

LAMPLIGHTER

23 Tishrei
Parshas
Bereishis
1317
13 October
5778/2017

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The first portion of the Five Books of Moses, Bereishit that we begin reading this Shabbat, gives us an account of the creation of the world, and concludes with the words, "And G-d finished on the seventh day the work which He had made." How does this verse fit in with the prohibition against labor on the Sabbath? If G-d completed the creation of the world on the seventh day, does it not imply that some labor was done on that day too?

The commentator Rashi solves our problem by explaining that G-d's clock is more precise than our own. Human beings, who cannot measure time as accurately as G-d Himself, must cease from work several minutes before nightfall to make sure we do not violate Shabbat. G-d, however, knows exactly when "the seventh day" begins, and He went on creating the world right up until the last moment. To us, whose vision is not so perfect, it would have appeared as if G-d ceased to work on Shabbat itself.

Every word in the Torah is precise, and included in order to teach us something positive. What then are we to conclude from the fact that G-d continued His labor right up until the very last possible second, something which we must be careful not to do?

We are taught by our Sages that "G-d created nothing superfluous in His world," including the creation of time itself. Every organism, every object, and every minute has been created with a Divine purpose in mind, and must be fully utilized and not squandered. Even one second can make a difference.

Every person in the world is created with his own individual talents and abilities, and each of us is given the right circumstances in which we may use them to the fullest. At this time in history, the end of the sixth millennium since the creation of the world, we stand at the threshold of the Messianic Era. We can counter the claims of a person who says that his actions hold no importance, as our exile is almost over and that only a few minutes remain. How can an insignificant individual possibly add to the accumulated good deeds of the generations who went before us, including our ancestors, Moses, the Prophets and the Sages of the Talmud, who were spiritually superior to us in every way? he may ask. The Torah, however, teaches us that the opposite is true. Every minute we are allotted is precious, and indeed, the whole of creation may hinge on a single second. Even a tiny good deed can tip the balance and bring Moshiach now, the culmination of the entire creation.

It's a Brand New World

By Yossy Goldman

In the beginning G-d created heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1)

For a change, let's talk a little philosophy.

From the first verse of the Torah it seems that once upon a time there was nothing. Then the Creator brought the universe into existence. According to the Tanya, seeing as the world didn't always exist, it isn't quite natural for it to exist now. Therefore, the creative force of G-d, which brought the world into existence initially, must constantly be present to fuel its continued state of being. Remove that Divine energy from the world, and it simply ceases to exist. It would be like pulling the plug on creation.

This concept is known as the law of continuous creation. Indeed, in our daily morning prayers, we describe G-d as the One who "in His goodness renews each day the work of creation." The Tanya, then, would understand that to mean not only each day but also each moment.

I suppose we could understand this idea from the simple analogy of a person throwing a ball up into the air. When he throws the ball, his strength will determine how high the ball will fly. The stronger his arm, the higher it will fly and the longer it will defy the natural law of gravity. But as soon as the power of his throw is spent, the ball can no longer defy nature and comes hurtling down again.

Likewise, if we want the initial or "natural" state of the world--which was non-existence--to be defied, then we need to keep fueling that same initial thrust of creative energy into the world that brought it into existence in the first place. Otherwise, the universe simply reverts to its initial state of nothingness and non-existence, just like the ball that runs out of steam and falls back to earth.

Now let's move from the philosophical to the practical and we discover a beautiful message of hope and inspiration in this concept. We are often burdened by the past, weighed down by our personal history and experiences. Our mistakes and failures still haunt us and prevent us from moving on.

Here then is a stirring message for all who would be hampered by past disappointments. It's a brand new world. Every day, every minute, every second, G-d is recreating the world anew. Forget about the past. What was, was. Today is a new world, a new present filled with exciting new opportunities. At any given moment we can begin again.

Especially in the week of Bereishit, when we read the Torah from the very beginning, it is a most opportune time for each of us to make a fresh start and a new beginning. New beginnings aren't always easy. But this idea of continuous creation offers powerful inspiration to give ourselves a new chance filled with new opportunities. As we start a new Jewish year, let us embrace this promise and be encouraged to begin again.

Slice of LIFE

G-d's Real Estate

By Shimon Posner

She was already sitting in my row as I got onto the plane. With her hands folded in front and her elbows sticking over the armrests, she was what they call matronly. But she had an air about her that screamed activist. A garish medallion with Arabic swirls made me curious enough to ask where she was from.

"Palestine," she answered, more than a touch defiantly.

"Just like my father," I told her.

Our conversation never moved onto anything else. And never stopped and barely slowed down. She spoke just enough English to be able to fight with me.

"Deir Yassin," she challenged me. "Hebron," I answered.

I was seventeen; she must have been sixty.

"The English is me no good," she would fall back on whenever the conversation wasn't going her way. She would then raise her hands to the overhead bins and exclaim: "My land! My land!"

"No," I assured her: "My land, my land."

The irony of it. The old-time Zionists — Herzl is the only one still remembered, but there were others — spoke of "attaining" the land to "normalize" the Jewish people. The French have France; the Germans, Germany; and the Jews will have the Jewish state. No more would they be "a people apart"; they would become "a nation among nations." No longer would they be the people of the Book (definite article); they would be the people who gave the world a book. All that separated the Jews from the family of nations, argued Herzl's

devotees, was their peculiar dress, grooming, and habits. In their own land they will lose all these idiosyncrasies, and with no yarmulke, no sheitel, no kosher, no Shabbos, no bris to differentiate them, the Jews would assume their rightful place in the family of nations.

I wear a yarmulke, I keep kosher, and well, you get the picture. But when a conversation with a stranger takes a turn to a Jewish topic, it nearly always begins with — and always gets passionate with — "what's going on over there in the Middle East?"

Some are with us. Some are against us. But everyone identifies that place with us. That identity, which was supposed to normalize us, is the lightning rod for all that makes us different.

The irony. Christian anti-Semitism penalized Jewish livelihood, ghettoized Jewish residence, and slandered Jewish honor. To escape the Dreyfus Affair in the west and pogroms in the east, some Jews in Europe turned to an ancient homeland to become a nation among nations. That homeland has now kicked up Islamic anti-Semitism. (Islamic anti-Semitism was always breathtakingly vitriolic, but it had never created a movement spanning from Morocco to Pakistan until the 20th century.) And now Christian philo-Semitism, along with Christian and secular anti-Semitism, are expressed in the land-people notion.

The UN condemns, curses, whines, and gripes more about Israel than they do about all the rest of the world combined. Ivy League student bodies and their professors couch anti-Semitism in anti-Zionist slogans. In Europe — oh enough, you've read it just like I have, but I'll never forget the Arab in Casablanca who threw a plastic cup at me and screeched "Zionist!" Or the street bum on Manhattan's Seventh Avenue Express who folded his New York

Times, lowered his reading glasses, and started berating me about the Palestinians. The last great hope of making us worthy of inclusion is what secludes us. Even the Diaspora communities. Especially the Diaspora communities.

In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth. A curious opening for a giver of laws: one that doesn't escape the Talmudists. Why did the Book not begin with the first law, the first call to action, instead of the telling of the story of creation? Rashi answers: To assert Jewish ownership over Israel - He who created the earth deeded this portion of it to this, His people.

Remarkable, that real estate title precedes G-d's gift to mankind. Remarkable that the world's all-time bestseller is so tied to this declaration of entitlement. More remarkable, the attention given to its detractors. Remarkable that Rashi, one thousand years ago — a mere generation before the Crusades slaughtered his grandchildren — begins his classic commentary focusing on a Mediterranean shoreline he never saw.

"It's what the Jews do that counts, not what everyone else says," Ben-Gurion is purported to have declared. Maybe, then, we should revisit Rashi. Go back to the beginning. This land is ours and this mission is ours. We cannot be separated from it, nor do we really want to.

Irony is G-d's humor. The land-people connection that was meant to separate the Book from the people has metamorphosed into a land-people connection that embodies the connection between Him, His people, and His Book.

To say the land does not belong to the Jews may perhaps fly in the face of history, no matter where you are sitting. It most certainly flies in the face of He who wrote, "In the beginning." The rest, as they say is history. My land. My land.

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

Editor: Shlomie Naparstek

P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA

Email: lamplighter@rabbinicalcollege.edu.au

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ISSUE 1317

WEEKLY VIDEO



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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

A Jew in Madagascar

By the Grace of G-d
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and blessing:

... It was with pleasure that I received regards from you and your husband, through Rabbi Joseph Weinberg, upon the latter's return from his visit in your community. It was a double pleasure to hear from him about your and your husband's warm and willing response to the task of unifying the Jewish families in your area and bringing them closer to the practice of Judaism, especially that your husband has taken it upon himself to teach the children, which is of increased importance in our times, for today it is the children who influence their parents.

Certainly you and your husband are aware of the principle of "specific divine providence"—a principle that is a mainstay of our faith in general, and of the teachings of Chassidism in particular. "Specific divine providence" means that every event, great or small, that occurs in the world, whether involving an inanimate object, a growing thing, an animal or a human being, in its every detail and sub-detail, does not occur by chance, G-d forbid, but is specifically ordained by G-d as part of His intentions and purpose in His management of the world.

Therefore, it goes without saying that when a Jew finds himself in a distant corner of the world, far from his homeland, far from any established Jewish community, this is certainly not by chance. This Jew should see himself as an emissary of the Omnipresent through whom G-d's word may reach also this corner of the world, bringing about an increase of justice and righteousness among all its inhabitants, and spreading the teachings and observances of Judaism among its Jews.

In such a case, one should not look upon the number of individuals that one has the opportunity to influence. Our sages have said, "Whoever upholds a single Jewish soul, it is as if he has upheld an entire world." If this is true at all times, how much more so does it apply to our generation, after the destruction, Heaven forbid, of such a significant portion of our people. Today, every surviving Jew is a "brand salvaged from the fire" who must not only fulfill his own role, but also take the place of those who perished in sanctification of G-d's name

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

With Rabbi Aron Moss

Why Is there No Evidence of G-d?

Question: How can a rational, thinking person believe in G-d, when there is absolutely no evidence for His existence? Today we have X-ray, radar, satellites, infrared photography, ultrasound imaging, gamma-ray telescopes and CCTV, and yet we still have found no trace of G-d. If He is supposed to be everywhere, why is He nowhere to be seen? My logic says, if you are nowhere, you don't exist...

Answer: Being everywhere doesn't make you easy to find. On the contrary, logic says that if you are everywhere, it's as if you're nowhere. A bit like our fridge.

As our family grew, we needed more fridge space, so we bought an old fridge online. It was a bargain. We soon found out why. When we plugged it in, it started humming quite loudly. At first, we thought we couldn't live with this constant, monotonous buzz coming from the kitchen. But in a day or two, we didn't even notice it anymore.

You can only hear a noise if that noise sometimes goes silent. But if it's always there, it's like it's not there at all. If you would ask our kids what that buzzing noise coming from the fridge was, they wouldn't even know what you were talking about. When you live with a noisy fridge, buzzing is silence.

It's the same with G-d. We live in a reality where the buzz of G-d is everywhere. There is no place devoid of Him, no moment when He is absent. So of course we can't detect Him. You can only detect the presence of something if you can detect its absence. The very definition of finding something is knowing where it is, but for that you have to know where it isn't. As the Baal Shem Tov taught, G-d is all and all is G-d. There is nowhere that he isn't. So we never see Him, because we are always looking right at Him.

This leads to an interesting conclusion. It's not that you can't see G-d. You actually can't miss Him. It just depends how you are looking. Put down your telescope and look at your life. You'll see He's been right there all along.

A WORD

from the Director

This Shabbat is known as "Shabbat Bereishit," the Shabbat on which we read the first portion of the first book of the Torah - Bereishit.

The Previous Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, used to say that "the position which we adopt on Shabbat Bereishit determines the nature of our conduct in the entire year to come."

Shabbat Bereishit represents the transition from the holidays of the month of Tishrei to our regular, day-to-day life of the coming months.

Shabbat, in general, is known to elevate the spiritual service of the previous week. As Shabbat Bereishit follows the holidays of Sukkot and Simchat Torah - holidays that collect and internalize all the influences of the holiday-filled month of Tishrei - Shabbat Bereishit perfects and elevates the holidays of Tishrei.

In addition, Shabbat Bereishit is the Shabbat on which the month of Mar-Cheshvan is blessed. One of the reasons that the prefix "mar" is added to the name of the month Cheshvan is that "mar" means bitter. Cheshvan has no holidays and is therefore a "bitter" month, especially in comparison to holiday-packed Tishrei.

Because Shabbat Bereishit has both of these aspects - the culmination of the previous month and the blessing of the upcoming month - it can potentially influence the entire year.

Thus, the position we adopt on Shabbat Bereishit has the potential to influence the entire year; it can bring the spiritual inspiration of Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot and Simchat Torah into our regular, day-to-day living.

May we all have a very "successful" Shabbat Bereishit.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

The Woodsman and the Governor

The beloved mentor of the yeshiva in Rishon Letzion, Israel, Rabbi Chaim Shaul Brook (1894-1965, affectionately known as Shoiel), was known for his wit and clarity. Once, while encouraging his students to increase in their studies, he told of a certain chassidic rebbe who had a custom at the conclusion of Shabbat: he would ask someone to share a story or a vignette relating to current events. The rebbe would then find and share a takeaway lesson. At one such gathering, the following story was shared:

There was a governor who went on a hunting trip with his close aide. Everything was wonderful, and they were having a great time together. After several successful hours, the clouds rolled in and the sky darkened. Lightning began to flash, thunder roared and a torrential downpour began. At first, the pair tried to find shelter under a tree, but the rain was too heavy, and they got soaked to the bone.

As night fell, they tried to find their way out of the soggy forest but, blinded by sheets of rain, they could not find the right path. Just as they began to panic in earnest, they saw a glimmer of light in the distance. They began to trek toward the light and arrived at an old bungalow.

They knocked on the door and out came a burly and unkempt man dressed in dirty rags. "What can I do for you?" he asked with a gentleness that belied his rough demeanor.

"We want to stay overnight until the storm passes," they replied in unison.

The owner of the shack invited them in and began to excuse himself for not being able to adequately accommodate them.

"In the past, this place was a rest area for travelers," he told them wistfully. "Over time people stopped coming, and I became bankrupt. I still have a goat, and I can offer you fresh warm milk if you'd like."

The governor and his aide were delighted to refresh themselves with some goat's milk. Soon after, their host offered them straw mattresses to sleep on. Exhausted, they were not picky and soon fell into a deep sleep.

The pair was greeted the next morning by sunshine streaming through the trees. The governor and his aide asked their kind host for directions and thanked him for his hospitality. They were soon on their way back to the governor's mansion.

A few days passed, and a noble carriage rolled to a halt outside the bungalow. A liveried officer descended from the carriage and invited the owner to come to the governor's mansion. The man began to tremble. "What did I do wrong? What will become of me?"

He was ushered into the mansion and the governor greeted him warmly. "Do you not recognize me? I am one of the two people you hosted a few days ago in your bungalow!"

Tailors were summoned, and they measured the man. They soon returned with new, well-fitted clothes for the dazed woodsman.

The governor also gifted him a house in the city and a generous monetary gift.

This was the story that was related, and the chassidim now turned to the rebbe to hear what he would add.

After a brief moment of silence, the rebbe began: "Let us imagine the woodsman's friend asks him, 'How did you make it big?' He'd answer, 'I gave the governor and his aide some goat's milk and a straw mattress to sleep on.'"

The rebbe continued: "Now, if the friend took this advice literally, and showed up to the governor's mansion with some goat's milk and a straw mattress, would he be rewarded as the bungalow owner was, or would he be risking punishment for offending the governor?"

"When the governor was away from his mansion and in distress, even a glass of goat's milk and a straw mattress was enough to restore his spirits. But when the governor is in his mansion, all the gold and silver in the world is not sufficient to satisfy him."

The rebbe raised his voice and exclaimed: "In these times of exile, when the Shechinah (Divine presence) is exiled along with us, 'all our hardships are His hardships,' even a small service, represented by goat's milk and a straw mattress, is sweet and desirable to G-d, and much reward is in store for those who do it. But when Moshiach will come, and the Shechinah will rise from the dust and return to its rightful place, even if we toil and exert ourselves to what we think is the highest levels, it will not be enough."

Reb Shoiel concluded to his students: "Hurry and seize the opportunity and increase a bit in goodness before it is too late."

PARSHAS IN A NUTSHELL

G-d creates the world in six days. On the first day He makes darkness and light. On the second day He forms the heavens, dividing the "upper waters" from the "lower waters." On the third day He sets the boundaries of land and sea, and calls forth trees and greenery from the earth. On the fourth day He fixes the position of the sun, moon and stars as timekeepers and illuminators of the earth. Fish, birds and reptiles are created on the fifth day; land animals, and then the human being, on the sixth. G-d ceases work on the seventh day, and sanctifies it as a day of rest.

G-d forms the human body from the dust of the earth, and blows into his nostrils a "living soul." Originally Man is a single person, but deciding that "it is not good that man be alone," G-d takes a "side" from the man, forms it into a woman, and marries them to each other.

Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden, and commanded not to eat from the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil." The serpent persuades Eve to violate the command, and she shares the forbidden fruit with her husband. Because of their sin, it is decreed that man will experience death, returning to the soil from which he was formed, and that all gain will come only through struggle and hardship. Man is banished from the Garden.

Eve gives birth to two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain quarrels with Abel and murders him, and becomes a rootless wanderer. A third son, Seth, is born to Adam; Seth's eighth-generation descendant, Noah, is the only righteous man in a corrupt world.

CANDLE LIGHTING



| | Shabbos 13 - 14 October | |
|------------|-------------------------|------|
| | Begins | Ends |
| Melbourne | 7:17 | 8:16 |
| Adelaide | 7:10 | 8:08 |
| Brisbane | 5:36 | 6:30 |
| Darwin | 6:25 | 7:15 |
| Gold Coast | 5:35 | 6:29 |
| Perth | 6:09 | 7:05 |
| Sydney | 6:49 | 7:46 |
| Canberra | 6:58 | 7:56 |
| Launceston | 7:12 | 8:14 |
| Auckland | 7:17 | 8:16 |
| Wellington | 7:21 | 8:23 |
| Hobart | 7:13 | 8:16 |
| Byron Bay | 6:35 | 7:29 |

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS BEREISHIS • 23 TISHREI • 13 OCTOBER

| | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| FRIDAY NIGHT: | MINCHA: | 7.25 PM |
| | KABBOLAS SHABBOS: | 7.55 PM |
| SHABBOS DAY: | TEHILIM: | 8.00 AM |
| | LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA: | 9.49 AM |
| | SHACHARIS: | 10.00 AM |
| | MOLAD WILL BE: | FRIDAY: 12.12 (17 chalakim)PM |
| | FARBRENGEN AFTER DAVENING | |
| | MINCHA: | 7.16 PM |
| WEEKDAYS: | SHACHARIS: | 8.00/9.15/10.00 AM |
| | MINCHA: | 7.20 PM |
| | MAARIV: | 8.05 PM |