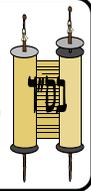




Kinder Torah

Parashas Yisro



No Other Power

"I sn't this a beautiful chassanah, Ephraim?"

"It is wonderful, Yerachmiel. Are you ready to leave? Do you want a ride home?"

"Yes. Thank you very much for the offer. It is a big *chessed* (act of kindness)."

"My pleasure. I'll bring the car around."

Ephraim goes to get his car. He pulls up and Yerachmiel gets into the front passenger's seat. He almost bumps his leg on the steering wheel.

"Be careful, Yerachmiel. Don't hit the steering wheel."

"What kind of a car is this, Ephraim? You have a steering wheel on your side, and a steering wheel on my side. Are there two sets of controls?"

"As a matter of fact there are. You can see that there is a brake and a gas pedal on your side also. But don't worry. They are all fake."

"You mean that they really do not control the car?"

"No."

"Forgive me for asking a silly question, but what are they doing here? I never saw a car with fake controls before."

"I t's all because of my little son. He is very inquisitive and active. He is only nine years old and he already wants to drive a car. When he was smaller, I would let him sit in my lap when the motor was off. He could then turn the wheel and push the pedals as much as he wanted. Now that he is older, he wants more. I rigged up this fake steering wheel and pedals on the passenger side. Now he can turn the wheel and push the pedals to his heart's delight. He thinks that he is controlling the car, but really he is doing nothing."

"That is brilliant! Not only have you satisfied your son, but you have built a miniature model of the universe right here in your car."

"Really?! My good friend Yerachmiel. You have always had a good imagination. Please explain to me how my car is a miniature model of the universe."

"With pleasure, Ephraim. First, let me ask you a simple question. Who is in control of the universe?"

"Hashem."

"Right. However, He is very *tsnuah* (modest). He does not show off. He does not reveal Himself openly. Rather, He controls everything in a clever, subtle, hidden way called 'nature.' He sets the sun, moon, and stars in motion. He guides the wind and

rain to provide water. He populates the earth with plants and animals. Every one appears to function by itself, but they are all part of the master plan. Then He sets us down here on this earth with a set of instructions to fulfill called the 613 mitzvos. We plow the land, we plant the seeds, we harvest the crop, we drill for the oil, we generate the electricity, and we cook the food. We can hold a small device in our hands which enables us to talk to anyone anywhere in the world at any time. It appears that we are controlling the world. We have tremendous power at our fingertips. However, we must not be fooled. We are really sitting in the passenger seat of your car. Our steering wheel and pedals do not control the car. They just appear to have power. The driver is really sitting in the other seat."



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he driver is, of course, Hashem."

"Right. He creates the illusion that we are in control, when we are really just turning a fake wheel."

"Why does He do that?"

"To give us free will. If He revealed Himself openly, everyone would instantaneously realize that He is The Only Power. They would do all of His mitzvos without question. By hiding Himself, he makes us work hard at having *emunah* (faith) in Him. We have to work; therefore we will be rewarded for our work. It is all for our own good."

"I see."

"Two of the basic mitzvos are mentioned in this week's parasha in the Aseres HaDibros (Ten Commandments). The Rambam (Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 1:5,6) explains as follows. Know that Hashem exists, as the verse says, 'I am Hashem your G-d.' He is The Ruler, Who is unlimited in His existence and His power.

Know that there is no other power besides Him, as the verse says, 'You shall have no other gods' (Shemos 20:2,3). Anyone or anything that appears to be in control is just as powerless as the dummy steering wheel in your car."

"My good friend, Yerachmiel, you have really strengthened my *emunah*. You have shown me that my simple car is really not so simple. It is a model of the universe. Every time that I sit behind the wheel, I will be reminded that I am not the one who is making the car go, rather it is The Almighty. He controls this car, as well as everything else in the universe. The idea that anything else has any power is just an illusion."

"You've got it Ephraim. B'ezras Hashem we can all strengthen our *emunah*, just as you have."

"Amen."

Kinderlach . . .

Hashem is everything. He created this world from nothing. He set up the 'laws of nature.' He uses them to control the world. However, do not be fooled. The sun has no power of its own. The wind is nothing without Hashem. The car and bus cannot go without Him pushing them. All of the marvels of modern technology – the microwave, the cell phone, the computer, the MP3, and the digital camera are just pieces of useless junk with Him controlling them.

Therefore, do not be fooled. Do not think that they have any power. He is the only power in the universe. The only One Who controls everything. "I am Hashem your G-d. You shall have no other."

Parasha Questions:

- What is the reward for honoring parents? (20:12)
- How did Hashem bless the seventh day? Sanctify it? (Rashi 20:11)
- When are the children punished for the parent's sins? (Rashi 20:5)

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