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from: **Rabbi Efrem Goldberg** <reg@brsonline.org> date: Oct 12, 2023, 2:21 PM subject: **Behind the Bima From the Front Lines, Living Am Yisrael Chai, and More. . .**
OCTOBER 11, 2023 | כ"ו תשרי ה' אלפים תשפ"ד DON'T JUST SING AM YISRAEL CHAI, LIVE IT! BY RABBI EFREM GOLDBERG

When the Jews of Bergen-Belsen concentration camp were liberated on April 20th 1945, they sang Hatikvah. At the end of the anthem, British Army Chaplain Rabbi Leslie Hardman, cried out, "Am Yisrael Chai – the People of Israel live!" When Golda Meir visited the Great Synagogue in Moscow as the Israeli Ambassador in 1948, the crowd of 50,000 ecstatically welcomed her with shouts of "Am Yisrael Chai!" In 1965, in order to energize the Soviet Jewry movement, Shlomo Carlebach was asked to compose a song. He wrote the famous version of Am Yisrael Chai.

In 2009, Prime Minister Netanyahu visited Wannsee Villa in Berlin, where the Final Solution for the destruction of Europe's Jews was planned in 1942 by Hitler and leaders of the Third Reich. In the visitors' book he wrote just three words in

Hebrew and then translated them into English: "Am Yisrael Chai – The people of Israel live."

As a slogan, Am Yisrael Chai affirms that despite the systematic attempts to exterminate and annihilate the Jewish people, thanks to God's guiding hand and the tenacity and resilience of the Jewish People, we stubbornly persevere. God has made an eternal covenant with the Jewish People; He has their back.

Am Yisrael Chai is also a tefilla, a longing for a united Jewish people living together in safety, security and with unity and harmony.

Explaining the words "I will take you to Me as an **עם**", a people (Shemos 6:7), Rav Soloveitchik writes:

The political-historical unity as a nation is based on the conclusion of the covenant in Mitzrayim, which occurred even prior to the giving of the Torah at Sinai. This covenant forced upon us all one uniform historical fate. The Hebrew word **עם** Am, nation, is identical to the Hebrew word **עם** Im, with. Our fate of unity manifests itself through a historical indispensable union...No Jew can renounce his part of the unity...Religious Jews or irreligious Jews, all are included in one nation, which stands lonesome and in misery in a large and often antagonistic world...

In the ashes of the crematoria, the ashes of the Chasidim and pious Jews were put together with the ashes of the radicals and the atheists. And we all must fight the enemy, who does not differentiate between those who believe in God and those who reject Him.

The secret to a strong Am Yisrael is a sense of Im Yisrael, being in it together, united, loyal, giving one another the benefit of the doubt and judging each other favorably.

The Torah relates that at the end of the first day of creation, **וַיְהי עֶרֶב וַיְהי בֹקֶר, יוֹם אֶחָד** – "It was evening and it was morning; the first day" (1:5). Rav Zev of Strikov advances a beautiful chassidic reading of this pasuk. **עֶרֶב** (evening) represents the gloom of exile, periods when we are thrust into "darkness," struggling, suffering, and in distress. **בֹקֶר** (morning), then, symbolizes the "light" of the redemption, the joy of salvation. The way we proceed from **עֶרֶב** to **בֹקֶר**, from the darkness of suffering to the light of redemption, is **יוֹם אֶחָד** – having days of oneness, days of achdus, unity, togetherness. This is a major gut check moment for those who live outside of Israel. Do we feel connected to the plight of our brothers and sisters there? Are we in profound pain by the events unfolding? Are our lives severely interrupted and different while this is going on?

The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva 3:11) writes that a person who vigilantly and righteously observes Jewish law, but separates himself from the Jewish People, has no portion in the World to Come. How does he define separating from the people? Someone who doesn't identify with the tzarah, with the crisis and tragedy Jews are enduring, has no portion in the World to Come.

There is so much we can and must be doing. We are all called to serve in this war, our courageous and brave heroes on the front lines but also Jews and decent people everywhere in the world. Daven, learn, send funds and supplies, text, call and check in on family and friends in Israel. Rally, advocate, write letters in gratitude to elected officials and media who are getting it right, and stand up to and protest those who are grossly wrong.

As we recite in the beracha of **יוצר אור** each morning, **עושה שלום ובורא את הכל** (“Maker of peace and Creator of everything”) – once there is shalom, then there is “everything.”

If we are embroiled in conflict and strife, we will remain in darkness. It is only when we transcend our differences and join together in mutual love and harmony that we can emerge from **ערב** to **בוקר**, from the darkness of exile to the light of redemption.

It must be clarified that unity does not mean uniformity. We do not need to be the same, act the same, think the same, or hold the same opinions, in order to achieve the “light” of **יום אחד**. We need simply to focus on all that we share in common – which far exceeds that about which we disagree – and build and strengthen our bonds of friendship despite our relatively few differences.

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, standing in Auschwitz-Birkenau at the March of the Living several years ago said, “We always knew how to die together. The time has come for us to know also how to live together.”

During this most difficult time, may the people of Israel learn to live with one another in harmony and unity. **Am Yisrael Chai!**

<https://www.5tjt.com/yom-kippur-war-2-0/>

Avinu Malkeinu

October 11, 2023

Rabbi Moshe Taragin

No words. No breath. Our hearts are dizzyed with shock and trauma, and burning tears stream down our cheeks. Our people and our land suffered their worst day in the 75-year history of our state. More Jews were killed on this one day than on any single day since the Holocaust. The pain and suffering are indescribable, the fear is palpable, and the mourning is overwhelming. I feel uncomfortable writing anything. There is absolutely nothing to say while so many are still suffering, while so many are being buried, while so many are fighting for their lives, and while so many are in the line of fire. This is not the time for “ideas,” or the time to draw larger conclusions or to search for meaning. It is a time to cry and cry. For our people and for our land. For the name of Hashem that was so horribly desecrated. I only write to provide basic “guidance,” and to recommend a few responses, not that there is any protocol for a catastrophe like this. Most of these “responses” to this disaster are self-evident, but on the slim chance that they aren’t, it is worth repeating them. Larger conversations

about the ramifications of this tragedy will have to wait until a more appropriate time. Tefillah Though tefillah is always central to our relationship with Hashem, there is a specific mitzvah to daven during a time of crisis, or an eit tzarah. The Torah describes the prototypical eit tzarah as:

The most severe form of national crisis occurs not only when we are at war but when the war assaults our country. It has been 50 years since we last experienced war in our own country during the Yom Kippur War. This is far worse. During the Yom Kippur war, the battles were waged along empty borders in sparsely populated areas, limiting the amount of civilian casualties. Sadly, we have currently suffered a massive pogrom directed at our own people. There is no other word to describe this vicious, premeditated attack designed solely for the purpose to kill and kidnap as many innocent people as possible, including elderly and babies. If there ever were an eit tzarah, this is it. The special mitzvah to daven during an eit tzarah can be accomplished by adding tefillot, and some have added “Avinu Malkeinu” Though every perek of Tehillim is effective, the perakim which most directly petition Hashem for salvation from heartless enemies include: 2, 7, 9, 13, 20, 22, 23, 27, 44, 55, 59, 60, 70, 74, 79, 80, 83, 121, and 130. Even without adding extra tefillot, the mandate of eit tzarah demands that we invest more deeply in our routine tefillot. This extra commitment can be attained through better minyan attendance or better decorum and discipline while davening. Mere awareness that our tefillot possess an added dimension can often deepen the experience, even without any inserting additions. There are lives hanging in the balance, and a Jew’s first response is to daven to the Redeemer of our people to send us redemption. Mourning The scenes are already apocalyptic. Thousands of lives have been shattered by senseless hatred of our people. Witnessing hundreds of funerals in the span of a few days is unfathomable. Even for those who haven’t been directly impacted by the tragedy, there is a basic human and religious responsibility to sympathize and identify with the suffering of the direct victims. Obviously, with few exceptions, any celebratory events or even enjoyable social events should be canceled. Additionally, until the intensity of our national mourning subsides, recreational media consumption should be curbed. It is unthinkable that while we are burying hundreds of korbanot, a Jew is relaxing and watching a sporting event or a movie. Part of living Jewish history is the responsibility to identify with tragedy. Cheshbon HaNefesh Whenever a tragedy occurs, moral introspection is mandated, and certainly a catastrophe of this magnitude requires self-examination. It is impossible to play G-d and to know what causes such tragedy. It is always easiest to critique others and to lay the blame on someone else or something else. Instead, each person should look inward, at themselves and their communities, to identify areas for improvement. Hashem is sending us a message. Though we don’t exactly know the specifics of the message, it is crucial to personalize the

experience and look for individual paths for improvement, and not just harp upon collective issues, which are always less manageable. Hashem expects us to respond to a crisis by improving our religious behavior. Emunah The ways of Hashem elude human comprehension, and we certainly can't wrap our minds around this catastrophe. Yet, our bitachon assures us that Hashem has some purpose for allowing this to occur. Faith also demands that we have confidence that, in the long run, Hashem has our best interests in mind and cares for and redeems His people. This is a dark hour in modern Jewish history and is not a time for simple faith. We cannot be afraid to ask genuine questions but also cannot be dispirited when we are thwarted in attempts to uncover answers. These horrific events cannot shatter our deep belief that our return to our ancient homeland is part of a larger historical redemption. Our country has seen very dark days before, and though the trauma of this day far surpasses anything we have endured in the past, the wheels of redemption continue to turn. For some reason, over the past few days, witnessing the grotesque and nauseating images, I kept thinking about the pogroms that battered our people about 120 years ago, in 1905. According to some reports, we suffered over 600 pogroms in one year. There is one difference, though, between 1905 and 2023. We have our land and we have our army and despite whatever shortcomings were exposed, our army, with Hashem's help, will punish the murderers and continue to protect us. In the aftermath of the Yom Kippur war, my Rebbe, HaRav Yehuda Amital, cited a Midrash that would become a staple of his as he wrestled with demoralizing national events. Commenting on the fact that in Shir HaShirim Hashem is compared to a gazelle, the Midrash elaborates:

A deer is so swift and furtive that almost immediately after it appears, it disappears from view. Its disappearance doesn't mean that it has entirely left the scene. Redemption can have lags and lulls and even terrible setbacks, but once the process begins it unfolds with inevitability. This tragedy tests us to maintain our resolve and our vision that we are part of a larger historical trajectory. Our faith survived the Holocaust, and we hope and daven that with His help, *iy'H*, our faith will survive this incalculable tragedy. It takes great faith to participate in the final chapters of history. We pray to Him to give us strength and faith to navigate the sorrow and pain of this process. There is a fabled song with ancient roots, which was sung by many European Ashkenazic communities on Simchat Torah. This song describes Hashem observing us celebrate Simchat Torah and remarking that our love for Him is so impressive "that we even ignore our suffering and celebrate His Torah." We ask Hashem to allow us to celebrate His Torah without any more suffering. n

This essay was written Sunday, October 8. Rabbi Moshe Taragin is a rabbi at Yeshivat Har Etzion/Gush, a hesder yeshiva. He has semichah and a BA in computer science from

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"RABBI'S MUSINGS (& AMUSINGS)"

R' Dani and Chani Staum

Erev Shabbos Kodesh Parshas Bereishis Mevorchim Chodesh Cheshvan 21 Tishrei 5783/October 13, 2023 FOR HIM I don't remember the last time I was able to so relate to a powerful story I heard, in a manner I never could have imagined. I was asked to share *divrei Torah* in my neighborhood Shul before *hakafos* on Simchas Torah evening. As I was walking to the bimah to begin speaking, I was told that we would be saying *Tehillim* first. At the time I had no idea why. The wife of one of the Shul's board members is a Physician's Assistant and keeps her phone on in case she is called with a medical emergency. On Shmini Atzeres afternoon, her phone had been buzzing incessantly. Although they couldn't see anything more than flashing headlines, it was enough for them to realize that there was a serious terrorist attack in Eretz Yisroel. After we said *Tehillim*, he informed me of the developments. With two of our children in Yerushalayim, it was quite unnerving to say the least. We also have many family members living in various communities throughout the country, and many students and friends in various yeshivos there. That's aside for the fact that, like every Jew, my heart is with Klal Yisroel, particularly in Eretz Yisroel. As I stood by the bimah and the assemblage waited for me to begin speaking, I had a strong urge to apologize and say that I was unable to proceed. But I knew that would be demoralizing and disheartening. So instead, I said a silent prayer asking Hashem for the strength and guidance to say the right thing. I also thought about the story I had heard a day earlier. As I have done the last few years, during Chol Hamoed Succos, I had the great *zechus* to facilitate a beautiful learning program called Greater Adventure. Each Chol Hamoed morning, after a 45-minute learning session, we heard *divrei chizuk* from an esteemed Rav in our community. That was followed by an exciting raffle with many great prizes. On Hoshanah Rabbah morning, the grand finale, our speaker was Rabbi Daniel Coren, a noted lecturer in the Monsey community (who also has many *shiurim* posted on Torahanytime). He related the following story: "About thirty years ago I was the *mashgiach* in a Jewish owned old-age home in Riverdale. "One year on Simchas Torah I was together with ten elderly men in wheelchairs from the home, helping facilitate *hakafos* "dancing". They took turns holding a *Sefer* of *Nevi'im* (used to read haftarah) because it's smaller and lighter than a *Sefer Torah*. "One of the residents, Mendel Steinberg, was an Auschwitz survivor. At one point during the dancing, Mendel shared a recollection from his days in Auschwitz. "One miserable day, they were sitting together in the barracks, when suddenly one of their fellow inmates got up and started dancing. They looked at him like he fell off the moon, but he told them that it was Simchas Torah. When they

retorted that even on Simchas Torah, one cannot dance in Auschwitz, he ignored their rationalizations and continued dancing. “Eventually, people started joining in, until a large circle had formed. They sang together the famous niggun to the words, “Utzu eitzah v’sufar dabru davar v’lo yakum ki imanu e-l - They (our enemies) make plans that are annulled, they speak words that never come to fruition, because G-d is with us.” “The Nazi guards heard the spirited singing and burst in. But when they saw what was happening, they didn’t know what to make of the inmates’ unbreakable devotion and they turned around and left. Mendel said it was the most emotional Simchas Torah he ever had. “My friend, Rav Shmuel Stauber z”l, worked with me at that old aged home. After I was no longer employed in that nursing home, Rabbi Stauber related to me that when he was informed that Mendel was very ill he went to visit him. When he arrived at Mendel’s room, the attending nurse told him that Mendel was in a coma, and it was clear that he didn’t have much time left. It was a waste of time to even visit. “Despite her words, Rabbi Stauber walked over to Mendel, leaned close to Mendel’s ear and began to sing, “Utzu eitzah v’sufar dabru davar v’lo yakum ki imanu e-l”. As he sang, Rabbi Stauber saw a tear trickle down Mendel’s cheek. Mendel passed away a few minutes later. “I often think about Mendel on Simchas Torah and that helps me dance more enthusiastically.” Rabbi Coren concluded by quoting the Satmar Rebbe who noted that the word rikud - dance has the same letters as the word meraked - to sift (one of the 39 forbidden melachos on Shabbos). When one dances with energy and excitement, he sifts negativity from within himself. By exuberantly demonstrating his desire for spiritual connection and growth he breaks through spiritual blockages within himself. As I stood at the bimah on Simchas Torah, I was encouraged by the thought of a Mendel’s fellow inmate in Auschwitz dancing despite his surroundings. After I proceeded to share some thoughts about the significance of Simchas Torah, I noted that we were about to dance for the honor of Hashem and His Torah. Therefore, it was incumbent upon us to display joy, even if we weren’t feeling it. Like many others, this past Simchas Torah was by far the most difficult Simchas Torah of my life. But I tried to bear my own words in mind, and I continued to dance in the circle. I ignored the deep pit in my stomach and pushed myself to keep dancing, knowing it was a zechus for Klal Yisroel, particularly at that time. We don’t dance for our own gratification, but for the honor of the heart and soul of our people. During our hakafos on Simchas Torah we made sure to sing Utzu eitzah as well. Mendel’s message, eloquently shared by Rabbi Coren, must resound loudly in our ears and souls. Our enemies hurt us terribly and caused us untold anguish and pain. Yet, we know we will ultimately prevail, “Ki imanu e-l - For G-d is with us.” May Hashem comfort Klal Yisroel. May all our captives and soldiers return home in peace and serenity and may we merit

great salvations for our holy people. Shabbat Shalom & Good Shabbos, R’ Dani and Chani Staum www.stamtorah.info

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Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Beraishis 5784

1 – Topic – The Current Matzav in Eretz Yisrael

As we begin from the beginning of the Sefer Torah once again but more with trepidation instead of the usual joy. Let’s look into the Parsha and see if we have a little bit of an insight that would help us with our functioning as Avdei Hashem during this difficult time.

When man is created, the Torah says in 2:7 (וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפִּיו, נִשְׁמַת) (חיים). HKB”H blew through his nostrils a soul of life. Then the Posuk says, (וַיְהִי הָאָדָם, לִנְפֹשׁ חַיָּה). The person became a living person. Rashi says on (לִנְפֹשׁ חַיָּה) he quotes the Targum (וְהָיָה הָאָדָם לְרוּחַ מְמַלְלָא). That human beings are able to speak, they are human beings who are unique among the creatures that Hashem created and their ability to speak.

There is a problem with this Rashi. Where in the Posuk did Rashi see this? Rashi doesn’t come to tell us Drashos, or Medrashim, Rashi comes to tell us Pshat. We have a rule, that Rashi is coming to answer some sort of question. What is the question, what is wrong with the Posuk? (וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפִּיו, נִשְׁמַת) (חיים). What is wrong?

The Netziv in his Peirush on Chumash answers this with a Klal, and it is a Klal that he repeats numerous times throughout the Hameik Davar. Let me share the Klal. He says (דְּשׁוּרֵשׁ חַי) (בלה”ק משמעו פעם חי ולא מת ופעם חי ולא עצב). The Shoresch Chai in Lashon Hakodesh, the idea of being alive in the Chumash, the meaning is found in two ways. One is that a person is alive as opposed to being dead. In other words, he is a living human being. Chai means something else as well. Sometimes you have a living human being, but he is not able to function properly. He is depressed. He is not functional. He doesn’t have a Simchas Hachaim. That is a lack of life as well. In Lashon Hakodesh the word Chai or Chaim refers to life. Chaya refers to a person who is alive. Even in English or Yiddish you say he is alive, he is Leibidig. Chaya is used that way.

So what bothered Rashi is (וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפִּיו, נִשְׁמַת חַיָּים), Chaim I understand means life. (וַיְהִי הָאָדָם, לִנְפֹשׁ חַיָּה) a person was a functioning, outgoing human being. He says Targum Unkelos (לְרוּחַ מְמַלְלָא), that is what Chaya means. Chaya means not just that he was alive. The Posuk is adding that he was (לְרוּחַ מְמַלְלָא), he was a person that is outgoing, he was able to communicate, able to function well with other human beings. Therefore, we have an insight into the very life that human beings have. The idea of Tachlis Hachaim, the purpose of the life that G-d gave us. It is not just to be alive, to breathe in and out and have a beating heart and functioning inner organs, but more than that.

The Tachlis of a person's life is to be able to function with a clear mind, with a Menuchas Hanefesh, with serenity. Without being able to function with clarity and purpose, there is something missing in the Chaim of the person. He is not Chai Bish'laimus.

The Posuk says in Chavakuk 2:4 (וְצַדִּיק, בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה). The Tzaddik lives by his faith. Life is challenging. There is a lot in life to get a person down. There are many moments, many opportunities for a person to feel a lack of energy and a lack of ability to function properly. There are many such moments. (וְצַדִּיק, בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה). The Chaya, the ability to live and to function comes from the faith of a person. When there are moments that we are down and we find it hard to function, (וְצַדִּיק, בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ). The Torah really gives a person this ability. The Netziv later in Parshas Va'eschanan in the beginning of Perek Daled adds to this theme. In Pirkei Avos Perek Beis it says (מַרְבֵּה תוֹרָה מַרְבֵּה חַיִּים). When a person adds Torah to his life he adds Chaim to his life. The Netziv explains that it doesn't just mean that you live longer. There are people who were (מַרְבֵּה תוֹרָה) that didn't live longer. But it means the Simchas Hachaim, the feeling of life. Jews even in the Ghetto, Jews even when they suffered Pogroms in different parts of the world, they gathered in the evening and the Batei Medrashim and they were alive with their Avodas Hashem. They were alive with their Ketzos and their Nesivos and Tumuling about learning. Some people live a lesser life. They are not into it. They are not functioning totally. But the goal of a Yid is to be alert. To be aware. To be attentive. That in Avodas Hashem, we see that as life.

A Tzarah, a difficulty in life that has no purpose, leaves a person drained. He is missing in his Chiyus. Someone who believes that whatever comes his way has a purpose, that whatever comes his way as confusing as it may be, has its Tachlis, has its purpose, such a person is Chai (בְּאַמוּנָתוֹ יִחְיֶה). Such a person really lives.

In a third place, in Parshas Eikev at the beginning of Perek Ches, the Netziv discusses this again and adds a new dimension. The Posuk there 8:1 says (כָּל-הַמִּצְוָה, אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי (מִצְוַת הַיּוֹם--תִּשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת: לְמַעַן תִּחְיִין). All the Mitzvos that I have given you (תִּשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת) be careful to obey them and follow them. (לְמַעַן תִּחְיִין) so that you have Chiyus, so that you have life. We understand that you are really a (מַרְבֵּה תוֹרָה) (מַרְבֵּה חַיִּים). Limud and Shemiras Hamitzvos gives a person a Chiyus, a purpose in his life even in times of challenge and difficulty.

But wait, it says (לְמַעַן תִּחְיִין) with an Ende Nun. The Ende Nun usually shows that something is smaller than it would have otherwise been. The little Chiyus. What does it mean (תִּחְיִין) as opposed to Tich'ye? Says the Netziv, the Neshama of a Jew is incomplete. The Simchas Hachaim, the sense of purpose is incomplete as long as a person is not in Eretz Yisrael. (דּוּדַי). When a person is in Chutz L'aretz that connection is never a complete connection.

That Chiyus in serving Hashem is never complete. Maybe that is what Chazal mean when they say that when you go into a Beis Medrash, that is different. It is like Eretz Yisrael. The place that you can have that Chiyus of connection to HKB"H. So the message is that you want to really be alive you have to have a certain Chiyus in life, a certain sense of purpose in life. There are challenges, people are ill, people are poor, people are suffering from Tzar Gidal Banim. If it is all arbitrary, it is very painful. Where is G-d? But if we understand that there is a purpose, that gives Chiyus to a person. That gives a person something more.

In times of challenge such as these, the feelings are overwhelming. We don't have Koach. It is very hard for us to function knowing what is going on. Very difficult. How do we go forward?

The psychology of a human being is that motivation is divided between the Koach Haleiv and the Koach Hamoach. The ability that comes from an emotional enthusiasm and the ability that comes from the Moach, from the Seichel, from a sense of mission. There are two different things.

When you talk about Seichel, intelligence, a sense of mission, the intellect of a person has the ability to withstand difficulties. A person can have a Kasha. Anybody who learns Gemara knows that with all the Ameilus, with all the effort you put into learning, sometimes you just end with a Kasha. Sometimes the Gemara itself says Kashia, it is difficult. It doesn't take away from the Geshmak of learning, it doesn't take away from the Chiyus of learning. There is a Kasha. Sometimes Aderaba, the Kasha gives the Geshmak. We say in Yiddish, Besser a Gutte Kasha Vi a Shvacha Teretz. A Good Kasha is satisfying more than a weak answer.

If someone asks his Rebbe and he says I don't know, it is not depressing, it means it is a good Kasha and it lifts up a person. The Klal is that as long as a person functions with Seichel and intellect it doesn't bring a person to depression. On the contrary, it brings a person to Hasmada.

If a person has a difficulty, and the difficulty is in understanding, it is in the Koach Haseichel, our intellect knows that we can't answer ever Kasha. The emotional part of a human being is not that way. The Koach Haleiv is different. The Koach Haleiv suffers when there is a Kasha. It suffers greatly. When things happen to a person and he looks to heaven and he says G-d I don't understand, it takes away his wind. It takes away his clarity, it creates Behala and is Mevalbeil people. Without Eitzza if a person is stuck and there is no way out, that is Eitzavon, that is depression. It makes a person unable to function. It causes a person to take wrong Eitzas, wrong ideas.

Yishuv Hadas is the opposite of intellectual panic. It doesn't come together. Sometimes it is better to make no decision than to make a decision when depressed. Sometimes you leave it with a Kasha. Sometimes we are desperate to try to help. Not a reason to grab onto donations to charities that may or may not

be real. Sometimes we have a difficulty and we feel no energy. The emotional part of us finds it hard to Daven. We need to be Misgabair with Seichel. The Moach needs to be stronger. The Moach has to do it.

I remember once I had gone with one of the Talmidim of the Yeshiva to see a Yeshiva in the Baltimore area, and we had flight back to NY at Reagan Airport in Washington DC. There is a shuttle that flies every hour. As we were waiting, they announced that due to a storm in NY the 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock, 7 o'clock and 8 o'clock shuttles are cancelled. It was 5 o'clock. Everyone rushed the counter to try to get a remaining seat on the 9 o'clock shuttle. I turned to the young man with me and I said quick, let's go the rental car counter because in 15 minutes the rental car counter will be crowded with people looking to rent a car that could go one way to NY. We rented a car and went. A Yeshiva Man uses his Seichel. Emotionally, you will rush the counter so that you are one of the 100 people trying to get the 5 seats available. When the intellect kicks in people make better decisions.

In the introduction to Mishlei, in Medrash Rabbah, there is a Machlokes. The Medrash asks what is greater the Moach or the Lev. The brain or the heart. Who are the Baalei Machlokes. Who is arguing about it? Dovid Hamelech and Shlomo Hamelech. Dovid says that the Moach, the brain is more. Shlomo says the Leiv, the emotion is more.

Anybody who learns this is astounded. Dovid, Tehillim is the heart of the Jewish people. Shlomo is the Chochom Mi'kol Adam, he is the intellect, he is the brain. It is the opposite. Dovid says the brain is more, the Moach and Shlomo says the Leiv is more. What is going on?

The answer is Shlomo Hamelech lived during good times. There were no wars during his times. It was peaceful. Jews were successful and prosperous. In good times your emotion can lead you. A joy and Simchas Hachaim can lead you. Dovid lived during times of war. He took Klal Yisrael to battle multiple times. During times of Tzarah, Dovid says the Moach is first. You have to lead with your brain. You have to lead with your Seichel.

We have to get a hold of ourselves. We say that we are going to storm the heavens with prayer. We are going to storm the heaven with Tefilla. What does that mean? What do we need to storm? What are we going to do gather and storm the heavens?

I'll tell you what it means. It means when you the individual stand and Daven Shemoneh Esrei it is a different Shemoneh Esrei. If you multiplied by hundreds and thousands, then we are storming the heavens. When your Shemoneh Esrei is said, if it is said with words of feeling, when you say (רָאָה נָא (בְּעֵינֶיךָ), the Beracha of (רָאָה) is for Berachos during a Tzarah that takes place during the Galus. If when you get to that you are storming the heavens, that is what you should be doing. The Leiv gets you depressed, makes it hard to have a good Davening. The Moach, the Seichel makes it stronger.

Our Yiddishe Kinder who are soldiers on the battlefield. A soldier has to be guided by his brain and not by his emotion. Emotions are too overwhelming. He has to be guided with his brain. If we are going to be the soldiers of Acheinu Bnei Yisrael and we are going to be the Mispalelim for them, we are going to be their representatives, we are there for them, then we need to let our Seichel lead. We have to use our Seichel, we have to use our brain. We have to do what we know is the smart thing to do. That is not to say that we are not emotional. We are all emotional. It is very hard. Very challenging. It is challenging for the soldiers too. Frightening for the soldiers too.

May HKB"H grant us a way out. A way out of the terrible difficulties in which we find ourselves, in which Klal Yisrael finds itself. We are in a trap with no exit strategy. May HKB"H provide for us a Yeshua at the 11th hour. We suffered so much Pogrom in our day. Don't fool yourself. This week the government expressed support for Israel. Next week they will criticize Israel. A week later they will sanction Israel. The Umos Ha'olam are not going to be our help. It is only Avinu Sheba'shamayim. Let HKB"H help us get out of this difficult time. More important, let us feel that we deal with it properly. Let us feel that we are doing what we have to do during this time. B'eZRas Hashem we will succeed in serving HKB"H properly and being able to come to a time of greater joy. Be alive, be a Chai, don't be depressed. Be alive in your Avodas Hashem. See a mission as any soldier sees a mission and put aside feelings to go and do what he has to do. May it be a Shabbos of Besuros Tovos for one and all! A Gutten Shabbos!

Tidbits for Parashas Bereishis Inbox

Ira Zlotowitz <Iraz@klalgovoah.org> 7:04 PM (4 hours ago) to me

Parashas Bereishis • October 13th • 28 Tishrei 5784
This week is Shabbos Mevorchim Chodesh Cheshvan. Rosh Chodesh is on Sunday and Monday, October 15th-16th. The molad is Shabbos afternoon 6:33 PM and 1 chelek. There is no Yom Kippur Katan observed for this Rosh Chodesh as Yom Kippur was previously observed this month. With Parashas Bereishis we begin a new cycle of Shenayim Mikra v'Echad Targum, the mitzvah to read the Parashah twice, along with the Targum Onkelos once. The Gemara (Berachos 8) says the reward for this mitzvah is arichas yamim (longevity). Can one fulfill the obligation to read Targum by reading an alternate translation, such as English? Consult your Rav.

We began saying Mashiv HaRuach U'Morid haGeshem on Shemini Atzeres. One who said Morid Hatal (i.e. Nusach Sefard) instead, does not need to repeat Shemoneh Esrei (the same applies if one is unsure if he said one or the other). For Nusach Ashkenaz (whose adherents do not otherwise say Morid Hatal), the omission of Mashiv HaRuach requires

repeating Shemoneh Esrei. One who realizes his error before beginning Atah Kadosh may immediately say “Mashiv HaRuach...” and continue with Atah Kadosh etc. If he realizes his error after beginning Atah Kadosh, he must return to the beginning of Shemoneh Esrei. If one is unsure if he added Mashiv HaRuach, for the first 90 tefillos it is assumed that he did not say Mashiv HaRuach, as he is not yet accustomed to saying it (the 90th tefillah will be Minchah on Sunday, November 13th). However, one who repeated the phrase “Mechayei Meisim Atah Rav L’hoshia, Mashiv HaRuach u'Morid Hageshem” 90 times can be halachically presumed to be accustomed to saying it; he would then not need to repeat Shemoneh Esrei in case of uncertainty.

As Rosh Chodesh begins on Motzaei Shabbos, one who extends seudas shelishis after sundown is in a quandary whether to say Retzei or Ya’aleh Veyavo (or both) in bentching. Some are careful not to eat bread after tzeis (for this purpose 35-40 minutes after shekiya) and then only say Retzei. Speak to your Rav.

Tzidkas’cha is omitted at Minchah on Shabbos.

The first opportunity for Kiddush Levanah is Tuesday evening, October 17th. The final opportunity in the USA is Motzaei Shabbos, October 28th.

One should remember to fulfill his/her Yizkor tzedakah pledges.

Daf Yomi - Friday: Bavli: Kiddushin 61 • Yerushalmi: Shevi’is 6 • Mishnah Yomis: Chagiga 1:2-3 • Oraysa: Next week is Yoma 18b-21a

Make sure to call your parents, in-laws, grandparents and Rabbi to wish them a good Shabbos. If you didn’t speak to your kids today, make sure to connect with them as well!

The series of days of BeHaB begins on Monday, October 23rd. BEREISHIS: The Seven Days of Creation. Day 1 - the world, starting with light (day & night) • Day 2 - the sky, separation of waters • Day 3 - earth and seas, vegetation and seeds • Day 4 - sun, moon and stars • Day 5 - fish and birds • Day 6 - beasts of the earth, Adam and Chavah (Kayin and Hevel were born on this day as well) • Day 7 - blessed and holy rest • Adam and Chavah are placed in Gan Eden • The Tree of Knowledge is forbidden to them • The serpent entices Chavah to eat of the Tree of Knowledge • The serpent, Chavah, and Adam are cursed • Adam and Chavah are expelled from the garden • Kayin and Hevel offer sacrifices; only Hevel’s is accepted • Kayin kills Hevel • Hashem warns Kayin about the nature of the evil inclination • Generations later, Lemech kills Kayin • Sheis is born • Ten generations from Adam to Noach • Hashem ‘regrets’ creating man and resolves to obliterate mankind • Noach found favor in Hashem’s Eyes.

Haftarah: As Shabbos is Erev Rosh Chodesh, the haftarah of Machar Chodesh replaces the regular haftarah. It discusses the interaction that took place on Erev Rosh Chodesh between David Hamelech and Yehonasan, son of King Shaul. Although David would become king instead of Yehonasan, they

remained as close as brothers. The haftarah tells the story of how Yehonasan saved David’s life from King Shaul.

Parashas Bereishis: 146 Pesukim • 1 Obligation

1. Peru U’revu - A man must marry and bear a son and a daughter.

וַיָּקָם קַיִן אֶל-הֶבֶל אָחִיו וַיַּהַרְגֵהוּ “Kayin rose against his brother Hevel, and he killed him” (Bereishis 4:8)

We know everything that occurs is just; that being the case, why did Hevel deserve to be killed by his own brother?

Rav Nachum Partzovitz zt”l, quoted by Rav Elya Baruch Finkel zt”l, explains that from the pasuk it is clear that Kayin looked obviously distressed when Hashem did not accept his korban. It is reasonable to assume that Hevel saw Kayin’s disappointment, yet it does not seem that Hevel attempted to comfort his brother in any way. This lack of empathy for his brother’s distress made Hevel deserving of death at his brother’s hand! Chazal say, “Yesh koneh olamo besha’ah achas,” literally translated as “Some acquire their portion in the World [to Come] in one moment.” However, the Ba’alei Mussar explain that an alternate translation of “sha’ah” is “attentive”. Thus, explaining the phrase, “Some acquire their world through one instance of paying attention”, by being mindful of a fellow’s need at just one occasion. If Hevel had considered his brother’s pain, he may have “acquired his world”, and could have been spared his brother’s rage. Recent events have shaken Jews worldwide. There are so many in mourning, others awaiting nervously the fate of their family, and many in constant fear and danger. We must constantly be attentive and give thought to all our brethren while doing all we can both materially and spiritually until each person is granted the yeshuah and nechamah they await.

Rav Kook on Breishit: Cherishing Troubles Inbox

Rabbi Chanan Morrison <chanan@ravkooktorah.org> Thu, Oct 12, 5:01 AM (19 hours ago) to me

Is this email not displaying correctly? View it in your browser. Rav Kook Torah

Breishit: Cherishing Troubles

The Scroll of Fasting One of the more surprising statements in the Talmud concerns a document composed over two millennia ago known as Megillat Ta’anit. This ‘Scroll of Fasting’ lists 35 days in the year when fasting is prohibited due to some joyful event that took place on that day.

The majority of these minor holidays commemorate the rescinding of some evil decree against the Jewish people. The most well-known of these is the holiday of Purim, when the Jews of Persia were saved from Haman’s plot to destroy them. “Our Rabbis taught: Who wrote Megillat Ta’anit? Hananiah ben Hezekiah and his colleagues, who cherished the troubles.” (Shabbat 13b)

What an unusual trait for a scholar — “who cherished the troubles.” Who likes hardships and suffering? What does this mean?

Rashi explained that they cherished the miraculous rescue from these persecutions. They appreciated the opportunity to express our thanks and gratitude to God.

But the literal meaning of the phrase indicates that these scholars found value in the troubles themselves.

Watching Over the Nation Rav Kook suggested a bold theory, proposing that these harsh events in the history of the Jewish people played an indispensable role in the nation's survival. Paradoxically, they have a part in the Divine providence that guards over the Jewish people, particularly throughout the long and difficult centuries of exile.

How do persecutions protect the people of Israel?

Israel's continued existence hinges upon the love and connection that each individual Jew feels for God, for His Torah in our midst, and for the Jewish people. This is an innate love, flowing from the soul's natural inclinations; and it is substantiated by the recognition of the appropriateness of this love for Israel, with its Torah and unique national mission.

On occasion, especially in periods when the nation is scattered across the world, this love may wane. Connection to the Jewish people often weakens as individuals chart their own path in life. They become absorbed in their own personal goals and aspirations, neglecting the ties that bind them to God's covenant — a covenant granted to the nation as a whole, which reaches the individual through the collective.

At such times, additional means are needed to bolster the connection of each individual to the nation.

Protecting the Family Unit In an earlier age, Divine Providence provided a means to strengthen humanity's awareness of its moral obligations. After the sin of Adam and Eve, the distinction between right and wrong became blurred, and commitments to family and community were less binding. The punishments meted out after Adam's transgression — "I will greatly increase your sorrow and your pregnancy; in pain you will give birth to children... With toil you will derive food from [the land] all the days of your life" (Gen. 3:16-17) — were not arbitrary punishments. They were meant to safeguard and fortify the family unit. By increasing the difficulty in bringing children into the world and providing for them, they reinforced the natural love of parents for their offspring. More invested in their children, fathers and mothers would be more willing to suffer the burdens of raising children until they become independent.

The Role of Afflictions A similar dynamic is at work with the Jewish people. It was critical that the connection to Torah, Jewish faith, and the nation of Israel should not be broken as a result of dispersion and exile. This is particularly true when we witness many peoples, after losing their independence and sovereignty, assimilate within conquering empires and disappear from the annals of history.

What will strengthen the inherent love of Israel, so that even its most humble members will recognize its value?

This is the function of troubles and persecutions. The challenges and dangers confronted for the sake of observing Torah, for the sake of Jewish faith, or even just for the sake of Jewish identity — they lead to a resurgence of love and connection in the hearts of subsequent generations. We learn to appreciate the steep cost which the Jewish national spirit has borne for its survival and the preservation of its Torah. This awareness imparts strength and resolve, fostering a deep sense of connection and loyalty.

With this in mind, these scholars compiled Megillat Ta'anit. They understood the importance of preserving the memory of these trials and tribulations in our nation's history for the benefit of future generations. They truly "cherished the troubles."

(Adapted from Ein Eyah, Shabbat vol. 1 (1:62) on Shabbat 13) Meshech Chochmah

on Bereishis Inbox

Rav Immanuel Bernstein

<ravbernstein@journeysintorah.com> Thu, Oct 12, 6:05 PM (5 hours ago)

Dear Friends,

We are excited to announce that this year we will be returning to mine the treasures of the Meshech Chochmah, whose mastery of and ability to blend together all areas of Torah, as well as his unique parshanut and vision, make this such a special sefer.

At this time, when the Jewish people are reeling from the horrors of the events of this past Shabbos, our hearts and tefillos go out to our brothers and sisters, both those who are in grief and distress and those who are placing themselves in danger to fight the enemies of Israel.

May all the Torah learning be a zchus for them, may the outpouring of love for our fellow Jews remain long after our enemies have been defeated, and may we hear only besoros tovos, yeshuos ve'nechamos.

Journeys in Torah MESHECH CHOCHMAH PARSHAS BEREISHIS The Sin of the Etz Hadaas

כִּי יֵדַע אֱלֹקִים כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכָלְכֶם מִמֶּנּוּ וְנִפְקָחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם וְהָיִיתֶם כְּאֱלֹקִים
יְדַעִי טוֹב וָרָע

For God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowers of good and evil. (Bereishis 3:5)

Many commentators over the generations have struggled with the question of how the snake was able to convince Chava to do something which Hashem had expressly forbidden — on pain of death, no less. Likewise, for her part, how could Chava allow herself to be convinced?

The Snake's Argument The approach of the Meshech Chochmah to this question is truly astounding. He explains that the snake was not trying to convince Chava that she would not die if she ate from the tree, contrary to what Hashem had said. Rather, he was arguing that if she and Adam truly valued closeness to Hashem, then they should be prepared to do

anything that would bring that closeness about, even if it meant that they would die! Since eating from the tree would make them more Godlike in the sense of knowing good and evil, they should be prepared to do it even if it required them give up their lives. What's more, argued the snake, the idea that you would be prepared to offer your lives in defiance of Hashem's command in order to attain closeness to Him is actually what He really wants you to do – that is the Divine will!

In this light, the Meshech Chochmah explains that the snake's words to Chava at the end of pasuk 4, “לא מות תמתין,” are not to be translated as “you shall not surely die,” i.e. with the snake disputing what Chava had been told in Hashem's name. Rather, they are to be translated as “No, you should indeed die!” In this way, the snake was seeking to convince Chava to perform what is known as “aveirah Lishmah – a sin for the sake of Heaven.” And indeed, Chava, and in turn Adam, were taken in by this appeal to their lofty desire to attain the maximum level of closeness to Hashem possible – whatever the cost.

The Reality However, almost immediately upon eating from the tree, it became abundantly and painfully clear that it had not brought them any further degree of closeness to Hashem at all, and in fact, had only served to distance them greatly. The first consequence of their sin was their consciousness of their nakedness as a source of shame for them. Prior to the sin, man's physical make-up was of an elevated nature, attuned toward goodness, so that no element of his anatomy was any reason for shame. After the sin, his physicality assumed a coarser nature, and his nakedness was now cause for shame and had to be covered up.

The second indicator of the distance that had been engendered by their eating from the tree is mentioned pasuk 8, which states that they heard the sound of Hashem walking in the garden, whereupon they hid themselves among the trees. The point of the pasuk is not that they heard the sound of Hashem coming and tried to hide themselves in order to avoid detection. Rather, prior to the sin, man's encounter with Hashem had taken the form of a Godly vision as well as a Divine message. Having eaten from the Etz Hadaas, however, he was no longer able to experience any visions; his communication from Hashem now took the form solely of hearing Him. Therefore, upon (only) hearing Hashem and thereby realizing the extent to which he had fallen through his sin, and the agonizing distance he had created between Hashem and himself, he hid among the trees in shame of having been taken in by the persuasive arguments of the snake.[1]

Hence, when Hashem asked Adam the question “where are you?” meaning, “Where has your sin left you?” Adam answered by mentioning the above two points: “I heard Your voice in the Garden,” i.e. I only heard a voice but with no accompanying vision, “And I was fearful for I was naked,” i.e. I saw that my nakedness had become a cause for shame in my lowered state, and so I hid. For this reason, in His rebuke to

Adam, Hashem referred to the tree as “the tree from which I commanded you not to eat,”[2] and not simply as, “the Tree of Knowledge.” Through this, Hashem was emphasizing to Adam that His commandment regarding the tree represented His essential will, and that no form of closeness to Hashem could ever come from disobeying His word.

Avraham: Paving the Way Back The situation of “hearing from Hashem without seeing” pertained for all the Neviim in the generations that followed.[3] The first one to begin to reverse this trend was Avraham. In the beginning of Parshas Lech Lecha, Hashem tells Avraham to go to the land of Canaan where He will bestow on him great blessing. After Avraham had arrived at the land, Hashem appears to him and again blesses him, whereupon the pasuk says, “וַיִּבֶן אֱלֹהִים מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה הַנִּרְאָה אֵלָיו” – he [Avraham] built an altar for Hashem Who appeared to him.”[4] The Meshech Chochmah explains that the words “Who appeared to him” are not merely a reiterative description of Hashem on that occasion – they are the reason for the building of the mizbeyach! While still in Charan, Avraham only heard Hashem's word, but having arrived in Canaan, he rose in spiritual level so as to be able to merit Hashem appearing to him – the first such occurrence since before the sin of the Etz Hadaas – and to mark his gratitude he built a mizbeyach “to Hashem Who appeared to him.”

I Am A JEW

By Ben Shapiro

October 12, 2023 0

I am a Jew.

Those have been the words of the Jewish people for three millennia.

Those were the words of the men, women and children of Masada.

Those were the words of the followers of Bar Kochba.

Those were the words of Jews in Granada in 1066 and the Rhineland in 1096 and Khmelnytsky from 1648-1657 and Kishinev in 1903, in Hebron in 1929.

Those were the words of Jews in Auschwitz and Treblinka.

Those were the words of Daniel Pearl.

Those are my words, too.

They are the words of my parents, my wife, my children.

Over the weekend, my people were attacked. Murdered.

Mutilated. Our women raped. Our children kidnapped.

This has happened millions of times before, to millions of Jews. Jew-hatred exists because evil exists. Because there are people who have, for all of human history, hated the Jews and sought to strike at them while they are weak. Who have blamed the Jews for their own problems, who have crafted complex conspiracy theories about the supposed power of the Jews, who have sought to destroy the Jews.

From Pharoah to Haman. From Hitler to Hamas.

The words of the Nazis are indistinguishable from the words of the Hamas charter. The chain is unbroken. And for two

millennia, since the destruction of the last Jewish dynasty in the holy land of Israel, those Jew-haters were ascendant. No longer. That is the promise of the State of Israel. Never again.

The Jews will not stand by and be murdered. They will not leave their Biblical homeland. They will not surrender. They will be strong and courageous, as Joshua said three thousand years ago.

Israel is indispensable. Its presence is a miracle, its strength a gift.

Thank Heaven for the State of Israel.

There are those who say that anti-Zionism is not antisemitism. Tell that to the dead women and children in Sderot. Tell that to Hamas, who proclaim in their charter: "Israel will exist and will continue to exist until Islam will obliterate it, just as it obliterated others before it."

There are those who say that the Israeli-Arab conflict is a "cycle of violence." Only the morally blind and obtuse could ever say such a thing.

Look at the videos. Look at the pictures.

That is what evil looks like.

LOOK.

Look, because this is what moral equivalence brings. Rape of women. Kidnapping of children. Murder of hundreds of innocents, including full families.

For decades, we've been told that to look evil in its face was somehow unsophisticated. That to pretend evil away was an act of intellectual virtue. That to cater to evil, to concede to evil, was the pathway toward a better world. It was all a damned lie.

LOOK.

There are those who proclaim the complexity of it all. Those people are fools. What's worse, they are enablers of evil, fellow travelers, justifiers of the worst human rights violations on the planet, from targeting civilians to hiding behind them.

Do not turn away.

LOOK.

This was the worst week for Jews since the Holocaust.

Do not turn away.

LOOK.

Look it in the face. I know that you will. I know you will because I am a Jew, and because I am an American. Americans love justice. Americans love good. Americans resonate to the book of Psalms, that says, "Hate evil, those who love the Lord."

Hate evil. And fight it. Americans always have, and they always will.

I know we will.

from: **Naaleh Torah Online** contact@naaleh.com

date: Oct 12, 2023, 8:44 PM subject: Parshat Bereishit: Seeing the Source

Supplication: Seeing the Source—Parshat Bereishit

Based on a Naaleh.com by Mrs. Shira Smiles

Adapted by **Channie Koplowitz Stein**

Dedicated I'iluy nishmot the kedoshim of the war in Israel, and for the safe return of the hostages and our IDF Tzivot Hashem. Parshat Bereishit recounts the creation narrative. In chapter two, there is a pause between the creation of the world and the creation of Man. The Torah has told us that the world was complete, yet here the Torah says, "Now all the trees of the field were not yet on the earth...for Hashem had not yet sent rain.... and there was no man to work the soil." If all the world was complete, what was man's work on earth? All vegetation had indeed been created in potential but remained beneath the soil's surface until Adam was created and prayed. Rashi explains that man's work was to understand the significance of rain and to pray.

We see the importance of prayer throughout Tanach, whether it is our Patriarchs and Matriarchs praying for a child, or Bnei Yisroel crying out to Hashem in Egypt. Rain is the symbol of all the goodness that comes down to us from heaven. In fact the word גשם/rain is the root of להתגשם/to materialize. In essence, rain is the physical materialization and result of our spiritual prayer. Praying for rain expresses our eternal dependence on the Creator.

Rabbi Lopian explains that there are four keys that cannot be predicted and remain exclusively in Hashem's hands. A מפתח/key, is an acronym for מ=מטר /rain, פ=פרנסה /livelihood, income, ת=תחיית המתים/resurrection, ח=חיה/childbirth. Our prayers, like those of Adam, help unlock those keys, and we become partners with Hashem. Rebbetzin Smiles quotes Rabbi Sternbach speaking about the current situation in Israel. There are gates in heaven as well as gates on earth. When the heavenly gates have been broken and our relationship with Hashem has been severed, the gates below reflect that break and are also broken. So those evil ones could barrel through the gates of our people down here. We have to know that our safety depends on our relationship with Hashem.

Rabbi Biederman offers a metaphor of a group of boys riding in a jeep down the steep road from Har Hazeitim. Within the jeep, it was frightening; would the jeep careen out of control? Then they were reminded that there was an experienced driver at the wheel. They could feel assured that they would be safe. Likewise, Hashem is at the steering wheel of our world. Let us be strong and respond by putting our trust in Him and praying. As the world was dependent on prayer from its very creation, so does it continue to be dependent on our prayers, writes Daas Torah. Even when Hashem has promised children, as he did to our patriarchs, the promise is the potential waiting for prayer. Through our prayers, we get what we need. The conduit is the gates; our prayers enter, and whatever we need comes out. Sometimes Hashem needs to awaken us to cry out to Him. He needs to send us challenges, for if we stop praying, the world

will cease to exist, writes Rabbi Pincus. Tefillah is talking directly to Hashem.

When someone is ill, we automatically call a doctor. But do we remember to also pray to Hashem, asks Rabbi Lopian? We should be having a constant conversation with Hashem, a concept both Avraham Avinu and King David knew in essence. How often did Avraham raise his hand to God? And King David described himself as prayer personified, ואני תפלה. Rain, coming directly from heaven without human intervention, becomes the symbol of creation and awakens man to Hashem's presence, writes the Mesillot Bilvovom. We are forced to look heavenward. And on Shemini Atzeret, through praying for rain, we proclaim the greatness of Hashem, for we remember that everything, both big and small is completely in God's hands. [This is perhaps one message of the massacre happening specifically on Shemini Atzeret; a vivid reminder that Hashem is orchestrating everything from Above, Hamas is a tool in His Hands.]

Hashem's greatest desire is to give, and the best gift a person can have is a relationship with Hashem which is created through prayer writes the Rigshei Lev. Our challenges are catalysts for prayer. When we feel blessed, we should pray with gratitude, and when we are hurting, we should call out. Life is cyclical, and we should use both the ups and the downs to connect to Hashem.

The Sifsei Chaim points out that gratitude only comes after one realizes something had been lacking. Therefore, Hashem planted Adam into a bleak world, spurring him to pray for rain. After the rains came and Adam saw the world blooming, he understood that all good comes from Hashem, and he could pray now from a sense of gratitude, not only from need. Hashem wants to come close to us and waits for our call to respond. As we call out to Hashem now in times of distress, may we merit to soon call out to Him in gratitude.

from: Isralight <isralight@isralight.org> via auth.ccsend.com
reply-to: isralight@isralight.org to:
internetparshasheet@gmail.com date: Oct 12, 2023, 4:1 PM
subject: A Weekly Byte from Isralight (Bereishit)
**SMALL TASTINGS OF TORAH, JUDAISM AND
SPIRITUALITY FROM RAV BINNY FREEDMAN –
PORTION OF BEREISHIT**

Reprinted from 2006

Endings and beginnings: the black and white of life.

Close to 80 years later, the image still remains, burned into his memory, as if it were yesterday.

He was five and a half years old, but already an adult, standing in the central square (the umshlagplatz) of the Piyotrekov ghetto, next to the synagogue. His father, the Rabbi of the town, stood tall and proud in the middle of the square surrounded by the men of the village, distinguishable by his long full beard and his black rabbinic frock. The men were all

on one side of the square and the women and children, by decree of the Nazis, off to one side.

Tension filled the air, with an intense, silent fear of the unknown, as they stood waiting in the square from where Jews were sent to... where?

Seventy-eight years later Rav Yisrael Lau remembers watching as the commandant of the Gestapo approached his father, the Rabbi, with murder in his eyes. He stood opposite him and drew his mika, the meter-long rubber truncheon favored by the Gestapo, from his belt. Suddenly, without warning or provocation, he brought the truncheon full force down on his father's back. The suddenness as well as the force of the blow caught the rabbi by surprise, causing him to stumble forward a few steps and his body bent forward, and it appeared he would fall to the ground.

But in a moment of enormous will power the Rabbi caught himself and, straightening up to his full height, stepped back to where he had been standing. Rav Lau still remembers the intense look on his father's face as, with tremendous force of will, he removed all emotion from his face, refusing to give the Nazi the satisfaction of seeing the Chief Rabbi of Piyotrekov fall or shout in pain.

It was clear to little five year old Srulli, that his father knew how humiliating and demoralizing it would be for the Jewish community to see their rabbi fall to his knees before the grinning Gestapo officer, and by sheer force of will, refusing to give the Nazis that satisfaction he betrayed no emotion whatsoever and turned back to face the Nazi officer, his face a stone mask.

Years later, in his book *Al Tishlach Yadcha' el Ha'na'ar* (do not stretch out your hand against the lad), Rav Lau, the boy who had risen to become no less than the Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel, describes this moment as the absolutely most painful moment of the entire six years he spent in the ghetto, work camp and concentration camps in the Holocaust.

And yet, it was this moment, more than any other, that gave him strength in his darkest moments, and to this day, that earliest childhood memory, (one of the last times he saw his father), remains with him wherever he goes, motivating him under the most trying of circumstances.

An ending, a painful farewell; and yet, also a beginning. The gift of strength and inspiration against the most trying of circumstances that would ultimately become a gift to motivate a young boy against all odds, and allow him to survive a painfully dark journey and live to reach his destination. Endings that are really beginnings, and beginnings that are endings are the stuff this week's portion, Bereishit (Genesis), is all about.

Just a week ago, we danced with the Torah scrolls on the festival of Simchat Torah as we concluded the entire five books of Moses, only to roll it back to the beginning and start all over again.

But this week's portion is not just about starting all over again, because that would mean we had finished what came before; no, this beginning is really the continuation of last week's conclusion.

I recall a number of years ago; a student spent Shabbat with us in Efrat at the beginning of winter, and ended up visiting a Synagogue the following week in Jerusalem. It happened that these two Shabbatot were the first two Shabbatot he had ever celebrated, much less attended a Synagogue, and that they happened to fall during the time of year when the Torah readings are about the saga of Joseph and his brothers.

He later remarked how brilliant it was that the Torah reading leaves off in the middle of such a good story almost ensuring that everyone would come back the next week to hear the next installment read.... I guess it was a good thing he wasn't visiting during the book of Vayikra (Leviticus) with its portions full of sacrifices, but in truth, he was right: Bereishit (Genesis) really is the continuation of Ve'zot Habracha (the last portion of the Torah), and every beginning really is just a continuation of the illusion of a previous ending.

And of course, if on his next visit, this student came during these two weeks of Bereishit and Ve'zot Habracha, he might assume that the continuation of Moshe's death and the moment of anticipation of a second generation of Jews born free in the desert and about to enter the land of Israel (the end of Ve'zot Habracha) is in fact the story of the creation of the world and the beginning of the saga of mankind in this week's portion. (Interestingly, when Joshua enters the land of Israel which might be considered the historical continuation of the end of the Torah (Ve'zot Habracha) he gives the Jewish people a speech which comes very close to this idea.)

This leads us to note that the theme of this week's portion, Bereishit, is all about beginnings which are really continuations, and endings which are really beginnings.

The creation of the world is not as much a beginning inasmuch as it is an extension of G-d who has no beginning. And the creation of humanity is also really not a beginning as we are, each of us, created in the image of G-d, who has no beginning and no ending, such that a part of us as well has no beginning and no ending.

And the story of Adam and Eve's mistake in eating from the Tree of Knowledge leading to an end of their sojourn in the Garden of Eden was really the beginning of the human journey to become partners in creating a better world (Tikkun Olam). And then there is the story of Cain and Abel. Firmly ensconced, by no accident, in this week's portion as well, is the ultimate question of the ultimate ending: the challenge of death.

Eating from the Tree of Knowledge, of good and evil, is somehow meant to introduce death into the world.

"Ki' beyom acholcha' mimenu' mot tamut." (Bereishit 2:17)
"... For on the day you will eat of it (the Tree of Knowledge) you will surely die."

On some level, man's expulsion from the Garden and his confrontation with the physical world represents the confrontation with mortality.

And then follows the story of Cain and Abel, whose ultimate result is the death by murder of one brother at the hands of another.

"Va'yakam Kayin el Hevel achiv va'yehargehu'." "And Cain arose against Abel his brother and killed him." (4:8)

Followed by Lemech's lament over having killed as well: "... Ki' ish haragti' lefitzi'..." "For a man have I killed by my wound..." (4: 23)

All of this leads to the chapter of generations (Genesis chapter 5), which when listing each successive generation of mankind, concludes each generation (each life) with the simple and yet so very final word: "Va'yamot", "And he died."

In fact, in Chapter Five this word appears no less than eight times, (verses 5,8,11, 14, 17, 20, 24, 27, and 31, the only exception being the story of Hanoch who is not described as dying but rather as "Einenu", "He is no longer", implying a different experience, and suggesting that the death term ("Va'yamot") being employed here does not mean that a person is no longer....

(It is also interesting to note that in an actual Torah scroll, each instance here where the word "Va'yamot" is used, appears as the end of a paragraph.)

Ernst Beckett, in his award-winning book, Denial of Death, suggests that our entire lives and everything we do are ultimately about our attempts to deny our own mortality.

Why then is 'death' introduced here at the beginning of the Torah, which seems to be such a central part of life, whether in its denial or anticipation, challenge or solution?

It is interesting that although the book of Genesis (Bereishit) begins with the question of death, the Torah never actually defines it, much less describes what follows this seemingly end of life. Death seems to be the indefinable, the unknowable, and remains as a question described even as "sheo'lah" (see Bereishit 37:35, where Ya'acov describes his mourning over Joseph as lasting till the end of his days...) whose root sha'al, the question suggests death as the ultimate question.

Indeed, it is only at the end of the book of Genesis, when Ya'acov lies on his deathbed, that we are given the barest suggestion as to what death is about.

Ya'acov, the third of the patriarchs, is the first figure in the Torah and perhaps in history, who has the opportunity to anticipate death. His is the first narrative of the actual process of death, and according to the Midrash (rabbinic legend) he may have been the first individual who actually became ill, giving him the chance to prepare for death.

(According to the Midrash, up until that time when a person died it was like the battery ran out, he simply sneezed, expelling the air breathed into us as the giving of soul (see Bereishit 2:7) and dropped dead, literally. Which may be why, to this day we say "G-d bless you" when a person sneezes....)

And what indeed, was his last task here on earth? He gathers his children, the future twelve tribes of Israel around him (as well as his grandsons Menashe and Ephraim) and blesses them before he dies.

And as soon as he concludes this task, the Torah tells us: “Va’yechal Ya’acov le’tzavot et banav, va’ye’asef raglav el ha’mittah, va’yigvah, va’yeasef el amav.” “And Ya’acov concluded instructing his children, and he gathered his feet onto the bed and he expired and was gathered unto his people.” (Bereishit 49:33)

A puzzling verse, to say the least.

Onkelos (the Mishnaic period scholar who translated the entire Torah into Aramaic, the language of the day) translates the term va’yigvah, (and he expired) as va’itnagid, which loosely translated means he went opposite or against, implying perhaps that death is just a step in a completely different direction.

But what does it mean that Ya’acov was ‘gathered unto his people’? Where are these people? And what does it mean that he ‘gathered his feet unto the bed’? Why do we need to know how Ya’acov was lying when he died? What do his feet have to do with his death?

And then there is the Talmud’s cryptic comment on this verse (Ta’anit 5a, quoted in Rashi on the verse):

“Ya’acov Avinu’ lo’ met.” “Our father Ya’acov is not dead.”

While this comment may be based on the fact that the word death (mavet) in fact does not appear here in this verse, nonetheless, it sure seems like Ya’acov died. So what does this mean?

Perhaps in order to deal with death we need to understand what life is all about.

There are many different levels to life. There is physical life, what Jewish mysticism describes as the nefesh be’hemi’ the animal side to who we are which basically is about consciousness, and the fact that even an animal is conscious of its needs and desires.

But then there is what we do with that life and the need we all carry to ascribe meaning to it. Our innate desire to make life meaningful is the part of us that rises beyond the animal part of who we are, and taps into the soul of life itself.

When Hashem breathed a soul into each one of us, we were given the opportunity to rise above our own physicality and to tap into why we are really here. This process, incidentally, cannot exist without our having been created by a Creator (What we call G-d, or Hashem). If we are created then we are not random; we must have purpose and our greatest challenge, along with life’s greatest joy, is in our attempt to tap into that purpose and figure out why we are here, and what we are meant to do with being here. (Or at least what we choose to do with our being here.)

Indeed, no matter how insignificant something may seem to be, this week’s portion teaches us that every thing was created and thus must have purpose, and our desire to give our lives meaning really stems from our need to tap into why we are

here and connect to the source of life itself: Hashem, who created us.

And of course, part of that meaning is not just that we have our own individual meaning, but that we can connect to a collective that is much bigger than we are whether it be a Jew connecting to the collective soul of the entire Jewish people, or for that matter any human being connecting to the collective soul of his people, nation, or religion. Indeed, some people are able to connect to the collective soul of the entire world.

Thus, we sense that there is a difference between an American killed in a car accident on I-95, and an American killed in Iraq as part of the US Army’s battle against terrorism, in defense of freedom who, even in his death, is connecting to the collective of an entire nation.

When Ya’acov leaves this world, he has essentially fulfilled his mission: he has forged a family of twelve sons into the beginnings of a nation that will become the Jewish people. He lives to see the brothers come back together as one, around his bedside, and he succeeds in instructing them on what that means. Only when he has completed this mission, the mission of his life, is he ready to move on. And he gathers his feet onto the bed, perhaps because his journey, his walk, is over, so he can move on. Yet, he is not dead; he is not “over”, he rather becomes a part of the larger collective soul of the Jewish people, and remains with us, in who we are and all that we do as a Jewish people to this very day.

Death then, is not an ending but a milestone, a portal, giving all of us the chance to consider dreams realized, and challenges which remain.

And as we read the portion of Bereishit, and contemplate a new year, full of new beginnings, let us take the time as well to reflect on all those individuals and dreams, ideas and past accomplishments that are the foundations on which we can begin, read, and continue, all over again.

Best wishes for a sweet year full of joy and exciting beginnings,

Shabbat Shalom from Jerusalem,

R. Binny Freedman

[1] See commentary Aderes Eliyahu of the Vilna Gaon to Bereishis loc. cit. who likewise explains the pasuk in this way.

[2] Pasuk 11. [3] This final section is based on Meshech Chochmah to Bereishis 12:7. [4] Bereishis ibid. Copyright © 2023 Journeys in Torah, All rights reserved. You’re receiving this email either because you signed up on the website or you requested to be added. <http://www.journeysintorah.com> Our mailing address is: Journeys in Torah 2/4 Rechov Yitzhok ben Nachum Bayit Vegan 90045 Israel

from: **Michal Horowitz** <contact@michalhorowitz.com>

date: Oct 11, 2023, 11:01 AM

subject: [New post] Bereishis 5784/Operation Swords of Iron
Bereishis 5784/Operation Swords of Iron

By Michal Horowitz on Oct 11, 2023 08:01 am

Bereishis 5784: Creation (Ch.1), Man and Woman (Ch.2), First sin (Ch.3), First murder (Ch.4), The ten generations from Adam to Noach (Ch.5). At the very end of the parsha, the Torah tells us of the corruption of man upon earth.

The pasukim tell us (Bereishis 6:6-8) וַיִּנָּחֵם ה' בִּיַּעֲשֵׂה אֶת-הָאָדָם – and Hashem reconsidered having made man on earth, and He was pained in His heart (keviyachol); And Hashem said: אֲמַחֶה אֶת-הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר-בָּרַאתִי מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה, כי עשיתם – I will erase man whom I created from upon the face of the earth – from man to animal, to creeping things, and to birds of the sky; for I have reconsidered My having made them; And Noach found favor in the eyes of Hashem. On the words “And He was pained in His heart”, Rashi teaches:

וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֱלֹהִים עַל אֲבִדֹן מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו, כְּמֹו נִעְצֵב הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל בְּנוֹ (שם ב' י"ט), וְזֶוּ כְּתִיב לְתַשׁוּבַת הַמִּינִים גֹּי אֶחָד שֶׁשָּׂאֵל אֶת רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן קֶרְחָה, אָמַר לוֹ אֵינִי אֶתֵּם מוֹדִים שֶׁהַקֹּדֶם רֹאֶה אֶת הַנּוֹלָד? אָמַר לוֹ הֵן, אָמַר לוֹ וְהָאֵל כְּתִיב וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֱלֹהִים לִבּוֹ? אָמַר לוֹ נִלְדָּד לָךְ בֶּן זָכָר מִמִּידָּ? אָמַר לוֹ הֵן, אָמַר לוֹ וְהָאֵל עָשִׂיתָ? אָמַר לוֹ שְׂמַחְתִּי וְשְׂמַחְתִּי אֶת הַכֹּל, אָמַר לוֹ וְלֹא הָיִיתָ יוֹדֵעַ שְׂסוּפּוֹ לְמוֹת? אָמַר לוֹ בִּשְׁעַת הַדִּנָּה הַדִּנָּה בִּשְׁעַת אֲבֵלָה אֲבֵלָה, אָמַר לוֹ כִּד מַעֲשֵׂה הַקֹּדֶם, אֵף עַל פִּי שְׂגִלּוֹי לִפְנֵי שְׂסוּפּוֹן לְחַטֹּא וּלְאֲבִדֹן לֹא נִמְנַע מִלְבָּרֵאן בְּשִׁבִּיל הַצַּדִּיקִים הָעֲתִידִים לַעֲמֹד מִקָּם

He mourned over the destruction of His handiwork: And this I have written as an answer to the heretics (who deny that G-d knows the future): A certain non-Jew asked the Tanna R' Yehoshua b. Karchah a question and said to him, “Do you not admit that Hashem knows the future?” R' Yehoshua said to him, “Yes (He does know the future).” The non-Jew said, “But it is written, and ‘He was pained in His heart,’ which indicates that G-d did not foresee the outcome of creating man!” R' Yehoshua answered him, “Has a male child been born to you in your lifetime?” The non-Jew said “Yes.” R' Yehoshua said to him, “And what did you do (when the child was born)?” He said to him, “I rejoiced, and I made everybody rejoice with me.” R' Yehoshua said to him, “But did you not know that his destiny is to die (like all of man)?” The non-Jew said to him, “בִּשְׁעַת הַדִּנָּה הַדִּנָּה בִּשְׁעַת אֲבֵלָה אֲבֵלָה – at a time of joy, we rejoice, and at a time of mourning, we mourn.” Said R' Yehoshua, “So too HKB”H. Even though it was revealed before Him that man’s destiny is to die, and to suffer destruction, He did not refrain from creating man, for the sake of the tzadikim (righteous) who are destined to arise. As we face a threat to our treasured and holy nation, Am Yisrael; our beautiful Holy Land, Eretz Yisrael; and our miraculous medinah, Medinat Yisrael, such that has never been seen since the establishment of the State in 1948, let us remember that בִּשְׁעַת הַדִּנָּה הַדִּנָּה בִּשְׁעַת אֲבֵלָה אֲבֵלָה, at a time of rejoicing, we rejoice, and in a time of mourning, we all mourn. No matter where a Jew lives today, no matter his religious affiliation, we are all in an intense, deep state of national mourning. With over a thousand kedoshim, Jewish neshamos, taken from us; tayer yiddishe kinder, babies and children, women and men in captivity R”L; close to 3,000 injured;

soldiers fighting for the State, for us and for their lives; with the country under attack of rockets from North to South; and battling terror infiltration on the northern and southern borders, Hashem yerachem v'yaazor... דַּרְכֵי צִיּוֹן אֲבִלּוֹת.

Rabbi Aryeh Leibowitz, rav of Beis HaKnesses of North Woodmere, wrote the following to his kehilla earlier this week: “During times of mourning (and there is much to mourn for as over a thousand people have already been murdered), the halacha demands that we curb our social behavior. Times of war are not the time for unnecessary parties, going out to shows and restaurants (order in if you don’t want to cook), or paying attention to silliness such as sports and fantasy teams. Of course, we all need to clear our heads and function as human beings, but we should do so in a way that reflects the sense of חִבּוּר עִם חִבּוּר that the moment demands. Chazal teach us that מַלְחָמוֹת אֵינָם מְחַלְלִים דְּגָאוּלָּה, and we should merit to see the words of the נְבִיאִים come to life as Hashem reveals His master plan.”

On the miracle of the State of Israel, in his Kol Dodi Dofek (presented just eight years after the founding of the Medinah, in 1956), Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the Rav zt”l, stated, “Let us not forget that the venom of Hitlerian anti-semitism, which made the Jews like the fish of the sea to be preyed upon by all, still infects many in our generation who viewed the horrific spectacle of the gassing of millions with indifference, as an ordinary event not requiring a moment’s thought. The antidote to this deadly poison that envenomed minds and benumbed hearts is the readiness of the State of Israel to defend the lives of its sons, its builders. It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh!

“This knock, which we must not ignore, was heard when the gates of the land were opened. A Jew who flees from a hostile country now knows that he can find a secure refuge in the land of his ancestors. This is a new phenomenon in our history. Until now, whenever Jewish communities were expelled from their lands, they had to wander in the wilderness of the nations, and were not able to find shelter in another land. Because the gates were barred before exiles and wanderers, many Jewish communities were decimated. Now the situation has changed.

If a particular people expels the Jewish minority from its midst, the exiles can direct their steps unto Zion, and she, like a compassionate mother, will gather in her children. We have all been witness to Oriental Jewry’s settling in the land of Israel in the past few years. Who knows what might have befallen our brethren in the lands in which they had settled had not the land of Israel brought them by boats and planes to her?

Had the State of Israel arisen before Hitler’s Holocaust, hundreds of thousands of Jews might have been saved from the gas chambers and crematoria. The miracle of the State came just a bit late, and as a result of this delay thousands and tens of thousands of Jews were murdered. However, now that the era of divine self-concealment (hester panim) is over, Jews who have been uprooted from their homes can find lodging in

the Holy Land. Let us not view this matter lightly! It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh!” (Fate and Destiny, p.34-35)

May HKB”H have rachamim upon us, k’rachev Av al banim, and may the yeshua (salvation), nechama (comfort), and binyan adei ad (an everlasting and eternal building) be immediately revealed.

על-אלה אני בוכה, עיני עיני ירדה מים—כי-רחוק ממני מנחם, משיב נפשי;
היו בני שוממים, כי גבר אויב
הכותבת בבכי, בברכת בשורות טובות וישועות,