Reality Check

By Rabbi Levi bar Ido

In Kabbalah (sod level Torah study), we study the Torah in order to enter a higher spirituality not religion. We study to learn how we can ascend beyond our world, into the worlds that govern the Malkhut. We observe the world from within ourselves, our mind. Our five senses receive external stimulus and pass it on to the brain, where it is processed forming our view of the world, and we perceive nothing outside this picture presented by our senses. (Yochanan 7:24)The world "we know" is a result of our reactions to any external stimuli. The real world (reality) "in itself" is unknown. For example, if my eardrum is damaged, I hear nothing and sound does not exist to me. I understand only within the scope to which I am in tune. Our perception of the world is always completely subjective. Our world view says nothing about what happens outside of us. We comprehend our own reactions to something supposedly unfolding outside us, but does anything really happen out there?

Many theories in history support this thought in Kabbalah. Newton's theory stated that there is an objective (true) reality that the world is as we see it and exists regardless of our own existence. Albert Einstein[1] later theorized that the perception of reality depends on the relation between the velocity of the observer and the speed of the observed. In other words, by changing our speed, either slower or faster, relative to an object (E=mc2), we view it completely differently: space becomes warped, compressed or expanded, and time changes. Other theories, such as Heisenberg's uncertainty principle[2], proposed reciprocity between the individual and the world. In other words, the perception of reality is a result of my influence on the world and its influence on me.

Kabbalah explains that there is no detectable reality outside us. We influence nothing outside us because we observe nothing outside us. Outside us, there is only constant Light. The entire world is within us, and we feel that we are influenced from the outside because we are created this way.

If we depart our world, we begin to see how the Light gives birth to ever newer pictures of the world within us. This entire world then becomes small and very restricted. We see how the Light determines the way we perceive ourselves and our environment, and we ultimately begin to control this process. Kabbalah gives us this capacity. We begin understanding that the reason for our restricted abilities lies within us. If we equalize our inner attributes with the attributes of the Light, we will reach the level of perfection and eternity called "the world of Infinity"—endless life and absolute fulfillment. All this depends upon changing and renewing our minds. This is why Kabbalah teaches us that by changing ourselves we begin to rise above this earthly existence. Our bodies remain in it and we go on living our lives with families, and the world. But we receive an addition to this—the Upper Reality—where we live in our supernal soul/mind-the Neshamah.

1. Quantum physics tells us that reality is far beyond human perception and intuition. In other words, our rational mind and common sense are just not capable of understanding the true nature of reality. Einstein's theory of relativity introduced a new way of looking at the physical properties of the universe. The Newtonian constraints of absolute time and space were abandoned. Time and space were unified and made relative, it formed a continuum that curved and enfolded about itself. Gravity was a distortion of this continuum caused by the presence of mass. From this, the famous formula e=mc~ was derived. (e=energy, m=mass, c=the speed of light, the magical constant in the system, the absolute maximum speed that anything can travel.) So Einstein's famous theory has one absolute (speed of light) in a relative universe, and it forms a kind of boundary around all we can know. Even though this theory has been borne out by many experiments, its consequences appear very bizarre. Objects shrink when they are in motion, space time curves; light is bent by gravity etc.

2.At a time when Einstein had gained international recognition, quantum theory culminated in the late 1920's statement of the Uncertainty Principle, which says that *the more precisely the position of a particle is determined, the less precisely the momentum is known in this instant, and vice versa*. The above phrasing of the principle is a succinct version of the mathematically precise uncertainty relation that Heisenberg published in 1927. Since the momentum of a particle is the product of its mass and velocity, the principle is sometimes stated differently, however, its meaning remains the same: The act of measuring one magnitude of a particle, be it its mass, its velocity, or its position, causes the other magnitudes to blur. This is not due to imprecise measurements. Technology is advanced enough to hypothetically yield correct measurements. The blurring of these magnitudes is a fundamental property of nature.