

# JUDAISM FOR LIVING SERIES



## LISTENING TO YOUR MESSAGES

SOURCE-BASED DISCUSSION

PROJECT  
INSPIRE.  
A PROGRAM OF aish HaTorah

Judaism is unique in that connection to belief in God goes deeper than just the intellect. It's all about the relationship. Consider the very first commandment given to the Jewish People when we left Egypt:

### SOURCE 1: *Mitzvah of Belief in God*

I am the Lord, your God who **brought you out of the land of Egypt**, the house of bondage:

אֲנִי יְ-הוָה אֱ-לֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ  
מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

This is the first commandment requiring us to believe in God, who introduces Himself as the God who took us out of Egypt.

**Q: Why does God introduce Himself as the One who took us out of Egypt rather than as the Creator of the Universe? Isn't that a much grander demonstration of His power and omnipotence?**

From the very beginning of Jewish History, God presents Himself as a personal God, who is intimately involved with us as a nation and as individuals and cares deeply about us.

**Q: Do you view belief in God as a relationship?**

**Q: When you focus upon how much people love and care about you, how does it make you feel? Do you feel God's love in the same way?**

**Q: The closer the relationship is between people the more of life they share. How does being close to God manifest itself in your life?**

**Q: How much do you think God is involved in your life? Does He get involved in the nitty gritty, or only the high leverage moments when you really need Him?**

Consider the following sources:

### SOURCE 2: *R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, Essay on Fundamentals Hashgachah / Bereishis Rabbah 10:7*

2a. God guides the world toward the fulfillment of its purpose. God constantly supervises His entire creation, giving it existence and guiding it according to the purpose for which He created it. (R. Luzatto)

2b. Even every blade of grass is on God's radar. Every single blade of grass has a spiritual force appointed over it, which strikes it and tells it: "Grow!" (Bereishis Rabbah 1)

הנה האדון ב"ה משגיח תמיד על כל  
בריותיו, ומקיימן ומנהלן כפי התכלית  
שבעבורה בראן

אין לך כל עשב ועשב שאין לו מזל  
!ברקיע שמכה אותו ואומר לו גדל

**Q: What would life be like if you believed God was involved with every aspect of your life? Would it be comforting? Would it bring a sense of security to your life?**

**Q: Do you think this would add an uncomfortable intensity to a person's life, like they always have to be on their game?**

**Q: What about living a meaningful life? How would this developing relationship with God play into that opportunity?**

**Although God gives us a broad canvas with which to create our relationship with Him, in the end how engaged we are with this process is up to us:**

**SOURCE 3:** *The Burning Bush, Book of Exodus (3:3)*

Moses said, "I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn't the bush burn up?"  
When ה-ו-ה saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the bush: "Moses! Moses!"  
He answered, "Here I am."

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרֶה-נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת-הַמַּרְאֶה  
הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מִדּוּעַ לֹא-יִבְעַר הַסִּנֵּה:  
וַיֹּרֶא יְ-הוָה כִּי סָר לְרִאיוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֶל-  
הַיָּם מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר  
הַנְּנִי:

**Q: Why do you think Moshe merited that God would appear to him? Take a look at the verse to see if it hints at an answer.**

R. Yerucham Levovitz explains that we have an obligation to follow after God's providence. If we don't try to see it, then we won't experience any providence, and we won't even know what providence is. If, however, one does try to see providence, he will immediately see it in every single step! This was the secret of Moshe's experience with God. God saw that he turned to look, and as a result God called to him.

**Q: Do you "turn to see" God in your life, or do you see things on face value, as just the way things are?**

**Q: How can you be more mindful of God's messages in your life?**

God isn't only in the good things that happen to you, His Hand is in everything. The more you see His Hand in your life, the greater your relationship and the greater your trust.

**Q: How would knowing God is behind everything help you deal with unpleasant situations?**

**Q: Do you think that noticing God in the good times would help you weather the not so good times, and feel His comforting presence there as well?**

**Exercise for Gaining Sensitivity to Divine Providence:**

1. Whenever something happens that you may have chalked up to a coincidence, notice that it is a message from God and write it down.
2. Review your messages weekly on Shabbos.
3. On Rosh Chodesh, the first of every Jewish month, review the divine providence for the month.