to complete as much of the task as you can.

That is the key point here, alluded to by the statement, “All is in the hands of Heaven except the fear of Heaven” (*Brochos* 33b). Success at anything we try to do is from God. Earning His help to accomplish anything is from us, a function of our will to be the very best *Tzelem Elokim* we personally can be.

So yes, the library of Torah is a vast universe, plus, plus. Yes, you need to know as much of it as you possibly can, even if that amounts to a fraction of a fraction of a fraction, etc. That is when a person merits what the *Gemora* says here:

“What is the meaning of the phrase, *‘And that think upon His Name’* (*Malachi* 3:16)? Rav Ashi said: If a person intended to perform a *mitzvah*, but due to circumstances beyond their control they did not perform it, the verse credits them as if they performed the *mitzvah*, since they are among those that think upon His Name” (*Brochos* 6a).

Shabbos Day

THERE IS SOMETHING else to consider here as well, something more *kabbalistic*. It’s like a tree. If you look at a tree from the top, you see branches off of branches off of branches. But if you trace all the many branches downward, they eventually all unify into a single trunk.

But even the trunk is not the end of the story. The trunk can be traced back to its roots, which eventually can be traced back to the tiny original seed from which everything first came. It is quite a remarkable example of the miracle of life, and symbolic of so much more.

Then there is the atom. We can’t even see atoms, at least not the way we’re used to seeing things in the physical world. But we have no problem seeing the incredible energy that they release once they have been split, or the vast physical universe that supposedly expanded out from something very tiny a long time ago.

It’s the way of the world. Big things often come from small things. Even more specifically, from “nothing.” Well, that’s what they call it, “nothing.” We call it something else which, when translated into English can mean “nothing,” but into *Kabbalah* is *Ayin*. *Ayin* is what we call the spiritual world that is devoid of all *physicality*.

So while “they” speak about “something from nothing,” we speak about *yaisb m’Ayin*, the physical world from the spiritual world of *Ayin*. We don’t really understand *how* it happens, just that it *does*, which is why we’re here to speak about it.

It's quite the "magic" trick. Magic today is really just illusion, making you believe that something has appeared out of nowhere when in fact it appeared from somewhere you didn't notice. If the magician were to reveal their secret, you would see that the magic ball had always been there, just out of sight.

But if you reverse Creation, you would see that it really wasn't there at some point, and was actually brought into reality, at least as we define reality...at least as the average mind defines reality. If you could watch the process with your *mind's* eye as well, it would, at some point, continue on where your physical eyes left off. It would show you the spiritual world of *Ayin* from which the physical world of *yaish* came. It is the "trunk" of an upside tree from which all other knowledge branches out.

Seudas Shlishis

THIS IS WHY eventually there will no longer be any *Aitz HaDa'as Tov v'Ra*, or any other intellectual branch of knowledge for that matter. It won't just get destroyed, but it will return to its root in the *Aitz HaChaim* from which it originally came. The world of *yaish*, to which all knowledge of the *Aitz HaDa'as* belongs, will return to the world of *Ayin* of the *Aitz HaChaim*, and become one with it.

In practical terms, all those *seforim* written over thousands of years to explain Torah and life will no longer be necessary. The authors will be rewarded for having written them, but their knowledge will no longer be needed by mankind once it has become elevated to the root of all knowledge, at least as much as we're allowed to reach. Moving closer to the Source of Knowledge, we ourselves will become one with knowledge, and automatically know *then* what we need to learn *now*.

Getting to that point may mean having to wait long after our own end. On the other hand, it may be closer than we know. Either way, it does imply something remarkable that we might see in the Torah, like in *Parashas BeHa'alo secha* after Moshe *Rabbeinu* chose the 70 elders to make up the first *Sanbedrin*. Just like that, they had to know how to *poskin shaylos* of the most serious degree.

The *Midrash* says that God gave them the knowledge on the spot. One moment they didn't know nearly enough to be a member of the *Sanbedrin*, the next moment, "*I will increase the spirit that is upon you and bestow it upon them*" (*Bamidbar* 11:17).

How? By "plugging" them into the higher Torah base of knowledge, from which all the details of Torah flow. By giving them access to God's will on a much higher, more all-encompassing level of comprehension. And the amazing thing is that God is still doing this for those who give themselves over for the sake of directing His people

according to Torah.

What does any of this have to do with this week's *parsha*? It does not mention Moshe *Rabbeinu*'s name anywhere, as *Chazal* explain and why. But *Kabbalah* explains that all Torah, no matter what the level or period of history, comes through Moshe *Rabbeinu*.

But what about everything that was said above? Doesn't it sound as if it is possible to by-pass Moshe *Rabbeinu* for some levels of Torah? This week's *parsha* tells you no. It leaves out Moshe *Rabbeinu* to emphasize that whatever the level of Torah learning, it must come through him. If a person merits such a special gift of Torah knowledge from God, they are also meriting a special connection to Moshe *Rabbeinu* himself. Wow.

Vayechulu: Getting More From Friday Night Kiddush:

Introduction, Part 2

AND WHEN I investigate in the other direction, on a molecular level, my reaction is the same. There are so many moving parts just for life to happen and continue from moment to moment. And that's all before even discussing the miracle of the body and the mystery of human consciousness and intelligence that we barely pay attention to. . . until some malfunction forces us to.

It's like the *Rambam* instructs:

What is the process for coming to love and fear God? When one contemplates His actions and His wondrous and great creations and sees in them His wisdom, that it has no limit and no end, immediately he will love and praise Him, and desire tremendously to know His great Name. (*Yad Chazakah, Yesodei HaTorah, 2:2*)

That's what should happen during *Kiddush* on Friday night. It's what we're doing, right? As we say *Vayechulu*, etc., we "contemplate His actions and wondrous and great creations." We look at His unfathomable wisdom in them and realize that it has no limit or end. So, who *wouldn't* at such a climactic moment love and praise Him, and desire tremendously to know His great Name?!

If we don't, then something is wrong.

It helps to talk about it. . . and talk about it. . . and talk about it. I have found that the more I discuss something, the more my appreciation of it seems to increase. The more my appreciation of something increases, the more excited I get about it. Before I know it, I am smiling from ear to ear and tickled with joy, sometimes unable to contain myself.

However, I don't think my family would appreciate it if I did this while saying *Kiddush*. As it is, they are patient with me, so *tiching*¹ the words as I go along would probably force them to make their own *Kiddush* in the end and get on with the meal. On the contrary, any expansion of *Kiddush* is going to have to take place in my head without skipping a beat.

But it won't, not unless I do all the brain work in advance. *Kavanah* (intention) is not something you just show up and have. If *Shabbos* teaches us anything it is the importance of preparation,² of being ready *before* the moment so you can be ready *at* the moment. We all know how fast moments can come and go, and with them opportunities we can never get back again. It always pays to be ready.

So that is where this book comes in. This book is part of that preparation for Friday night *Kiddush*. It is a look at things to think about when saying the words of *Kiddush*, ideas that most certainly will enhance other parts of life all week long. *Kiddush* is not just a gateway to the rest of the meal, but to the entire *Shabbos* experience, regarding which the *Gemora* says:

*“For I am God Who sanctifies you” (Shemos 31:13), [meaning that] The Holy One, Blessed is He, told Moshe: “I have a good gift in My treasure house and *Shabbos* is its name, and I want to give it to the Jewish people. Go tell them.” (Shabbos 10b)*

And the thing about gifts is that the more you understand them, the more you enjoy them. Good *Shabbos*? Is there really such a thing as a bad *Shabbos*? Before you answer that, read the book.

Available through thirtysix.org and Amazon.com.

For essays on the current situation, go to www.shaarnunproductions.org.

Good *Shabbos*,
Pinchas Winston

¹ Yiddish for elucidation.

² *Avodah Zarah* 3a.