



Parashat Bereshit 5770

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Kaddish at the Kotel

A student from our Yeshiva – the closest Yeshiva to the Temple Mount – will say Kaddish three times a day at the Kotel – the holiest spot today available to us – for your loved one(s). We request a donation to the Yeshiva.

If you are interested, please be in touch and send us the name(s).

On the Parashah -

The Torah is Optimistic

[Commentary on the Torah - Reishit, p. 24-25]

Hashem separated between the light and the darkness, and He saw that the light was good (Bereshit 1:4)! Baruch Hashem, there are good things in the world. The expression "it was good," is repeated over and over, and at the end of creation: "Very good" – an optimistic outlook. If the ancient religions of the Far East wrote the Torah, they would have written: "And G-d saw that it was bad," "And he saw all that He did and it was very bad." These are pessimistic religions. Everything is bad, everything is lost, everything lacks hope, everything is despair, the body is bad and the soul is bad.

We, however, say that the world is good. But there are so many trials and tribulations? – I know. I do not live on the moon. I noticed. I learned that Adam sinned and Kayin killed Hevel. I know that this is not exactly the Garden of Eden. But we are talking in principle – this world is the Garden of Eden. The world is good. The second day of Creation was even better, even if it is not written in the Torah. And the third day was even better still. In fact, this is the best of all worlds! But this does not happen in one day, rather in stages. And we are partners with Hashem in this work. Hashem Himself testifies that this world is good, and that it is the Garden of Eden. And if it is not currently the Garden of Eden - it is a temporary setback, and with the help of Hashem, we will succeed in freeing ourselves from it. All-in-all the world is good, the world is wonderful and the world is full of light.

Rav Aviner on...

The Nobel Prize

[from Ha-Rav's Q&A blog]

Question: How should we relate to the Nobel Prize of the non-Jews? How should we relate to other prizes given out by non-Jews? Does a movie awarded an Oscar become a good and quality movie?

Answer: The non-Jews do not establish for us what is true and what is not, and they do not decide which movie is proper and which is not. The Torah is what decides which movie is good, clean, kosher and brings blessing. We received the Torah precisely for this reason. But our Sages do tell us (Eichah Rabbah 2:13): "Do not believe the Torah among the non-Jews, but do believe wisdom among the non-Jews." They possess the ability to teach scientific knowledge. See the Maharal at length in Netivot Olam, Netiv Ha-Torah (chap, 14) for the difference between Torah and wisdom. Science describes reality, and the non-Jews are able to understand this realm. The Torah describes what this world should be from an ethical, and we understand this realm. In this area, we need to give approval regarding what is proper and what is not.

Question: A scientist from the Weizman Institute won the Nobel Prize in the area of Bio-Chemistry. What does this say to us? Should we be happy?

Answer: We should certainly be happy. Although many Jews have won the Nobel Prize, we are now not only speaking about Jews but about the State of Israel. This is another indication that the Nation of Israel is returning to the Land of Israel. We are strengthening ourselves in Torah as well as in needed non-holy areas. Hashem has decided to revive our Nation in our Land. We are returning to Zion and building the Land. We established the State and the army. There is therefore also a need for non-holy matters. Non-holy matters are obviously not enough and holy matters are above them, but the non-holy is also important. The non-holy and holy are like the relationship of the body and soul. The body needs the soul and the soul needs the

body. The essence is the soul, but there is also a need to strengthen the physical side of the national revival.

Stories of Rabbenu — Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

Great Teachers of Israel

Chafetz Chaim

In the year 5681, our Rabbi traveled to Poland to meet with Rabbis and Chasidic Rebbes to convince them to join the "Degel Yerushalayim" movement which Maran Ha-Rav Kook established to infuse the Zionist movement with Torah and holiness. At that time, the Chafetz Chaim came to Warsaw, and our Rabbi, who yearned to see the splendor of the most righteous person of the generation, went to where he was staying. He found him surrounded by people. After over an hour, our Rabbi approached to take leave from him. The Chafetz Chaim asked: "Are you a local?" Our Rabbi responded: "No, from Jerusalem," and he added: "Your honor was close with Reb Eliyahu David (the Aderet), father-in-law of my father." When the Chafetz Chaim heard whose son was standing before him, his face lit up and he joyfully said: "Your honor is the son of the Rav of Zimel, the Rav of Boisk, the Rav of Yafo, the Rav of Jerusalem? Then why does he speak about his grandfather? Tell me about your father! How is he? We are old close friends."

Our Rabbi related that he heard from the family members of the Chafetz Chaim that during the late hours of the night, not exactly at midnight, the Chafetz Chaim would speak with Hashem relating the Redemption of Israel, saying: "Master of the Universe, I, Reb Yisrael Meir, also want to merit greeting the King Messiah. Please, bring the Redemption," and other such prayers. Our Rabbi would add: "It seems that there is great value in heaven to prayers such as these from great Tzadikim."

Reb Chaim Brisker

Our Rabbi would relate in the name of Reb Chaim Brisker that anyone who is not capable of closing the Gemara in order to perform an act of loving-kindness, when there is no one else to do so, is also not suited to open the Gemara to learn it! (Mi-Toch Ha-Torah Ha-Goelet vol. 4 p. 208. In the book "Gadol Shishuma" p. 15, it is related that our Rabbi said this statement in the name of Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin).

Netziv

Our Rabbi related that the Netziv's wife travelled to Moscow for surgery. The students approached the Netziv and pleaded that he permit them to stop the learning in the yeshiva so they could recite Tehilim. He reluctantly agreed on condition that it would be exactly for five minutes and not any longer. He stood over them with his watch so it would not be even a half a second too late. "Stop learning in the Volozhin Yeshiva? – Don't heaven and earth exist from here!" (Mi-Toch Ha-Torah Ha-Goelet vol. 4, pp. 207-208)

Nechama Leibowitz

Our Rabbi said that she was a Torah scholar. He praised her greatly for her seriousness and fear of heaven. When she heard about how our Rabbi related to her, she felt immense respect. In contrast, our Rabbi said that her brother (Yeshayahu Leibowitz – a controversial Israeli philosopher) caused damage and was dangerous. (Iturei Cohanim #39)

Ha-Nazir, Ha-Rav David Cohain

In the middle of a class at Ha-Nazir's house, on Rechov Amos in the Geulah Neighborhood, he said to his students: "Stand up, stand up. Reb Tzvi Yehudah is passing by in the street." When they went out to the porch, they indeed saw our Rabbi Yehudah passing the house. This was the deep connection between the two of them.

*From Rav Aviner's Commentary on Birkat Ha-Mazon,
entitled Shir Ha-Ma'a lot*

"Young lions may want and hunger"

What do lions lacking food have to do with us? Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, explains, that the word for "young lions" [kefirim] is derived from the word "heresy" [kefirah]. A "kofer" [heretic] is one who stumbles on heresy when it chances upon him. A "kefir" [young lion] is someone who has the trait of heresy implanted into the essence of his personality. The materialistic heretics [kefirim] are hungry, "but those who seek Hashem will not lack any good."

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