מרומי תורה

שבת קודש - פרשת בראשית - כט׳ תשרי תשפ"ד

The Purpose of Animals

Ben Freund

One of the five times I got to participate on YU's Torah Tours, I was *zoche* to *lein* the first *aliyah* of Parshas Bereishis. After davening, one of the congregants came up to me and told me, "Since you *leined* 'פרו ורבו' twice,[1] you're going to have twins!"

His comment raised an interesting question. Why does the *Torah* command "פרו ורבו," "be fruitful and multiply," twice? One can answer this question very logically: The two commands of פרו ורבו are being commanded to two distinct groups of creatures. the first instance is directed towards the sea creatures, flying animals, and insects that were created on the fifth day,[2] while the second is directed towards land animals and humans created on the sixth day.[3]

While we understand the instruction to be fruitful and multiply towards humans, why are the fifth day's creations given this directive? What purpose could this command fulfill?

The Ramban[4] quotes the *midrash*[5] which says that the fifth day's creations needed the *bracha* of "פרו ורבו" because people hunt them. This *bracha* was necessary to allow them to cover the earth and keep them from going extinct. Why, however, was it necessary for so many animals to roam the earth?

Based on this Ramban, perhaps we can suggest another idea. We know that everything in this world was created for our benefit and for us to use in the service of Hashem.[6] The *gemara* in *Eiruvin*[7] brings down that we can learn modesty from the cat, not stealing from the ant, and avoiding *araios* from the dove. Not only do animals exist on earth for us to hunt and eat, as the Ramban posited, but they also exist for us to help us learn positive *midos*. The widespread availability of animals allows us to get to a higher level of avodas Hashem when we observe, learn, and imitate their positive *midos*. By being commanded to

Light Amongst the Darkness

Miriam Rivkah Freund

In these very difficult times, it can be hard to make sense of what is going on in Israel and when and how it will end. However, what is very clear is that one week ago on *Shabbos*, a terrible tragedy took place. This week has been a long week, and many are saying it is just the beginning. Whether this is true or not, no one truly knows, but this week's *parsha* can perhaps give us some *chizzuk* for this time.

It starts, בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ, In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth. וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹקִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם, The earth was unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water.[1]

I think these first *pasukim* of the *Torah* are very relevant to our times. I joined the global Mizrachi's Tefillah and Chizuk event this past week and was inspired by an idea that both US-Israel Ambassador Michael Oren and Israeli Journalist Sivan Rahav Meir touched upon. They described how in the beginning, when Hashem created the world, there was a lot of confusion and darkness. Then Hashem created light. Not only did He create light, but He went ahead and separated the light from the darkness. In these times, there is a lot of confusion and darkness being constantly shared on the news. One can fall prey to feeling despair and at a loss of how one can help. One can, *chas v'shalom*, think that this is all there is left in the world. However, the following *pasuk* immediately contradicts this perspective and offers us hope. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר, and God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.[2]

Even during our darkest and most upended hours, Hashem says there must be light, and then there is light.

be fruitful and multiply, the animals were blessed with the ability to display their midos tovos to be able to show and teach humans the proper way to behave. After all, one of the main points of learning Torah is to teach.[8]

With everything going on in Eretz Yisrael right now, it's hard to pinpoint how we should respond. It's hard to find light in an *eis tzara*. Our community has pioneered many meaningful initiatives, allowing us to do what we can to aid Israel. I'd like to highlight one of the many things we can do.

There are a lot of people in Eretz Yisrael right now who have had their lives upended. They've had to run to war, leaving everything that once was and remaining uncertain about the future. Let us appreciate everything we have while we have it. Let's use our *midos tovos* and channel them towards our Israeli brethren, showing them we're here for them in whatever manner possible. Let's do it in their *zechus*, and *b'ezras Hashem*, may we be *zoche* to see peace in Eretz Yisrael, the building of the third Beis Hamikdash, and the coming of Mashiach *bim'heira b'yameinu*!

Have a good שבת!

Hashem is with us during our most difficult days and promises us there will be light after the darkness. This is not meant to invalidate the pain as we see by the next *pasuk*: וַיַּרְא אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאוֹר כִּי טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹקִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ, and God saw that the light was good, and God separated between the light and the darkness.[3]

Hashem sees that the light is good and that hope and goodness will triumph over despair and evil, but then why does Hashem need to separate the light from the darkness? Why have darkness exist at all? There are many answers given by the sages over the generations for why evil must exist. I do not know of one that will sufficiently answer the pain that is felt right now, and I will, therefore, not try and cite them. Instead, I'd like to suggest that looking at this *pasuk*, one can see that both light and darkness exist and that Hashem separated them. However, if we look at the beginning of the *pasuk*, we can see that Hashem sees and calls only one of the two "good." That is light. As we know, when just one candle is lit in a dark room, the candle lights up the entire room and dispels the darkness.

While some fear this is the beginning of a difficult war, perhaps this is also the beginning of the last war that will bring Mashiach, as I heard from Rav Herschel Schachter *shlit"a*. We cannot know for sure, but we can continue to look for the light and become the light within the darkness as many Jews unite around the world in prayer, in much needed funds, and in *achdut*.

May this heartbreaking and painful *galus* finally come to an end, and may we see the light of the coming of Mashiach speedily in our days.

Trivia Questions

1. What does the Torah say is the primary purpose of the Luminaries, and what does it say is the secondary purpose?
2. List all of the characters in תנ"ך who slept in a תרדמה (slumber)?
3. Find two characters in this week's parsha that have the same name.

Trivia Answers From Last Week

1. Shimon did not get a blessing in Vezos HaBeracha. The Ibn Ezra says that this is because they worshiped Avodah Zarah, while the Ramban has a different explanation.
2. The city of צוער appears in the story of לוט and סדום.
3. The Torah records the public mourning of Yaakov at the end of Bereishis and Aharon in Bamidbar.

[1] בראשית א:כב, בראשית א:כח
[2] בראשית א:כ–כא
[3] בראשית א:כד–כז
[4] רמב"ן בראשית א:כב
[5] בראשית רבה יא:ג
[6] מסילת ישרים פרק א: ואם תעמיק עוד בענין תראה כי העולם נברא לשימוש האדם
[7] עירובין דף ק עמוד ב
[8] דרך חיים ו:ו: כי זה עצם התורה שילמד אחרים גם כן. וגם עיין בבא קמא דף יז עמוד א: והאמר מר גדול תלמוד תורה שהתלמוד מביא לידי מעשה לא קשיא הא למיגמר הא לאגמורי. ורש"י שם ד"ה למיגמר: לעצמו מעשה עדיף **אבל לאגמורי לאחריני עדיף ממעשה** הלכך לימד לא אמרינן

[1] Bereishis 1:1, 2
[2] Bereishis 1:3
[3] Bereishis 1:4

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