

# SICHA SUMMARY

## Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 29

*Va'eschanan, Sicha 1*

### The Context:

In his exhortation to the Jewish people before their entrance into the Land of Israel, Moshe urges the people to meditate upon G-d's unity:

"And you shall know this day and consider it in your heart, that G-d is G-d in heaven above, and upon the earth below; there is none else." (Devarim, 4:39)

### The Question:

Why does the verse need to specify G-d's union with heaven, earth, and emphasize that there is "nothing else" aside from G-d which, the Midrash says, refers to G-d's unity "even in the empty space of the world"? If G-d is the sole creator of all that exists, then why would we expect any difference between G-d's unity with heaven, earth, or any other realm? From the fact that the Torah itself stresses G-d's unity with these elements, it is evident that Torah sanctions such a differentiated

understanding of Divine unity. Why would that be?

### The Explanation:

The Baal Shem Tov taught that Divine creative speech is vested within the particularity of each individual creation. This goes further than a general statement of creation's contingency on G-d, which can imply that there is some separation between creator and creation. Just like the sun's rays are contingent on the sun to exist, yet also reside and function outside of the sun, it is possible to imagine that G-d is the sole author of creation, yet the creations enjoy an independent existence. The idea that G-d's speech vitalizes each creation from within implies that every detail of that creation is subsumed within the Divine creative power and does not actually enjoy an independent existence.

If this is the case, we might imagine that "the heavens," the spiritual beings and realms, are more receptive to relinquishing their identity to G-d's creative speech. But the "earth," the baser elements of reality, are not able to unite with G-d's speech to this extent. Perhaps they are like the sun's

rays — dependent on G-d for existence, but retaining a sense of independence outside of His totalizing presence. Therefore the Torah emphasizes that “you shall know this day and consider it in your heart, that G-d is G-d in heaven above, and upon the earth below; there is none else.” (Devarim, 4:39) Meaning that even in the “earth below” there is “none else” literally, aside from G-d’s creative speech.

### **The Lesson:**

In terms of one’s spiritual service: “the heavens” refer to the beginning of the day,

when we thank G-d for restoring our soul from its ascent to Heaven during sleep. The “earth below” refers to the soul’s activity in the body throughout the day, beginning with prayer and Torah study. The “empty space of the world” refers to the pragmatic, mundane activities of the remainder of the day. In each of these realms, we must recognize that there is “none else” besides for G-d’s animating speech. Not just in our spiritual pursuits, but in our seemingly “empty” pursuits as well.

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