

לעילוי נשמת
מרת עקא עדנה
צפורה ע"ה
בת משה מנחם הלוי ז"ל



על פני השטח

AL EY DESHE

Weekly Torah Insights and inspiration on the Parsha from the Rosh Yeshiva Shlit"za of Gur

The Power of Individuality

וַיִּכְלְוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צְבָאָם

Then the heaven and the earth were completed, and all their array. (Bereishis 2:1)

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 11a, Chullin 60a) expounds based on this pasuk: "All matter of Creation was created in its full posture, with its consent, and in its form, as the pasuk says, וַיִּכְלְוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל צְבָאָם, do

We may note that according to Rashi's reading of the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah, the question seems to be a non-starter. Rashi comments: "With its consent – Hashem asked them if they want to be created, and they said yes. In its form – In each one's flavor and each one's mold." It seems clear from Rashi that the creations were not asked *how* they wanted to be created, but *if* they wanted to be created. If they would choose to be created, they would be formed as Hashem saw fit. The heavens would be the heavens and the earth would be the earth. However, in Chullin, Rashi explains "In its form" as "In the form that they chose." Accordingly, perhaps the creations could, in fact, choose their form. However, this Rashi may simply mean that, for example, the earth could have chosen to be square instead of round – not that it could have chosen to be a different creation. Clearly, the Rambam understood the Gemara as meaning that each creation could choose which creation it would be.³

The Rambam answers his question: the earth did not possess the understanding to fathom the purity and *kedushah* of the *Shamayim*, so it consented to be created

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Each person needs to be created in his unique mold. There can be no two Avraham Avinus and no two R. Bunims

not read it 'צבאם' but rather 'צביונם – their form.'

*Toldos Yaakov Yosef*¹ quotes the Baal Shem Tov who cited a question of the Rambam:² If each thing was only created with its consent, why didn't the earth insist on being created as the heavens, which are so much more connected to Hashem?

1 Ben Poras Yosef to our parshah; *Tzafnas Pa'ane'ach*, Yisro; *Kesones Pasim*, Kedoshim

2 The Baal Shem Tov gave the source as a *teshuvah* of the Rambam. It is no longer extant.

3 The Rambam could have asked this question on many aspects of Creation; for example, why didn't mankind choose to be *malachim*? It seems that he focused the question on the first matters of Creation, i.e., heaven and earth.

Dated Date Palms

The Gemara⁸ relates a fascinating story, which allows us a glimpse into Adam HaRishon's activities at the dawn of Creation. R. Shimi bar Ashi once set out on a journey, and R. Kahana accompanied him from Pumbedra until Bei Tzinisa of Bavel. Bei Tzinisa was home to many date palms. When they reached there, R. Kahana asked R. Shimi if it was true that the local palm trees dated back to the time of Adam HaRishon. R. Shimi remarked that this question reminded him of an explanation he'd heard attributed to R. Yosi ben R. Chanina, on the pasuk (Yirmiyahu 2:6) *in a land through which no man passed and where no person settled*. R. Yosi asked: If no man ever passed through that land, surely no person settled there, so what is the meaning of *וְלֹא יָשַׁב אָדָם שָׁם*? R. Yosi answered, *אֶרֶץ שְׂגוּרָה* "עליה אדם הראשון לישוב נתישבה, ארץ שלא גזר עליה אדם הראשון לא נתישבה – Any land which Adam HaRishon decreed would be settled was settled; any land he did not decree, was not settled."

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as the earth. *Toldos Yaakov Yosef* questions this: The purpose of seeking the consent of every creation was so that it could not complain later why it wasn't created as something else. But if each creation did not know better than to consent to its form, it could still harbor a complaint when it would later learn what it could have been. If so, what was achieved by this?

When I was in *cheder*, my *rabbeim* would relate a saying of the Rebbe R. Bunim: "If, before Creation, I would have been asked if I wanted to trade places with Avraham Avinu, I would have declined. Either way, there would be only one Avraham Avinu and one Bunim of Peshischa, so what would Hashem have gained by switching us around?"⁴ What did R. Bunim mean? The Mishnah says (*Avos* 4:3), אין לך אדם שאין לו שעה, ואין לך דבר שאין לו מקום – *Every person has his hour, and each thing has its place*. In order that this world see an expression of every *bechinah* (spiritual nuance), each person needs to be created in his unique mold. There can be no two Avraham Avinus and no two R. Bunims. In the same way, there is a need for the heavens and a need for the earth. Each one serves its unique purpose, giving Hashem *nachas ruach* in its particular fashion.

What unique purpose does the earth serve? The Midrash⁵ states that the earth is called ארץ because it wanted (רצתה) to fulfill Hashem's will. The Sfas Emes explains⁶ that although the *Shamayim* is superior to the earth

in its perfection, the earth is greater in one aspect: *ratzon*, desire. Elsewhere,⁷ the Sfas Emes adds that this is the reason there is *ta'avah*, desire, in our world. The power of *ratzon* is the essence of our purpose on this world: desiring closeness to Hashem. The satisfaction we as earth-bound creations can bring Hashem with our longing for Him cannot be matched by the *malachim* in *Shamayim* with their *avodah*. After all, that is the purpose of Creation: that Hashem be given a place to reside in the lower worlds, through our *avodas Hashem* carried out with longing.

This, then, is why the earth did not prefer to be created as the heavens. It understood that it must serve its own important *avodah* – exercising *ratzon*, desire, to serve Hashem. It is specifically *because* our world is so far removed from *ruchniyus*, so physical and earthly, that its feelings of longing for Hashem are so precious to Him.

We must all take this lesson to heart. When people suffer hardship, whether in *ruchniyus* or *gashmiyus*, they often think, *If only my life circumstances were different, like so-and-so! Then everything would be just fine*. This is the *yetzer hara* talking! We must repeat to ourselves what Chazal said: אין לך אדם שאין לו שעה, ואין לך דבר שאין לו מקום. Every person must serve Hashem in the manner specific to his place and his time, unique to his individual situation.

(בראשית תשפ"ג – ס"ג מאמר א)

Following Orders

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶל הַנָּחָשׁ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת אָרוּר אַתָּה

And Hashem G-d said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, accursed are you." (Bereishis 3:14)

Rashi comments, citing Chazal,¹⁰ that this shows that we do not seek merit for one who seduces others to sin. After all, the *nachash* could have been defended based on the principle of "דברי הרב ודברי התלמיד, דברי מי שומעין, A command of the *rebbe* and a command of a student – which does one obey?" The *nachash* could have argued that it was not responsible for Adam HaRishon eating from the *eitz hada'as* because Adam should have followed Hashem's command not to eat, disregarding the advice of the *nachash*.

What is the rationale behind the concept of שומעין דברי הרב ודברי התלמיד, דברי מי שומעין? The *Sma*¹¹ explains that a *meshale'ach* (one who appoints a *shaliach*) can claim he did not expect the *shaliach* to follow his directive over the command of Hashem. This explanation is given by the *Rishonim*¹² as well. The understanding seems to be that since the *meshale'ach* did not expect the *shelichus* to be fulfilled, his *minui shelichus* (appointing of a *shaliach*) was deficient.

This is hard to accept. Why would we assume that the *meshale'ach* was not serious about appointing the *shaliach*? This is especially difficult since the principle of *divrei harav* applies even where the *shaliach* was paid to carry out the *shelichus*.¹³ In this case, the *meshale'ach* certainly intended for the *shelichus* to be fulfilled.¹⁴ So why would the *minui shelichus* be incomplete?

One might suggest that as long as the *meshale'ach* is unsure whether the *shelichus* will be fulfilled, the appointment is lacking. But this cannot be true, either. Suppose one appoints a *shaliach* for a mission in a dangerous area. It is obviously doubtful whether it will be carried out. Nonetheless, if the *shaliach* does fulfill the *shelichus*, it certainly takes effect. Clearly, doubtfulness about the future fulfillment of a

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10 Sanhedrin 29a

11 182:2

12 *Tosefos HaRosh*, Kiddushin 42b s.v. *Hani*; *Tosefos Shantz* cited in *Shittah Mekubetzes*, ibid s.v. *Heicha*

13 See *Pnei Yehoshua* ibid; *Sha'arei Mishpat* 182:3

14 See *Tosafos*, Bava Kamma 56a s.v. *Ela*

4 See *Ramasayim Tzofim*, זי"ע, בונם הר"ר no. 17; *Shem MiShmuel*, Korach p. 287; *Zechusa D'Avraham*, Vayeshev; *Stach Sarfei Kodesh*, vol. 3 no. 214 (in the new version, Vayishlach)

5 Bereishis Rabbah 5:8

6 5635 s.v. *B'Midrash*

7 *Likutim, hashmatos* to our *parshah*

Dated Date Palms

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אֲדָם יִשָּׁב אֶדְמָה means that Adam HaRishon did not decree settlement on that land, and as a result it is “a land through which no man passed.” Rav Shimi concluded that this phenomenon was applicable to Bei Tzinisa in a different sense: Adam HaRishon decreed that its only settlement would be date palms. This is why these trees are said to date back to Adam HaRishon.

We must follow the script that Hashem prepared for us, fulfilling His will in whatever situation we find ourselves

The Gemara's wording seems unusual. The term אֶרֶץ גִּזְרָה means “a desolate land.”⁹ If so, it seems odd to refer to a land destined for settlement as “אֶרֶץ שְׂגוֹר עֲלֵיהָ אֲדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן לִישׁוּב.”

The pasuk says (2:7) וַיִּצְרֶה אֱלֹקִים אֶת אָדָם מִן הָאֲדָמָה – *And Hashem G-d formed the man of dust from the ground.* Rashi cites Chazal saying that Hashem collected dust from all ends of the earth and formed Adam out of it, so that wherever he would die, the earth would accept him in burial. Clearly, besides containing the *neshamos* of all future humanity, Adam's creation encompassed the world itself. Because of this, when Adam sinned with the *eitz hada'as*, the entirety of Creation was negatively impacted. Since that time,

every person is tasked with doing his part to restore the damage wrought by Adam's sin. As each generation – and each individual – would withstand its *nisyonos*, the *chet* would be repaired to a degree.

This is what the Gemara means by אֶרֶץ שְׂגוֹר עֲלֵיהָ אֲדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן לִישׁוּב and אֶרֶץ שְׂגוֹר עֲלֵיהָ אֲדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן. All people would face tests as a result of Adam HaRishon. Some people's tests would be in the form of an אֶרֶץ גִּזְרָה, a desolate land that is “not decreed to be settled,” i.e., they would face harsh difficulties, both in *gashmiyus* and *ruchniyus*; while some people would find their lot in “a land decreed to be settled,” i.e., a life of wealth, where they would need to exercise caution not to drown in the luxuries of this world. Whichever form of *nisayon* a person faces, he as a person, and the world as a whole, must do their best to repair the *chet* of Adam HaRishon.

The same lifetime might include periods of “settlement” and periods of “desolation.” When a person feels difficulty in *avodas Hashem*, when he doesn't taste its sweetness, he must hold strong and not succumb to his negative feelings. He must realize that this is the context for the *avodah* that Hashem wants from him at this time. And when one feels good about his *avodas Hashem*, enjoying its *geshmak*, he must be cautious that it does not lead to haughtiness.

We must internalize that our stay in this world is only a means of entry into *Olam Haba*; we must follow the script that Hashem prepared for us, fulfilling His will in whatever situation we find ourselves. This is why R. Shimi's message was relayed while traveling: it teaches that the lesson of serving Hashem whether in “settlement” or “desolation” is our life's journey, through which we can repair the damage of Adam HaRishon's sin.

One might wonder how exactly to restore the damage of Adam's *chet*. Perhaps we should learn *mishnayos* which begin with the letters of Adam's name? Such questions are simply a distraction from one's *avodah*. Each person must fix himself; he must repair his own *chet* of the *eitz hada'as*. Every person needs to focus on his own *aveiros*, elevating and refining himself further and further.

Many people want to know what they should be *mekabel* upon themselves. The answer is simple: Don't look for new things. Just fulfill your obligations – fully. Whichever mitzvos apply to you presently, perform them to the utmost. Every person knows where his struggles lie, where he needs to battle his *yetzer hara*. That is where he should focus.

One may ask *how* to do his *avodah*; *how* to vanquish his *yetzer hara*. But *what* he should be doing? That is not a question.

(בנאות דשא – בראשית תשכ"ג)

9 See *mefarshim* to Vayikra 16:22

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shelichus does not affect the validity of its *minui shelichus*.

Furthermore, it is a matter of debate whether a *shaliach* even needs to be formally appointed, or it is enough for the *shaliach* to know that the *meshale'ach* wants his service (*gilui da'as*).¹⁵ According to the second approach, the idea of *divrei harav* could not be attributed to a deficiency in the *minui shelichus*.

I believe the *Sma* means to explain differently. It is not that the *meshale'ach* does not expect the *shelichus* to be fulfilled, but rather that in regard to attributing the actions of the *shaliach* to the *meshale'ach*, the *shaliach* is seen as acting of his own accord, since the directive opposed Hashem's command.

Let us prove this approach further. The Gemara (Kiddushin *ibid*) cites a *Beraisa* that if one appoints a *shaliach* to purchase something with money of *hekdesch*, and the *shaliach* does so, the *meshale'ach* has transgressed the prohibition of *me'ilah*. The Gemara challenges this: Why doesn't the principle of *אין שליח לדבר עבירה* (one cannot become a *shaliach* to transgress a sin) apply, so that the *shaliach* is the one transgressing *me'ilah*?

*Tosafos*¹⁶ points out that the Gemara must be discussing a case where it was unknown that the money belonged to *hekdesch*, because one does not transgress *me'ilah* when acting knowingly. But if so, the principle of *divrei harav* (which is the basis for *אין שליח לדבר עבירה*) could not apply. If the *shaliach* did not know that Hashem commanded him not

to use this money, he could not be expected to reject the *shelichus*. So how can the Gemara's question be understood? *Tosafos* answers that the Gemara invokes *אין שליח לדבר עבירה* for a case where after being appointed, the *shaliach* found out that the money belonged to *hekdesch*, and nonetheless used it. In such a case, he should have followed Hashem's command and not spent the money.

If *divrei harav* is a claim that the *meshale'ach* did not expect the *shaliach* to carry out his directive, as one might understand the *Sma*'s explanation, then *Tosafos*' answer cannot be understood. Since when he appointed the *shaliach*, the *meshale'ach* was unaware that the money belonged to *hekdesch*, it could not be said that he did not expect the *shelichus* to be fulfilled. Even if the *shaliach* later discovered that it belonged to *hekdesch*, that cannot change the original mindset of the *meshale'ach*. The *Sma*'s explanation must be reconciled with *Tosafos*' answer, because *Tosefos Shantz*¹⁷ writes both of these explanations.

Clearly, the *Sma* means that, as above, because the *shelichus* conflicts with Hashem's command, the act of the *shaliach* cannot be attributed to the *meshale'ach*. This holds true even where the *shaliach* realizes after his appointment that Hashem forbids following the directive of the *meshale'ach*. Here, too, the *shaliach*'s act cannot be seen as belonging to the *meshale'ach*.

(בנאות דשא – בראשית תשפ"ג)

Divrei Hisorerus on the Situation in Eretz Yisrael

It was not easy to feel *simchas yom tov* as the Torah requires this Simchas Torah. It brings to mind a story with Rav Yitzchak Hutner. During Sukkos of 5703, Rav Hutner, living in America, received the bitter news coming out of Europe. At the same time, a gentile neighbor decided to have some fun and set Rav Hutner's *sukkah* on fire. Utterly broken, Rav Hutner sat down and burst into tears. Just then, a *chassidische Yid* passed by. Taking in the situation, he addressed Rav Hutner. "Rav Yitzchak," he said, "you must understand that when the Ribbono Shel Olam commanded the mitzvah of *v'samachta b'chagecha*, He intended it, as well, for Rav Yitzchak Hutner on Sukkos of 5703."

Rav Hutner was grateful his entire life for these words. The right words at the right time make their mark better than the most powerful *derashah*. It is this same lesson that we must keep in mind now.

We must internalize that Hashem is our merciful Father and He acts only for our good. We don't know His *cheshbonos*, but if He commanded us to be joyous, we must try to place ourselves in a happy state of mind.

All Yidden must join in with our brethren who are *batzarah u'vashivyah*, in suffering and captivity. We must join them in feeling, in heartfelt pain. When the Jews of Beitar were undergoing suffering at the hands of the Romans, other Jews felt secure that it was not they who were suffering. This caused a *kitrug* against them. We must not feel this way.

Each person has to judge for himself in what area he falls short and rectify his ways. It is impossible to know Hashem's ways, but it seems that in a general sense, there has been a lacking in *emunah* and *bitachon* in Hakadosh Baruch Hu. We have become reliant on *basar v'dam*, on the power of man. It has now become clear that *אם ה' לא ישמר עיר וְשָׂאָה שְׂקִידָהּ* – *if Hashem will not guard the city, in vain is the watchman vigilant* (Tehillim 127:1). Sometimes one forgets who it is that is guarding him from the dog. It is then that the dog bites, *chas v'shalom*. We must remember and internalize that Hashem alone is our protector and guardian.

Another important point is attentiveness to *kedushah*. The Torah warns that when there is a breach in *kedushah*, *וְשָׂאָה מֵאַחֲרֶיךָ* – *Hashem will turn away from you* (Devarim 23:15). It is not easy, but the more we improve in *kedushah*, the more the *Shechinah* will be among Klal Yisrael and protect us.

Let us strengthen ourselves in Torah and *tefillah* and acting as Yidden should act, and may Hashem bring us *besoros tovos*.

15 See *Shulchan Aruch*, E.H. 35:4; *Machaneh Efraim*, *Zechiyah U'Matanah* 6

16 *S.v. Amai*

17 *Ibid*