

To Know G-d

What does it mean that "the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed" (Isaiah 11: 9), and everyone's time will be devoted to learning about Him?

(Based on the Rebbe's *Hadran al ha'Rambam* pub. in *Toras Menachem* 5746, vol. 2.)

Rambam writes in *Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings and their Wars*, 12:5: "The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d."

The Rebbe gives two insights about this:

- "The ocean contains a vast host of living beings. However, the waters cover them to the point that their individual existence is no longer perceived [when a person looks at the ocean]. Similarly, in the Messianic age, the world will continue to exist. However, every element of its existence will be permeated by the knowledge of G-d."
- "Now, even Torah sages have to earn a livelihood so as not to live off charity, but when *Moshiach* [the true Messiah] comes there will be such abundant good that there will be no need for this."

- ❖ We hope for *Moshiach* because we want to fulfill Torah and its *Mitzvos* (Commandments) completely. All of the details that we know will happen when *Moshiach* comes will be there because they will assist us in observing Torah and *Mitzvos*.
- ❖ The first and foremost *Mitzvah* is "to know G-d," and when *Moshiach* comes it will be fully realized in a setting in which the world is "full of knowledge of G-d," and there will be understanding of the Creator to the greatest extent that is humanly possible.

12: 5: In that era, there will be neither famine nor war, envy or competition for good will flow in abundance and all the delights will be freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d.

Therefore, the Jews will be great sages and know the hidden matters, grasping the knowledge of their Creator according to the full extent of human potential, as Isaiah 11:9 states: "The world will be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the ocean bed."

- ❖ What is the *Mitzvah* of "knowing G-d"? To know that G-d doesn't need (i.e. is not dependent on) any other existence, and that He is the Source of all other existence, and He maintains the existence of everything in the physical and spiritual realms.
- ❖ G-d is beyond our intellect, so anything that we know about Him is has to come from Him, namely through the Tradition of Torah or through true prophecy or holy intellectual inspiration.

Knowledge of G-d:

- A. We can know intellectually that there must be a Creator of the universe, as explained in this parable (quoted from Chabad.org):

The classic work *Chovot Halevivot* [Duties of the Heart] 1:6 quotes a beautiful parable. Once a rabbi entered a king's palace and was granted an audience with the king. The king asked him the question, "how do you know of the existence of the Creator?" The rabbi respectfully asked the king to leave the room for a short while. On the table was a quill, an inkwell and some paper. While the king was out of the room, the rabbi wrote a beautiful poem on the paper. When the king returned he noticed the poem and was amazed at its poetic style. The ink was still wet and the king praised the rabbi for writing such a beautiful poem. The rabbi replied that he had not written the poem, rather, he had taken the inkwell, poured it onto the paper and the letters had formed themselves. The king ridiculed such a suggestion saying that it was impossible for the ink to arrange itself into a single letter, let alone a word, let alone a sentence, and certainly not into a beautiful poem! The rabbi replied, "there is your answer. If the ink in an inkwell cannot form a poem without the hand of a poet, then certainly the world, which is infinitely more complex than the poem, could not possibly form itself without the hand of a Master Creator!"

- B. There is a *mitzvah* that we should know that G-d doesn't depend on anything, and that everything depends on Him.
- C. There is something higher than those two which is also a *mitzvah*. It is that we know that we can never fully comprehend G-d because our intellect is limited. This will lead a person to the point stated by Rambam (*Mishneh Torah, Foundations of the Torah* 1:2) "If one would imagine that He does not exist, no other being could possibly exist." At this level, a person understands that G-d is beyond the concept of "existence," and that there is no separate existence from G-d.

The levels of B and C will be fulfilled completely when Moshiach comes. How?

Basic answer:

- A. Intellectually we will grasp that G-d is the First and that He makes everything else exist constantly (as in Tanya, Part II, *The Gate of Unity and Faith*).
- B. We will understand (and know!) that He is beyond our understanding.

Deeper answer:

- A. We will understand Hashem “to the full extent of human potential.”
 - B. “As the waters cover the ocean bed,” we will understand that which is beyond our understanding: like the water *fills and covers* the ocean bed underneath, so too we will grasp things beyond us because our intellect will be filled with knowledge of G-d that is beyond our grasp. However, it will not change the fact that we are just human beings. Before we get to this great high level, the Jews will be “great sages” [and will teach everyone in the world about G-d].
-
- ❖ This verse (Isaiah 11: 9) expresses the ultimate spiritual level of the world. All of the details about Moshiach (as we said before) are there to help us fulfill Torah and *Mitzvos* completely. Only after all of those details can the world be in a state where we will have the spiritual power to gain a new level of understanding of G-d, when “*the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed.*”
 - ❖ Our learning Torah and doing *Mitzvos* [the 613 Jewish *Mitzvos* for Jews, and the *Mitzvos* of the Noahide Code for Gentiles] is G-d’s greatest desire. Since He is One, therefore He and His desires are one. So when **all** of the Torah and *Mitzvos* will be fulfilled when Moshiach comes, everyone together will have brought completion and peace to this world.