

Sparks

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Getting the Divine View on You *How to make worlds of a difference*

And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the picture of the LORD shall he view (Numbers/BaMidbar 12:6-8)

Several years ago, I gave my kids Cheerios for breakfast. It said on the front of the Cheerios box that on the back of this box is a three-dimensional Cheerios bumblebee. So I looked at the back of the box and saw a distorted, blurry thing. Have you ever looked at a 3-D book without the goggles? You see a mishmash of misprinted, distorted images. There were no goggles inside the box of Cheerios, but the instructions on the back said to put the picture up to your nose and slowly move it away from your face. Well, I was sitting there waiting for the kids to finish breakfast, so I figured, why not? I put the box up to my nose and slowly moved it away from my face. I didn't get it right. So I put the box up to my nose again, and slowly moved it away. I noticed one of my daughters kicking her sister under the table, like, "Daddy's gone crazy! We knew he was studying Kabbalah or something, but this is crazy. Why doesn't he just eat the Cheerios instead of trying to stuff the box into his nose?"

I wasn't going to give up, however, because it said that there's a three-dimensional bumblebee on the package, and having paid for that box of Cheerios, I wanted to get the full experience. So again I put the Cheerios box up to my nose. I slowly pulled it away, and suddenly I saw it! I shouted, "Oh my gosh!" My kids jumped up and ran away from the table. Now my kids no longer eat Cheerios. They're afraid it might affect them, too.

The profound lesson on that Cheerios box was that by changing our perceptual focus we can see something that was virtually invisible to us before. The way we see things really determines the way they look.

When Jacob was on his way to Egypt, G-d said to him, "Jacob, don't worry. Joseph will close your eyes."

The *Zohar* explains that when a person passes away, according to Jewish law, someone has to close the eyes of the deceased. So Jacob was told, in Egypt you're going to pass away, but your beloved son Joseph will be the one to close your eyes.

The *Zohar* asks: Why do we have to close the eyes of the deceased? And the *Zohar* answers: Because the colors, the texture, the shapes of this world are in your eyes; in order to see the next world, someone has to close your eyes.

According to the Kabbalah, we do not see reality as it is. Rather, we see our *perception* of reality, which is the world we live in.

To better understand this, let's borrow some terminology from the philosopher Immanuel Kant. Kant said that there are two aspects to truth: "noumena" are things as they are in themselves, the constituents of reality; "phenomena" are these things as we perceive them. And how we perceive reality can be very different from reality itself.

A familiar example of this discrepancy between reality and our perception is our sense that the world is stationary. Scientists assure us that our planet is whirling around the sun at a speed of 67,000 miles per hour, but my empirical reality testifies that I am totally stationary as I sit here at my computer desk, because the velocity sensors built into human anatomy are limited by gravity.

Similarly, sometimes you meet a person who you feel is worlds apart from you. And she really is: the world that you live in is not the same as the world that she lives in. That's because the way you see reality is very different from the way she sees reality. And the way you see reality actually creates your world. This is what is meant by phenomena.

The Kabbalah teaches that there are three worlds of phenomena. They are referred to as the world of action, formation, and creation. They reflect reality as it appears to us, with our limited perspective. Noumena, reality as it is, makes up the world of *atzilut*, the world of emanation. As we ascend higher and higher through the three worlds, we get a broader perspective and come closer to discerning more and more what is true about reality but has been hidden. As we ascend higher and higher we come closer and closer to seeing reality from G-d's perspective. Indeed, Moses was able to see life from the highest vantage point humanly possible. Moses was able to get a glimpse of G-d's take on life; G-d's picture and perspective on life.

Therefore the revelation of the Torah that Moses received is knowledge that guides us in our world based on G-d's perspective. Revelation begins where human experience ends. Experience can take me only to the outer limits of my own perspective. Revelation is information bestowed from a higher perspective. The very definition of revelation is knowledge bestowed from a Divine perspective.

To give a simple metaphor, revelation is like the traffic station on the radio. You are driving down route 83, and you wonder which is the quickest route to your destination. Is there a traffic jam ahead? Should you get off at the next exit and take an alternative route? Or take your chances with the traffic lights on the main thoroughfare? There is really no way for you to know; you cannot possibly see the next two miles of roadway. But the traffic helicopter hovering overhead sees everything. From its perspective, all the highways and traffic patterns are perfectly visible. So you tune into the traffic station, and

you hear the clear message: “Traffic jam on route 83 between Kilmer and Havington. If you’re traveling north, exit at route 144.” Even the most deluxe, state-of-the-art automobile can never know what the helicopter knows, unless the helicopter communicates to it. That is revelation.

Our journey in life is all about perspectives. The goal of a Torah life is to empower us to achieve the greatest perspective, which is the highest world. From that world we will come the closest to seeing everything from the perspective of the source of everything. We will come the closest to getting G-d’s perspective and picture as did Moses.

That’s when the hidden will be found. That’s when G-d’s oneness and love will become obvious, and we will bubble over with joy and laughter at the realization of how it was there all the time—only our limited perspectives fooled us and hid this truth.

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