

Dvar Torah for Parshat Bereishis

Based on *Likutey Moharan I*, Lesson #65

You've probably asked yourself, "Why don't we begin the new cycle of Torah reading with the *first* Shabbat of the year? Let's finish the previous cycle on the last Shabbat of the year ending and start the new cycle with the new year. Why start now, when the year is just about a month old?"

Rebbe Nachman spoke often of the need to start again. The success of a spiritual venture depends on its beginning. If the beginning was good—e.g., one's intentions were pure, one prayed for its success—the results will be good. If one re-starts the venture, i.e., continues it with new enthusiasm and vigor, the results will be better. If one got off to a poor start, re-starting is a must.

Some of us, despite the month-long preparation of Elul, despite the Days of Awe: Rosh Hashanah, the Ten Days of Repentance and Yom Kippur, and despite Sukkot, will still have stone-hearts unscratched. Others of us may already have botched innumerable opportunities of *teshuvah* (repentance). Sigh and groan? Yes. Give up? Heavens, no!

Though the most propitious time of the year for *teshuvah* has passed, the **PATH** of repentance remains open constantly and continuously. Moshe Rabbeinu opened this path shortly after the sin of the golden calf and it remains open. To enter this path make sure to hold fast to your Torah study. To whatever depths you may have sunk (or risen), maintaining a schedule of sincere Torah study will help you come back (*Likutey Halakhot, Chakirut v'Kablanut 2:12*).

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Based on *Likutey Moharan I*, Lesson #54; *Likutey Halakhot, Sokheir 3:8*

The mind is beggared in trying to imagine the beauty of the world that Adam was privileged to see after God breathed life into him. Even today there are many places of natural beauty in the world. When one is fortunate enough to be in such a place, the energy and emotion triggered are quite powerful.

But does anyone remember *why* the world was created?

It was created for you to have a personal relationship with the Merciful Creator. This critical point is often forgotten despite the continuous reminders we are given. One type of reminder is the "natural" one. There are many others. The whole world is full with them.

News vs. Hints

What the Shekhinah (the Divine presence) wears in the morning, She does not wear by night. What She wears today, She will not wear again (*Tikuney Zohar, #22*). What the Shekhinah "wears" depends on us. Depending on what **we** do—collectively and individually—Hashem chooses an appropriate medium, object or event, to beckon us closer.

Some people have many children, some cannot conceive; some have unlimited credit, some have

creditors hounding them day and night; some have domestic bliss, some live in a concentration camp called "Home." Each person has a unique set of circumstances that calls for a unique set of reminders. Each family, community, city and country has a unique set of common circumstances that calls for a unique set of reminders.

Each day has its hints, allusions, signs and reminders to draw close to Him. All events—war, weather, sports, fashion and finances—all these kaleidoscopic changes are meant to remind each individual of the purpose of life. Yet, if we're not careful, events take on a life of their own and become "news," delivered and analyzed by the media. The true Author of the events and the messages He is trying to convey are forgotten.

Before we read the morning Shema we recite the blessing *yotzeir or*. This blessing praises God for making all sorts of fantastic changes in an already fantastic Creation: He creates light and darkness; God makes peace and He creates evil, He makes the news and determines the outcome of war. God creates **EVERYTHING**. Why do we recite this blessing before proclaiming our allegiance to God? In order to reinforce our recognition of His Oneness.

Even if a person can't decipher all the hints, believing that Hashem gives appropriate hints to each person is beneficial. It increases and renews the ability to recognize and decipher the hints. It likewise increases one's longing for Hashem and for doing what He wants one to do.

Who you are now is not who you were yesterday. You've gone up—or down, God forbid. You need new hints. God changes the world for you, to draw you closer to Him. Remember that.

agutn Shabbos!
Shabbat Shalom!

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