

PARSHAT VAETCHANAN
DEUTERONOMY 3:23-7:11
14 AV 5782/11 AUGUST 2022



Landscape with Arched Bridge
Painting by Rembrandt van Rijn (1638)

IN THE HEAVENS ABOVE AND ON THE EARTH BELOW

1. “And now, O Israel, hear...” (Deuteronomy 4:1)
2. In the beginning, the Great Chief Above lived all alone. When he made the world, he went down to shallow places in the water and created land out of mud. He piled some of this mud so high it froze and became the mountains. The Great Chief Above also created the trees, roots and berries. He made man out of a ball of mud and instructed him to take fish from the water and deer from the forests. He then created woman to combat the man’s loneliness taught her about berries, roots and basket making and how to cook and dress skins. She handed these skills down to their daughters and granddaughters. Despite all the gifts from the Great Chief Above, the people quarreled. They quarreled so much that Mother Earth shook the mountains so hard that she created rapids and waterfalls. The falling rocks killed some people and animals. (Creation story of the Yakama)
3. Native American mythology contains ancient stories of lore in which survival knowledge, traditions, cultural origins and more gets passed on from one generation to the next. As an oral tradition, Native American myths are best shared live where the storyteller doesn’t just share the story, they bring it to life. The legends are rich with many layers of meaning, which offers the listener different lessons depending on their current state of mind and heart, and also depending on their current stage of life. As a person moves through the years they hear and understand more layers to the stories, and the true heart of Native

American mythology is revealed. They teach us not to wander off from what is most essential in life. (Tim Corcoran)

4. “Know today and restore it in [cause it to return into, *hasheivotah*] your heart that Adonai is God in the heavens above and on the earth below; *ein od.*” (Deuteronomy 4:39)
5. Where can I escape Your spirit?
Where can I flee from Your presence?
If I ascend to heaven, You are there;
If I descend to Sheol, You are there too.
If I take wing with the dawn
to come to rest on the western horizon,
even there Your hand will be guiding me,
Your right hand will be holding me fast.
If I say, “Surely darkness will conceal me,
night will provide me with cover,”
darkness is not dark for You;
night is as light as day;
darkness and light are the same.
(Psalm 139:7-11)
6. וְיָדַעְתָּ אֲנִי אֵלֹהִים יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד (Deuteronomy 6:4)
7. Know what is above you – an eye that sees and an ear that hears and all your deeds recorded in a book. (Mishnah, Avot 2.1)

The nature of the influence that flows from God to the world will be a reflection of the nature of our activities. (Based on the Baal Shem Tov)

“Know what is” is from you. (Dov Baer, Maggid of Mezeritch)