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**Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet**  
**Bereishis 5770**

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**HUMAN BEGINNINGS :: Rabbi Berel Wein**

The Torah addresses the true nature of human beings in its opening chapter on the story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The salient points of the story are certainly pertinent to our lives and times. Adam and Eve disobey God's commandment and mistakenly substitute the quest for human knowledge, wisdom and opinion for the Divine will. The tendency of humans, even those who deem themselves to be pious and faithful, is to somehow believe that they know better – better than tradition, than experience, better than God Himself.

Thus every ideal, policy, and analysis created by humans is automatically thought to be correct, progressive and beneficial to humankind. Even such mass murderers and psychopaths as Hitler, Stalin, Mao and their ilk always convinced themselves and duped others to believe as well that what they were doing – killing millions of innocents – was for the eventual greater good of world human society. They knew better - and God's commandment not to wantonly murder others was not applicable to them – they somehow had superior wisdom that made them above all laws and morality.

One has to always be wary of those who know better and intend to impose their wisdom and plans on others. Invariably they lead humankind to be expelled from the little if any paradise that it may still occupy. Adam and Eve taught us this lesson the hard way. Their descendants should avoid having to relearn this lesson over and over in every generation.

A second trenchant point that the story of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden teaches us is that human beings cannot hide from the consequences of their behavior. Eventually the piper must be paid. When man's plans go awry, when his ideals turn into false idols, when he realizes the disastrous consequences of past hopes and policies, when he is literally stripped naked before the bar of history and suffers from the unforeseen consequences of his past behavior and decisions, most humans follow the example of Adam and attempt to hide from their mistakes.

Adam hides in the vegetation of the Garden of Eden and naively believes that he can avoid the necessary confrontation with God. He also believes that somehow he need not confront himself either. Then the voice of the Lord is asking the question of all questions, "Where are you?" This is not a question that refers to Adam's location on earth. Rather it is the deep probing question of self-assessment that governs all of life's actions and vicissitudes.

Every moment of our waking lives the question "where are you" is directed to all of us. And hiding in the bush does not help as the question eventually emanates from within our deepest being and cannot be wished away or ignored indefinitely. After centuries of secularism - "where are you?" After decades of peacemaking and unilateral concessions - "where are you?" After the pursuit of material goods to the exclusion of all else – "where are you?" There is no hiding from that question. It is what guides and informs our personal and national lives.

And as a final insight that certainly can be gleaned from the story of Adam and Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden concerns the clothing the Lord made for them, so to speak, to cover their nakedness. The Torah describes the clothing as being made from material called "ohr," which is spelled with an "ayin" and means hides or leather. The Talmud records for us that in the Torah written by Rabbi Meir, the great scholar and scribe of the second century CE, the word "ohr" was spelled with an "aleph" instead of an "ayin." "Ohr" with an "aleph" means light/radiance. Human beings have the choice as to how they wish to cover their nakedness and their base and wrongheaded behavior. They can cover it with hides, leather, furs and satins. But eventually these materials fray, tear, decay and/or are no longer considered to be fashionable.

Rabbi Meir's option was to cover them with light – with Torah and faith, commitment and tenacity, repentance and good deeds. The original light of creation still exists in our universe and world. If we humans are wise enough to envelop ourselves in its radiance, our shameful nakedness can be covered and we will not be doomed to repeat past errors of judgment and behavior.

We should attempt to retain as much of our physical and spiritual Garden of Eden as possible in this good new year that has now begun for all of us. Shabat shalom.

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**Weekly Parsha :: BERESHITH :: Rabbi Berel Wein**

The rabbis of the Talmud characterized all beginnings as being difficult. Well, for the Lord nothing can be said as being difficult. Nevertheless we can all certainly agree that the universe created by God is exceedingly wondrous and complex and difficult for us ordinary humans to grasp in its entirety. So this beginning is a difficult one as well, at least for us, to consider and deal with.

Science has advanced many theories and only limited certainties as to the origin of our species – humankind - and of our planet, Earth, and certainly in regard to our galaxy and the immense universe of which we are barely a tiny speck. What are we to make of all of this?

The Torah has purposely hidden the secrets of creation from us in the narrative that it portrays of the six days of creation and of the arrival of Shabat. It is as though the Torah is telling us that "how" is not important as to this universe but rather the issue is simply "what." What are we supposed to do with our lives, our planet, our galaxy, our universe now that we are temporary residents here?

Human curiosity and further scientific and technological advances will continue to pursue the elusive "how" of creation. That is purely basic human nature – to attempt to know the unknown and to understand the infinite. But that will have only limited effect, if any at all, on human behavior. That certainly remains at best a work in progress. And it constantly demands more work from us.

Human beings were placed on our earth, according to the Torah, "to work and exploit its riches and yet to guard and protect that world." That is the clear instruction given by the Almighty to Adam in the Garden of Eden. If humans are able to harmoniously blend the two – the work and the guarding – then this planet is and will remain a veritable paradise.

However, if humans lose their sense of proportion and balance regarding these two goals and veer towards working and exploiting too much or guarding overzealously then neither of these goals will be achieved. Harmony and a balanced relationship one to the other is the only way to ensure success. Human society seems to veer from plundering its habitat to overprotecting it at tremendous cost to human comfort and society's economic wherewithal.

The watchword of our day is "green" – green energy, green housing, a green economy. This is a worthwhile goal but it cannot be the only goal on the human agenda. After the rapacious treatment of the earth's resources over the past centuries, the reaction of "green" has set in with a vengeance. Eventually we humans will have to find the balance between working and guarding that the Lord bade us to do at the beginning of the story of humankind.

Common sense, political wisdom and a balanced view of life and its problems can all help fulfill God's blessings to Adam and Chava and their descendants to truly inherit this earth and live in harmony with it. Shabat shalom.

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**TORAH WEEKLY - Parshat Bereishet**  
**For the week ending 17 October 2009 / 28 Tishri 5770**

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## OVERVIEW

In the beginning, G-d creates the entire universe, including time itself, out of nothingness. This process of creation continues for six days. On the seventh day, G-d rests, bringing into existence the spiritual universe of Shabbos, which returns to us every seven days. Adam and Chava - the Human pair - are placed in the Garden of Eden. Chava is enticed by the serpent to eat from the forbidden fruit of the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil," and in turn gives the fruit to Adam. By absorbing "sin," Adam and Chava render themselves incapable of remaining in the spiritual paradise of Eden and are banished. Death and hard work (both physical and spiritual) now enter the world, together with pain in childbirth. Now begins the struggle to correct the sin of Adam and Chava, which will be the main subject of world history. Cain and Hevel, the first two children of Adam and Chava, bring offerings to G-d. Hevel gives the finest of his flock, and his offering is accepted, but Cain gives inferior produce and his offering is rejected. In the ensuing quarrel, Cain kills Hevel and is condemned to wander the earth. The Torah traces the genealogy of the other children of Adam and Chava, and the descendants of Cain until the birth of Noach. After the death of Sheis, Mankind descends into evil, and G-d decides that He will blot out man in a flood which will deluge the world. However, one man, Noach, finds favor with G-d.

## INSIGHTS

### The Jury Is Still Out - "Let us make Man." (1:26)

Rosh Hashana marks the creation of the first man. "And He blew into his nostrils the soul of life." (2:7). When G-d decided to make Man, He 'consulted' with His Heavenly Court, and what can only be described as an argument broke out.

Truth said, "Don't create him, for he is full of lies!" Righteousness said, "Create him, for sometimes he will behave righteously!" And so it went back and forth in the Heavenly Court. Some said "Create!" while others said "Don't create!"

In the middle of this melee, G-d said, "Man has already been created." Our Sages learn this from the phrase Na'aseh Adam, (Let us create man.) which can also be read as Na'asah Adam, "Man has already been created" - meaning that Man was created in the midst of an existential doubt. When man was created, the jury was, quite literally, 'out'.

Man came into this world in a state of din, of judgment - a judgment that was never resolved.

Every Rosh Hashana, on the anniversary of that Heavenly "argument", the same question is re-awakened, "Create/Don't create!" and each one of us is judged as to what extent we have answered that question - should man be created?

### Shh! It's Cheshvan

If you want someone to be quiet, if you want them to listen, you raise your finger to your lips and say "Shh!"

The sound of air flowing over lips is the universal sign to be still, to be quiet. The English word "hush" is connected with this sound. The same sound appears in the name of the month of Cheshvan, the month that begins this week. The root of the word Cheshvan is chash, which in Hebrew means quiet. The very name of the month commands us to be still, to be quiet. What is this stillness that is Cheshvan?

The month of Cheshvan says to us "Hush! Be still and listen to your heart! Listen to the quiet after the storm. Listen to the still small voice of the soul washed pure by the great storm of Tishrei!

In Hebrew the word for "the senses" is chushim, which is connected to the word chash - "silence." For the senses operate in silence. They are the silent recorders of reality. They record in silence and they play back their message in silence. And to decode what our senses tell us when they replay the soul's diary of the month of Tishrei, we must listen to the sounds of their silence and reflect to what extent have we answered that question of "Shall we make Man?"

Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

## Parshas Bereishis

### In the beginning of G-d's creating the heavens and the earth. (1:1)

The first Rashi in the Torah is famous: Amar Rabbi Yitzchak, "The text of the Torah should have commenced with Sefer Shemos 12, in which the commandment regarding the month of Nissan is written. Instead, the Torah begins with creation. This is to indicate that Hashem created the world. Thus, it was His prerogative to give Eretz Yisrael to whichever nation He chose. He gave the Holy Land to the Jewish People as an inheritance." This statement is questionable, since many basic teachings and lessons can be derived from Sefer Bereishis, such as: Maase avos siman labanim, "The actions of the fathers (Patriarchs) are a sign, portent, for their children;" the words of the servants of the Patriarchs are more precious than the instruction of the children." These are just a few of the lessons which would be lost with the omission of Sefer Bereishis.

Horav Yaakov Kamenetsky, zl, points out that, indeed, many of the fundamentals of the Torah-- such as Techiyas Ha'meisim, Resurrection of the dead-- have rules which are only in the Talmud. If so, the stories of the Avos could have their place in the Oral Law. They did not have to be written in the Torah She'Biksav, Written Law. The rule for inclusion in the Written Law is that it belongs to the Taryag, 613 mitzvos, or that it presents a lesson which is important for the gentile nations to know. Since the Oral Law was supposed to remain oral and, thus, not accessible to the average gentile, they would have to read it in the Torah She'Biksav. As a result of this, Rabbi Yitzchak, quoted by Rashi, explains that there was actually no reason to begin the Torah with its narration concerning the creation of the world, except for the fact that the gentile nations need to learn from this saga. They should become acutely aware of the development of the Jewish nation and its title to Eretz Yisrael. Bereishis is for them. Perhaps, it is also for us, since, regrettably, many self-loathing Jews still do not accept that Eretz Yisrael really belongs to us. If we would truly believe it is ours, so would everybody else.

There is another reason that Rashi begins his commentary to the Torah with a statement from Rabbi Yitzchak. Rashi's full name was Rabbi Shlomo ben Rabbi Yitzchak, hence the surname Yitzchaki. It makes sense that Rabbi Yitzchak, whom Rashi quotes, was none other than his father. Why does he begin his commentary with a dvar Torah from his father? I think it goes beyond Rashi's fulfillment of the mitzvah of Kibud Av, honoring his father. Rashi had a sense of hakoras hatov, gratitude, recognizing that whatever he had achieved was the result of his father's sacrifice. Hakarah means recognition. In every word of Torah that Rashi learned, he acknowledged his father. Thus, as he begins his commentary to the Torah, he commences with a dvar Torah from his father.

Interestingly, his father teaches us to look to the beginning, the source of everything. Throughout history, various groups have laid claim to Eretz Yisrael. Rabbi Yitzchak asserts that all strife can be settled easily by focusing on the Owner/Creator of Eretz Yisrael: Hashem. He decided to give His land to His People. Subject closed. Likewise, Rashi is intimating that his own ability to write such an unparalleled pirush, commentary to the Torah, is due to his father's mesiras nefesh, self-sacrifice.

The story is related that Rabbi Yitzchak merited a son who would illuminate the Torah world for all generations through his commentary, which made Torah accessible to everyone. Apparently, his father, a poor vintner, found an unpolished stone, which he immediately took to the local jeweler for an appraisal. Lo and behold, the stone was valued at a price beyond the means of anyone in the entire city - except for the church. When the local priests heard about Rabbi Yitzchak's discovery, they were prepared to pay an exorbitant sum of money for the stone. Rabbi Yitzchak refused to sell the stone to the church at any price, fearing that it would contribute to idolatry.

The priests thought of a ruse to obtain the stone. They hired a ship and convinced Rabbi Yitzchak to join them for a short trip. As soon as they were away from land, the priests demanded the stone. They were prepared to pay for it, but, if necessary, there were "other" means of obtaining it. Tradition tells us that Rabbi Yitzchak flung the stone into the sea, either on purpose or "accidentally on purpose." A Heavenly voice then decreed, "Because you were willing to sacrifice a precious diamond for the glory of

G-d, you will be blessed with a son who will illuminate the eyes of the Jewish People."

### **In the beginning of G-d's creating the heavens and the earth (1:1)**

The Midrash relates Rabbi Yehudah ben Pazi and Bar Kappara expounding on the work of Creation. "Why was the world created with a bais - Bereishis; in the beginning? Because it is an expression of brachah, blessing. And why not with an aleph? Because it is an expression of cursing, arirah." The commentators point out that Chazal's statement is not necessarily consistent with other pesukim in Tanach in which the letter bais is not always used as blessing. Indeed, we find in Yeshayah 24:1, "Behold, Hashem empties (bokeik) the land and lays it waste (bolkah)." Also, in Yechezkel 16:40, "They will tear you (u'bitkuch) with their swords." Furthermore, we find the letter aleph heading up the Aseres HaDibros, Ten Commandments - Anochi Hashem Elokecha. Nonetheless, although aware of these pesukim which seem to contradict their words, Chazal chose to disregard them and not make them an issue concerning this particular Midrash. Apparently, a deeper meaning is the basis of Chazal's delineating the bais of blessing from the aleph of curse.

Horav Meir Tzvi Bergman, Shlita, gives the following explanation. He cites Chazal in the Talmud Nedarim 40a, "If the young tell you to build and the elders tell you to raze, listen to the elders and do not listen to the young. This is because the building of the young is razing, and the razing of the elders is building. An example of this is Rechavam ben Shlomo HaMelech." This is a reference to Rechavam's ignoring the advice of the elders, his father's advisors, and instead listening to the young, inexperienced advisors with whom he had grown up. This ultimately led to his downfall and the razing of the Bais HaMikdash.

We find a similar statement in the Talmud Kedushin 33a, which notes that Rabbi Yochanan would rise out of respect for the aged, even gentiles. He commented, "How many crises have they weathered!" Rav Bergman explains that the older generation has an advantage over the young, whereby they know how to build upon the foundations of the past. Any structure which they build, be it physical or intellectual, it is based upon their rich storehouse of experience - both personal, and that which they have observed among the nations. They include the traditions they have received, which have been tested and proven over time. Thus, even when they determine that a structure must be razed, it is built upon a strong foundation of experience and wisdom acquired through painful and diligent observation, practice and training. Indeed, this is why their destruction will prove to be constructive. It will have a productive and beneficial impact on the future of any endeavor. They understand when something has to be razed and how it should be taken down.

By nature, the young refuse to learn from the past, often maintaining a rebellious stance against what is old, tried and true. They seek initiative, want to devise their own methods and invent new theories. For them, it is an insult to learn from others. Their building is based upon undermining and tearing down the structures of the past. Previous methods and axioms are an anathema to them - regardless of how much practical sense they make. The mere fact that it is not "theirs" is sufficient reason for something to be discarded and, often, reviled. Thus, their concept of building essentially means dismantling the original structure.

The construction of the Bais Hamikdash is a mitzvah of the Torah. Yet, it cannot be carried out under the guidance of the young, because it must be founded upon deep foundations of tradition going back to the Avos, Patriarchs. The Rambam Hilchos Bais HaBechirah 2:2 notes that it is a hallowed tradition that the place where David and Shlomo built the Mizbayach, Altar, was the exact spot upon which Avraham Avinu built an Altar and bound Yitzchak upon it; upon which Noach built an Altar when he emerged from the Ark; where Kayin and Hevel offered their sacrifices; and where Adam HaRishon offered a sacrifice to Hashem when he was created. Indeed, it was from the earth of that very same spot that he was fashioned. Chazal say that "Adam was created from the place in which he would find atonement."

The bottom line is that an edifice as sacrosanct as the Bais Hamikdash must be built on a mighty foundation. The building wrought by the young on new-- and often - shaky foundations, consists more of destruction than construction. Rav Bergman goes so far as to say that even if the young

offered us a chance to build the Bais Hamikdash, and even if we could definitely not be able to build it without their assistance, we would outright, without hesitation, reject their offer. At any rate, although we might not be able to build the edifice, we would at least have the foundations for that building firmly in hand, because we connect to the past. We will start, and Hashem will help us to complete it. If we were able to comply with the wishes and advice of the young, we would ultimately destroy its foundations, allowing nothing to rest on it, and catalyzing its premature ruin. Far from considering the assistance of the young an opportunity that should not be lost, it would mean the bitter end to every future opportunity. Far from reaping benefit, we would be stuck in a vicious maelstrom and lose everything.

With the above in mind, we can revert back to the Midrash which distinguishes between the bais of blessing and the aleph of curse. The Torah of Klal Yisrael cannot begin with an aleph, because this means commencing the Torah from "the beginning." This is an indication that here lies curse - not blessing; it is not building, but destruction. The Written Torah which one can read from the original, must be precluded and overshadowed by the Oral Torah which one must study from his elders. Shlomo Hamelech says in Mishlei (1:8), Shma beni mussar avicha, v'al titosh toras imecha, "Hear, my son, your father's mussar, and do not leave off your mother's Torah." In pointing the individual in the correct direction to further his wisdom, the Torah says (Devarim 32:7), She'al avicha v'yageidcha, z'keinecha v'yomru lach, "Ask your father and he will recount it to you, your elders and they will tell you." Torah must be studied through the process of mesorah, transmission, from one generation to the next. Herein lies the blessing; herein lies construction.

The Aseres HaDibros are a free-standing introduction, indicating the beginning, Hashem's introduction to Klal Yisrael. Thus, it can very well begin with an aleph, because its first words are Anochi, "I am Hashem, I am the beginning, the wellspring and source of all that is." The Torah of Hashem's children, however, must begin with bais, because a child comes after his father; he is second in the tradition, and Torah can only be learned through the medium of the external chain of tradition.

### **And G-d created the great sea-giants... G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. (1:21; 2:3)**

Upon studying the story of Creation, we confront what seems to be two inconsistencies in the language of the text. On the fifth day of Creation, Hashem created the tananim ha'gedolim, the great sea-giants. Interestingly, this is the only creation of which the Torah does not conclude, va'yehi chein, "and it was so." Why is this? Clearly, if Hashem created them, then it was so. Why is this creation different than the others? Rashi cites a comment from Chazal in Meseches Bava Basra 74b that these giant sea-creatures are none other than the Livyasan and its mate. After creating them, the female was then slain, salted and preserved for a future banquet to be held in the company of Moshiach Tzidkeinu and attended by the tzaddikim, righteous persons, of all generations. This is an incredible statement, considering that this amphibious creature was created only to be immediately killed and stored for the sake of a special meal sometime in the distant future.

Another such instance is in Creation, which, at first, seems highly irregular. Hashem rested on the seventh day of Creation, declaring it as Yom Shabbos Kodesh. The Torah teaches us that Hashem blessed the Shabbos. How did Hashem bless Shabbos more so than any other day of the week? Rashi explains that Shabbos was blessed with the Manna, which they received daily, but on Friday, in honor of Shabbos, Klal Yisrael were provided with a double portion. This seems strange, considering that the Manna was not received until thousands of years later, and it only lasted for the forty years in which the Jewish People sojourned in the wilderness. Both of the above creations have had very limited and restricted purposes; yet, their creation occupies a central role in Hashem's plan. How are we to understand this?

In an insightful commentary, Rabbi Yaacov Haber notes that this is a question only to those who assume that the significance of an object is measured by time and space. This is a grievous error. We should not determine the value of an object based on its overt value. Some things are

here for but a moment, but, to someone, that moment is critically important.

Let us take an example from the episode of Noah and the raven. The pelting rain had ceased, but was the land dry? Noah sent out the raven in search of dry land. Chazal relate that the raven kvetched and asked, "Why me? There are so many other creatures aboard the Ark. Send one of them!" Noah replied, perhaps with more frankness than was necessary, "You do not have much purpose in the world. You are not a kosher fowl. You may not be offered on the Mizbayach, Altar, as a sacrifice. You do not sing sweetly. Truthfully, if something were to happen to you, it would not engender a great loss in the world." Noah was wrong, because not only did the raven survive, but its much later descendants actually served a crucial function in providing sustenance to Eliyahu HaNavi in the desert. Noah erred in that every creation has a function and a purpose. Hashem does not waste creations. They all have significance in His eyes. We have no right to question Hashem, just because we do not quite understand the significance of something.

Another classic example of this idea is when Moshe Rabbeinu is commanded by Hashem to wage war with Midyan. Moshe felt that he should also battle Moav, since the people were much worse than the people of Midyan, who only assisted Moav in their attacks on the Jews. Hashem did not agree. Perhaps at the time Moshe did not understand, but when we look further down in history, we can understand why Hashem spared Moav. Rus descended from Moav. If there had been no Moav - there would have been no Rus and no Malchus Bais David, kingdom of the House of David. Many generations of this degenerate and evil nation were allowed to live so that the diamond, Rus, would ultimately emerge.

If Moshe can misjudge, we surely can, and we often do when we question the value of a nation, a group or an individual. In our limited perception, we see little value, but Hashem's vision envelops an entire world as a whole in its historical context. We can never estimate the purpose, or value in life, of an individual. It might take one single action to justify an entire life's existence. It might be his descendants down the line that justify his creation. Since we can never know, we have no right to pass judgment, surely not to question the Almighty.

This thesis strikes home, since I have had the privilege to spend time with Jews who are living in restricted environments, such as those incarcerated for various crimes. I used to wonder about them, since some of these individuals are doing hard time with little or no hope of parole or commutation. I say I wondered, in the past tense, until I saw a forty-five year old man putting on Tefillin for the very first time and reciting Shema Yisrael. There is no simple way to describe the experience. These are people who, for the most part, were raised with no clear understanding of what Judaism means or its relevancy to them. For some, had they not ended up in prison, they would probably never had donned a pair of Tefillin. When they perform that mitzvah, it is with such feeling and passion that it could serve as an inspiration - and it does. Maybe that is their purpose - to perform a mitzvah with pure, unadulterated emotion, for no other reason than to finally serve Hashem.

#### **And the man assigned names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to every beast of the field. (2:20)**

One of the seven blessings which comprise Bircas Chasanim is Sameach tesamach re'im ha'ahuvim k'sameichacha yetzircha b'Gan Eden mikedem. "Gladden the beloved companions as You gladdened Your creature in the Garden of Eden from aforesaid." This brachah asks Hashem to gladden the couple who stand before us as He did for Adam and Chavah in Gan Eden. One question confronts us immediately upon grasping the scope of this request: Is it reasonable to expect that every contemporary couple experiences such a heavenly relationship on par with that of the first couple in Gan Eden? Let us face it, we are not in Gan Eden, nor are we Adam and Chavah. Horav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zl, derives a powerful lesson from here concerning the power of prayer. When we entreat Hashem for something, we should not limit ourselves. Hashem can do anything and, if He desires, He will. Therefore, we should ask and hope for the ultimate response to our requests. Who knows?

Returning to the blessing, we do not find anywhere in the Torah that Hashem "gladdened" Adam and Chavah. The Midrash, however, does

teach that Hashem Himself escorted Chavah and brought her to Adam. Before doing so, He adorned her with forty-four beautiful ornaments and braided her hair. The angels descended to Gan Eden and played music for them. The sun, moon and stars danced before them. Hashem prepared a banquet filled with delicacies, He made the chupah, canopy, and He served as the chazzan to bless the first couple. The Torah, however, does not indicate that any unusual form of simchah took place. In addition, the word yetzircha is singular, which means creature, and is interpreted as referring to Adam, who was gladdened when Hashem created Chavah, so that he was no longer alone. This might be a reference to the singular unit of Adam and Chavah as husband and wife, who became a unified couple through the perfect harmony that existed between them.

Horav Eliyahu Schlesinger, Shlita, suggests that when Hashem created Adam and Chavah, He gave them the entire world. They were in charge. They had all of the keys. He gave them the ability to fashion the world in their image, to leave their imprint on the future of mankind. What greater sense of joy can there be than to have the power to initiate, to guide and direct, to inspire and shape lives. This is similar to the power of Creation. This is why Chazal teach us that Adam gave the appropriate name to every creature in existence. He understood their individual characteristic traits and named them accordingly. This is the apex of simchah. Adam and Chavah enjoyed the happiness associated with chedvas hayetzirah, the delight in the ability to create.

This was the manner in which Hashem gladdened Adam and Chavah. He gave them the opportunity to shape the image of the world according to their wisdom, understanding and perception. This is the zenith of simchah. Every young couple has before them the same opportunity, as they begin a new chapter in their lives together as husband and wife. Together they will decide the character of their new home. Will it be a home where Torah will thrive, where tzedakah and chesed, charity and acts of lovingkindness, will reign? Will meticulous mitzvah observance be a primary component in their lives? How will they raise their future children? What will be their priorities? Yes, this is the chedvas ha'yetzirah that greets them as they enter the new phase of their lives. Just as Hashem gladdened the first couple, so, too, does He avail the same opportunity to every subsequent couple. It is up to them to make the proper decisions.

#### **Va'ani Tefillah**

**Nosein l'beheimah lachmah livnei oriev asher yikrau.**

**He gives the animal its food and to the young of the Raven that for which they cry out.**

Interestingly, in reference to beheimah, animal, David Hamelech speaks in the singular, while concerning the raven, he reverts to the plural. Why is this? Horav Tzvi Hirsch Halevi Horwitz, zl, author of the Lachmei Todah, cites Chazal's famous dictum, "One who prays for his friend will be answered first." This means that if two people are in need, and one of them-- instead of thinking of himself-- prays first for his friend, he will be answered first. This may be interpreted into the pasuk, "Hashem is close to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him sincerely." At first glance, the text is redundant, since it could have stated simply, "Hashem is close to all who call upon Him sincerely."

Horav Tzvi Hirsch Halevi suggests that the first part of the pasuk refers to those righteous Jews who pray for others. They ask Hashem to listen to their pleas on behalf of others, so that they will be answered first. This is ratified by those "who call upon him sincerely." Rather than pray for themselves directly, they pray for others, so that they will be answered. This pasuk is followed by, "He performs the will of those who fear Him." Hashem listens to these righteous, fulfilling their needs first, and afterwards, "He hears the cries (of others)." This may be the reason that bnei oreiv, ravens, are mentioned in the plural. Ravens care very much for one another. Thus, when they "pray"/cry out to Hashem, it is not personal, but for one another. Since they are praying for each other, each individual raven is first answered concerning its own needs. They are mentioned in the plural, because their prayer is a "team effort."

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## Rabbi Yissocher Frand on Parshas Bereshis

### The Grass Is Always Greener When You Pray For Rain

The beginning of the second perek [chapter] of the Chumash says: "These are the products of the heavens and the earth, when they were created on the day of Hashem G-d's making of earth and heavens. [Bereshis 2:4] This summary of creation is followed by a difficult pasuk [verse] to interpret and even to translate: The presumed translation is "Now any tree of the field was not yet on the earth and any herb of the field had not yet sprouted, for Hashem G-d had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to work the soil."

Rashi interprets that even after the 6 days of creation, there was still no grass. Despite the fact that the Torah stated on the third day of creation "and the earth brought forth vegetation, herbage yielding seed" [Bereshis 1:12], Rashi explains that they did not emerge from the earth on that day but they stood on the surface of the ground until the sixth day.

The Torah explains in perek 2 pasuk 5 why the grass did not come out - "because there was no man to work the soil". Rashi interprets this to mean that there was no one who could recognize the goodness of rains. In other words, there was no human being around to appreciate the rain and to ask for it. When Adam was created and he understood that the world had a need for rain, he prayed that rain should fall. In answer to man's prayer, rain fell and the grass, trees, and all the vegetation of the earth then began to grow.

We learn a couple of interesting things from this Rashi. First, we see that the first prayer in the history of the world was Adam, the first man, asking for rain, shortly after his creation. We also learn that G-d was not merely waiting, as it were, for man to recognize the need for rain before bringing the rain, but G-d was waiting for man to pray for rain. Rav Aharon Kotler in Mishnas Aharon says that from here we learn that if a person does not pray for that which he needs, it can be there waiting and ready for him, but if he does not pray to G-d for it, it will not come.

This year could be the most financially successful year in one's career. The deal may just be waiting and ready. But if the person does not pray for it, it will not come. This is the way the Almighty set up the world. He set up the world in such a way that we must pray for things from Him. In this way, we will come to an appreciation that everything comes from Him.

The commentaries ask a very basic question: Why do we recite the same Shmoneh Esrei ('18 benediction' Amidah) day in and day out, 3 times a day, every weekday of the year? The point is to drive home through our thick skulls the lesson that we need the Almighty. We recite this prayer 1000 times a year and we still do not get it!

This Rashi is teaching us a very basic lesson regarding man's existence in the world. Blessings may be waiting right around the corner, waiting to come to us, but they won't come until we pray for them and thereby acknowledge that these blessings come from the Almighty.

### The Bloods Of Hevel Were Crying Out From The Ground

After Kayin killed Hevel, G-d inquired of him: "What have you done? The sound of your brother's bloods (demei achicah) cry out to Me from the ground." [Bereshis 4:10] Rashi comments on the plural form of the word dam [blood] used in this pasuk. The Almighty was alluding to the fact that Kayin not only killed his brother but he also killed all the potential descendants that might have come from him.

Every person on this planet descends from Adam. The Rabbis tell us that man was created as an individual to teach that one who preserves a single life is as if he preserved the entire world. When Kayin killed Hevel, it wasn't only a matter of killing a single individual. The "loss of life" he caused - when projected into the future amounted to the loss of billions of individuals! When we look at a person, we cannot just look at him "as he is there". We must look at the vast future potential that every person has.

Perhaps this can help explain the following Talmudic passage [Berachos 28b]: When Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai was on his death bed, his students came in to visit him. When he saw them, he began to cry. The disciples asked him, "Candle of Israel, the right hand pillar, the mighty hammer, why are you crying?" Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai responded, "If I were being taken before an earthly king who is here today and tomorrow in the grave, whose anger is not a permanent anger and who if he imprisons me it

will not be a permanent imprisonment, and I might be able to appease him with words or bribe him with money - would I not anyhow cry in fear? Now I am being taken before the King of Kings, the Holy One Blessed is He who is eternal. If He is angry with me, it will be an eternal anger and if He imprisons me, it will be an eternal imprisonment. If He kills me, it will be an eternal death. I cannot appease Him or bribe Him. Not only that, but I have two paths before me - one leading to Gan Eden and one leading to Gehinnom and I do not know on which path they are taking me. Should I not cry?"

The Baalei Mussar ask two questions on this Gemara. First - did Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai, the great Candle of Israel and the right hand pillar, have any doubt about whether he was headed for Gan Eden or Gehinnom? More to the point, he was initially sitting on his death bed and apparently not showing any emotion. It is only "when he saw his students approaching" that he began to cry.

Rav Elya Lopian explains that if Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai only had to worry about himself, he would have been confident that he was destined for the World to Come and for residence in Gan Eden. But when he saw his students he thought to himself, "Did I do justice with each of my students? Did I treat each student properly? Did I give enough attention to each student? Was I perhaps too harsh with one student and too lenient with another?" Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai said to himself, if I wasn't good enough with even one of my disciples, it will affect not only him but his children and his grandchildren and his great grandchildren until the end of all time. When Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai saw all his students come visit him, he realized "the voice of the bloods of your brother are crying out to Me". One lapse regarding a single individual can have a negative impact on all future generations!

All too often, we hear from people who are not religious today because 50, 60, or 70 years ago they had teachers who "turned them off". There were some teachers in Europe and America at the beginning of the last century who used to beat their students. It was not just the students who were lost to Judaism, but in many cases all future generations were lost as well.

Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai, upon seeing his disciples, realized that his Heavenly Judgment was not something that was unilateral, depending solely on his relationship with the Almighty. Rather, his Heavenly judgement was also dependant on the affect he did or didn't have on all his students. This caused him to cry and be sincerely afraid. He was no longer so sure of where he was headed after his passing.

One does not have to be a Rebbi or have students to draw personal lessons from this Talmudic passage. In the course of our lives, we deal with our children, our neighbors, and our co-workers. When we affect them, it affects not only them, but their children and their children's children for all generations. This is something a person must ponder throughout his life. Have I done justice and am I doing justice to the people with whom I interact during the course of my daily activities?

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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## Parshas Bereishis: It's Up To Ewe!

### By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

They say that the road to purgatory is paved with the best of intentions. Indeed, the first murder in the world, forerunner to a never ending cycle of violence, occurs moments after a sacrifice snubbed as Kayin (Cain) killed his brother in a jealous rage. What happens is as follows: Kayin brought an offering to the Lord. He was an innovator and even a trendsetter, yet his gift went unnoticed. His brother, Hevel (Abel), who only followed his lead, brought an offering that was received with respect from Hashem. Kayin, in a jealous rage, killed his brother.

Let's analyze the verses. The Torah in Braishis tells us that "Hevel (Abel) was a keeper of sheep; Kayin (Cain) was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Kayin brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord. And Hevel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat of it. And the Lord had respect for Hevel and for his offering; but for Kayin and for his offering he did not have respect.

And Kayin was very angry, and his countenance fell” (Genesis 4:2-5). I will omit the violent details as we all know the sad ending.

Let’s analyze the difference between the two offerings. Where in the Torah’s words does the sincerity of Hevel’s offering contrast with the superficiality of his brother’s? Why was one accepted and the other not?

In a small farming town, not far from Bellville, Illinois, a Jewish woman had a dilemma. She knew her son was Jewish; after all he was born to a Jewish mother. However there was no one within miles of her small farm to teach him about his heritage. But destiny had other plans. A medical condition compelled her to make weekly trips to the neighboring large city of St. Louis, Missouri about forty minutes away. This was her opportunity. While she would be at the doctor she would drop her son off at a Jewish institution where someone would teach him about his heritage. Celestial forces in heaven joined the cyber forces of Google and guided her to the St. Louis Kollel where she pulled up unannounced in her weather-worn pick-up truck one day last year. The back of her truck was filled with hay and some other residue from her farm, but the front seat held here prize possession - her Jewish son.

The Kollel scholars accepted him with open arms and Rabbi Mintz, the Director of Programming scheduled weekly learning sessions to fill his young mind and eager soul with all the Torah possible for the duration of his mother’s visits to St. Louis. Indeed, the boy grew in Yiddishkeit and his mother, albeit far removed from any observance, was exceptionally grateful.

“You cannot imagine what this means to me,” she explained to Rabbi Greenblatt, the Dean of the Kollel. “I will not let this kindness go unpaid. I want to bring the rabbis of the Kollel a gift — something that is truly meaningful to our family. I will go back home and find something that is truly representative of what is dear to us!”

Rabbi Greenblatt’s assurances that she need not give anything were unacceptable to her, and the fellows of the Kollel assumed that the woman would buy a set of books for the Kollel library, - a gift that would be more than expected to their gracious hearts. After all what kind of meaningful gift can you find on a farm in Bellville, Illinois?

A week went by and they had not heard from the woman. It was only a few weeks before Rosh Hashanah when she returned together with her husband in the pick-up truck. They lowered the gate and led their gift to the front door of the Kollel where the rabbi who opened the door froze. Standing at the door was the woman, her husband and her son and a lamb! “We wanted to give something that is truly from us! Please have the Rabbis share it for the holiday.”

Indeed, my son who is a member of the St. Louis Kollel had first cut lamb chops this Rosh Hashana, a delicacy that his parents have never yet merited for a holiday meal.

Look at the difference in the way the Torah presents Kayin’s gift as opposed to Hevel’s. Kayin brings the fruit of the ground. Hevel, “hayvee gam hu, he brought himself also.” Our sages explain that he brought himself with the sheep. It was not just a gift of sheep. It was “bringing him from his sheep.” He had his own heart and soul intertwined with the gift.

The Torah, from the onset, teaches us that about donating to a holy cause.

It is not only about ewe giving, it is about giving you!

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**Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky**

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**Adding to Shabbos: A Model for Avodas Hashem**

The mitzvah of Shabbos first appears in Parshas Bereishis. Although technically Shabbos is only the actual seventh day of the week, there is a mitzvah to add on to Shabbos at its beginning and at its conclusion. This mitzvah, known as tosefes Shabbos, is derived by Chazal from a posuk in Parshas Emor which requires us to begin Yom Kippur early and end it late; this is extended to Shabbos as explained in Rosh Hashana 9a.

There is a fundamental debate as to the halachic nature of this mitzvah. One possibility is that this mitzvah is meant as a safeguard against Shabbos desecration. Since it is possible for human beings to err as to the time when

Shabbos begins and ends, the Torah imposes this buffer to prevent a mistake which could result in chillul Shabbos. Rashi (Beraishis 2:2) takes this approach in explaining that it was unnecessary for Hashem to begin His Shabbos early because Hashem knows the precise time when Shabbos begins. Alternatively, one can understand that the Torah wants us to begin Shabbos early and end it late not merely to be cautious, but because we are supposed to infuse a small part of the week with the sanctity of Shabbos.

There are practical halachic differences between these two approaches. According to the first understanding, when we accept Shabbos early we are merely refraining from melacha. It is still halachically Friday for all purposes. We refrain from melacha at a time which is not yet Shabbos lest we violate the actual Shabbos. The second approach views the time of tosefes Shabbos as being endowed with actual kedushas Shabbos, i.e. Shabbos has begun even though the astronomical day of Friday has not ended. Tosfos (Pesachim 99b) quotes two opinions whether one can fulfill one’s obligation of eating the Shabbos meal during the period of tosefes Shabbos. If this time is not yet Shabbos, although one is refraining from melacha one cannot fulfill the mitzvah of eating a Shabbos meal. If tosefes Shabbos transforms Friday into Shabbos, one can fulfill the Shabbos obligation of having a meal during this time.

These two approaches to tosefes Shabbos are not only relevant in terms of technical halacha, but each approach highlights a different dimension of Shabbos observance. The terms shamor and zachor in the Aseres Hadibros describe the dual aspects of Shabbos observance. The Ramban in Parshas Yisro comments that shamor, which is synonymous with refraining from melacha, is rooted in yiras Hashem- the fear and awe we feel in the presence of Hashem. All prohibitions in the Torah emanate from yiras Hashem. Yirah requires one to step back and not act in violation of Hashem’s word. Zachor, which is synonymous with the positive mitzvos of Shabbos, is rooted in ahavas Hashem- the love of Hashem. All positive mitzvos are rooted in ahavas Hashem as we try to actively come closer to Hashem by expressing our love by doing His mitzvos.

Each of these dimensions of Shabbos is expressed during the period of tosefes Shabbos. Shamor requires us to be extra careful not to violate melacha on Shabbos, and as such begin Shabbos early lest we chas v’shalom do melacha when it is actually Shabbos. Zachor fills us with such a love of Shabbos that we are not supposed to be satisfied with kedushas Shabbos being limited to the day of Shabbos itself. Rather, we are to be eager to begin Shabbos that we actually endow part of Friday with kedushas Shabbos.

Having just completed the yomim tovim of Tishrei we have experienced both of these Shabbos themes in our celebration of yom tov. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, known as the Yomim Noraim, highlight yiras Hashem. Succos and Shemini Atzeres-Simchas Torah, known as Zman Simchasenu, highlight ahavas Hashem. Shabbos is the t’chila l’mikroei kodesh - the first of all the holy days. Shabbos sets the tone for our celebration of the yomim tovim. As we begin a new year with Shabbos Bereishis, let us focus on these two dimensions of Shabbos. The mitzva of tosefes Shabbos enables us to express both our yiras Hashem and our ahavas Hashem. Hopefully this mitzvah will impact upon our entire avodas Hashem improving both our yirah and ahava for Hashem.

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**Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski**

**The TorahWeb Foundation**

**Adam - A Unique Individual**

In creation, Hashem had the earth bring forth a multitude of creatures, and there were many of each species. Adam, however, was created as a single individual. The Midrash asks, “why was man created as a single individual?” and gives several reasons.

Perhaps another reason man was created as a single individual was because Hashem intended each person to be unique. “Just as their facial features are unique, so are their minds unique” (Tanchuma Pinchas 10). At least, that is how it was intended to be.

I recall people whom I knew back in the 1930's. These were people who emigrated from eastern Europe early in the twentieth century, and they were fiercely unique. Many of them were known by nicknames. Shimon was a fine talmid chacham who was known as "der krumer tzaddik" (the distorted tzaddik). Mordechai was known as "yom hashishi". There were two Chaim's: Chaim S. was "Chaim fun America" and Chaim F. was "Chaim fun Canada." Eliezer barely knew Chumash, and when he was noted to be looking in the Zohar, he was thenceforth known as "the Zohar hakadosh." Moshe W. related what he had read in the Morgen Journal series on the Queen of Sheba, which earned him the appellation, "Malka Sheba." Moshe W. must have done something to warrant being called Elifaz ben Esau. The nicknames were symptomatic of their uniqueness. (Derogatory nicknames are deplorable and are in violation of halacha, but nevertheless did indicate a person's uniqueness.)

These people's minds were not formed by the mass media or by educational institutions, hence each one's personality was as unique as his fingerprints and DNA. Each person thought for himself, yet there was surprisingly little disunity.

Today, we vote in blocs and think in blocs. We are influenced by the mass media, major corporations and by the leaders of educational institutions. Indeed, the educational system has been criticized as forcing all students into the belly of the bell curve, resulting in mediocrity as well as uniformity. We yield to whatever fad prevails. Our minds are made up by everyone except ourselves.

There are indeed rules and principles by which we must all abide, but there is ample room within these parameters to be oneself. What is my goal in life? What do I think happiness is? What are my unique abilities that I should develop? What kind of lifestyle do I want?

Rebbe Shalom Shachna, the father of the Rebbe of Rhizin, married the granddaughter of Rebbe Nachum of Chernoble. The latter's chassidim did not approve of Rebbe Shalom Shachna's ways, which did not conform to the Chernoble practices, and complained to Rebbe Nachum. When Rebbe Nachum asked his grandson why he was not conforming, the latter answered with a parable.

The egg of a duck got mixed up with the eggs of a hen. When the chicks hatched, the mother hen took them for a walk. When they passed by a stream, the duckling jumped in. The mother hen panicked, shouting, "Come out of there! You'll drown!" The duckling responded, "Have no fear, mother. I know how to swim."

Rebbe Nachum told his chassidim, "Leave him alone. He knows what he is doing." Thence came the dynasty of Rhizin, famed for its uniqueness.

Listen to the words of Rav Shlomo Wolbe. "Every individual, like Adam, is an entire world. The existence of billions of people does not detract from each person's uniqueness. Every individual is a one-time phenomenon.

Every person should know, "I, with my strengths and talents, facial features and personality traits, am unique in the world. Among all those living today and in all past generations, there was no one like me, nor will there ever be anyone like me to the end of time. Hashem has sent me into the world with a unique mission that no one else can fulfill, only I in my one-time existence" (AleI Shur vol.2 p.71),

And again, "How distant from reverence for Hashem is the person who seeks only the approval of others, and is ready to imitate whatever he sees others do." (AleI Shur vol.1 p.132).

Perhaps only tangential yet not irrelevant is a phenomenon I have observed. If one asked my older brothers where they were learning, they would say, "By Reb Shlomo," referring to Hagaon Rebbe Shlomo Heiman of Mesivta Torah Vodaas. Others would say, "By Reb Ahron," referring to Hagaon Rebbe Ahron Kotler of Lakewood. Others would say, "By the Rav," referring to Hagaon Rebbe Yosef Dov Soloveichik. If you ask a yeshiva bachur today where he learns, he answers, "In Ponevez," or "In Brisk," or "In Tshebin" or "in YU." Students identify with a place rather than with a person.

It may be more convenient to follow the herd instinct. That spares us the need to think for ourselves. However, if happiness is the result of self-fulfillment, we may be sacrificing happiness for convenience.

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**Portion of the Week / Everybody needs somebody sometime**

**By Benjamin Lau**

The renewal of the annual cycle of weekly Torah readings that began a few days ago on the festival of Simhat Torah inspires a feeling of anticipation. That feeling accompanies us as we leave behind the festive, often solemn, atmosphere of the High Holy Days and Sukkot, and resume our daily and weekly routines.

This week's portion, the first in the annual cycle, describes the harmonious world God creates step-by-step during the six days of creation. Our world is fashioned gradually and quietly, not with any "big bang." It is created with God's words: "And God said ..." When the process of creation has reached its conclusion, the result is a good, beautiful world: "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). The first human being, Adam, is part of a harmonious, wonderful universe.

This atmosphere is maintained until Chapter 2 of Genesis, when the first human being is identified as a male. The feeling that the created world is good is replaced by a divine understanding that Adam must not live in solitude: "And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18).

The word levado, alone, can be interpreted in two ways: lonely or alone. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik writes that you can feel lonely even in a crowd and, alternatively, you can feel no trace of loneliness even if you are physically distant from human society.

On human solitude, Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra comments: "We all need a helpmate, as it is written in Ecclesiastes, 'Two are better than one' [4:9]." According to Ibn Ezra's approach, it is hard to manage alone in this world; we all need help, and that is why God decides to grant Adam a partner - Eve. Rabbi Isaac Arama elaborates on this theme: "In his infinite wisdom, God decided that the relationship between husband and wife must not be based solely on sex, as is the case with the other members of the animal kingdom. Instead, God wants the conjugal relationship to be personal and special, so it can strengthen the love and bonds of friendship between husband and wife, and so they can learn how to help one another whenever there is a need for doing so. This relationship shields husband and wife from the feelings of solitude experienced by the animals that graze in our fields and do not need one another's company. Furthermore, in the conjugal relationship, the husband can feel that his wife is a good friend, who provides him with help whenever he needs it; his wife is thus his appropriate helpmate, his equal."

The connection between husband and wife is not merely technical; it is substantive and vital for both.

In his Aramaic translation of the Five Books of Moses, Onkelos renders levado - alone - as bilkhodohi, solitary. In other words, Onkelos emphasizes the solitude of the human condition. Loneliness threatens all human existence; the conjugal relationship saves us from that threat. In addition to serving as a means for fulfilling the commandment of "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) and perpetuating humanity, the conjugal relationship allows husband and wife to function as a single unit, providing their lives with an anchor. According to this interpretation of levado, the institution of marriage is a bulwark against the loneliness of the human condition; it fills our lives with happiness.

Natan Zach's poem "Badad" ("Alone") offers a harsh view of the human condition: "'It is not good that man should be alone'; he is lonely anyway." In Zach's view, whether we interpret levado as alone or as lonely, we are solitary creatures; that is the harsh fact of human existence. Is Zach challenging the institution of marriage as a divine solution to the tragedy of solitary human existence? Or is he alluding to the crisis of the family unit, which no longer serves as a shelter from loneliness?

There is another interpretation for Gen. 2:18. Rashi comments: "If Adam were without a partner, some people might argue that there are two parallel authorities in this universe: God is alone in his world - heaven - and he is without a partner, while Adam is alone in his world - earth - and he is also without a partner." If Adam had no partner, he might have mistakenly

thought that he was unique, even divine. This is the danger of hubris that has plagued human civilization since the time of creation.

We find a positive view of the uniqueness of human beings in the Babylonian Talmud, in the Mishnah of Tractate Sanhedrin: "That is why Adam was created as the sole being; that fact is meant to teach us that the destruction of the life of a single human being is considered by the Torah to be equivalent to the destruction of an entire world; conversely, the granting of sustenance to a single human being is considered by the Torah to be equivalent to the granting of sustenance to an entire world. A second reason for Adam having been created as the sole being is to ensure peace in our world. Since Adam was created as the one and only human being, none of us can say to our neighbor: 'My father is greater than your father.'" "A third reason is to prevent heretics from claiming that there is more than one authority in heaven. A fourth reason is to proclaim God's omnipotence. When human beings use a seal to mint coins, all the coins are identical. However, when God, King of the Universe, uses Adam as a seal for producing other human beings, each human being is a different, distinct being. Thus, we must all say, 'The world was created for my sake.'"

In one of her songs, Chava Alberstein tells the country's educational system what message it should be delivering to Israel's schoolchildren: "We must tell each of them: 'You are wonderful, you are unique, you are special ... When you grow up, how can you harm another human being, who, just like you is wonderful, unique and special?!'"

That is also a commentary on "It is not good that man should be alone." The child may cling to the first part, "You are wonderful," and disregard the second, about another human being wonderful, just "like you." Couplehood restrains him and teaches him to create goodness of two, and not one.

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#### Rav Kook List

#### Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

#### Breishit - Letters of Creation

The Midrash relates how the first letter of the Torah was selected. Before the world was created, the letters of the alphabet presented themselves before God. The letter Aleph then announced: I should be used to create the world, since I am the first letter in the alphabet. But God replied: No, I will create the world with the letter Bet, because it is the first letter of the word brachah (blessing). If only My world will be for a blessing!

For this reason, the account of the world's creation begins with the letter Bet - Breishit. The Aleph, as the first letter in the alphabet, was given a different honor: it was selected to begin the Ten Commandments - Anochi.

Nice story - but what does it matter which letters were used to start Genesis and the Ten Commandments?

#### Two Types of Light

A major textual difficulty in the account of Creation concerns the creation of light. God created light on the first day, but the sun and the stars were only formed on the fourth day. So what kind of light was created on day one?

According to the Sages, the light of the first day was no ordinary light. It was a very elevated light - so elevated that God decided that it was too pure for this world. He hid this special light away for the righteous in the future. Where did God conceal it? In the Torah.

The Torah, the Sages taught, preceded the world and its physical limitations. The pristine light of the first day also belongs to this initial stage of creation, transcending all limitations of time and place.

Unlike the elevated light of the first day, regular light is produced by the heavenly bodies that were created on the fourth day. Our awareness of the passing of time, of days and seasons and years, comes from the world's movement and rotation. The sun and the stars, God announced, "will be for signs and festivals, days and years" [Gen.1:14]. Our concept of time belongs to the limits of the created universe; it is the product of movement and change, a result of the world's temporal nature.

This second type of light corresponds to a lower holiness that penetrates and fills the world. In the language of the Zohar, the higher, transcendent light 'surrounds all the worlds' (soveiv kol almin), while the lower, immanent light descends and 'penetrates all of the created worlds' (memalei kol almin).

Now we may understand why the Midrash states that God created the universe with the letter Bet. Bet, the second letter, indicates that our world is based on two forms of infinite light: an elevated, timeless light, and a lower light subject to the

limitations of time and place. These two forms of light are the blessing that God bestowed to the world.

#### Sanctifying the Sabbath

This dual holiness is apparent in the seventh day of creation - "The heavens and the earth and all of their components were finished and He rested on the seventh day" [Gen. 2:1-2]. The holiness of the Sabbath is keviyah vekayama, set and eternal, independent of our actions. And yet, we are commanded to sanctify it - "Remember the Sabbath day to make it holy" [Ex. 20:8]. How can we sanctify that which is already holy?

The essential holiness of the Sabbath is eternal, transcending time; but it has the power to sanctify time. By reciting kiddush, we give the Sabbath an additional holiness - the lower, time-bound holiness. Therefore it is written that the Jewish people are blessed with a neshamah yeteirah, an extra soul, on the Sabbath. The first neshamah is the regular soul of the rest of the week, the soul that rules over the body. This soul is bound by the framework of time, just as the body that it governs is temporal and impermanent. On the Sabbath, however, an additional neshamah is revealed - a soul that transcends time, the soul of Israel that is rooted in the highest spiritual realms.

Our recitation of kiddush on Shabbat commemorates two historic events: creation of the world, and the Exodus. Creation is the aspect of holiness that transcends time, a holiness that is still only potential. The Exodus is the aspect of holiness within time, a holiness that was realized.

#### Bet and Aleph

Thus the Bet of Breishit is a double blessing: of potential and realized holiness, of timeless and time-bound light.

And what about the Aleph? The Torah's revelation at Sinai came to repair the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge. "I created the evil impulse and I created the Torah as a remedy for it" [Kiddushin 30]. The Torah reveals the transcendent light of the first day of Creation, the light of timeless holiness. Therefore the first letter of the Ten Commandments, the beginning of the Torah's revelation, is an Aleph - "Anochi Hashem Elokecha," "I am the Eternal your God." Like the Aleph, representing the number one, the Torah contains the infinite light of day one, the boundless light that God saved for the righteous.

[Adapted from Shemu'ot HaRe'iyah Breishit, pp. 6-9 (1931)]

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#### TALMUDIGEST - Bava Batra 58 - 64

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by Rabbi Mendel Weinbach

#### Z.P.G. - THE ROAD TO DISAPPEARANCE - Bava Batra 60b

Circles obsessed with the Mathusian theory that population growth threatens the survival of mankind in a world of limited resources have made a Zero Population Growth (ZPG) their goal. This means that no parents should have more than two children to replace them when they leave this world, thus keeping the total world population at static level.

In our gemara we find an interesting view of what would happen to the Jewish people if they ascribed to ZPG.

"Since the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash," says Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha, "we should really have decreed upon ourselves to abstain from eating meat and drinking wine (as an expression of mourning), but we cannot make decrees that most people will not be capable of obeying."

He then adds: "Since the evil empire (the Romans) issued evil decrees and prevented us from learning Torah and doing mitzvot, we should really have decreed upon ourselves to refrain from marrying and bringing children into the world and thus passively allowing for the seed of our Patriarch Avraham to disappear - but since people will not be able to abide by such a decree it is preferable to leave them alone."

Tosefot raises a question in regard to the suggestion made for refraining from bringing children into the world. In contrast to the consumption of meat and wine mentioned in the first suggested decree, procreation is mandatory on the basis of the Torah command to "be fruitful and multiply." (Bereishet 1:28). How then could we make a decree to ignore this command?

The answer given by Tosefot is that the decree would have been limited to continuing married life after minimal fulfillment of the mitzvah through the birth of one son and one daughter. Such a policy would not clash with the obligation of procreation, but would nevertheless have passively led to the disappearance of the Jewish people.

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