



A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA

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פרשת בראשית

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ וְכוּ'. וַיִּצְרֶה אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָדָם עֶפֶר מִן הָאֲדָמָה, וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נֶשְׁמַת חַיִּים, וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה. (בראשית א' כ"ו, ב' ז')

And G-d said, "Let us make Man in Our image, after Our likeness." ... And Hashem G-d formed man of dust from the ground, and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life; and man became a living being.

(Bereishis 1:26, 2:7)

The *Sidrah* begins with teaching about Hashem's creation of the world and everything within it. After all of nature and the animals were created, Hashem focused on the ultimate purpose of this world: the creation of man.

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* cites the Yismach Moshe, who shares an insight from the Sefer Halkarim, which raises several questions about the contrast between the creation of man and that of animals:

- 1) Why does the Torah conclude the descriptions of the other creations with the phrase וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים כִּי טוֹב, *and Hashem saw that it was good*, but not for the creation of man?
- 2) Why does the Torah define the creation of fish, birds, and animals as being created לְמִינָהּ / לְמִינֵהוּ, *according to their kind*, but not for the creation of man?
- 3) Lastly, why did Hashem create both male and female animals from the beginning, whereas with humans, He first created Adam and only later created Chavah?

The Sefer Halkarim teaches that there is a profound distinction between the creation of humans and that of animals. The creation of animals was complete from the moment they came into existence, as they immediately reached their full potential. In contrast, when Hashem created humans, He only laid the groundwork and potential for greatness, since true perfection can only be achieved when a person harnesses and develops their innate abilities.

With this understanding, we can address the questions posed earlier. The Torah describes the creation of animals with the phrase וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים כִּי טוֹב, to indicate that total goodness and perfection were realised at the moment of their creation. Therefore, the Torah refers to them as being created לְמִינָהּ, *to their kind*, emphasising their primary purpose: to sustain and maintain their respective species. Additionally, male and female animals were created at the same time to demonstrate that they share identical roles in preserving their species.

In contrast, humans were not created perfect, and thus cannot be described as טוֹב since they require further development to reach their ultimate state. Consequently, their creation is not termed לְמִינָהּ, because Hashem's intention in creating humans was not to preserve the human race, but rather to produce elevated beings capable of improving and perfecting themselves by fulfilling Hashem's will. For this reason, men and women were created as distinct individuals, not simultaneously, indicating the higher mission of humanity and the unique role each person can fulfil. Furthermore, in the human context, males and females have different roles, with the woman created as an עֲזָרָה כְּנֶגְדּוֹ, *a helper*, to assist man in achieving true perfection and reaching his ultimate potential.

With this insight, the Yismach Moshe explains the challenging phrase נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם, “*Let us make Man...*”. The use of the plural implies, as if, that there were other forces involved in the creation of man. Various interpretations are offered by the Meforshim, but the Yismach Moshe presents a unique perspective based on the above. He explains that Hashem was addressing Man directly, saying, “I may have provided the potential, but for you to become truly great and achieve *sheleimus*, we need to join our efforts. You must take your raw potential and shape it into what it means to be a Man.” The creation of man was not finished simply by Hashem’s act of creation. True perfection in the formation of אָדָם - Man, as envisioned by Hashem, can only be realised through our choices, contributions, and efforts in reaching our full potential.

The Rosh Yeshiva further explains the concept of humans being created בְּצִלְם אֱלֹקִים. He writes that Hashem instils in humanity the virtuous and kind traits that He exhibits when governing the world. These inherent aspects of our personality allow us to recognise Hashem's qualities, enabling us to continuously strive to emulate His ways.

An example of this can be found in Avrohom Avinu, the pillar of Chessed, who recognised Hashem's profound kindness in governing the world. Chazal (*Midrash Rabbah* 49) teach that Avrohom Avinu encountered a בֵּיטָח דּוֹלֵקָת, *a palace alight*, which led him to declare that just as there cannot be a palace without an owner, so too, the world we inhabit must have a Creator. Avrohom did not just merely see a palace but rather a בֵּיטָח דּוֹלֵקָת, a palace that was bright and warm. He acknowledged that the Creator did not merely create a world; He also benevolently provides it with an abundance of goodness and kindness.

For this reason, man's mission in life is to bring these deeply embedded virtues to fruition. The *possuk* (*Devarim* 28:9) commands וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכֵי י, *and you shall go in His ways*, and Chazal expound that just as Hashem is חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם, *compassionate and gracious*, so too must we embody these *middos*. Hashem has endowed us with these traits to help us recognise His greatness, and He expects us to develop these abilities to their fullest potential.

As we enter the new year, we should be mindful of this lesson. Hashem created us, human beings, with Divine traits, immense potential and an inherent greatness, along with a significant mission ahead of us. We must appreciate that our role in existence is far greater than anything else and live in accordance with that understanding. By striving for ultimate *sheleimus*, we will truly fulfil our status as the אָדָם created in the likeness of Hashem.

This Devar Torah is adapted from ספר וענפיה ארזי אל and is presented by the Gateshead Yeshiva Alumni Association. To receive by email, please register your interest by sending an email to parshasheet@gyalumni.org.