



YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Bereishis

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

A New Level of Understanding

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The Objective for Creating Heaven & Earth

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The Difference Between the Attributes of Justice & Mercy

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Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Bereishis

The Blueprint of Creation to Actualize G-d's Glory



Speech, the Catalyst for Spirituality

Torah: Regarding the creation of Adam, “And Hashem G-d formed the man, dust from the ground, and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life; and man became a living being (*nefesh chaya*).”

Rashi: The *Torah* also refers to the domesticated and undomesticated animal as ‘*nefesh chaya* (living beings)’; however, the human being is the ultimate of living species because he possesses intelligence and has the ability to speak.

Ramban citing *Targum Unkolus*: The words “*nefesh chaya*” can be interpreted as “he (man) became a speaking species. It is with this unique soul that man will have the ability to comprehend and speak.” If the *Torah* uses the same words “living species (*nefesh chaya*)” regarding the creation of man as it does regarding the creation of land animals, what is the basis for the interpretation of “living species,” when

stated regarding man, to mean that he became a species with the power of speech?

Torah: “*Bereishis bara Elokim* – In the beginning G-d created...”

Chazal: The opening words of the *Torah* mean that for the sake of *Torah*, which is “*reishis* (first/choicest)” G-d created heaven and earth. Meaning, that all existence only came into being for the specific purpose for the fulfillment of *Torah*. Another interpretation of the opening words of the *Torah* is that G-d created the world for the sake of the Jewish people who are referred to as “*reishis* (chosen). In essence, the world was created only for the fulfillment of the *Torah*; however, because the Jewish people are the only ones qualified to receive it, it is the equivalent of the world being created for them. If any other nation would have been qualified to receive the *Torah*, the world would have been created also on their behalf.

Gemara in Tractate *Eruvin*: One of the students of *Reb Meir* was studying *Torah* without articulating its words. He only meditated upon it. *Bruryah*, the wife of *Reb Meir* strongly criticized this student for not enunciating the *Torah* that he was studying. She had said to him, "You are not accomplishing anything in the manner in which you are studying." She based her criticism on the verse that states, "*Torah* is life for those who come upon it (*l'motzeihem*)."*Bruryah* explained to him that the verse is stating, "*Torah* brings life only to the one who verbally expresses it (*meshe motzi b'peh*)."

It is only when one articulates the *Torah* that he is studying that it spiritualizes him and brings about life. Since the world was created only to be the setting for the fulfillment of *Torah* (in all its aspects), the ultimate purpose of creation is for the spiritualization of man and all existence. Spirituality, at the most complete level, can only be achieved through the articulation of *Torah* when it is being studied and extolling G-d. Consequently, the human species that was created for that purpose is not complete and fully functional unless it was endowed with the power of speech. The expression "living being (*nefesh chaya*)" when it applies to the animal means that it was created with a life source that enabled it to be complete within its own context as an animal.

Similarly, the words "*nefesh chaya*" when applied to the human being means that he was endowed with a life source that enables him to be complete in his mission, which is to glorify G-d. As the prophet states, "For My (G-d) glory I have created it (the world)." Although the nations of the world have no relevance to the spirituality that is generated through the articulation of the *Torah*; nevertheless, they were endowed with intelligence and the ability to speak only to sing G-d's praises. As it states in *Isaiah* that at the end of time, "Every tongue should swear..." G-d will be glorified and extolled by all mankind.

The Undeniable Purpose of Existence

Bereishis: "*Bereishis bara Elokim ais Hashemayim v'ais haaretz* – In the beginning G-d created the heaven and the earth..." Throughout the six days of Creation, the *Torah* refers to G-d with the appellation of "*Elokim*."

Chazal: The appellation of "*Elokim*" connotes the Attribute of Justice while the appellation of "*Hashem*" connotes the Attribute of Mercy.

Midrash: G-d initially intended to bring about existence through the Attribute of Justice, which is exacting. However, at the time of the creation of Man, the *Torah* juxtaposes the appellation of "*Hashem*" to "*Elokim*" – "*Hashem Elokim*."

Rashi citing *Chazal*: "The world could not exist solely through the Attribute of Justice (because man is prone to fail), therefore G-d integrated the Attribute of Mercy with the Attribute of Justice." What relevance does the Attribute of Justice have to the inanimate world and its unintelligible creatures who are not endowed with the power of choice? The Attribute of Justice and the Attribute of Mercy are only applicable within a context of culpability. If one chooses to do the right thing he will be rewarded. Contrastingly, if one chooses to transgress he will then be punished.

Midrash: The verse, "*Bereishis bara Elokim* – In the beginning G-d created..." can mean that G-d brought about existence for the sake of *Torah* which is referred to as "*reishis* (choicest/first). Meaning, the setting of existence is solely to accommodate and facilitate all aspects of *Torah*."

Chazal: The *Torah* was the blueprint for existence. As *Chazal* state, "G-d gazed into the *Torah* and created the world." Thus, anything in existence that would have no relevance to the fulfillment of the *Torah* would be considered superfluous. Every granule of sand, since it exists, has some relevance to the fulfillment of *Torah*. This exactness in function and purpose has relevance to "*Elokim*," the Attribute of Justice.

Gemara in Tractate *Avodah Zorah*: "During the first three hours of the day, G-d studies *Torah* and during the second three hours of the day, He sits in Judgment of the world." If one prays the *Mussaf Amidah* (Additional Silent Prayer of the Morning Service) of *Rosh Hashanah* as an individual, not within the context of a *minyan* (quorum of ten men), he should not do so during the first three hours of the day because the most intense and exacting level of Judgment occurs during this period of time. However, if one prays within the context of a *tzibur* (congregation), there is no need to be concerned. This is because of the special merit of the *tzibur*.

Gemara: "If G-d sits in Judgment of the world during the second three hours of the day, why should one not

pray the *Mussaf* Service as an individual during the first three hours?" The *Gemara* answers, "When G-d studies *Torah* during the first three hours it is the most intense moment of Judgment. The level of judgment that is unleashed during the second three hours when He sits in judgment of the world is not as severe."

King Solomon in *Proverbs*: "Acquire Truth (*Emmes*) and do not sell it." When G-d studies *Torah* it is a moment of exactness and truth. *Torah* is unadulterated Truth. Because it is precise and exact, it is therefore a moment that G-d does not tolerate any degree of imperfection. There are no gray areas in *Torah* – something is either permitted or forbidden. It is only because of our lack of clarity and understanding that there exists ambiguity. *Emmes* (Truth) is spelled in the Hebrew language "*Alef mem tof*."

Maharal of Prague: If Truth is lacking in even on the most miniscule level, which is represented by the letter "*Alef*," what remains is "*mem tof – mes*," which means "death." Since existence was only created to accommodate and facilitate the fulfillment of the *Torah*, the criteria of creation was thus as precise and exacting as the *Torah* itself.

Chinuch: There is a Negative Commandment that one is not permitted to add to the *Torah* (*baal tosif*) or detract "*baal tigrash*" from the *Torah*. Adding to the *Torah* is the equivalent of a detraction because the *Torah* is perfect and complete. Thus, the *Torah* uses the appellation of "*Elokim*" regarding Creation to indicate its purpose.

Gemara in Tractate *Avodah Zorah*: At the end of time G-d will sit with a *Torah* and declare to the world, "Whoever has a share in *Torah* should come and take his just reward." All the nations of the world will gather to claim their rightful reward. They will claim that all of their achievements and successes were only for the sole purpose for the Jewish people to engage in *Torah* study. They will say to G-d that the wars that they had waged, the massive amounts of money that they had accumulated, and the cities that they built were only to accommodate the Jewish people to study *Torah*.

G-d will respond, "Fools, that you are! You did all of these things for yourselves (and not for the *Torah*)."
If the end of time is a moment of truth, how could the nations falsely claim that all of their pursuits and successes were solely for the sake of the *Torah*?

Brisker Rav and *Chofetz Chaim*: When the nations of the world took their initiatives, they had only done so to accommodate themselves. However, at the end of time, when truth will reign supreme, the nations of the world will realize and understand that there is nothing in existence that can be achieved unless it directly or indirectly relevant to *Torah*. In retrospect, they will understand that in reality they had only succeeded in their pursuits because it was meant to accommodate the Jewish people and their *Torah*. However, G-d will tell them that they are undeserving of reward because their initial intent was not to benefit the *Torah*. This reality is based on the first verse of the *Torah*, "*Bereishis bara...for the sake of reishis* (the choicest, which is *Torah*) G-d created heaven and earth."

Gemara: If one loses a small coin and it is found by a needy person who benefits from it, the one who had lost it will be credited for doing an act of charity. Although the one who had lost the coin had no idea that there was a beneficiary of his loss; nevertheless he is rewarded. Why then are the nations of the world not deserving of reward- similar to the one who had lost the coin?

Gemara in Tractate *Avodah Zorah*: This is referring to the end of time when G-d will reveal His Omnipotence to the world, which is a moment of truth and clarity. Since reward at that moment only has relevance to truth, only the individual who was purely motivated to benefit the *Torah* can be a beneficiary of that reward.

The Secret to Jewish Survival

Rabbeinu Bachya and *Maharal* of Prague: The number seven always connotes and symbolizes the natural order. The process of Creation of the physical world occurred over a seven-day period, culminating with the *Shabbos*.

Torah: Regarding agricultural activities in the Land of Israel, one may work the land for six years, but must keep it fallow in the seventh year. This Law is to commemorate the process of Creation, in which G-d was creative for six days and ceased His creative activities on the Seventh Day (*Shabbos*). The number eight, which is one beyond seven, alludes to the supernatural – that which is outside of the context of nature. For instance, the *Torah* states that a male child

must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. Although the foreskin is a natural part of the anatomy of a male, the *Torah* dictates that it must be removed on the eighth day. The number “eight” is to connote that the removal of the foreskin has no relevance to the physicality of the Jew, but rather is an integral part of his spirituality.

The festival of *Shavuot* is celebrated fifty days after the Jewish people had left Egypt (Passover). The Sinai event that had taken place on *Shavuot* is referred to as the day of the “giving of our *Torah*.” It is the day that the Jewish people were taken by G-d to be His chosen. They had become consecrated as a result of this experience. It is interesting to note that this occurred on the day after seven cycles of seven, which is the equivalent of “eight.” This is to indicate and emphasize that what occurred on this day was something that transcended the natural order.

Torah: Some years after the Great Flood, the families of the world had decided to build a tower in Babel in order to ascend to heaven to “wage war against G-d.” G-d disrupted their scheme by scattering them over the face of the earth. He confused the seventy families by giving each of them their own unique language. Thus, disrupting the unity and commonality among them. These seventy families became the seventy root nations of existence. Again we find that the root nations of existence which personify physicality are quantified by the number “seventy”, which is ten multiples of “seven.” This is to reveal that their essence is physical and have no true relevance to spirituality. The seventy nations of the world are therefore bound by the natural order and cannot transcend or supersede it.

This is understood by a statement in Tractate *Shabbos*—that the nations of the world are bound by the Zodiac. The gentile is not able in any way to change what is dictated through the star under which he was born. In contrast, the Jewish people, whose essence is spiritual, are able to supersede the limitations and constraints of physical existence. This is also demonstrated by the statement of the *Gemara*, “*Ein mazal l'Yisrael* – the Jewish people are not bound by the Zodiac.”

Torah in Haazinu: When the Jewish people will engage in paganism, it will cause G-d's Wrath to come upon them. The verse states, “They provoked me with a non-god, angered Me with their vanities; so I shall provoke them

with a nonpeople, with a vile nation shall I anger them.” Meaning, just as the Jewish people had forsaken G-d for something of no value, He will mete out punishment against them with a nation that does not truly have the standing of a nation – measure for measure.

Rashi: “G-d will express His vengeance through a nation that has no name. As it states, ‘The people of the land of Kasdim, who are not a nation and the Edomites who are disgraceful...’ Although the Edomites are considered a nation, since their essence is disgraceful, it is the equivalent of a non-nation.” The essence of the Jewish people is their spirituality. Their sole purpose in existence is to utilize the material to develop and perfect their essence. They have no place in existence as a nation whose objective is their physical and material advancement. The world, as a finite entity, cannot accommodate anything beyond the number “seventy” (the seventy nations of the world). Thus, the Jew has no place within existence if he does not live in accordance with the Will of G-d.

Torah in the Portion of the *Tochachah* (Curses): If the Jewish people forsake the *Torah*, they will be punished in a manner that no other nation had ever experienced. The level of suffering and denigration will be unfathomable. This is because outside of the context of spirituality, the Jewish people have no place in the world. As the body rejects a foreign entity and expels it, identically the world will reject and expel the existence of the Jewish people. Thus, they are destined to a level of extinction.

Torah regarding *Yitzchak's* quantification of *Yaakov*: “*Hakol kol Yaakov v'hayadayim yidei Esav* - the voice is the voice of *Yaakov* and the hands are the hands of *Esav*.”

Chazal: This statement can mean that as long as the Jewish people utilize their “voice” as the “voice” of *Yaakov* (symbolic of *Torah* study), then they will not be subject to the hands of *Esav*. If one can hear the “chirpings of the children in the synagogues and the voices of *Torah* in the study halls,” then the Jewish people will not fall prey to their enemies. It is only when they forsake the *Torah* that they will be subject to annihilation.

The Jewish people have suffered through many exiles over thousands of years because they had failed as a

Jewish people. If in fact there is no place in existence for them as a nation within the physical realm, why have they not become extinct?

Torah: During the fortieth year in the desert, Moshe had said to the Jewish people, “At the end of time G-d will return with your captives to the Land of Israel.”

Rashi citing the *Midrash*: The verse should have stated, ‘G-d will bring back your captives.’ Why then does the verse state that G-d will return “with” your captives? It is because when the Jewish people go into exile, G-d goes into exile with them. What is the value of G-d following His people into exile?

Simply one would say that just as a parent, because of his exceptional level of love for his child, is pained when his child is punished, so too is G-d because of His unlimited love for His children/people pained by their suffering in exile. Therefore He accompanies them into exile. However, with our understanding of the essence of the Jewish people and their relevance to existence, we can explain this differently.

The reason G-d needs to go into exile with the Jewish people is because if He did not, they would cease to exist. Although the Jewish people were exiled because of their spiritual failings/abandonment of G-d; nevertheless, G-d associates Himself with His children in exile to guarantee their survival. His association with them in exile is the only reason that they do not go into oblivion. It is only because G-d is with His children in exile, that they will be able to return for the ultimate redemption.

Putting Things Into Perspective

Torah: “*Bereishis bara Elokim* – In the beginning G-d created ...”

Rashi citing *Chazal*: The *Torah* refers to G-d with the appellation of “*Elokim*” to connote that existence was brought about through the Attribute of Justice. In contrast the appellation “*Hashem* (YKVK)” connotes G-d’s Attribute of Mercy.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: What the *Torah* is telling us is that in essence the Attribute of Justice represents goodness and kindness (*tov v’chesed*). Bringing about the creation of the world was itself an act of kindness

and goodness – providing unlimited opportunity for mankind. Before the sin of *Adam*, existence was untainted and pure. It was a setting in which man could have advanced himself to a level of perfection within moments. However, because of the sin of *Adam* that same accomplishment will take 6000 years, as explained by *Ramchal*.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: “This is the meaning of the verse ‘*Hashem hu haElokim* – *Hashem* (YKVK) is *Elokim*.’ Meaning, that although *Elokim* connotes the Attribute of Justice, it is in essence one in the same with goodness and kindness. There is no distinction between the two appellations – *Hashem* and *Elokim*. All of the events that have relevance to existence are meant to present mankind with the ultimate opportunity and provide kindness to him.”

For example, if one is in need to have a gangrenous limb removed in order for him to live, one may perceive it as the ultimate act of cruelty because it severely limits and handicaps the individual. However, in its essence it is the ultimate act of mercy because it is only through this procedure that the individual will be able to live. The Attribute of Justice is exacting in meting out punishment. When one transgresses, he is deserving of retribution. However, the pain and suffering that one experiences is only meant to spiritually rehabilitate him. This is the manner in which the Attribute of Justice is in essence an act of Mercy.

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh: “The blessing that *Yitzchak* had given to his son *Yaakov* states, ‘And may *Elokim* give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fatness of the earth...’ The ultimate blessing which *Yitzchak* had given emanates from *Elokim*. It is the Attribute of Justice (*Elokim*) that gives blessing gratis. Despite the fact there was no one before existence to merit its creation, G-d created the world through the Attribute of Justice. The Attribute of Justice manifests itself in severe punishment only to assist the individual. However at the end of time there will be a level of clarity that all will know that G-d is One and His Name is One. Meaning, *Hashem* (YKVK)/ the Attribute of Mercy is in fact one with *Elokim* (Attribute of Justice).”

Mishna in Tractate *Berachos*: “Just as one must bless (G-d) for the good, he must also bless G-d for the bad.” In order to perceive the Attribute of Justice in the

same manner as the Attribute of Mercy one needs to have a special level of clarity. When one experiences tragedies in life, he must understand that these tragedies emanate from the same source as bounty and blessing – which is G-d Himself, Who is all Good. One must not mistakenly believe that tragedy comes upon him from a negative/severe source. If one had the sufficient level of clarity, he would praise G-d during times of difficulty no less than the praise he would give during times of good fortune. This is in fact the law as it is stated in the Code of Jewish Law.

Torah at the conclusion of the first day of creation: “And there was evening and there was morning, day one (*yom echad*).” After the second day of creation the *Torah* states, “And there was evening and there was morning, a second day (*yom sheini*).”

Midrash: “According to the order of counting the first day of creation should have been referred to as “the first day (*yom rishon*)” However the *Torah* chose the term “*yom echad* – day one.” Nothing existed on the first day of creation other than G-d Himself. On the second day of creation the angels were created.

Maharal of Prague: The creation of the angels because of their enormous spiritual dimension and magnitude, detracted from the obviousness of G-d’s unity. Before the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, the *Midrash* tells us that when *Adam* was created, he radiated with such intensity and holiness that the angels had mistakenly believed that this radiance was that of G-d Himself. Similarly, because of the dimension of holiness of the angels themselves, it interfered with the true perception of G-d’s Oneness.

However, at the end of time this will not be the case, as the verse states, “And G-d will be King over all existence- G-d will be One and His Name will be One.” Despite the degree of the present ambiguity of reality, at the end of time all mankind will be endowed with a level of clarity to be able to recognize and fully appreciate the unity of G-d in every aspect of creation. Although the angels of enormous spiritual dimension will exist, it will not detract from His perceived unity. Therefore the level of clarity at the end of time will be even greater than that which existed at the time of the second day of Creation.



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