Points to Ponder

Berashis 5779

**יֹּ֣אמֶר אֱלֹהִ֗ים יְהִ֤י מְאֹרֹת֙ בִּרְקִ֣יעַ הַשָּׁמַ֔יִם לְהַבְדִּ֕יל בֵּ֥ין הַיּ֖וֹם וּבֵ֣ין הַלָּ֑יְלָה וְהָי֤וּ לְאֹתֹת֙ וּלְמ֣וֹעֲדִ֔ים וּלְיָמִ֖ים וְשָׁנִֽים Hashem declared that there should be illuminaries in the Shomayim to separate between day and night (1:14**) – When the Russians landed the lunar rover, The **Brisker Rav** was asked if there could ever be life on the moon. He cited this possuk in order to show that the moon was created to have impact on the calendar and on determining day and night but not for sustaining life.

**זָכָ֥ר וּנְקֵבָ֖ה בָּרָ֥א אֹתָֽם He created them as male and female (1:27)** – The Talmud (Berachos 62b) notes that there is a disagreement between Rav and Shmuel as to whether woman was created from man’s tail or whether he was created both male and female at the same time. Assuming the latter, was female back to back with him or facing the same direction? **Rav Schachter Shlita** pointed out that there are two opinions in the Zohar best hinted to, in the dual style of writing in Ksav Ashuris. In the Beis Yosef Ksav, the Tzadee (Sofis ) is like a second head facing the same direction as the original while the Ksav Ari looks like dueling heads pulling into 2 directions. The **Gra** explained that the difference is before the sin versus after. **Rav Soloveitchik ztl**. added that as he got older, he could not imagine two heads ever working in the same direction.

**וַיַּ֤רְא אֱלֹהִים֙ אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁ֣ר עָשָׂ֔ה וְהִנֵּה־ט֖וֹב מְאֹ֑ד Hashem saw all that He created and it was very good (1:31)** – If Hashem saw it as all good, how could Shlomo say it was all Havel Havolim? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** answered that when a person can sum up all of creation in the manner that Shlomo did, Hashem saw that as Tov Meod. Then, it is not all worthless.

**עַל־גְּחֹֽנְךָ֣ תֵלֵ֔ךְ וְעָפָ֥ר תֹּאכַ֖ל כָּל־יְמֵ֥י חַיֶּֽיךָ: You will crawl on your back and you will eat dirt all of the days of your life (3:14)** – If the snake were to have dirt available at his disposal all of the days of his life, was this really a curse – or a Beracha? Also, the Gemara (Bava Kama 16a) notes that one who does not bow at Modim becomes a snake. What is the connection between the snake and someone who does not bow at Modim? **Rav Betzalel Rudinsky Shlita** suggested that the ultimate blessing is the awareness that you are connected to the holiness and all-powerful Hashem. Thus, one who loses the connection to Hashem is cursed. If you have the chance to relate to Hashem even if to ask for your needs, you are still connected. If you are cursed and not given the chance to relate, there is no bigger curse than the abandonment and lonliness it brings on. Being unable to bow to thank Hashem at Modim makes us as cursed as the Nachash.

**וַיִּקְרָ֧א הָֽאָדָ֛ם שֵׁ֥ם אִשְׁתּ֖וֹ חַוָּ֑ה כִּ֛י הִ֥וא הָֽיְתָ֖ה אֵ֥ם כָּל־חָֽי: He called her Chava as she was the mother of all living things (3:20)** – Why does Adam name her NOW? Why with the recognition that she was the mother of all living things? **Rav Eliyahu Baruch Shulman Shlita** commented that while anger fleets, names remain permanent. We can choose to develop a perspective rather than to choose to highlight a memory that corrodes our past.

**וַיַּ֩עַשׂ֩ יְהֹוָ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים לְאָדָ֧ם וּלְאִשְׁתּ֛וֹ כָּתְנ֥וֹת ע֖וֹר וַיַּלְבִּשֵֽׁם: He made them clothes of light (3:21**) – The Midrash notes that Hashem made them clothes that shown like lanterns. What type of lanterns were these? **Rav Shaul Yisraeli ztl.** explained that the light referred to here was the light of Chessed that illuminated from the moment that Hashem displayed his Chessed at the beginning of the torah and all the way through until the end when he buried Moshe . Without the original sin, the illumination of Chessed would not have been as apparent.

**לָ֚מָּה חָ֣רָה לָ֔ךְ וְלָ֖מָּה נָֽפְל֥וּ פָנֶֽיךָ: Why are you angry and why are you sad (4:6)** – We can understand why Kayin was angry – it was a result of the jealousy he must have felt after Hevel stole his idea and was more accepted than he. But why was he sad? **Rav Elya Svei ztl.** explained that the Torah is showing us the danger of a Nefilah – a depression. The depression can lead one to give up on himself and break too far. That is what happened to Kayin. He chose to notice Hevel and not his own talents. When one thinks that his using his own talents to achieve his personal spiritual goals does not matter, it is the perfect place for his to fall prey to his Yetzer HaRa.

**Haftorah - יְהֹוָ֥ה חָפֵ֖ץ לְמַ֣עַן צִדְק֑וֹ יַגְדִּ֥יל תּוֹרָ֖ה וְיַאְדִּֽיר The Lord desires [this] for His righteousness' sake; He magnifies the Torah and strengthens it (Yeshayahu 42:21)** – How was Hashem not in violation of Baal Tosif when he was interested in being Mizakeh us in Torah u’Mitzvos? **The Netziv** (comments to Sheiltos) explains that Hechsher Mitzvos in the Torah get us Sachar even though they are only preparatory. **Rav Schwab ztl**. suggested that L’Hagdil torah refers to that which we understand and can explain. The L’Haadir refers to that which is beyond our comprehension but we still observe it lovingly.