

Parshat Bereishit- Purposeful Pain

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

When the Torah describes how Adam was driven out of Gan Eden it uses two phrases, *vayeshalcheyu* and *vayigaresh*. The Tana Devei Eliyahu explains that *vayigaresh* is an expression of divorce. Hashem so to speak divorced Adam as a husband divorces his wife. The Avnei Nezer explains that divorce is not so much about severing a physical bond but about severing an emotional and spiritual bond. The Torah uses two words because there was a double banishment. *Vayishalcheyu*- Hashem physically drove man out. *Vayigaresh*- He separated emotionally and spiritually from him. Not only was Adam removed from an idyllic existence and sent into a dark, challenging, world but he lost that deep connection to Hashem.

Chassidut teaches that life is a series of tests. Avraham Avinu's courage, generosity, and goodness were all tested with the ten trials. Not only was he challenged physically but also spiritually. Hashem pulled back and hid from Avraham. It says, "*Vayar et hamakom merachok*." *Makom* refers to Hashem who distanced Himself which made the test that much more difficult. When a person faces a physical challenge, there's a spiritual crisis as well. Hashem hides Himself and this is part of the test to see if the person will find the strength within himself to withstand the challenge. When Adam and Chava were driven out of Gan Eden (*vayishalcheyhu*), they had to work hard to earn their bread. But more difficult was *vayigaresh*. Hashem hid His presence and left man to face the rigors of life

alone.

Why does Hashem seemingly abandon man in his moment of greatest need? Why is He hidden within the strict justice of this world? The Ari Hakodesh teaches a profound idea. Before Hashem created the world, the intensity of His light was so great that nothing could exist along with Him. Hashem had to withdraw within Himself to make space for nature to endure. Hashem did this many times. Our world came into existence in the final process. There were earlier creations where Hashem allowed worlds to come into existence but they collapsed because His holiness was too intense. There was *shevirat hakeilim*, vessels within creation shattered because they could not contain Hashem's great light. Some *nezizot* (sparks) of that incredible spiritual light remained. The Ari Hakodesh taught that the fundamental goal of human existence is to uncover those sparks. Man's purpose is to bring Hashem into the world by revealing those hidden *nezizot*. The Arizal explained that this could be done in two ways. A person can live a Gan Eden like spiritual existence and attract the *nezizot* to him like metal to a magnet. But when Adam ate from the *eitz hadaat* and brought evil into himself he could no longer do that. He was sentenced to leave Gan Eden, wander through the world, gather the hidden *nezizot*, and bring out the full measure of divine spirituality within them. When Hashem sent Adam out of Gan Eden it wasn't so much a punishment but rather a way in which he was meant to overcome the physical and spiritual challenges he would encounter in

his sojourn through the world. He was meant to find and uplift those *nezizot* of holiness wherever he went. When a *tzadik* confronts evil and stands up against it without Hashem's overt help, he creates a powerful spiritual force which uplifts the *nezizot* hidden in this world.

Chassidut teaches that when we face great suffering with faith, the amount of light we can access is beyond comprehension. We can become so elevated that we have the power to rectify the sin of Adam. Just as Adam wandered from place to place so too the Jews are destined to wander the four corners of the world. Each exile has its *nisyonot*. If we can successfully overcome them we can generate incredible holiness.

There are two forms of exile, *Galut Mitzrayim* and *Galut Ashur*. The root word of *Mitzrayim* is *meitzar* -oppression and difficulty. The Jews were physically tormented in Egypt. *Ashur* comes from the root word *osher*- abundance and well- being. In exile, sometimes we are tested by suffering and sometimes we are tested by opulence. The latter is not necessarily less difficult than the former. More Jews have been lost to assimilation than were killed in the Holocaust. "*Uba'uh ha'ovdim m'eretz Ashur...*" People will be lost in the land of wellbeing. It will be difficult to find Hashem amid material abundance and success. But the strength of Am Yisrael has been proven again and again. Over thousands of years, the Jewish people have faced the challenges of exile with strength, heroism, and faith.

Chessed in the Torah

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg

The Chofetz Chaim quotes the verse in Shemot, "*Vayeitzei el echav vayar b'sivlosam*." Moshe went out to his brothers and saw their suffering. Rashi explains, "*Nasan einav v'libo li'hiyot meitzar aleheim*. He directed his eyes and heart to feel their pain." This is *midat hachessed*, thinking about one's friend's difficulties and challenges and how one can help him. Although Moshe grew up amid the wealth and opulence of Paro's palace, the Torah describes how he went out to his brothers and immediately felt a kinship to them. The first step is caring and feeling connected.

Moshe considered the situation and thought about what he could do to help. The Torah continues to describe how he saw an Egyptian attacking a Jew and how he killed him to save the Jew. Later on when he went to Midyan, he again displayed *chesed* by saving the daughters of Yitro from the shepherds. The Ramban uses striking language to describe Moshe's kindness and good attributes. He couldn't tolerate injustice. When he saw a Jew hurt, he immediately had to assist him. The Torah tells us that Moshe was called Moshe – "*Ki min hamayim mishisihu*." Batya, the daughter of Paro, called him Moshe

because she drew him out of the water. Rav Hirsh asks, according to correct Hebrew grammar Moshe's name should have been *mashui* (the one who was drawn), in the passive tense. But by giving him the name Moshe, the active form of the verb, she indicated that all his life he should remember that he was drawn out of the water. He was to have a sensitive heart to other people's trouble and be conscious to be a *moshe*, a deliverer in times of distress. His Hebrew name gave him the constant awareness of his origins and taught him to be an active savior to others in times of need.

Accountability of Adam: Parshat Bereishit

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

When Adam sins with the *eitz hadaat*, Hashem calls out to him, "*Ayekah*/Where are you?" No one would presume to think that Hashem was unaware of Adam's whereabouts. As Rashi understands, Hashem approached Adam gently, not wanting to terrify him with an immediate, scolding. In fact, says Rav Epstein, Hashem is teaching us that we should begin our conversations with someone who may have wronged us in a conciliatory tone.

When Hashem interacts with man, He approaches him in the same manner that the individual perceives Him. Since Adam hid after having sinned, and he could no longer "see" God, Hashem approached Adam from the same perspective, as if He could not see him, "Where are you? Have you eaten of the tree?..." This was the beginning of doubt in Hashem, most manifest in Amalek who would later instill doubt into *Bnei Yisroel*.

Ohel Moshe suggests that Hashem was asking two distinct questions. First, where are you, how have you distanced yourself from Me? Second, since you have transgressed My explicit command, there needs to be an accounting. While Adam did *teshuvah* for his sin and the relationship could be repaired, the damage to Adam's exalted stature was permanent.

The ideal form of Man as Hashem originally created him was so exalted that the angels wanted to sing his praises. The path to regaining this is through the *Torah*. That's why the Torah has 248 positive commandments to parallel the number of limbs and organs in the body, and 365 negative commandments to

parallel the number of blood vessels. It is through *Torah* that we can hope to approach the perfection of our *tzurat haAdam* that Hashem had envisioned for mankind.

We fall into sin so easily because we think that sin is just some dirt adhering to us externally, writes *Chochmat Hamatzpun*. We don't realize that the effects of sin change our essence and distances us from God, as it did for Adam. Our souls yearn for the completion that comes from reconnecting to our Maker. And the day after *yom tov* is also meant to be a day of slowly coming down from that connection, from being tied to the *yom tov*. Do we ask ourselves, as we come down from the high of *yom tov*, "*Ayekah*?" We are meant to take something of *yom tov* with us and integrate it into our lives. If we do not come out somewhat changed, the experience will remain meaningless. We need to yearn, seek and work for wholeness, to ask ourselves *Ayekah*, to strive to approach the level of our forefathers. Hashem is calling out to us, urging us to return to the perfected *tzurat haAdam*.

Man goes through spiritual stages of growth just as a child goes through developmental stages of growth. If we haven't grown from our life experiences, writes Rabbi Pincus, we have missed the point of life, and we are like a storekeeper who works all day moving around his merchandise and interacting with people but earning no money. We need to exude a quiet sense of godliness, a *tzurat haAdam* as Hashem initially created Adam. To the extent that we can disconnect from the distractions of the world, we are able to reconnect to the Source of everything and to our own essence.

When Hashem created Adam, He took him

around and showed him the entire creation in all its beauty, writes the Shvilei Pinchas. Hashem exhorted him, "Be careful not to destroy it." As the *Zohar* tells us, each of us contains within ourselves all of creation. We are meant to elevate our mini worlds to Hashem's service. Where are we in that service? Are we succeeding?

We say daily in *Oz Yoshir*, "This is My (personal) God and I will glorify Him." *Ayekah*, what makes you uniquely you, what *mitzvah* excites you? Look inward to your uniqueness, discover who you are, and from that vantage point, you can start the *teshuvah* process. This was the message Yosef was conveying to his brothers when he revealed himself, continues Rabbi Levovitz. "It is I, that same Yosef," recognize that core that has always been me. Yosef was living a life uniquely his, growing in his spiritual greatness. Where are we? Are we continuing to sanctify our personal sanctuaries, or are we turning the *Ayekah*/Where are you to *Eicha*/How could it have come to this? Elevation or destruction is up to me alone, "

How do you access your inner self? Rabbi Frand teaches us, the wish we give to a baby at his bris, "May this little one become great." A baby is born as a completely self-centered being; may he grow to consider others. As Hashem is full of *chesed*, emulate Him and become a *baal chesed* in ways that you personally come across. The more you expand your world by reaching out to others, the more godly you become.

Only by accepting responsibility, writes *Yiram Hayam*, can we correct and rectify our action, and reconnect to Hashem.