

***Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam,  
Asher Kidshanu BeMitzvotav VeTzivanu,  
La'asok BeDivrei Torah.***

**Text 1: The Problematics of Myth, Neil Gillman (Shma, April 2002)**

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1. ... There is no totally objective, human experience of the world. We construct reality from our simple perception of an apple to our most complex scientific theories. To this task we bring everything that makes us who we distinctively are, our genetic make-up, our educational and cultural baggage, and our intuitive, almost pre-conceptual, assumptions about what the world looks like. ...
2. ... Myths, then, are not to be contrasted with facts....
3. ...Myths are the connective tissues that knit together the data of experience, thereby enabling these data to form a coherent pattern and acquire meaning - what Rollo May, in his *The Cry for Myth*, calls the beams of the house that are themselves invisible but without which the house could not stand. ... It is precisely because these connecting tissues are themselves invisible that myths are frequently viewed as fictions.
4. ...Myths can be "living," "broken," or "dead". A living myth is one that works for us, that we embrace as "true," that makes sense of the world as we perceive it. A broken myth is ...
5. ... Finally, what makes a myth "true"? Clearly not because it corresponds to the facts, simply because we have no independent perception of those facts to compare it with. We cannot escape our humanness. But one myth may do a better job of integrating what we do perceive to be the data of experience; it accounts more adequately for more of what we perceive. For Jews, that myth is canonized in Torah.

**Text 2: The Tapestry of Jewish Time: A Spiritual Guide, p. 38, Nina Beth Cardin**

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When the sun goes down on the sixth day, and we light the Shabbat candles, we open up a portal in time and space. We stand before the candlesticks, circling our hands above the flames three times, gathering, collecting, immersing ourselves in their light. ...We take our hands away. "There was light." Everything is bathed in this radiance borrowed from the first light of creation so long ago. We have walked through the portal, into time eternal.

**Text 3: The Zohar (Pritzker Edition) Vol. II, p. 285, note 208, Daniel Matt (*adapted*)**

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*Alma de'Atei, or Olam Haba, or "The world that is coming", is often understood as referring to 'the world to come.' From another point of view, however, the "world that is coming" already exists, occupying another dimension. The wise call it Ha'Olam HaBa not because it does not exist now, but for us today in this world it is still to come. (Tanchuma, Vayikra 8) ... The world to come does not succeed this world, but exists from eternity as a reality outside and above time, to which the soul ascends. (Guttman, Philosophies of Judaism, 37)*

**Text 4: The Chosen (Play edition), p.24, Aaron Posner and Chaim Potok**

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Whose task is it to study Torah? The world? No! The world is *Eisav!* The world is *Amalek!* The world is Cossacks! The world is Hitler, may his name and memory be erased! Of whom, then? Of the people of Israel. **We** are commanded to sit in the light of the Presence. It is written "The world is like a vestibule to the world-to-come; prepare thyself in the vestibule, that thou mayest enter the Hall." In *gematria* the words "this world" add up to 163, and the words "the-world-to-come" come out to 154. The difference between "this world" and "the-world-to-come" is nine. Nine is half of eighteen. Eighteen is *chai*, life. In this world, there is only half of *Chai*. We are only half alive in this world!

Lesson Plan:

- Bracha
- Framework for conversation
- **Myth:** Texts
- **Time** – Lifecycles, *Chagim*
  - Birth, Death – other lifecycles
  - Pesach, YN – other *chagim*
- Steinsaltz on *Olamot*
- Importance of Setting/Environment for experience