

## THE MISCONCEPTION SERIES

- **LECTURE ONE – INTRODUCTION TO MISCONCEPTION SERIES**
  - Why and how do misconceptions arise?
  - What are the effects of misconceptions?
  - Brief examples of current misconceptions
  - Brief overview of lecture series
  
- **LECTURE TWO – IS GOD INVOLVED IN THE WORLD?**
  - *Overview of a few misconceptions about God's involvement in the world*
  - What is the extent to which God is involved in the world?
  - Knowledge vs Judgement
  - Free will
  - What about rabbis who say natural disasters and diseases are judgements from God?
  
- **LECTURE THREE – COMMANDMENTS**
  - *Overview of a few misconceptions about keeping commandments/mitzvot*
  - Definition of a commandment/mitzvah
  - Why are we *commanded* to do mitzvot if they are merely for our own benefit?
  - Why are there stories in the Torah of God punishing those who do not follow commandments?
  
- **LECTURE FOUR – PRAYER**
  - *Overview of a few misconceptions about Prayer*
  - Philosophy of prayer
  - Laws of prayer
  - Power of prayer (holy men's blessings/gravesite prayers/paying for prayers)
  
- **LECTURE FIVE – SUPERSTITION**
  - *Overview of a few superstitions in our communities*
  - Can we alter our reality by performing rituals?
  - Segulot, dybbuks, kapparot, parnassah – what are they?
  - The Zohar and Kabbalah



- **LECTURE SIX – STUDYING TORAH vs WORKING**
  - *Point out a few misconceptions about Torah study and the working world*
  - Are we obligated to live a life of Torah study?
  - Yeshiva/Kollel system
  - Army service
  
- **LECTURE SEVEN – CUSTOM vs LAW**
  - Difference between custom and law
  - Importance of customs
  - Why has custom trumped, or become equal to, law?
  - Are customs binding?
  
- **LECTURE EIGHT – BIBLICAL STORIES**
  - Did the seemingly supernatural events in the Torah really happen? Are they reality or metaphorical?
  - Midrashim being taught as Peshat today, and the associated problems with this
  - Biblical criticism – what is our response?
  
- **LECTURE NINE – KASHRUT/KOSHER FOOD**
  - *Overview of a few misconceptions about Kashrut/Kosher Food*
  - Why keep Kashrut?
  - Food cooked by non-Jews
  - Wine, oil and bread made by non-Jews
  - Kosher symbols on food packaging (hechshers)
  - 'Suitable for Vegetarian' food and restaurants
  
- **LECTURE TEN – ELECTRICITY ON SHABBAT**
  - What does the Torah say about lighting or extinguishing a fire on Shabbat and Yom Tov?
  - Why and how is electricity considered 'fire' or 'building'?
  - Dissenting rabbinic voices on the banning of electricity on Shabbat and Yom Tov
  - Is there no halakhic allowance of using mobile phone or electric cars on Shabbat and Yom Tov?

- **LECTURE ELEVEN – ROLE OF WOMEN IN JUDAISM**
  - *Overview of a few misconceptions people have about women in Judaism*
  - What is the role of women in Judaism?
  - Tzniut/Modesty – why is this important? What about jeans/sheitels?
  - Why are there fewer commandments for women than men?
  - Women rabbis
  
- **LECTURE TWELVE – SEX & RELATIONSHIPS**
  - Problems with pre-marital relations
  - Status of sex in Judaism
  - Lust vs Love, importance of Niddah
  
- **LECTURE THIRTEEN – SCIENCE & EVOLUTION**
  - Does Judaism accept Evolution?
  - Can Judaism and Jewish law adapt to scientific advances?
  - 'Consciousness' and the challenges that Science faces to explain this phenomenon
  
- **LECTURE FOURTEEN – END OF SERIES: THE FUTURE OF JUDAISM**
  - What is the current state of Judaism?
  - What are the problems with the current state of Judaism?
  - How can we improve Judaism? What needs to be done?
  - When are we able to change laws that seem outdated? (two-day Yom Tov, electricity, etc.)
  - The Messiah – who and what is this?