

# CHABAD LUBAVITCH OF CHAUTAUQUA

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Kabbala and Meditation - Week 2 – 2021

1. Who in His goodness renews each day, continuously, the work of creation, as it is said (Psalms 136:7): “[Give thanks] to Him who makes the great lights, for His kindness is eternal.” (Morning Prayers)
2. *Forever, O L-rd, Your word stands in the heavens.* (Psalms 119:89)
3. *the word of our G-d shall last forever.* (Isiah 40:8)
4. The world was created with ten utterances. (Ethics of our Fathers 5:1)
5. It is written: “*Forever, O G-d, Your word stands firm in the heavens.*”
6. The Baal Shem Tov, of blessed memory, has explained that “Your word” which you uttered, viz., “*Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters...*,” (Genesis 1) these very words and letters through which the heavens were created stand firmly forever within the firmament of heaven and are forever clothed within all the heavens to give them life, as it is written, “*And the word of our L-rd shall stand firm forever,*” and as it is likewise written, “*And His words live and stand firm forever....*” For if the creative letters were to depart even for an instant, G-d forbid, and return to their source, that source being the degree of G-dliness from whence they emanate, all the heavens would become naught and absolute nothingness, and it would be as though they had never existed at all, exactly as before the utterance, “Let there be a firmament.”  
And so it is with all created things, in all the upper and lower worlds, and even this physical earth and the realm of the completely inanimate. If the letters of the ten utterances by which the earth was created during the Six Days of Creation were to depart from it but for an instant, G-d forbid, it would revert to naught and absolute nothingness, exactly as before the Six Days of Creation.
7. ...the making of heaven and earth, which is *creatio ex nihilo*.  
[Before heaven and earth were created, they simply did not exist; only after they were created did they come into being as existing entities. Their being is thus something utterly novel, something which previously had not existed at all.  
In such a situation, the creative force which brings them into existence must constantly recreate them in order for them to exist. Were this force to withdraw for even the briefest moment, creation would revert to nothingness.] This—*creatio ex nihilo*—is [even] more wondrous than, for example, the splitting of the Red Sea, for then, G-d drove back the sea by a strong east wind all the night, i.e., the G-dly force that split the sea clothed itself in the wind, and the waters were split and not merely ceased their flow but stood upright as a wall.  
If G-d had stopped the wind, the waters would have instantly flowed downward, as is their way and nature, and undoubtedly, they would not have stood upright like a wall,  
...How much more so is it in the creation of something out of nothing, which transcends nature and is far more miraculous than the splitting of the Red Sea, that surely with the withdrawal of the power of the Creator from the thing created, G-d forbid, the created being would revert to naught and utter nonexistence.  
Rather, the activating force of the Creator must continuously be present in the thing created to give it life and ongoing existence. [Activating forces such as the above] are the selfsame letters of speech [that constitute] the ten utterances by which [all beings] were created.  
[This is why the above-quoted verse states, “Forever, O G-d, Your word stands in the heavens.” G-d’s speech, which is the force that brings a created being into existence, must be present there forever so as to give it life and existence.] (Tanya, Shaar Hyichud V’Haemuna Chapters 1-2)

8. "Whoever is in a rage resembles an idolater." The reason [for this] is... because at the time of his anger, faith in G-d and in His individual Divine Providence has left him. For were he to believe that what happened to him was G-d's doing, he would not be angry at all.

True, it is a person possessed of free choice that is cursing him, or striking him, or causing damage to his property, and [therefore] guilty according to the laws of man and the laws of heaven for his evil choice. The perpetrator for his part cannot plead innocence on the grounds that he is merely an instrument in the hands of Divine Providence.

Nevertheless, as regards the person harmed, this [incident] was already decreed in heaven, and "G-d has many agents" through whom He can act [Zohar III, 36b; Talmud, Tractate Taanit 18b]..

Hence, even if the offending party had chosen otherwise, the incident would have befallen the victim in any case. Anger thus remains unjustifiable. For the offended party is not angry that the other party made an evil choice; what angers him is the damage done to him. His anger thus results from his lack of belief that the true cause for his mishap is not a particular individual's evil choice, but a heavenly decree.

And not only this, that a heavenly decree gave permission in principle and made it possible that he suffer injury, but even at that very moment at which [the offender] strikes or curses him, there is vested in him (in the offender) a force from G-d and the breath of His mouth, which animates and sustains him; (Tanya, Igeret Hakodesh, 25)

9. "In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

A basic principle of Judaism is that the entirety of existence was created by G-d yesh me-ayin, "something from nothing." Everything—matter and energy, space and time, even the very phenomenon "existence"--was generated from a prior state of utter nothingness by the Creator.

This isn't just a factual truth—it has a profound influence on how we perceive ourselves and our existence. It means that nothing, except for G-d, must be; that there are no axioms, paradigms, laws or realities that limit G-d's absolute freedom; that everything that is, is solely because G-d made it so.

Furthermore, creation is not a one-time act, after which the world exists on its own, like a carpenter who builds a cabinet and walks away from it. Rather, G-d continually creates the world, constantly forcing it out of an initial state of utter nothingness into existence and life. Should this flow of vitality cease for even an instant, G-d forbid, all would revert to absolute nothingness. As we say in the daily prayers, "He who in His goodness renews each day, constantly, the first act of Creation." The great works of Jewish philosophy (such as Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed, the Ramak's Pardes Rimonim, R. Isaiah Horowitz's Shaloh and R. Schneur Zalman of Liadi's Tanya) discuss this doctrine of "perpetual creation," and cite scriptural, logical and philosophical proofs that such is indeed the nature of existence.

At every point in time, the world is the way it is only because G-d actively desires to so create it. This is of course a fascinating idea—to think that our world, which seems so solid and contagious to our five senses, is actually pulsating from existence to nothingness and back again every fraction of time! But aside from stimulating our minds and inspiring our mystic wonder, does it make any real difference to us in our daily lives? What are the practical ramifications of the truth that G-d is creating the world anew every moment of time?

Often, as we journey through life and grapple with its myriad challenges, we experience moments of hopelessness and despair. At these times, we seem incapable of seeing any good in ourselves or in a fellow human being, nor of discerning any redeeming purpose in the dilemma or circumstance in which we find ourselves.

But the doctrine of perpetual creation means that at every point in time, the world is the way it is only because G-d actively desires to so create it. There can be no "hopeless" situations, no "meaningless" moments, for this very moment, with all its attendant circumstances, was only just now brought into being out of absolute nothingness by a purposeful Creator who is the ultimate source of good.

(Chabad.org, The Doctrine of Perpetual Creation by Yanki Tauber)

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