

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Bereishis



בס"ד

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Torah Wellsprings

Bereishis

Emunah

The belief that Hashem created the world must always be in our thoughts. This emunah is the purpose of the entire Torah. Therefore, the Torah begins with the pasuk, בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא, אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ, which discusses the creation of heaven and earth.¹

Rashi, quoting the Midrash writes that בְּרֵאשִׁית means בשביל ישראל שנוקראו ראשית, "The world was created for the Jewish people who are called ראשית, Hashem's first..." The Yesod HaAvodah zt"l explains that Rashi is saying בְּרֵאשִׁית, for the Jewish nation who believe in creation, בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת

1. Another primary purpose of the Torah is to develop *bitachon* – trust in Hashem. The roshei teivos of בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים form בבא"א. Reb Meir HaGadol of Premishlan zt"l teaches that בבא"א is also the roshei teivos of the pasuk (Tehillim 25:2) בְּךָ בִטַחְתִּי אֵל אֲבוֹנָה, "I trusted in You; let me not be ashamed," as well as the roshei teivos of the pasuk (Tehillim 84:13) אֲשֶׁרִי אָדָם בִּטָּח בְּךָ, "Fortunate is the man who trusts in You."

The Torah begins with this roshei teivos to teach us that its essence—its central avodah—is *bitachon*: trusting Hashem at all times. When a person lives with emunah and bitachon, he remains calm and joyful, knowing that Hashem is caring for him in every moment.

This idea is alluded to in the final words of this week's parashah (6:8): וְנֹחַ מָצָא חֵן בְּעֵינֵי ה'. Noach was always calm—his very name, נח, reflects tranquility—because he lived with the awareness of בעיני ה': that everything that happens is under Hashem's eyes, His supervision, His hashgachah pratis. A person who sees life through בעיני ה' naturally finds happiness, confidence, and inner peace.

הָאָרֶץ, Hashem created the world. For this emunah – which we constantly repeat to ourselves with words and in our hearts – Hashem created the world.

בְּרֵאשִׁית also means first. Tzaddikim explained the pasuk בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם means the first thing a person must know is that Hashem created heaven and earth, and that He leads the world, with all its details, with *hashgachah pratis*. This is the meaning of the word בְּרֵאשִׁית: the first thing a person must know is בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם, that Hashem created the world and everything that's in it.

וַיְהִי עָרָב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר – The Light that Emerges from the Darkness

Was the world created with Hashem's attribute of kindness or with Hashem's attribute of *din*, harsh judgment, or perhaps the world was created with a mixture of both attributes?

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים means Hashem created the world with the name אֱלֹהִים, which represents מִדַּת הַדִּין, harsh justice. Later, the Torah states (2:4) בְּיוֹם עָשָׂה ה' אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם, "on the day that הוֹי"ה made earth and heaven." הוֹי"ה represents Hashem's attributes of compassion and kindness. So, which was it? Was the world created with אֱלֹהִים, as implied by the first pasuk, or was the world created with הוֹי"ה אֱלֹהִים, a mixture of kindness and judgment?

Rashi answers that the original plan was to create the world with מִדַּת הַדִּין, strict justice; however, רָאָה שֶׁאֵין רָאָה, Hashem saw that the world can't exist in this manner. Therefore, Hashem's first plan for creation was canceled, and instead, He created the world with a mixture of הוֹי"ה אֱלֹהִים, kindness and strict justice.

The Meor Einayim (Lech Lecha) asks how Hashem changes His mind if He knows the future. From the

very beginning, Hashem knew that the world couldn't exist with מדת הדין, with harsh justice. So, how do we understand that Hashem first wanted to create the world with מדת הדין if He knew it couldn't exist in this manner?

The Meor Einayim answers that Hashem never changed His plan. Hashem's initial plan and His final plan were the same. He created the world to bestow kindness upon creation. But for this to occur, the kindness must be limited to a measure that we can appreciate and receive. Hashem's kindness is endless. If we were to receive Hashem's endless light of kindness, it would be like receiving the sun's rays, undiluted and with an unlimited degree of brightness. It would cause more harm than good. Certainly, Hashem's kindness, which is endless, needs to be limited.

Therefore, Hashem's initial plan, and final plan, was to create the world with a mixture of חסד and דין, kindness and strict justice, so that we can receive Hashem's light and kindness in a limited manner, and appreciate it.

We now quote Rashi's words (1:1), and how it is explained according to the Meor Einayim. שבתחלה עלה במחשבה לבראותו במדת הדין, Hashem wanted to create the world with His kindness, for that is the purpose of creation. But Hashem thought, from the very beginning, that the מדת הדין, the attribute of din, should also be involved with creation. The reason is ראה שאין העולם מתקיים: Hashem knew that the world can't exist with undiluted and unlimited chesed. The chesed would be too much to receive. Therefore, והקדים מדת רחמים ושתפה למדת הדין, Hashem made a combination of chesed and din.²

2. A key difference between the Meor Einayim's explanation and

With the Meor Einayim's explanation, we understand the Gemara (Brachos 60b), which states that we must praise Hashem for the bad things that happen to us just like we praise Hashem for the good. We must be as joyous as when we receive good things. This Gemara is difficult to understand. Why should one be happy when bad things happen? How can he praise Hashem joyously for these troubles, and how can he praise Hashem with the same amount of joy he praises Hashem for the good that happens to him?

But as the Meor Einayim explains, all hardships are a step towards receiving good.

The yesurim create a vessel, a limitation, so we can receive Hashem's goodness in a manner we can appreciate. With this awareness, we will be happy with the hardships, since they are a necessary step to receive Hashem's kindness in a limited and beneficial manner.

The Meor Einayim adds that when the yesurim are intense, it's a sign that Hashem is about to give an even greater degree of kindness. When one has these thoughts in mind, he can praise Hashem for the good and for the opposite, and he can praise Hashem with joy.³

the way Rashi is generally understood lies in how to interpret the words: וראה שאין העולם מתקיים, "He saw that the world cannot exist." Until now, we assumed this meant that Hashem saw the world could not exist with *din* alone, so He introduced *chesed*.

The Meor Einayim, however, explains the opposite: Hashem saw that the world could not exist with *chesed* alone, so He brought in *din*.

3. To help us understand this concept, we quote the Gemara (Pesachim 112a), which states, "More than a calf wants to nurse, the

We quote the Meor Einayim: "Before Hashem bestows upon a person His immense kindness, Hashem has to create a צמצום, limitation, which comes from the attribute of *din*. This is for the person's benefit. This enables him to receive the kindness. Without the *din* and צמצום which came first, the person

would not be able to receive the bright light of Hashem's kindness. It would be too bright for him... Therefore, Chazal (Brachos 60b) say, 'In the joyous manner that one blesses Hashem for the good he receives, that is the joyous manner he should bless Hashem for the bad.' This is because also the bad is for our good.⁴ It creates a צמצום,

cow wants to nurse it." The cow wants to give a lot, more than the young calf can receive, but that would harm the calf. Therefore, the cow must limit how much it gives so that it won't harm its child. The cow uses גבורה, strength, and דין to limit the amount she gives to her offspring. The nimshal is understood. Hashem desires to give us as much kindness as possible, but the kindness needs to be limited, or it will harm us.

4. Hashem is extremely close to those who are suffering. Chazal (Shabbos 12a) teach, "The Shechinah is above the head of the ill." This itself shows that even what appears to be bad is ultimately for our good.

The parashah states (1:21), וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַתַּנִּינִים הַגְּדֹלִים - "Hashem created the great taninim." What exactly does תַּנִּינִים mean, and why is it written with only one yud, instead of תַּנִּינִיִּים in full plural form? The word appears plural, yet the missing final yud gives it a hint of the singular. Which is it?

Rashi explains that תַּנִּינִים are the great sea creatures, and the Gemara (Bava Basra 74b) teaches that this refers to the Leviason and its mate, created male and female. Hashem killed the female and set it aside for the tzaddikim in the future, because their tremendous size would make it impossible for the world to sustain them if

they multiplied. This explains why the Torah uses the plural form - hinting at the original pair - yet omits the final yud, signaling that only one remains.

Tehillim (104:26) says, לָיוּתָנוּ זֶה יִצְרָתָהּ לְשִׁתְקָהּ בּוֹ - "You formed this Leviason, to play with it." Since only one Leviason remains, Hakadosh Baruch Hu, keviyachol, says to it: "You will not remain alone. I am with you." From here we learn that whoever feels alone in the world is not alone at all. Hashem is beside him. In times of hardship, when a person feels isolated, Hashem whispers, "I am with you. You are not alone."

Reb Berel Tauber shlita told a mashal: A magnificent painting was cut into ten thousand tiny pieces and distributed among ten thousand people. Each person received a fragment so small that he could not tell what part of the painting it came from — a tree, a house, a dish, a cloud. Reuven received a colorful piece and felt proud, convinced he had received something beautiful. His friend Shimon received a black piece, plain and colorless. He felt jealous of Reuven and others who seemed to have received "better" portions.

Reuven tried to comfort him: "Your black piece is very special... it's a unique shade of black." We all know these kinds of compliments — well intentioned words that feel more like salt on a wound. Shimon answered with sarcasm, "Yasher koiach. May you have simchos, as well." He was not comforted. At that moment, it truly seemed that Reuven had received something better.

Later, the painting was reassembled. Each piece was placed in its proper place. It turned out to be a portrait of a king walking in his garden. Reuven found his colorful piece — it belonged to the flowers in the garden. Shimon searched for his black piece but could not find it. People pointed to the king's eyes: "Look closely. Your black piece is the pupil of the king's eye. It is the most important piece in the entire painting."

The nimshal is clear. People go through dark, painful moments and feel that others have received a better portion. Friends try to offer chizuk, but the words often fall flat. The suffering person remains convinced that his lot is inferior. But when the geulah

limit, and now the chesed that Hashem wants to give becomes constricted and smaller, to the extent the person can receive it. In accordance with the greatness of the goodness Hashem plans to give, that is the extent of the צמצום that must precede it. If something very good happens to him, the צמצום that precedes it, which he thinks is bad, will also be great. When a person believes this, he will certainly praise Hashem for the bad as he praises Hashem for the good, because he knows that the hardships are the beginning of the good that will come." (see there more).

The Gemara (Shabbos 77b) states that Rav Zeira asked

Rav Yehudah, מאי טעמא עיי' מסגן ברישא והדר אימרי א"ל כבריתו של עולם דברישא חשוכא והדר נהורא, "Why do goats walk in front of the herd, and then come the sheep?" Rav Yehudah replied, "It is like the creation of the world: darkness comes before light." The night comes before day. Rashi explains that goats are generally black and sheep are generally white. So, just as in creation, night preceded the day, so, too, when a herd of cattle is walking, the goats, which are dark, walk first, before the sheep.

Concealed in this Gemara are deep lessons. The Maharal and the Maharsha have different explanations, but they both explain that

comes, when the Beis HaMikdash is rebuilt, and the full picture is revealed, it will become clear that those "black" moments were the most precious of all - the pupil of the King's eye. Hashem watches over those who suffer with an extra measure of hashgachah pratit.

Reb Yankel Galinsky zt"l added another image: When one looks at the underside of an embroidered cloth, the most tangled, messy knots correspond to the most beautiful patterns on the outer side. So too with yesurim. One day, it will be revealed that the tangled, difficult moments were the most beautiful and significant parts of our lives.

עייזם represent din (from the word עז, קשה). Rav Zeira's question was why din comes to the world before chesed. Why is this always the system of first yesurim, and then Hashem's chesed? Rav Yehudah answered that it is like the creation of the world. First comes night

and then comes daytime, as it states וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר. The troubles must come forth to make a limit for Hashem's kindness so that it won't overwhelm us. The din is a preparation for the good. As the Zohar writes, לִית חֲשׁוּכָה, that all darkness emerges from light.⁵ The

5. A blind person is called סגי נהור, which literally means "a lot of light." Why use such a term? Isn't a blind person someone who lacks light? The Lubavitcher Rebbe zt'l explained that Koheles (2:13) says בִּיתְרוֹן הָאוֹר מִן הַחֹשֶׁךְ, "the advantage of light from darkness." This implies that light emerges specifically from darkness. Similarly, the Zohar teaches לִית חֲשׁוּכָה אֵלָא מִגּוֹ נְהוּרָא, "Every darkness comes from light." When there is much darkness, it means there is even more light concealed within it. Right now it may appear dark, but the time will come when it will be revealed that it was all for the good. This applies to blind people as well. They live in darkness, but within that darkness lies tremendous hidden light. The tzarah is the preparation for the good. Therefore, we call the blind סגי נהור - "abundant light." There is great light present; it is simply not yet revealed.

The author of אצילות explains that there are four worlds: אצילות, עשיה, בריאה, and יצירה. The highest world is אצילות, which we cannot perceive at all. Below it is עולם הבריאה, the realm of the malachim. Then comes עולם היצירה, and finally our world, עולם העשיה. With this in mind, we can understand the pasuk (Yeshayah 45:7) יוֹצֵר אוֹר וּבּוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ, "Who forms light and creates darkness." One would assume that light originates from a higher world, yet the pasuk uses יוֹצֵר - implying that light comes from the world of יצירה. Darkness, however, is described as בּוֹרֵא חֹשֶׁךְ - created from the higher world of בריאה. How can darkness come from a higher world?

hardships and darkness are also for our good. They emerge from goodness. They are the way Hashem gives goodness to the world.

Hischadshus

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ can also mean that Hashem created the world

בְּרֵאשִׁית because people will begin again.

This level is a very high one to reach because human nature is to feel that we can't change our ways. But Klal Yisrael can begin anew and reach new heights in their avodas Hashem. It was for this attitude of *hischadshus* that Hashem created the world.⁶

The explanation is that when an extremely bright light shines directly into a person's eyes, he becomes momentarily blinded. He sees only darkness, not because there is no light, but because there is too much light for the eye to receive. So too with the "darkness" of the world of בְּרֵאשִׁית. Its darkness is not the absence of light; it is the presence of overwhelming light that cannot yet be perceived. What appears as darkness is, in truth, a higher and more intense light.

How can darkness come from a higher world? But the explanation is when a bright light shines on a person, the person feels blinded for a moment. He only sees darkness. This is because the eye can't receive so much light. The same can be said about the darkness of the world בְּרֵאשִׁית. The darkness means there is a lot of light there.

6. We say in Kiddush Levanah שהם עתידים להתחדש כמותה, that the Jewish nation will one day be renewed just like the moon. This expresses the very essence of a Yid: his ability to begin again. Rashi writes that בְּרֵאשִׁית refers to the Jewish nation, who are called ראשית. They are called ראשית because this is their nature — to always start anew.

In בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית we say בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית. One can explain that if a person

Even if a person falls to the lowest levels, he can begin again and become a new person. One way this is done is by forgetting about

his past errors (except for certain set times for introspection when he can think about the past, in order to be cautious not to repeat these deeds in the future).⁷ When one removes

doesn't begin again, if he never makes a fresh start, then there is no תכלית, no purpose to his avodah. Renewal is the foundation of growth.

The Shinover Rav zt'l teaches that we read parashas Bereishis immediately after the Yamim Noraim to show that we now stand at a new beginning. It is a fresh year; the aveiros have been atoned for. We can begin our avodas Hashem as though it were the very first time.

The final words of the Torah are לעיני כל ישראל. Rashi explains that this refers to the moment Moshe Rabbeinu broke the luchos before the eyes of the entire nation, after the sin of the egel. The Tzikdas Yosef of Pittsburgh zt'l explains that this hints to us that even if a person finds himself at the place of לעיני כל ישראל - at the broken luchos, at the lowest point, at the sin of the egel - he can still begin again with בראשית. He can dance with the Torah on Simchas Torah and start anew.

Someone once complained to the Kotzker zt'l that he had no reason to be happy on Simchas Torah, since he hadn't learned Torah the entire year. The Kotzker replied that the primary joy of Simchas Torah is that we begin again. This joy is available to anyone who wants it. As the Chidushei HaRim zt'l says, the simchah of Simchas Torah is the preparation to receive Torah for the entire year.

7. The first letter of the Torah is the letter ב, which is closed on three sides and open only toward the front. This hints that a person should always look forward, not remain stuck in the past. Our focus should be on moving ahead, beginning anew, and building what comes next.

his failures from his mind, he is able to approach every aspect of avodas Hashem as though it is his first time. He doesn't carry feelings of incompetency and failure, because as far as he is concerned, he doesn't have a history of failures to compare to. He can place all his energy in the avodah, as though it is the first time. But if he focuses on the past, and he remembers the many times he failed, it will be hard for him to improve his ways. He will feel that he can't change his ways, and

thinking that way becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This is the meaning of בְּרִאשִׁית, telling us that no matter what occurred, start again, as though this is your first time.

On Simchas Torah, we finish the Torah, and we immediately begin with Bereishis. This hints to us that we don't ever stop. We always begin anew.⁸

Kayin was sad because his korban wasn't accepted. Hashem said to Kayin (4:6) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵל קַיִן לָמָּה חָרָה לָךְ וְלָמָּה נָפְלוּ פָנֶיךָ, "Why

However, the beis has an עוקץ - a small edge that points backward, toward the alef that precedes it. This teaches that we cannot ignore the past entirely. A person must remember where he came from, recognize his mistakes, and learn from them. The past provides caution, perspective, and wisdom. But the main letter faces forward, because that should be our primary focus.

8. The Avudraham writes that we read Bereishis on Simchas Torah in order to silence the Satan. The Satan claims that our joy comes from finishing the Torah — that we are celebrating being freed from the yoke of Torah study. To refute this, we immediately begin again. We show that our happiness is not because we completed an obligation. In truth, we have not finished at all; we are ready to learn the entire Torah anew. The Maharsha offers a similar explanation (Avodah Zarah 19a, ד"ה סליק ספרא).

are you upset, and why has your countenance fallen...?"

The Siforno writes, למה נפלו פניו. כי כשיש לקלוקל איזו תקנה אין ראוי להצטער על מה שעבר אבל ראוי "When a problem can be solved, it isn't correct to be upset about what happened in the past. Rather, instead, he should try to amend the past."⁹

After Chavah sinned with the tree of knowledge, Adam named her Chava, as it states (3:20): וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֶׁם: אִשָּׁתוֹ חַוָּה, כי הוא הִיתָה אִם בְּלָ חַי, "Adam named his wife Chava (חַוָּה) because she was the mother of all life (חַי)." In the previous chapter it states (2:22-23): וַיִּבְרָא ה' אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם אֶת הָעֵלֶּע אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִן הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיִּבְרָאָהּ אֵל הָאָדָם, וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִנֵּנִי עֵצָה מְעַצְמִי וּבִשּׁוּר מִבְּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לָקַחָהּ זֹאת, "Hashem built the side that He had taken from

Adam into a woman, and He brought her to Adam. Adam said, 'This time, it is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called *ishah* (woman) because she was taken from *ish* (man).'

" He called her אִשָּׁה, woman, but didn't give her a personal name. That was given after the aveirah of Eitz HaDaas. What is the explanation?

The aveirah of Eitz HaDaas brought death and sadness to the world. But it was important to focus on the future and to ignore what occurred. Focusing on failure prevents growth in the future. Therefore, at this time Adam called her חַוָּה, telling her that she had a great mission to accomplish. All mankind will come from her. She will be the mother of all life. He was telling her

9. Why did Hashem ask Kayin why he was sad? His korban was not accepted - isn't that a reason to be sad? The explanation is that a person should not remain focused on the past. He did something wrong; his korban was rejected, but now it is time to look toward the future and consider what he can do going forward.

to focus on what she will accomplish in the future, rather than to mope over the failures of the past.

It states at the end of the parashah (6:5-7) וַיֵּרָא ה' כִּי רָבָה רָעַת הָאָדָם בְּאָרְצוֹ וְכָל יֵצֵר מְחַשְׁבֹּת לְבוֹ רָק רָע כָּל הַיּוֹם, וַיִּנָּחֶם ה' כִּי עָשָׂה אֶת הָאָדָם בְּאָרְץ וַיִּתְּעַצֵּב אֵל לְבוֹ, וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶמְחָה אֶת הָאָדָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּרַאתִי מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה, "Hashem saw that the evil of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of his heart was only evil all the time. Hashem regretted that He had made man upon the earth, and He became sad in His heart. Hashem said, 'I will blot out man, whom I created, from upon the face of the earth...' The Chozeh of Lublin zt'l explains these pesukim tell us that Hashem will forgive people for their aveiros. But they must be careful about atzvus, becoming depressed from their sins. Because that will draw them to even lower levels, and they won't be able to perform good deeds. He explains the pesukim as follows: וַיֵּרָא ה' כִּי רָבָה רָעַת הָאָדָם בְּאָרְץ, when

Hashem sees that people are sinning a lot, Hashem won't be very angry with them. This is because Hashem knows וְכָל יֵצֵר מְחַשְׁבֹּת לְבוֹ רָק רָע כָּל הַיּוֹם, that man was created with a yetzer hara that brings him bad thoughts and bad plans. Therefore, man isn't so guilty for the bad he does. In fact, Chazal (Succah 52) say that there are four things that Hakadosh Baruch Hu regrets that He created, and one of them is the yetzer hara. This is implied in the words וַיִּנָּחֶם ה', Hashem regrets that He created the yetzer hara. So, despite his aveiros, even if they are many, there is hope for him. Hashem will forgive him, with the understanding that the yetzer hara is the true culprit, and not the person. However, if the person will become sad because of his aveiros, as it states וַיִּתְּעַצֵּב אֵל לְבוֹ, then Hashem will become angry with him. וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶמְחָה אֶת הָאָדָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּרַאתִי מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה, Hashem says that He will destroy man, whom He created. This is because when one is

sad, he loses hope, and he stops performing good deeds. His entire avodas Hashem is lost.

The Gemara (Brachos 6b) states, לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בתפילת, מנחה "A person must always be cautious with the tefillah Minchah." What is special about this tefillah?

The Chida (מדבר קדמות, ערך תי"ו) explains that Minchah was the first tefillah said in this world. Adam HaRishon davened Minchah on Friday afternoon, on the day he was created. He davened this tefillah after his aveirah with the Eitz HaDaas! He said this tefillah after he realized the great destruction he and Chavah caused by eating from the Tree of Knowledge! Nevertheless, he strengthened himself and davened Minchah before Hashem with joy. This is the specialness of this tefillah. It is *hischazkus*, after a great spiritual descent.

The Baal Shem Tov zt'l (Keser Shem Tov) says, "Erev Shabbos, at the tefillah

Minchah and at kabalos Shabbos, all the mitzvos and words that were said during the week are elevated." Perhaps this is because this tefillah was established after Adam's fall. He strengthened himself and fixed the future, rather than moping over the past. This attitude rectifies everything wrong performed in the past.

Chesed – The Pillar of Creation

As we wrote above, Rashi (1:1) writes, שבתחלה עלה במחשבה לבראותו במדת הדין, וראה שאין העולם מתקיים, והקדים מדת רחמים ושתפה למדת הדין "At first, Hashem planned to create the world with the attribute of *din*. He saw that the world wouldn't exist in this manner, therefore, Hashem brought the attribute of compassion (רחמים) and combined it with the attribute of *din*."

Zera Shimshon zt'l (ד"ה במדרש ע"פ נעשה) asks that he thinks the world would exist. If people would see the severe

punishment that comes immediately for every aveirah, nobody would perform aveiros.

He answers that Chazal (Avos 1:1) say, על שלשה דברים העולם עומד, על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים, "The world exists on three pillars: Torah, avodah, and kind deeds." Without kind deeds, the world won't exist. The pillar of the world will be lacking. We learn to do deeds of kindness and deeds of compassion because we see that Hashem leads the world in this manner. As Chazal (Shabbos 133b) say, מה הוא רחום וחנן אף אתה היה חנן ורחום, as you see that Hashem is kind and compassionate, you should also be kind and compassionate."

But if Hakadosh Baruch Hu would lead the world with the attribute of din, people would also act in Hashem's ways, and they would act towards one another with din, and without compassion and without patience and without understanding. No one would do favors for

others, and there would be hatred and jealousy in the world. The world can't exist in this manner. Deeds of chesed are needed, for this is one of the pillars that give existence to the world.

This lesson teaches us the great importance of chesed. There would have been a great benefit if the world were created with the attribute of din. As the Zera Shimshon explains, no one would perform aveiros, and everyone would be tzaddikim. But Hashem loves chesed, and Hashem wants people to perform chesed with one another. Therefore, Hashem was *mevater* on his own honor, and He created the world with the attributes of compassion and kindness. Unfortunately, with this form of creation, there will probably be aveiros in the world. But at least there will be deeds of chesed, and people will help one another.¹⁰

10. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabba 4:6) states: "Why does it not say כִּי טוֹב regarding the second day of creation? Reb Chanina says שָׁבוּ נִבְרָאת מִחִלּוֹקֶת - because division and machlokes were created on this day, as it says וַיְהִי מִבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם, that the heavens became a separation between the waters." There is water below the heavens and water above the heavens; this division resembles machlokes, which is not כִּי טוֹב. Reb Tavyomi adds: "If a machlokes that benefits the world is not called כִּי טוֹב, then certainly a machlokes that causes confusion, such as disputes between people, is not כִּי טוֹב."

The Midrash (Esther Rabba 7:11) says that Bnei Yisrael are compared to the stars. One explanation is that the stars were created to appease the moon, which had to become smaller (see Rashi 1:16). Bnei Yisrael are compared to stars because their primary purpose is also to appease and help others. Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves the stars. Rashi (Shemos 1:1) writes that just as Hashem repeatedly counts the stars, showing His love for them, so too He repeatedly counts Bnei Yisrael. Rashi says: להודיע חבתן שנמשלו לכוכבים, שמוציאן ומכניסן - "To show His love for them, for they are compared to the stars, which Hashem brings out and brings in with their number and their names." The reason Hashem loves the stars can be understood as being because they were created to appease the moon. Hashem loves those who appease and help others.

Rashi (2:7) writes about the creation of man: עֲשָׂאוּ מִן הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים וּמִן הָעֲלִיוֹנִים - "Hashem made him from below and from Above." Man was created from earth, below, and Hashem blew life into his nostrils, which is from Above. A human being is therefore a mixture of heaven and earth.

Reb Yisrael Salanter zt'l explains that the beings Above do not need anything, while the beings below need many things — food, clothing, counsel, help, and more. Man was created from above and below so that regarding his own needs, he should feel like a creation from Above and be satisfied with what he has, not seeking more. But regarding his fellow man, he should view him as a creation from below, recognizing that he needs many things, and therefore seek to help him.

Rashi (2:7) writes about the creation of man, עֲשָׂאוּ מִן הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים וּמִן הָעֲלִיוֹנִים, "Hashem made him from below and from Above." Man was

Bitachon

Someone didn't have the money to buy a seat for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in his shul where he davened throughout the year, but he trusted that Hashem would help him find a seat. He came early, before the tefillos began on Rosh Hashanah, and studied the map, hoping to find his name, but it wasn't there. No place was arranged for him. So he stood in the aisles, between the many bachurim (who also didn't have a place). When the *mispallelim* passed through the aisles, he was inadvertently pushed from side to side, and it was

very unpleasant. Then, someone called him and said, "Why are you standing in the aisle? Your place is right next to me!"

He went to see what he was talking about and saw that his name was on the seat. He had bought a seat for Rosh Hashanah a year before, and his name was still on the seat.

Wondrously, Hashem arranged a place for him to sit.

(Obviously, when one can afford to buy a seat, he should, so he can daven properly, but when the situation doesn't enable it, and he has the midah of bitachon, Hashem will help him.)

created from earth, below, and Hashem blew life into his nostrils. That is a creation from Above. So a human being is a mixture of heaven and earth, above and below.

Reb Yisrael Salanter zt'l explains that the beings that are Above, in heaven, they don't need anything. The beings below need many things. (They need food, they need clothing, counsel, help, etc.) Man was created from above and below because for one's own needs, one should feel that he is from the creations "Above" and he doesn't need anything. He should be satisfied with what he has, and not seek for more. But for his fellow man, he should consider him as a creation from "below" and to understand that he needs many things, and therefore, to seek to help him.

It states in this week's parsha (3:19) בְּזֶעֶת אַפֶּיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם, "By the sweat of your face, you will eat bread." The pasuk is discussing the obligation to make hishtadlus for parnassah, but together with this obligation is the awareness that everything is from Hashem. We can trust in Hashem, and Hashem will help us.

The Gemara (Kesubos 104a) states that moments before Rebbe was niftar, he raised his ten fingers and said, "Ribono Shel Olam, you know that I toiled with all my ten fingers in Torah, and I didn't take any pleasure from this world, not even with my tiny finger." The miforshim say that Rebbe was very wealthy. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 36a) states, "From Moshe Rabbeinu until Rebbe, we don't find Torah and wealth together (תורה וגדולה במקום אחד)." So, how could he say that he didn't enjoy this world at all, not even from his small finger?

Rebbe was saying that he didn't have any pleasure from his fingers. He recognized that all pleasures he enjoyed were given to him directly from Hashem, and they aren't the work of his own hands.

The Imrei Noam zt'l discusses the pasuk בְּזֶעֶת אַפֶּיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם, "By the sweat of your face, you will eat bread," and he writes that בְּזֶעֶת is roshei teivos for עבודה בלב זו תפילה, "The work of the heart is tefillah" (Taanis 2a). This tells us that one doesn't have to sweat and work hard to earn his parnassah. He can earn his parnassah with his tefillah. He doesn't need בְּזֶעֶת אַפֶּיךָ, the sweat of the face, and hard work. He needs tefillos, said from the depths of his heart. Although it states, וברכתך בכל אשר תעשה, that Hashem blesses us when we *do* (from what we learn, the chiyuv of hishtadlus), however, Chazal (Sanhedrin 65a) tell us עקימת שפתיו היא מעשה, the moving of the lips is called an action. Therefore, davening can also be called

hishtadlus. (See Maor v'Shemesh, Bishalach, quoting Rebbe Mordechai of Neshchiz zt'l, that tefillah is also hishtadlus - עקומת שפתיו היו מעשה - and one doesn't need any other hishtadlus.)

We say in the Selichos, השתדלו והרבו תחינה ובקשה. This is saying that השתדלו והרבו the majority of our hishtadlus should be תחינה ובקשה, our tefillos to Hashem.¹¹

The Influence of the Yom Tov

The Gemara (Sukkah 53a) states that at the Simchas

Beis HaShoavah, chachamim juggled with אבוקות של אור, "torches of light". They threw the "torches of light" from one hand to the other, and the light of the torches shone to all sides. We can explain, b'derech remez, that this hints to us that the light of the yom tov should shine the entire year. Succos has passed, but as chassidim say, "It didn't pass; it went in. It became part of us." The lessons of succos, its holiness, and the brachos of

11. The word לחם means bread, but it is also an analogy for Torah, as it says (Mishlei 9:5) לכו לחמו בלחמי. The Yismach Moshe (פרשת המון) teaches that although בועת אפיק תאכל לחם is a curse that we must toil for our parnassah, if we wish to free ourselves from this curse, the solution is to toil in Torah, which is also called לחם. That toil can exempt a person from needing to make the other toil.

It says (Tehillim 104:21) הַקָּפִירִים שֹׁאֲגִים לַטָּרֶף וְלִבְקֹשׁ מֵאֵל אֱכָלֻם - "The young lions roar for prey and request their food from Hashem." שֹׁאֲגִים refers to roaring, while וְלִבְקֹשׁ is a calmer request. When people make hishtadlus, they roar - they are busy, involved, and think everything depends on them. When they daven, it is וְלִבְקֹשׁ, a quiet and often unemotional and detached request. This is not how it should be. Someone who behaves this way resembles the animals (הַקָּפִירִים); he is not acting like a human being. It should be the opposite: the primary effort should be in our tefillah. That should be our main hishtadlus.

the *yom tov* remain with us throughout the year.

The Mishnah (see Yoma ch.6) states, על כל סוכה וסוכה אומרים לו, "At every succah that he came to, people told him, 'There is food here. There is water here.'"¹²

Rebbe Yisrael (the Yanuka) of Stolín zt'l said that what is hinted at in these words is that על כל סוכה וסוכה, from every year Succos until the coming Succos, אומרים לו הרי מזון הרי מים, he receives bounty of parnassah. The mitzvos of Succos bring us a *shefa* of

food and drink for the entire year, until next year Succos.

We daven on Succos, והשיאנו ה' אלקינו, which means that Hashem should load onto us the kedushah of the *yom tov*, more than we are able to carry on our own (Avudreham on Pesach).

The Avudreham also explains that והשיאנו means fire (as in Rosh Hashanah 22b, משיאין¹³). We request והשיאנו ה' אלקינו את ברכת מועדיך that Hashem should enlighten us with the light of the *yomim tovim*.¹⁴

12. According to the literal meaning, this refers to the person who took the goat to the עזאזל, to throw it off a cliff on Yom Kippur. There were huts along the route with food and drink, and people offered them to him. He never partook of the food, since eating is forbidden on Yom Kippur, but the fact that food was available calmed him and enabled him to continue until he reached his destination.

13. The Gemara is referring to the bonfires that the beis din would light on mountaintops to inform the public when Rosh Chodesh had been declared.

14. Rebbe Moshe Kobriner zt'l (Imros Tahoros, Shavuot) said a similar explanation. He said והשיאנו means: זאלסט אונס אריין פלאקערן און אריין שיינען: "Hashem should shine into us the holiness of the *yom tov*!" "We should merit to take along

It states (Shemos 34:22) וְהָיָה (האסיף תקופת השנה, and the Sfas Emes (תרל"ח ד"ה שמיני) says that this means Succos which is תקופת השנה, the strength for the entire year. The year's existence, and all the year's bounty, comes from the Yom Tov Succos.¹⁵

Hashem is with Us All Year

The Midrash says that after the seven days of Succos, Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, קשה עלי פרידתכם, "It is hard for Me your departure," and Hashem asks us to stay one more day.

The question is that after Shemini Atzeres passes, it will also be hard for Hashem when we leave. What is

accomplished by staying one more day? Inevitably, there will be a moment when it is hard for Hashem, keviyachol, when we leave!

It is repeated that the Yismach Yisrael zt'l told the following mashal to answer the question:

There was a king who had a son, and they both loved each other immensely. When the son got married, he lived far away from the king, and the king and the son didn't stop yearning for one another. One day, the father, the king, came to visit. The son was very happy for the duration of the days his father was there. When it was time for the king to return to his

a touch of simchah," a drop of simchah from the yom tov should remain with us.

15. The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 3a) calls the mitzvah of succah מצוה קלה, an easy mitzvah. The concept of קלה is found in what the Gemara refers to as a בריה קלה, an insect that eats and consumes but does not excrete (see Gittin 56b). It takes in and does not give out. Reb Avraham Yehoshua Freund of Asad zt'l said that succah is called מצוה קלה because it shines holiness into the Jewish nation, and that light should remain inside and never leave.

homeland, the son came to his father and expressed his disappointment. The father said, "I have a solution for you. Build a home for me, near where you live, and I will remain here with you."

Similarly, when Succos is about to pass, Hakadosh Baruch Hu says to Bnei Yisrael, קשה עלי פרידתכם, it is hard for Me when we depart. It is hard for both of us. However, there is a solution. Build a *mishkan* for me, and I will dwell with you, always."

Even in our times, when we don't have a Mishkan, we should make our homes a Mishkan, a place for the Shechinah, and Hashem will remain with us the entire year.

But the person says, "But how can I possibly make a place that will be fitting for You? I am a human being, imperfect; what can I do to make a place for You?"

Hashem replies, עכבו עמי, "Stay with me for one

day." This means to take upon yourself a small *kabalah*. Take something along with you for My sake, something small that you can keep. Hashem isn't asking for a lot. Do something small, but do it for Me, and I will dwell together with you the entire year.

Throughout Succos, we bring many *korbanos*, but on Shemini Atzeres, we bring, פר אחד איל אחד, far fewer *korbanos*, a single פר and a single איל. The Avnei Nezer explains that this is to tell us that something small is also sufficient, and Hashem will remain with us, and He will rejoice with us.

There is a tefillah to be said when one leaves the succah. In this tefillah, it states, ובזכות צאתי מביתי החוצה ודרך מצותיך ארוצה יחשב לי כאילו הרחקתי, גידוד, "In the merit that I left my home and went outside to perform the mitzvah of sitting in succah, may it be counted as though I went to galus." There is a certain amount of discomfort in

having to leave the house to eat in the succah. We say in this prayer that if it was decreed galus, exile, on a person (or on a community, etc.), chalilah, let the galus to the succah be considered as if we were already in galus, and that we already received our punishment.

The question is that galus is extremely painful. It is a far greater punishment than simply picking oneself up and eating in a succah for seven days. How can this small discomfort take the place of galus?

The Yeitav Lev (first night of Succos, 5) answers that in Hashem's eyes, small things are viewed as significant. The small discomfort of galus to the succah, in Hashem's eyes, is viewed and considered as if the person went to galus and had already received this punishment.

We quote, "It states (Bereishis 24:1) וַה' בָּרַךְ אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל, 'Hashem blessed Avraham with בְּכָל, *everything*' and בְּכָל

also means כָּל דָּרוֹ, *anything*, even a drop. The Gemara (Yoma 74a) says that כָּל חֶלֶב means even a drop of *chelev*, forbidden fats, is also forbidden. Rashi writes, אֲפִילוּ, כָּל שֶׁהוּא מִשְׁמַע, the word כָּל implies that even a tiny drop is forbidden. Therefore, when it states וַה' בָּרַךְ אֶת אַבְרָהָם בְּכָל, 'Hashem blessed Avraham with בְּכָל, *everything*,' this means that Avraham, and the Jewish nation, receive reward even for a כָּל דָּרוֹ, a drop of a good deed. That, too, will make a great imprint in heaven.

"As the Chovas HaLevavos (Cheshbon HaNefesh 5) writes, 'It shouldn't be small in your eyes anything you do for Hashem, even a word, and even a look, because the little that you do is enormous for Him (כִּי הַמְעַט מִמֶּנּוּ רַב אֲצִלוֹ). The same is with aveiros. The best example of this is the sun. When it moves an amah on earth, it moves vast distances in heaven.

"Therefore, we request that going out of the house should be like going to

galus. This is because in heaven, this small deed is seen far greater than it appears to us, and it makes a great imprint."¹⁶

There is a wonderful *vort* from Reb Moshe Leib Sassover zt'l. On yom tov, we say *אתה בחרתנו*, "You chose us from all nations... You love, and You desire us..." Immediately after yom tov passes, we say in Shemonah Esrei *אתה חוננתנו...*, "You give us wisdom..." (This is the Havdalah we say in Shemonah Esrei.) Rebbe Moshe Leib Sassover said, "It is the same *אתה*, 'You' of *אתה בחרתנו*, as the *אתה*,

'You' of *אתה חוננתנו*. Hashem remains the same Hashem. When it is yom tov, and when it is weekdays, we are associating with the same Hashem *yisbarach*. Therefore, even after the yom tov passes, don't despair; don't think that we lost our connection with Hashem, because it is the same *אתה*. We can still connect with Hashem with our good deeds, with our mitzvos, etc. And as we are explaining, the *kabalos tovos* will grant us an aspect of the yomim tovim even after the yomim tovim pass.¹⁷

16. A person needed a screw for his personal needs and noticed an expensive chandelier hanging from the ceiling. He understood that it was supported by a screw. He thought to himself, "The chandelier is very precious and beautiful and costs a lot of money, but the screw is cheap and insignificant. It won't bother anyone if I take it." People shouted at him, "It is true that the screw is inexpensive, but without it the chandelier will fall."

This is the response we give to those who say that a small kabbalah is meaningless. We reply that even if it is small and seems unimportant, we need it to hold onto the yom tov throughout the year.

17. We can also explain that when we say *אתה בחרתנו*, don't forget that soon you will say *אתה חוננתנו*, and therefore make a kabbalah

Shabbos

Rebbe Dovid'l of Tolna zt'l said that Shabbos Bereishis is הכנה על כל שבתות השנה, the preparation for all Shabbosim of the year.

The Tzemech Tzedek of Lubavitz zy'a said, ווי מ'שטעלט

זיך אוועק שבת בראשית אזוי גייט די "How a person sets himself on Shabbos Bereishis, that is how it will be the entire year."¹⁸

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹקִים אֶת (2:3) יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ "Hashem blessed the seventh day, and He made it holy." The Zohar

tovah so that the yom tov will remain with you.

18. The Rashab of Lubavitz zy'a said, quoting his grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek zy'a, that there is great happiness in heaven on this Shabbos, like the joy a father feels when he brings his son for the first time to cheder to study Torah. This is how it is at the beginning of the year: our Father in heaven is very happy when He sees His beloved children beginning the Torah from Bereishis. Therefore, it is an eis ratzon, and many yeshuos can occur on this Shabbos.

The Pnei Menachem zt'l of Gur would say that there is a renowned segulah to open the aron kodesh for kriyas haTorah. When the aron kodesh is open, it is an eis ratzon for tefillah. The Rosh (Hilchos Sefer Torah 1) writes that in our days, the mitzvah of writing a sefer Torah is fulfilled by purchasing sefarim such as chumashim, Mishnayos, Gemaros, and their meforshim. The Rosh explains: "The mitzvah of writing a sefer Torah is to learn from it... and with the Gemara and the meforshim, he will know the mitzvos and the halachos clearly. Therefore, these are the sefarim that a person has a mitzvah to write." (See Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 270:2, with the meforshim there.)

Just as opening the aron kodesh is an eis ratzon, so too when one opens and begins the Torah from Bereishis. This is a wonderful eis ratzon. Certainly so when the yeshivos and kollelim reopen at this time. It is an eis ratzon, a very special moment in heaven.

(which people say on Friday night before the seudah) teaches, "All brachos, above and below, come from Shabbos." The

Zohar states wondrous brachos that we receive from Shabbos, and in particular, on Friday nights.¹⁹

19. The Chofetz Chaim (al HaTorah) writes: "Those who lack emunah are so foolish. They come to Shabbos late, and they are quick to leave Shabbos. The weekday is cursed with בועת אפיק תאכל לחם - that one must work hard to earn parnassah. Only Shabbos is free from this curse. Hakadosh Baruch Hu Himself blesses this day, as Chazal say: ברכו... וקדשו. Instead of being wise and coming to Shabbos early to receive its blessings, and leaving Shabbos late so they do not rush back into the curse of the weekdays, they do the opposite. They begin the blessings of Shabbos late, and they hurry to leave it and enter quickly into the weekdays. Fortunate are those who understand this and accept Shabbos early and leave Shabbos late so that they can receive Hashem's blessings."