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Sermon Day One Rosh Hashanah 5779

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**“THE G-D YOU DON’T BELIEVE IN – I DON’T EITHER BELIEVE IN”**

*A rabbi just got his first pulpit, his mother gives him advice about sermons:*

*“Son, remember that both you and the congregation have a job to do. Your job is to speak, they’re job is to listen. Make sure you finish before they do!”*

*Man bored by the most boring sermon ever finally walks out... meets his friend:  
Is he finished yet?*

*“Oh yes he’s finished, but he won’t stop!”*

**Friends, let’s talk about G-d... its Rosh Hashanah, it’s all about G-d...**

*A rabbi at a new pulpit, walks in to shul the first Shabbat; the congregation president asks him: What will the sermon be about? Says the rabbi: I figured I’ll speak about G-d!*

*Says the president: “Right away you have to become so controversial?!”*

**Rosh Hashanah is all about making G-d our king**

**But doesn't it feel like it's getting kind of repetitive...** over and over again we keep telling Him: You are our king and we are your subjects, you are our master and we are your servants... You are great, we are small...

**I was at Target a couple weeks ago,** I see one of my friends from town who I usually see on the High Holidays, we schmooze... I tell him, so I'll see you in a couple weeks... He shakes his head... I'm not sure rabbi...

I look at him... really?!

"Look, I'm a proud Jew, but I just don't get the whole prayer thing... and the on and on praising...

I get it, like anyone, G-d likes his ego boosted... but He takes it to an art-form...

Seriously, rabbi, does this bother anyone else... that G-d needs constant ego boosting and the begging?

And this is supposed to be G-d!?

But no! We keep repeating the praises...

**Count 'em... I bet if we a dollar fifty for each one... we'd have an amazing year!**

Thank you for creating me, I appreciate it, I really do... but now, can I get on with my life...?

**What kind of G-d is this that needs all this attention?!"**

(I'm happy to say this individual is sitting here today... He came because I told him it was the topic of my sermon today...)

And we keep repeating His praise over and over and over again each year, and in each prayer?

**Does G-d have such a bad memory?**

***Joke: A couple is going for marriage counseling. The therapist asks her what's wrong. She says he never says I love you. So the therapist asks the husband: Why is that?***

*Husband replies: Honey, 28 years ago when we got married I told you I loved you. If anything changes I'll let you know.*

**Can't we just make that disclaimer on the first morning of Rosh Hashanah: G-d you're great and wonderful, we're really small and weak! We love you, you're the boss.**

**If anything changes we'll let you know...**

**So give us a good year! Let's go to lunch!**

**A man who considered himself an atheist** met with the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, explaining why he doesn't believe in G-d.

The Rebbe answered him: The G-d that you don't believe in, I don't either believe in! The G-d that I believe in, you believe in too!

**When most people say G-d, it comes with baggage**

**They are envisioning an image of a big huge powerful being someplace way out there.**

**And I gotta watch out for Him!**

**He's infinite and we're infinitesimal**

**He's all knowing and we know very little**

He's all good, and we're not so good

He's perfect, were flawed

He's eternal, were a passing moment

He's big, strong, mighty, vengeful... we better stay on his good side...

### **How does that make a person feel...**

This comparison is so disempowering, so overwhelming

There's little me... then there's this huge G-d! I'm tiny and unimportant.

On top of this – G-d gave us so many commandments...

OMG this is hardly inspiring & uplifting...

That's most people's paradigm of G-d

That's why many people don't believe in G-d- bc it's so overwhelming and over bearing

### **And it's basically a G-d of fear...**

**Could He just leave me alone and bother someone else...**

**I have to give up my little self, the little bit I have left of me, to surrender to this huge G-d**

**Friends, this is not Judaism!**

**As the Rebbe said – the G-d you don't believe in, Judaism doesn't believe in either...**

**A Pew Study** last year concluded

80% of people believe in G-d, 20% don't

But of the 20% that don't... most of them do believe in a High Power...

They don't believe in a G-d of FEAR... but they KNOW there is DEFINITELY A HIGHER POWER!

**Well, I say the 20% – they're on to something!**

**The huge scary G-d someplace out there,**

The G-d of fear... this big power hungry G-d... and don't mess with Him...

DOESN'T EXIST!

There's no such G-d!

And if He does, he needs some bully therapy...

**So many people have a relationship of fear with G-d**

**Calvin and Hobbs comic strip:**

Hobbs the toy tiger turns to Calvin the little boy and says:

Calvin do you believe in G-d?

**Calvin: Well someone's out to get me**

**Dear friends, G-d is EXISTENCE!**

**All of Existence, with a capital E!**

**G-d is Reality – with a capital R!**

**By way of illustration:**

**If He was the sun – we'd be the ray**

**If He was the ocean - we're all drops in the ocean**

**If He was the super body, we're all tiny parts of His cosmic body**

Not some super being called G-d floating around someplace out there in the atmosphere.

He IS the place, every place.

Everything else are IN EXISTENCE. The people, the animals, the plants, the planets, the angels, the spiritual worlds, everything, is IN EXISTENCE.

G-D ISN'T IN EXISTENCE – G-D IS EXISTENCE ITSELF.

AND EVERYTHING ELSE IS IN EXISTENCE... EXISTING WITHIN HIM!

**In the New Age world** it's fashionable to talk about the universe as G-d

**Jim Carrey** said the key to his success – **“I pray to the universe and I ask the universe to help me, because the universe loves me, the universe cares about me – the universe is on my side”**

**Now, this is not Judaism...** but it is a lot closer to Judaism than the typical view of G-d that most people have...

It's not accurate because G-d isn't the universe; He's all of Existence, infinitely bigger than the universe... He shone the universe into existence with a mere ten words... He created all of the universes, and all of the spiritual heavenly worlds... so no, Judaism doesn't see G-d as the universe...

But by way of illustration, it IS a step in the right direction of discovering what G-d really is.

**When Russian astronaut went into outer space** he was asked what he saw  
– he said “I didn’t see G-d.”

What did he think? He’s gonna fly out there and suddenly he’s gonna see a suddenly out of dark space two eyes appear and a hand waiving: “Hello I’m G-d... what took you so long...”

In a very childish way this Russian astronaut believes that G-d is something out there someplace and maybe one day we’ll get there and meet him over there.

But G-d is not over there, He’s everywhere...

**MAKOM:** Do you know that one of the terms we use for G-d in Judaism is: Makom – we say it the pesach seder, Baruch Hamakom. We say it at a shiva: Hamakom yenachem eschem...

**G-d isn’t someplace... He IS the place. Every place, the context within which everything else exists.**

**How does this make us feel – small or big? Unimportant or important?**

**If G-d’s this huge guy** way up there, all knowing and all powerful, than we’re insignificant and unimportant,

And living in constant fear not to upset Him!

**But if G-d is Existence** and we’re all part of existence,

We’re actually VERY important.

We're all part of something great, and true and eternal,

He's the context within which everything exists

Were facets of G-d

He's the place, the space, the context

**There's only a G-d of LOVE**

**RACHUM – RECHEM**

G-d is sometimes referred to as RACHUM – the merciful One

Rachum is the same Hebrew letters as RECHEM – womb

We're literally inside of Him!

He can't not love us!

**People say – show me G-d and I'll believe in Him**

**I saw an animation** - two drops of water discussing if they believe in the ocean.

One says I don't believe in the ocean... The other says: why not? Well, show me the ocean and I'll believe in him... But you can't see the ocean.

**Why not? He's too big, and he's far away?**

**No, because he's too close! He's everything and everywhere...**

**So, then we'd be in him and he's be in us.**

**Exactly, we're in him and he's in us!**



**You want to feel G-d? Feel your pulse!**

Who is beating your heart? If it's not you, than it's someone else... I think you'd want to get to know Him...

That's G-d beating your heart

**That's G-d saying to you, with every individual heartbeat: I'm with you, I'm in your life, I'm actually you!**

**So when G-d gives us commandments, and tells us to do stuff... or to praise Him**

**It's not some powerful power hungry being outside of me telling me what to do**

**I'm a facet of Him, He's the space, the context of my existence,**

**He's my greater self**

**He's the soul of my soul**

**He's my greater essence**

**Of course I want to live the will of G-d**

**That's really who I am!**

**Example of physical therapy** – after an injury or illness (G-d forbid) we need to reopen lines of communication between the particular limb and the brain

We're all parts of G-d but we aren't aware of that. Because of free choice that's the way it's meant to be

Mitzvahs, prayer, praises of G-d are not for Him

They're for US

To clear up the lines of communication so we're in touch with our brain – G-d!

A Mitzvah is physical therapy

Prayer is emotional therapy

Torah study is mental therapy

Therapy, any form of therapy, is something we need constantly, repetitively, in order for it to stick and become part of who we are.

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**So many Jews are living with a G-d who is out to get them...**

**There's no such G-d**

**G-d is not out to get you, He's out to give you**

**A sense of self, a sense of being true and real, embraced within the greater, within the oneness of Hashem**

**Think of yourself within G-d, like the baby in mommy's womb**

**There's nothing BUT love!**

**He loves us with the same love He loves Himself, like the mother loves her baby!**

**G-d cannot not love us... the same way you can't not love your finger...**

**A fellow who is a proud non-believer wrote a book called: Beware of G-d**

He suggests if we put the Bible into a word document and each time it says G-d we replaced it with Jerry – we'd conclude Jerry was a jerk.

Jerry wants this, and he wants that. Jerry got angry. Jerry looked down upon the people...

But imagine if each time it says G-d we replaced it GOODNESS, or LOVE, or EXISTENCE

We'd take a good look at it...

It's not like my boss got angry, or an out of control parent that some of us may have experienced getting angry...

Oh – goodness got angry... Existence says this is a bad idea... I ought to pay attention...

**Doing a mitzvah is good for us, violating G-d's will is bad for us**

**But what about Judgment – all for our sake. All about love.**

**In the same way when the doctor** says to stay away from certain foods that are bad for you, you don't get upset... he's not trying to control you, he's simply telling you how you work, and based on YOU, this isn't something you want to eat. And if the doctor is a good friend, he'll actually shout at you for eating self-destructive things...

**I recently spoke at Italian affair** – I told joke: Difference between Jewish mother and Italian mother? Eat, you're killing me vs. Eat, or I'll kill you!

They both mean: I love you! I'll kill you if you don't enjoy... if you don't eat...

G-d got angry!?! Of course He did... because you did something stupid

Don't you get angry at your child when they do something really stupid and self-destructive?

You get in the car, oh boy is that kid gonna get it... I'm gonna kill that kid...

What you mean to say is – He’s killing me! I love him too much, why does he have to keep hurting himself.

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### **Kirk Douglass re-embraced Judaism much later in life...**

(Had a 2<sup>nd</sup> Bar Mitzvah at 83... another one at 96... we’re hoping for the third one...)

At the recent Jewish Retreat in Rhode Island I met the rabbi who is Kirk Douglas’ rabbi. First time they got together it was for a Shabbat, met in Israel. He walks into the Shul, and starts chanting... the Friday night service... Lechu neraneno lahashem. Rabbi is shocked that he knew it. Kirk says:

“Rabbi, I’m an actor, I know my lines. But Judaism is all form - no content.”

Why do you say that?

Look, I grew up in an Orthodox home, they hoped I’d be a rabbi, my mother made challah and lit candles, but it’s all form - no content.

So the rabbi asked him:

Imagine if you’d be spending money now the way you understood money as a child, how would that be?

I’d be squandering it away on non-sense.

Imagine if you’d be eating foods the way you treated food as a child?

I’d be eating junk!

So why are you basing your view of G-d on your view from childhood!

**Our approach to G-d needs to grow up with us appropriate to our level of sophistication... every other area of life our wisdom grows, but G-d remains on the level it was in kindergarten...**

**Enter a Phd math course and they're teaching math from grade two  
you'll say I don't believe in math.**

Kirk Douglas said: check mate rabbi – you're telling me it's time to grow up...

**I invite you to study with me, in JLI, or in TANYA**

Upcoming course: Wrestling with Faith

We study TANYA each Saturday morning at 8:40am for an hour.

Tanya students know this stuff... Actually they know Hashem Echad – Hashem is the only one... It's all part of HIm

Study of Torah will elevate the way you view G-d

Let's graduate the childish image of an angry G-d

Let's discover the True G-d, who is the Soul of our Soul, the Essence of our Existence,

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**Dear Friends – let's get to know G-d for real in this new year.**

**Not G-d the angry bully we've been trying to watch out for or trying to bribe...**

**The true loving G-d, the truth of all existence, including your own existence.**

**Think of yourself within G-d, like the baby in mommy's womb**

**Judaism isn't just about believing in G-d**

**Judaism is more so about believing in ourselves**

**Reminding us, we are much more than we think**

**We matter - to the cosmic plan**

**We're part of the Divine, and integral to HIS Happiness and plan**

**Each of us is a drop of the Divine ocean**

**A ray of light from the Divine Sun**

**A tiny but integral part in the Divine cosmic body**

**A literal baby carried in the Divine womb**

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**G-d is not out to get us**

**He's out to give us**

**A sense of self, a sense of being true and real and eternal, embraced  
within the greater, within the oneness of Hashem**

**He's out to give us**

**a sense of security and connectedness and belonging**

**Empowering each of us to live each day mindfully and happily**

**Filled with unbridled joy and a deep seated sense of importance and  
purpose!**

**And He's about to give us**

**A SHANA TOVA**

**A New Year blessed with prosperity, health, nachas & happiness!**