

PART 3: FIVE THINGS WE KNOW ABOUT GOD

by Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf

It All Begins With God

Five Things We Know About God - cont.

3) Involved Supervisor

Until this point we have spoken of God as the Creator. We also saw that the nature of creation is such that He constantly sustains creation. This maintenance of creation is a function of the ongoingness of creation. A direct result of God being the Creator and Sustainer of all existence is that He is also a very hands-on supervisor. Think about it: if every moment is in fact a new act of creation, then God is involved, so to speak, with everything that exists at all times. In other words, God isn't like the owner of a football team sitting comfortably in his luxury box watching a team he owns but has little direct impact on in terms of what takes place on the field. Rather, God is the owner, the general manager, the coach, the water boy and a whole lot more all rolled into one. In other words, He is constantly and intimately involved with all that exists in His creation.

4) Oneness

If all of Judaism could be distilled into one statement it would be, "Listen, O' Israel, God our Lord; God is One."

This is often understood as the proclamation of the Jewish belief in monotheism, one God. In fact, it is much more than that. It is a statement about the unity -- the oneness -- of God's absolute being. It's true that Judaism gave the world the single most revolutionary idea that has ever been articulated, namely, that there is only one God and not a myriad of conflicting and competing gods, forces, and powers. However, the oneness of God means even more than that. The oneness of God means that all that exists, all forces and all powers, are an expression of a greater, transcendent Unity that is the source of their existence as well as the source of any power or influence they seem

to exert within existence.

5) Giver

One thing we know for sure about creation is that it doesn't exist for God. Since God is wholly complete and lacks nothing, it can't be that His act of creation was motivated by a need, because a need implies a lack and He has no lackings. Creation, then, is not for the Creator, rather it is for the creature. So another critical insight we have about God is that His ongoing acts of creation are ongoing acts of altruism. The creation and maintenance of all existence is an act motivated, so to speak, only by pure benevolence. God's "relationship," therefore, to His creation is one in which He is the giver par excellence, and we, the creatures, are the receivers of what it is that God has to offer. And what is it that God has to offer? The only thing that truly exists -- Himself.

Shimon Apisdorf is an award-winning author whose books have been read by hundreds of thousands of people around the world. He has gained a world-wide reputation for his ability to extract the essence of classical Jewish wisdom and show how it can be relevant to issues facing the mind, heart and soul in today's world. Shimon grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, and studied at the University of Cincinnati, Telshe Yeshiva of Cleveland and the Aish HaTorah College of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem. He currently resides with his wife, Miriam, and their children in Baltimore. The Apisdorfs enjoy taking long walks, listening to the music of Sam Glaser and going to Orioles games.

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