



Bereishis

מתוך "ליקוטי שמואל"

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Which Type of Chessed is Preferable: Anonymous or Known?

Parshas Bereishis

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

The *pasuk* in Parshas Bereshis says: “And Hashem G-d made for Adam and his wife garments of skin, and he clothed them.” (Bereshis 3:21). After the *aveira* (sin) of Adam and Chava, when they realized they were naked, the *Ribono shel Olam* made garments for them. The Gemara (Sotah 14a) interprets the *mitzva* of “*Acharei Hashem Elokecha taylaychu*” (You shall walk after the *Hashem* your G-d) (Devorim 13:5) as an imperative to emulate the attributes of the *Ribono shel Olam*: Just as the *Ribono shel Olam* clothes the naked, so too should you; just as the *Ribono shel Olam* visits the sick (as when He appeared to Avram in Elonei Mamrei after Avram’s *bris milah*), so too should you; just as the *Ribono shel Olam* comforts the bereaved (Bereshis 25:11), so too should you; just as the *Ribono shel Olam* buried the dead (Devorim 34:6), so too, should you.

The Gemara then quotes a comment of Rav Simlai: The beginning of the Torah consists of *gemilas chassadim* (acts of kindness) and the end of Torah consists of *gemilas chassadim*. The Torah begins with the *Ribono shel Olam*’s dressing the naked, and it ends with the *Ribono shel Olam*’s burying the dead. The problem with this teaching of Rav Simlai is – what is he adding? We already see from the previous examples that the Torah begins with *gemilas chassadim* and ends with *gemilas chassadim*!

The sefer Mishmeres Elazar (by Rav Elazar Brach) suggests the following: Rav Simlai is not merely teaching that we need to emulate the *Ribono shel Olam* in **what** He does. We also need to emulate Him in **how** He does it. There is an inconsistency specifically in the two *pesukim* that Rav Simlai is referencing. When *Hashem* clothed Adam and Chava, the *pasuk* spells out who did it: “*Va’ya’as Hashem Elokim l’adam u’l’ishto kosnos ohr...*” The *pasuk* says exactly who did it. However, at the end of the Torah, the burial of Moshe Rabbeinu is left anonymous: “And He buried him in the valley.” The Name of **Hashem Elokim** is not mentioned! Why the difference? Which is it? Should *gemilas chassadim* be performed in anonymity or with a name attached?

The Mishmeres Elazar explains that the Torah is not only teaching us **to** perform *chessed*. The Torah is teaching us **how** to perform *chessed*. Sometimes (or perhaps, most of the time) it is important for *chessed* to be anonymous. A person is saved from embarrassment by not knowing who is performing this *chessed* for him. However, there are some situations in life, where the person needs to know who is performing the *chessed*.

After the *aveira* of Adam and Chava, when they realized what they had done and felt rejected, such that their relationship with the *Ribono shel Olam* had perhaps ceased to exist, it was important for the *Ribono shel Olam* to make the point that it was **Hashem Elokim** who was coming to their rescue. “Even though you committed a terrible *aveira* for which you are going to need to pay a significant price, nevertheless, I still love you!” In such a situation, the correct way to perform the

chessed is to not do it anonymously, but rather to let the source of the *chessed* be known, to make the point that the relationship has not been broken.

This is different from the situation in V'zos Habracha, where there is no point in publicizing who buried Moshe Rabbeinu. Therefore, the *pasuk* just anonymously says "He buried him in the valley."

The lesson is that we must not only practice *chessed* but we must learn **how** to practice *chessed*. Usually, it is best to keep our *chessed* anonymous. But at other times, it is preferable for the source of the *chessed* to become known.

If He Couldn't Eat from the Tree, Why Was It There?

Parshas [Bereishis](#)

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

The Torah says, "And *Hashem Elokim* commanded the man saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad, you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.'"

[Bereishis 2:16-17] *Hashem*[G-d] places Adam in Gan Eden and makes everything accessible to him – with one exception: The fruit of the "*Etz Ha'Daas*." The Torah immediately continues: "And *Hashem Elokim* said 'It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him.'" [Bereishis 2:18]. Thus, immediately after the warning to distance himself from the Tree of Knowledge, the Almighty establishes the institution of marriage as part of Creation.

What is the lesson of this juxtaposition?

We may answer this question by asking another question: If *Hashem* did not want Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, why did He put it in *Gan Eden*? If there needed to be a Tree of Knowledge, let the Almighty plant it somewhere on the other side of the world where it would not tempt man! Had He done that, Adam could have been given carte blanche – eat whatever you want from the Garden – no exceptions! What would have been wrong with that?

The answer is that Hashem is teaching humanity a lesson. Every human being must learn that certain things in this world are off limits. Man needs to confront limitations. Not everything in the world should be accessible. The Almighty knew exactly what he was doing. He wanted something to be placed within man's reach that would be "off limits" precisely so that man would recognize that certain things are "off limits."

The Tiferes Shlomo (Rav Shlomo Hakohen Rabinowicz [1801-1866], the first **Rebbe** of the **Radomsk Hasidic** dynasty) makes an interesting point. The *pasuk* cited above reads, "And *Hashem Elokim* commanded **upon** man saying (***al*** *ha'Adam leimor*)."

The Torah commonly uses a slightly different terminology, for example, "And Hashem spoke **to** Moshe (***el*** *Moshe*)..."

The Tiferes Shlomo asks, why doesn't the *pasuk* here also use the expression "And *Hashem Elokim* commanded **to** man (***el*** *ha'Adam leimor*)"? The Tiferes Sholmo answers that ***al*** *ha'Adam* – **upon** man – means this defines humanity. This commandment (regarding limitations) is what makes a *mensch*! Humanity needs to recognize that there are moral

borders in this world – up until this point and no further! Man cannot have **everything** he desires. There needs to be something that man cannot have, so that he can learn the concept of restraint.

This is why when we look at the world around us, and we see sports stars, or we see the *menuvalim* who populate Hollywood, etc., we notice that everything is accessible to them. Whether legal or illegal, moral or immoral, they feel they must have everything. Nothing is off limits. What happens to such people? They inevitably, invariably, sink to the depths. It is because they have no limits, and can get away with everything, that they self-destruct – morally and even physically. When you can say whatever, you want to whomever you want and can do whatever you want anytime you want, you stop being a human being.

The *sefer* Milchamos Yehuda writes that this is why the *pasuk* introducing marriage comes immediately following the *pasuk* introducing limitations. After “*Hashem Elokim* commanded upon man...” then “*Hashem Elokim* stated, ‘It is not good for man to be alone...’” For a person to live with another human being, each party needs to know that there are limits. There are some things you can do, and there are some things you cannot do. There are lines that you cannot cross. A person who learns that lesson easily and learns it early will have a successful marriage. A person who never learns that and has no borders and has no restraints – not in the way he talks, not in the way he acts, and not in the way he eats – is not going to have a successful marriage.

Only after the concept of limitations was established in the world, could the institution of living with another person and the concept of marriage be successfully implemented for man.

Song of G-d

Written by Anonymous

Song of G-d The first word in the Torah is Bereishis. The letters of Bereishis are Beis-Resh-Aleph-Shin-Yod-Tav. These same letters rearranged, make up the words Shirat Av—the song of the father (Shin-Yod-Resh-Tav and Aleph-Beis). All of creation is really a song created by our father. Creation is G-d's symphony. We are all notes in it. Just as a symphony exists only for beauty and pleasure, life is also a masterpiece that ultimately exists only for beauty and pleasure. G-d didn't create the world for himself, but rather for us to give us pleasure. Just as a classical musician appreciates Beethoven much more than the neophyte, so too life is cherished much more by the people who listen to its notes and study its patterns. Those who listen to the depths of creation and study it begin to hear the song of G-d, and will ultimately create their own notes that harmonize with G-d's masterpiece. But the people who do not open their hearts to listen and their minds to see—those people who refuse to become pupils of life will only play discordance. Learn and choose well. At the end of creation, when we all come together to experience the magnum opus, may all of our notes be harmonious and none of us experience the shame of playing dissonant note after dissonant note. Partially heard from Rabbi Trugman of Moshav Modi'in.

B'reishis bara Elokim

Written by Oizer Alport

Dovid HaMelech writes in Tehillim (119:160) rosh d'var'cha emes – Your very first utterance is truth. The Baal HaTurim points out that the final letters of the first three words in the Torah spell the word emes – truth – hinting to the fundamental importance of the value of truth in Hashem's eyes. Indeed, the Gemora in Yoma (69b) states that Hashem's "seal" is emes. Further, the final letters of the last verse describing the creation (2:3) also spell the word emes, alluding to the fact that the universe was created with Hashem's attribute of truth from beginning to end. Rabbeinu Bechaye points out that the first verse in the Torah contains every vowel sound except for one...

The shuruk is missing from this verse. He explains that this is because the letters which spell the word shuruk can also be rearranged to spell the word sheker – falsehood – and because Hashem created the world to be a place of truth, there was no room for a shuruk in describing the beginning of the Creation! It is not only the Written Torah which is emblazoned with Hashem's seal of truth, but the Oral Torah is as well. The Aseres HaDibros begin with the letter aleph (anochi), the Mishnah begins with the letter mem (me'eimasai), and the Gemora starts with the letter tof (tanna), again spelling the word emes! The Vilna Gaon notes that it is not only the Torah itself which is encoded with Hashem's seal, but even the great commentaries upon it are embossed with this powerful commitment to the truth. The Torah forbids (Vayikra 11:42) the consumption of all creeping creatures which slither on their bellies (gachon). Interestingly, Rashi renders the word "belly" as "innards" – me'ayim – which would seem to be anatomically imprecise, as beten would seem to be a more accurate translation. Further, the word gachon appears much earlier in the Torah (Bereishis 3:14), in reference to the punishment of the serpent which tempted Chava, yet Rashi felt no need to explain the meaning of the word until its appearance in Parshas Shemini. The Vilna Gaon beautifully explains that the Gemora in Kiddushin (30a) states the letter vov in the word gachon is the middle letter in the entire Torah. Rashi begins his commentary on the Torah with the letter aleph (amar Rav Yitzchok) and ends with the letter tof (asher shibarta). Rashi didn't feel

the need to explain the word gachon, or else he would have done so where it initially appeared. However, because this is the middle of the Torah, and therefore of his commentary, he wished to render it as a word beginning with the letter mem to hint that the entire Torah, along with his Divinely-inspired commentary, is emes – true – from the start to the middle to the very end!

For whom was the world created?

Written by Moshe Kormornick

The Maharal explains that the Torah is the seed of all life. The Torah is the blueprint of the world, from which everything came forth.

The Maharal explains that just as a fruit-bearing tree is not considered to have reached its purpose until it has produced its first fruit, so too with the world: the Jewish people were created last of all the nations.

Just as the tree which stems from a seed is only planted for the sake of its fruit, so too the world created from Torah was only created for its fruit – the Jewish people.

This is what is intended in the verse of Lecha Dodi – סוף מעשה במחשבה תחילה (Last in Creation but First in Thought).

Humor

The Nouveau Riche

A Jewish couple won 20 million dollars in the lottery. They immediately set out to begin a life of luxury. They bought a magnificent mansion estate in Southampton and surrounded themselves with all the material wealth imaginable.

They then decided to have a butler and, wanting the best, they traveled to London to hire one. They found the perfect butler through an agency and brought him back to their estate.

The day after his arrival, they instructed him to set up the dining room table for four, that they were inviting the Cohens to brunch. The couple then left the house to do some shopping.

When they returned, they found the table set for eight. They asked the butler why eight, when they had specifically instructed him to set the table for four.

The butler replied, "The Cohens telephoned and said they were bringing the Bagels and the Knishes."

The Origins of Man

One day, eight-year-old Melissa says to her mother, "Mommy, I've been thinking about us humans, and I'm a bit puzzled. How did we first appear on Earth?"

"That's a very good question, darling," her mother replies. "God made Adam and Eve, and they had children, and then their children had children, and as a result, mankind began."

Later that day, Melissa asks her father the same question. "Daddy, how did we humans first appear on earth?"

"That's an intelligent question, Melissa," he replies. "Millions of years ago, there were monkeys from which, gradually, the human race evolved."

Melissa is confused by this answer and goes back to her mother. "Mommy," she asks, "how come you told me God created the human race, yet daddy said they developed from monkeys?"

"Well, darling," replies her mother, smiling, "the answer is simple. I told you about my side of the family and your father told you about his."

The Prophecy

Moishe, a medieval Jewish astrologer, prophesied that the king's favourite horse would soon die. Sure enough, the horse died a short time later. The king was outraged at the astrologer, certain that his prophecy had brought about the horse's death. He summoned Moishe and commanded him, "Prophet, tell me when you will die!"

Moishe realized that the king was planning to kill him immediately no matter what answer he gave, so he had to answer carefully. "I do not know when I will die," he answered finally. "I only know that whenever I die, the king will die three days later."

The Rabbi's Prayer

Chaim Rosenberg, the rabbi's son, once inquired, "Daddy, I notice every Shabbos morning, before you give your sermon, you kiss the aron that houses all of the Torah scrolls. What are you doing?"

Rabbi Rosenberg explained, "I'm davening to Hashem, that he should let me give a good sermon."

"Hmm," Chaim thought. "So, Hashem doesn't always answer our prayers?"

FlyDubai: God's Miracle or Man's Heroism?

by Lori Palatnik

October 1, 2026

Brave passengers and crew saved Flydubai Flight 1073. Does that mean it wasn't a miracle?

The elation over the safe return of the 180 Israeli passengers aboard the [Flydubai flight](#) was still “in the air” when the backlash began. People were offended that so many were calling it a *miracle*.

During a live interview on Fox News, a former Prime Minister of Israel said that the safe outcome of the threatened Flydubai flight was “not a miracle, it was an act of heroism by the passengers and of the Emirati crew.”

On social media, people echoed the same sentiment. How, they asked, could anyone call this a miracle when so many courageous human beings had worked so hard to prevent a tragedy?

And they had.

The heroes of that flight were extraordinary:

- **The captain's resilience:** Despite being severely stabbed and bleeding heavily, Captain Machchhar summoned the strength to unlock the cockpit door.
- **Immediate passenger intervention:** Passengers, including Yaniv Hayoun, an Israeli plumber who put the attacker in a chokehold, and an Israeli plumber, physically breached the cockpit, fought off the attacker and dragged him out.

- **Medical intervention:** An onboard dentist, Dr. Shota Musayev, worked to stem the captain's arterial bleeding and helped keep him alive.
- **Trained backup:** Off-duty Flydubai crew members who happened to be traveling as passengers stepped in to stabilize the aircraft and make an emergency landing in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia.
- **The aircraft itself:** Aviation experts noted how extraordinary it was that the plane survived its severe plunge without catastrophic structural failure.

Critics argue that calling this a miracle diminishes the literal blood, courage, skill, and resourcefulness of the people who saved the flight.

Nothing could be farther from the truth.

What Exactly Is a Miracle?

We all know the story of the splitting of the sea. But do we remember that the sea did not split immediately?

According to the Midrash, Nachshon ben Aminadav walked into the water, continuing forward until the water reached his neck. Only then did the sea split.

He risked his life, trusting that God would intervene.

But is that allowed?

Can I blindfold myself, walk across a freeway, and say, "I'm counting on God to perform a miracle"?

Of course not.

So why is Nachshon praised?

Because he wasn't counting on a miracle for himself. He was willing to risk himself for the sake of the entire Jewish people.

He did everything a human being could do. And then God did the rest.

When We Take the Credit

We just went through Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. In our prayers, we repeatedly recall the miracles of God taking us out of Egypt.

Every Friday night, in Kiddush over wine, we do the same.

Hey — it's not Passover. Why do we keep talking about the Exodus?

Because human beings have a remarkable tendency: When something goes wrong, we blame God. When something goes right, we take the credit.

The Torah warned us about this thousands of years ago. Moses tells the Jewish people that after they enter the Land, build homes, prosper and accumulate wealth, they may become tempted to say: "My strength and the might of my hand have made me this wealth."

And immediately comes the correction: "But you shall remember the Lord your God, for He is the One who gives you the strength to make wealth."

The Torah isn't denying our strength. It's reminding us where our strength comes from.

“I Prayed and Touched God”

Interviews with some of the passengers on the Flydubai flight are filled with accounts of prayer.

People recited the *Shema* — the declaration of faith that traditionally accompanies us at the moment of death.

One young passenger said, “I prayed and touched God.”

The heroes of Flydubai Flight 1073 are real. Their bravery was beyond, beyond. They ran into the proverbial sea.

They fought, they bled, they used their training and their ingenuity, and they saved lives.

And with all of the other factors that came together — factors we could chalk up to “coincidence,” “luck,” “nature,” or simply our own “strength and might” — we were granted a miracle.

But What About the Wind?

Just before the sea split, the Torah tells us that there was a great wind. What is this — the Weather Channel?

When I was a young girl in Hebrew school, I was taught the “real” explanations for the miracles in the Torah.

The Plague of Darkness? Perhaps a total eclipse. The splitting of the sea? Maybe it was a low tide. We can always find another explanation.

And that is part of having free will. We are free to say: It wasn't Divine. It was nature, science, coincidence.

It was us.

Human beings indeed acted heroically. But acknowledging their heroism does not require us to exclude God. Both are true.

We Have to Do Our Part

After all the inner spiritual work of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we immediately begin building the sukkah.

The walls of the sukkah remind us of the Clouds of Glory that protected the Jewish people in the desert. We were protected — but we also had to do our part. We had to build, act, and move forward.

We need the humility to understand that our strength, courage, intelligence, and ability are themselves gifts.

The passengers on that flight were heroes. Their actions should be celebrated; their courage should be honored.

And perhaps we can honor them even more deeply by recognizing that their extraordinary human strength does not make a miracle unnecessary. It may be exactly what a miracle looks like.

May we continue to rise here, every day, doing everything within our power — and merit the miracles from Above.

