

CHAYUS

A Shabbos Stimulus

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of *Itta bas Yosef Mordechai* ע"ה And *Tzvi Daniel ben ע"ה David Ainsworth* ש"י
Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

Erev Shabbos Parshas Yisro, 5782 – January 21, 2022

ערב שבת פרשת יתרו, י"ט שבט, ה'תשפ"ב

כתר שם טוב

PORTIONS OF LIGHT

Adapted from
Keter Shem Tov

The Jealousy of Atzilus

Each soul descends from the heights of heaven, indeed, from the supernal heights of the Ein Sof, in order to inhabit a corporeal body.

The formation of each individual soul and its descent is done in accordance with the Torah, and is for the sake of enabling the soul to fulfill the mitzvos each and every day, be it a weekday, a Shabbos, or a Yom Tov—by following that which G-d has

instructed us through His holy Torah, which was given to each Jewish individual. All this is for the sake of the ultimate ascent that is accomplished through observing Torah and mitzvos.

This is why *chochmah* of *atzilus* (the Divine element of Supernal Wisdom in the highest realm) is jealous of the tefillin placed on the head of a Jew in this world!

סיפור חסידי

ONCE UPON A CHASID

By Yanki Tauber
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When the Rabbi Made a Mistake

G-d descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And G-d called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses ascended. (Yisro19:20)

If G-d descended from the supernal heights, couldn't He come down just few thousand feet further? Why trouble a man of eighty to climb to the top of the mountain?

Yet therein lies the essential nature of man's comprehension of Torah. G-d is infinite and undefinable. Torah is His wisdom and will—by definition, ungraspable by the finite mind of man. The notion that the human intellect can relate to the divine truth, or even meet it halfway, is ludicrous. It is only because G-d gave us the Torah, only because He chose to suspend the line He drew at creation separating the finite from the infinite, that we can access His communication to man.

But the Almighty desired that man's understanding of Torah not be a gift from above, but the result of a combined effort, the issue of a union between the human mind and the mind of G-d. Man must give it his intellectual all, and apply to the utmost the powers invested in his brain of flesh. And when he attains the peak of his finite mountain, there is G-d with His gift of absolute truth.

—From the teachings of Chassidism

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, of righteous memory, related: Rabbi Yechezkel Landau, the famed author of *Noda B'Yehudah*, served as the rabbi of Prague from 1754 to 1793. Once, a group of scholars who wished to contest his rabbinic qualifications presented him with a series of questions in Torah law. These fictitious "cas-

es" were carefully constructed to be as complex and as misleading as possible, so as to ensnare the rabbi in their logical traps and embarrass him with an incorrect ruling.

Rabbi Yechezkel succeeded in resolving all the questions correctly—all, that is, but one. Immediately

his detractors pounced on him, demonstrating how his verdict contradicts a certain principle of Torah law.

Said Rabbi Yechezkel: “I am certain that this case is not actually relevant, and that you have invented it in order to embarrass me. You see, whenever a man of flesh and blood is called upon to decide a matter of Torah law, we are confronted with a basic dilemma: how can the human mind possibly determine what is G-d’s will? The do’s and don’t’s of Torah are the guidelines by which the Almighty desires that we order our lives. How is it that the finite and error-prone intellect is authorized to decide such divine absolutes?”

“But the Torah itself instructs that the Torah ‘is not in heaven,’ but has been given to man to study and comprehend; and that whenever a question or issue is raised, it is man, employing his finite knowledge and

judgement, who must render a ruling. In other words, when a person puts aside all considerations of self and totally surrenders his mind to serve the Torah, G-d guarantees that the result will be utterly consistent with His will.

“However,” concluded Rabbi Yechezkel, “this guarantee applies only to actual events, when a rabbi is called upon to determine what it is that G-d desires to be done under a given set of circumstances; but not if his personal honor is the only issue at hand. Had you presented me with a relevant question, I know that I would not have erred, since I approached the matter with no interest or motive other than to serve the will of G-d. But since your case was merely a hypothetical question designed to mislead me, my mind was just like every other mind, great and small alike—imperfect and manipulable.”

לקוטי שיחות

A SICHA

By: ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org

Adapted from the works of the [Lubavitcher Rebbe](#)

G-d’s Presence On Mount Sinai

Verse One: G-d descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain, and G-d summoned Moshe to the top of the mountain, and Moshe ascended (*Shemos* 19:20).

The Rashi: *G-d descended upon Mount Sinai*—I may think that He actually descended upon it. Therefore, Scripture says: “You have seen that from the heavens I have spoken with you” (*Shemos* 20:19). This teaches that He did descend; although He was still in the heavens, He bent the upper and lower heavens, and spread them upon the mountain like a bedspread on a bed, and the Throne of Glory descended upon them [the upper and lower heavens].

Verse Two: G-d said to Moses, “So shall you say to the children of Israel, ‘You have seen that from the heavens I have spoken with you’” (*Shemos* 20:19).

The Rashi: *From the heavens I have spoken*—But another verse states: “G-d descended upon Mount Sinai.” The third verse comes and harmonizes them: “From the heavens He let you hear His voice in order to discipline you, and on earth He showed you His great fire” (*Devarim* 4:36). His glory was in heaven; His fire and His power were on the earth. Alternatively, He bent the heavens and the highest heavens and spread them out upon the mountain. So Scripture says: “And He bent the heavens, and He came down” (*Tehillim* 18:10).

The Questions:

- 1) The contradiction between the verses only becomes apparent when we read the later verse in chapter 20 that relates that G-d spoke from the heavens. Why

does Rashi address this contradiction in chapter 19, before we have reached the later verse?

- 2) How does Rashi derive that “He bent the upper and lower heavens and spread them upon the mountain like a bedspread on a bed, and the Throne of Glory descended upon them” based on a straightforward reading of the verse?
- 3) Why does Rashi suddenly provide an additional explanation in his remarks on the verse in chapter 20 that he did not offer earlier—that “His glory was in Heaven and His fire... was on earth”?
- 4) Why does Rashi modify the explanation he offered in chapter 19 by changing his wording from “the upper and lower heavens” to, “the heavens and the highest heavens” in chapter 20?

The Explanation: The context provided in chapter 19, even before we read chapter 20, leads to uncertainty regarding G-d’s presence on the mountain. In verse 18 we read how “Mount Sinai was covered in smoke, for G-d descended upon it with fire.” This implies that smoke shrouded the mountain because of the proximity of G-d’s fire, but not that G-d’s fire itself was upon the mountain. For if it were, the mountain itself would be burning. Thus, it seems from this verse that G-d did not literally descend upon the mountain. However, based on verse 20, it seems that G-d actually descended upon the mountain. The ambiguity of these verses alone leads to the question posed by Rashi, “I may think that He actually descended upon it.”

To address this difficulty, Rashi explains that “He

bent the upper and lower heavens and spread them upon the mountain like a bedspread on a bed, and the Throne of Glory descended upon them.”

Rashi explains that G-d marshaled the upper heavens, drawing them progressively lower until they were together with the lower heavens, and then blanketed them over the mountain like a bedspread. A bedspread is not something that has any significance without a bed; it is part and parcel of the bed and it makes the bed usable. With this metaphor, Rashi explains that G-d's presence was so close to the mountain it was as if they were one, even though there was still some semblance of separation. With this, Rashi keeps true to the theme of the verse which accentuates G-d's presence on earth, while still acknowledging the context of this chapter which implies that there was some separation between G-d and the mountain.

The thrust of chapter 20, however, is to highlight how G-d spoke to the people from an awe-inspiring place of transcendence. Hence, immediately following this account, G-d commanded, “You shall not make images of anything that is with Me: You shall not make a likeness of my servants who serve Me on high” (Rashi to *Shemos* 20:20).

Therefore, in reconciling the contradiction between chapters 19 and 20, Rashi stresses how distant G-d was: “His glory was in heaven, His fire and His power were on the earth”—His essential self, His glory, remained in heaven, only His external expression, “fire and power,” were felt on the mountain.

And yet, to account for the verse in chapter 19 that

implies that G-d was actually *on* the mountain, Rashi again cites the explanation that “He bent the heavens and the highest heavens and spread them out upon the mountain,” but here, Rashi emphasizes G-d's remoteness. Rashi does not cite the metaphor of the bedspread which highlights G-d's proximity, and instead of saying “upper and lower heavens,” he says “the heavens and the highest heavens,” again stressing the exaltedness of G-d. In this way, Rashi resolves the contradiction, but gives primacy to this verse, which points to G-d's transcendence.

The Deeper Dimension: There is a deep allusion to the fact that chapter 19 verse 20 suggests G-d's closeness and chapter 20 verse 19 suggests His exaltedness. The number 19 alludes to the Divine faculty of *malchus* (Likkutei Torah (Arizal), Bereishis 2:23) whose role is to give expression to all of the Divine influence that precedes it. The number 20 alludes to G-d's “crown,” His essential transcendence from creation. (The letter *kaf*, which has the numerical value of 20, is the first letter of *keter*—crown (See Likkutei Torah (Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi), Shir Hashirim 35c).)

Thus, chapter 19 verse 20 highlights how the loftiest dimension of G-d, the “crown/20,” is expressed and revealed within the world through “*malchus*/19.” And chapter 20 verse 19 highlights how G-d is essentially removed from creation—even when He is in the mode of expression/*malchus*/19, it is within the context of “crown/20” the exalted essence of G-d.

Likkutei Sichos vol. 16, P. 223ff

אור תורה

OHR TORAH

NEW SECTION!

Translated by: **Yechiel Krisch**

Adapted from the teachings of the **Mezritcher Maggid**

Proper Worship of G-d

The sages teach: the nations of the world initially challenged the first two of the Ten Commandments—“I am the Lord, your God” and “You shall have no alien gods” (Exodus 20:2-3)—with the claim that G-d selfishly seeks only His own glory (Kiddushin 31a).

But what was their objection? All of creation was formed for His glory alone, per the verse: “All are called in my name, created for My glory” (Isaiah 43:7; Avos 6:11). Additionally, the second commandment itself requires clarification. Why prohibit “alien gods” when it is obvious to any thinking person that there is but one G-d?

We can answer these questions by analyzing our patriarch Abraham's religious journey. Abraham knew that all physical matter contains an activating G-dly force and, as one gifted with powerful vision, he was

able to see this force acting upon the physical world. Abraham initially worshiped the G-dly force encloded within the sun—effectively serving G-d. Until the sun set. Abraham then realized that the activating force behind the celestial bodies was but one of G-d's forces. He resolved to seek the cause of all causes, the Endless One who never wanes.

The error of the idolaters is that they worship G-d's garments, like the sun, instead of His essential glory. Although idols and celestial bodies indeed contain G-d's activating force—for “all the land is filled with His glory” (Isaiah 11:9) and “you give life to all of them” (Nehemiah 9:6)—we must worship G-d Himself, not the physical matter in which He is encloded.

While no intelligent person would mistake an idol for G-d, one may have thought to worship physical mat-

ter because of the G-dly force encloded within it. When G-d forbade the worship of alien gods in the Ten Commandments, He was outlawing the worship of the physical matter in which He is encloded, and even forbidding the limited activating force that Abraham initially

worshiped. From this, the nations correctly understood that G-d seeks only His own glory. He commands us to serve His fundamental glory alone—not the activating force invested in nature.

(Or Torah, 97)

גאולה
GEULAH

Yalkut Moshiach uGeulah al HaTorah
Translated by Yaakov Paley

Today!

“In the third month of the children of Israel’s exodus from Egypt, on this day they arrived in the Sinai Desert” (Yisro19:1).

Rashi states that the words “on this day” teach us that we should view the giving of the Torah as if it were literally given *today*. We are enjoined to apply the same principle to the verse, “Remember *this day*, when you went out of Egypt” (13:3), considering ourselves to have just been redeemed from Egypt today.

Regarding the arrival of the redemption, it is stated, “*Today!—if you listen to My voice*” (Tehillim 95:7). If we consider ourselves as having experienced the giving of the Torah and the exodus from Egypt today, then we will certainly listen to His voice. As a result, the redemption will arrive—today!

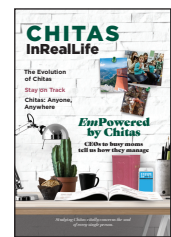
Chasam Sofer

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת

SHABBOS CHITAS / RAMBAM GUIDE

BOOK	SECTION
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לרפואה שלימה
חיים דוד רפאל בן שרה שי'

