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Parshas Bereishis 5782
Translation by Dr. Baruch Fox

"It is not good for man to be alone"

HKB"H Performed an Incredible Chesed by Giving Man a Suitable Mate to Bear Him Children and Enable Him to Exist in the Two Worlds

In honor of the auspiciously approaching parshas Bereishis, I would like to explore the tremendous chesed HKB"H performed on behalf of mankind at the beginning of creation. He provided him with a wife to complement him and be his soulmate, as it is written (Bereishis 2, 18): "ויאמר ה' אלקים לא טוב היות האדם לבדו אעשה לו עזר כנגדו"—**Hashem Elokim said, "It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him."** This depiction takes on a unique perspective in light of the events that followed. For, after the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as," Adam protests (ibid. 3, 12): "האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל"—**the woman whom You gave to be with me—she gave me of the tree, and I ate."** Rashi comments: "כאן כפר בטובה"—this statement demonstrates that Adam was ungrateful for the kindness HKB"H had shown him. Rashi's conclusion is somewhat surprising! After all, Adam HaRishon merely spoke the truth. The wife G-d had given him encouraged him to partake of the forbidden fruit with her, as it is written (ibid. 6): "ותקח מפריו ותאכל ותתן גם לאישה עמה ויאכל"—**she took of the fruit and ate; and she also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.**

To make sense of the matter, we must scrutinize HKB"H's description of the woman. When He created her, He said: "אעשה לו עזר כנגדו"—**I will make him a helper against him**. Undoubtedly, HKB"H created woman with the characteristics and abilities to assist her husband—to be an **"eizer."** Yet, the description **"eizer k'negdo"** contains two contradictory terms. A wife who is a helper is not against her husband; conversely, a wife who is an adversary is not a helper. Thus, HKB"H intended to teach Adam a very important lesson as explained by Rashi: "זכה עזר, לא זכה כנגדו להילחם"—if man is fortunate and meritorious, she will be an **"eizer,"** a helper; however, if he is not meritorious, she will be **"k'negdo,"** against him—an adversary. This is consistent with the teaching in the Gemara (Sotah 2a): "כי הוה פתח ריש לקיש בסוטה אמר הכי, אין מזווגין לו לאדם אשה אלא לפי מעשיו"—**when Reish Lakish came to expound on parshas Sotah, this is what he said: They** (the Heavenly Tribunal) **match a woman to a man solely in accordance with his deeds.** Rashi explains that a modest woman is matched with a tzaddik, and an immodest woman is matched with a rasha.

Hence, we can draw the following conclusion. Since the first woman—Adam's "eizer k'negdo—not only did not help Adam, but actually caused him to sin with the Etz HaDa'as, it is clear that he was not meritorious—in Rashi's words: **"lo zachah."** Had he stood firm, adhering resolutely to Hashem's warning not to eat from the Etz HaDa'as, he would have accomplished two objectives: (a) he would have resisted his wife's advice and avoided the sin and (b) he would have prepared her ahead of time by counselling her not to converse with the serpent, the "nachash," so as not to fall into its trap.

However, Adam HaRishon himself fell prey to the yetzer's persuasive ploy—desiring to partake of the fruit of the Etz HaDa'as. As a result, his wife, Chava, was transformed from an **"eizer"** into a **"k'negdo"**—precipitating his downfall. Yet, Adam did not accept responsibility for what transpired as he should have. Instead, he protested to HKB"H: "האשה אשר נתתה

"עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואוכל"—in effect, he blamed HKB"H for providing him with a woman who caused him to sin and fail. Therefore, our blessed sages were justified in concluding: **"כאן כפר בטובה"**—this remark demonstrates that Adam HaRishon was ungrateful and unappreciative.

Now, in Sha'ar HaGilgulim (Intro. 23), our master, the Arizal, teaches us that all of the neshamos were contained within the being of Adam HaRishon at the time of the cheit. Otherwise, HKB"H would not have sentenced all of creation and mankind to die. Therefore, just as it is incumbent upon us to rectify the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as," it is also incumbent upon us to rectify the lack of gratitude demonstrated by Adam HaRishon with regards to the woman HKB"H gave him.

To emphasize this point, the Gemara states (B.M. 59a): **"לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בכבוד אשתו, שאין ברכה מצויה בתוך ביתו של אדם אלא בשביל אשתו, שנאמר ולאברם היטיב בעבורה, והיינו דאמר להו רבא לבני מחוזא אוקירו לנשייכו כי היכי דתתעתרו".** **A man should always be careful about his wife's honor, because blessing is found in a person's house only on account of his wife, as it states** (Bereishis 12, 16)**: "He treated Avram well on account of her." Thus, Rava told the people of Mechoza: Honor your wives, so that you may become wealthy.** In essence, all Berachos emanate from HKB"H's declaration at the time of woman's creation: **"It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him."**

The Ideal Is for Man to Live in Two Worlds

We will begin our investigation with a fascinating passage in the Gemara (Berachos 31a): **"אמרו ליה רבנן לרב המנונא זוטי בהלולא דמר בריה דרבינא, לישרי לן מר אמר להו, ווי לן דמיתנן, ווי לן דמיתנן אמרי ליה אנן מה נעני בתרך אמר להו הי תורה והי מצוה דמגנו עלן".** **The Rabbis said to Rav Hamnuna Zuti at the wedding feast of Mar the son of Ravina, "Let the master sing for us." He said to them, "Woe to us that we are destined to die! Woe to us that we are destined to die!" They said to him, "How are we to respond after you?" He answered them, "Where is the Torah that we have studied and where are the mitzvos that we have performed that can protect us** (Rashi: from the fate and judgment of Gehinnom)**?"**

This incident defies comprehension. After all, the Rabbis requested that Rav Hamnuna honor them with a song proclaiming the benefits and sanctity of marriage in order to fulfill the mitzvah of entertaining and delighting the Chasan. According to Chazal (Berachos 6b), anyone who fulfills this mitzvah is worthy of the Torah, is considered as if he rebuilt one of the ruins of Yerushalayim and as if he offered a korban todah. That being the case, why did Rav Hamnuna choose to sing what sounded like a dirge—**"Woe to us that we are destined to die! Woe to us that we are destined to die!"**—at this joyous occasion?

With the utmost respect and reverence, perhaps we can justify Rav Hamnuna's choice by explaining the juxtaposition of two seemingly incongruous pesukim in this week's parsha (ibid. 2, 17): **"ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות. ויאמר ה' אלקים לא טוב היות האדם לבדו אעשה לו עזר כנגדו".** **But of the Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die. Hashem Elokim said, "It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him."** First, HKB"H sternly warns Adam not to partake of the Eitz HaDa'as, so that he won't die; then He declares that it is not good for a man to be without a woman as his "eizer k'negdo."

We will now introduce an incredible chiddush from the commentary of the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh on this week's parsha (2, 17). He addresses the question of what Adam HaRishon's life would have been like had he not sinned with the Eitz HaDa'as and had lived on forever. In fact, he discusses this issue at greater length at the beginning of parshas Bechukosai (20). He comments that it seems unimaginable that Adam HaRishon would have existed forever in Olam HaZeh. After all, the desired goal is for man to merit ascending to the heavenly yeshivah, to study Torah there and to attain insights and knowledge that he was unable to attain in Olam HaZeh encumbered by a physical existence.

Therefore, he concludes that even if Adam HaRishon had remained alive, he would still have merited ascending to the heavens to study Torah in the heavenly yeshivah. Additionally, he would have been permitted to return to Olam HaZeh to perform the mitzvos of Hashem. The situation would have been analogous to a person living in a two-story house, who could go up and down as he pleases. He compares it to Eliyahu HaNavi (Melachim II 2, 11) whose soul ascended to the heavens in a whirlwind, while his body remained below like a discarded garment (according to some commentaries).

Death in Olam HaZeh and in Olam HaBa

I would like to propose my own explanation for HKB"H's admonition to Adam HaRishon: **"ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות"—but of the Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.** In the Hebrew text, HKB"H reiterates the fact that Adam will die--**"מות תמות"—you will die** (in the present)**; you will die** (in the future)**.** We can suggest that HKB"H is informing him that if he eats from the Eitz HaDa'as, he will not be permitted to live in both worlds simultaneously, like in a two-story house. Instead, as a consequence of the sin, it will necessitate two deaths—once upon his birth into this world and a second time upon his death.

Two explain this concept, let us refer to the Gemara (Niddah 13b): **"אין בן דוד בא עד שיכלו כל הנשמות שבגוף"—the son of David will not come until all the neshamos have been removed from the "guf."** Rashi explains that **"guf"** is the name of a place designated for the neshamos that are destined to be born into this world. In other words, before descending to Olam HaZeh, the neshamah resides in the world of neshamos called "guf." Furthermore, we have learned in the Mishnah (Avos 4, 22): **"שעל כרחך אתה נוצר"—for against your will you are formed.** The Bartenura explains that the neshamah is reluctant to vacate the pure, heavenly site where the neshamos are located and enter the impure organ of a woman. Hence, a malach comes and removes it against its will and places it in the woman's body.

From the perspective of the neshamah, leaving the "guf" and descending involuntarily to Olam HaZeh is a form of death, akin to when the neshamah leaves a person's physical body at the end of one's life in Olam HaZeh. On the other hand, if a person were able to live in both worlds simultaneously, he would not sense or experience death—neither when he descended to enter a physical body nor when he returned to the heavens. This is the implication of HKB"H's pronouncement to Adam: **"כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות"**—as a consequence of the sin, you will experience two deaths—one when the neshamah comes down to Olam HaZeh and one when it departs Olam HaZeh.

We can suggest that this is alluded to by an interpretation in the Tikunei Zohar (Tikun 24): **"ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו "מות--כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות, מות בעולם הזה, תמות בעולם הבא" תמות** implies that you will die in Olam HaZeh, and you will die in Olam HaBa. In keeping with our current discussion, this means that as a consequence of the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as," two death sentences were decreed: (1) **"מות בעולם הזה"**—when a person is born into this world, it is like a death from the upper world for the neshamah and (2) **"תמות בעולם הבא"**—when it ascends back to the heavens, it can no longer return back to earth.

Death Is Not Associated with David because He Left Behind a Son Like Him

With this introduction, we will proceed to explain the juxtaposition of the warning not to eat from the Eitz HaDa'as with the creation of the woman: **"But of the Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die. Hashem Elokim said, 'It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him.'"** We can propose that in this manner, HKB"H revealed something wonderful to us. Indeed, as a result of the double death sentence **"מות תמות"**, it is impossible to live in both worlds like in a two-story house. Nevertheless, when a man marries a woman to fulfill the mitzvah of "pru u'rvu," he can still live in both worlds simultaneously.

To begin with, let us introduce a teaching from the Gemara (B.B. 116a): **"דרש רבי פנחס בן חמא, מאי דכתיב והדד שמע במצרים כי שכב דוד עם אבותיו וכי מת יואב שר הצבא, מפני מה בדוד נאמרה בו שכיבה וביואב נאמרה בו מיתה, דוד שהניח בן כמותו נאמרה בו שכיבה, יואב שלא הניח בן כמותו נאמרה בו מיתה".** **Rabbi Pinchas ben Chama expounded: Regarding that which is written** (Melachim I 11, 21)**: "And Hadad heard in Mitzrayim that David had reposed with his fathers and that Yoav, the commander of the army, had died." Why regarding David does the text employ the term "שכיבה" ("reposing"), whereas regarding Yoav the text employs the term "מיתה" ("dying")? Regarding David, who left behind a son like himself, the term "reposing" is used; however, regarding Yoav, who did not leave behind a son like himself, the term "dying" is used.**

To explain why the term "dying" is not applied to someone who merits leaving behind a (righteous) son who follows in his footsteps, we will refer to a statement from the wisest of all men (Koheles 9, 10): **"כל אשר תמצא ידך לעשות בכוחך עשה, כי אין מעשה וחשבון ודעת וחכמה בשאול אשר אתה הולך שמה"—whatever you are able to do with your might, do it. For there is neither doing nor reckoning nor knowledge nor wisdom**

in the grave where you are going. According to Rashi, he is cautioning us to fulfill the mitzvos while we are still alive and still can. For, once the soul has left the body, it is impossible to perform any mitzvos or good deeds.

Notwithstanding, our sacred sefarim assert that if a person educates his children and his progeny to serve Hashem, he is rewarded for the mitzvos they perform even after his demise, just as if he was still alive. We find an explicit source for this notion in the praise HKB"H bestows on Avraham Avinu (Bereishis 18, 19): **"כי ידעתיו למען אשר יצוה את בניו ואת ביתו אחריו, ושמרו דרך ה' לעשות צדקה ומשפט, למען הביא ה' על אברהם את אשר דיבר עליו"—for I have cherished him, because he commands his children and his household after him that they abide by the way of Hashem, doing tzedakah and justice, in order that Hashem might bring upon Avraham that which He had spoken of him."** Rashi comments on the words **"in order that Hashem might bring": Thus, does he command his children: "Keep the way of Hashem so that Hashem might bring upon Avraham, etc." It does not say, "Upon the house of Avraham," but rather "upon Avraham." We have thus learned that anyone who raises a righteous son, it is as if he does not die.**

Thus, we have an explicit source stating that Avraham Avinu is rewarded in Olam HaBa for mitzvos that his descendants perform in Olam HaZeh. This explains why the term "dying" was not mentioned by David HaMelech. Since he left behind a son that he had educated and followed in his footsteps, it was as if he was still very much alive.

Like the Days of the Heavens over the Earth

We will now introduce a wonderful insight from the holy Admor, Rabbi Yischar Dov of Belz, zy"a. He explains the juxtaposition of pesukim in the second paragraph of Krias Shema (Devarim 11, 19): **"ולמדתם אותם את בניכם לדבר בם בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך ובשכבך ובקומך... למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה אשר נשבע ה' לאבותיכם לתת להם כימי השמים על הארץ". And you shall teach them to your children to speak about them, while you sit in your home, while you walk on the way, when you retire and when you arise . . . in order to prolong your days and the days of your children upon the land that Hashem has sworn to your forefathers to give them, like the days of the heavens over the earth.**

He explains in his own inimitable way that the Torah is teaching us: **"And you shall teach them to your children to speak about them"**—that you should educate your children to live by the tenets of the Torah—**"in order to prolong your days . . . like the days of the heavens over the earth"**—so that even after you have passed away and are residing in the heavens, it will seem as if you are still living down on earth, because you will be rewarded for your progeny's mitzvos even in the upper world. These are his sacred words.

Note that the passuk specifically emphasizes: **"Like the days of the heavens over the earth."** It is teaching us that if a person successfully educates his children to observe the Torah, it is as if he is living in two worlds simultaneously—both in the heavens and on earth. It is analogous to living in a two-story house, like the situation prior to the "cheit Eitz HaDa'as."

We have now been enlightened and have cause to rejoice. We can now comprehend the juxtaposition of the two pesukim discussed above: **"But of the Eitz HaDa'as Tov VaRa you must not eat thereof; for on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die. Hashem Elokim said, 'It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him.'"** First, HKB"H warns Adam that if he eats from the Eitz HaDa'as, he will die two deaths--**"מות תמות".** The first is when the neshamah is forced to leave the haven of neshamos, the "guf," to descend to Olam HaZeh; the second is when the neshamah leaves its physical body to return to the haven of neshamos.

Notwithstanding, we have learned a vital principle in the Gemara (Megillah 13b): **"אין הקב"ה מכה את ישראל אלא אם כן בורא להם רפואה תחילה"—HKB"H does not afflict Yisrael unless He has created a remedy for them beforehand.** In keeping with this principle, HKB"H provided a solution prior to the cheit: **"Hashem Elokim said, 'It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a helper against him.'"** If he marries a good woman who bears him children, and he educates them to live by the precepts of the Torah, he will continue to exist in Olam HaZeh even after passing away—in keeping with the notion of: **"Like the days of the heavens over the earth."**

We have now shed some light on the song that Rav Hamnuna sang at the wedding celebration: **"Woe to us that we are destined to die! Woe to us that we are destined to die!"** He was telling them that it would be a shame, if they could not exist in both worlds and had to die twice, as per the decree

"מות תמות". At first, the Rabbis did not comprehend his intent; they thought that he was admonishing them. Therefore, they responded: **"How are we to respond after you?"** In other words, if a preeminent Torah-scholar such as yourself fears that he will die two deaths, what are the likes of us to do?!

Therefore, he clarified his intent: **"Where is the Torah that we have studied and where are the mitzvos that we have performed that can protect us?"** He was explaining to them that in the upper world, it is no longer possible to perform mitzvos and good deeds. Yet, there is an essential mitzvah they can perform to protect them and benefit them in the upper world—namely, "pru u'rvu." By producing children that live a Torah-life, they can annul the decree of two deaths and exist in both worlds.

Dancing before the Kallah

I would like to share a wonderful thought with all of you. Our blessed sages laud the mitzvah of dancing before the kallah. Here is a pertinent passage from the Gemara (Kesubos 16b): "תנו רבנן , בית שמאי אומרים כלה כמות שהיא, ובית הלל אומרים כלה נאה וחסודה". **The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: How do we dance before the kallah? Beis Shamai say: We praise the bride as she is. Beis Hillel say:** In all cases, we say that she is **a beautiful and charming kallah.** Further on, the Gemara says (ibid. 17a): "אמרו עליו על רבי יהודה בר אילעאי, שהיה נוטל בד של הדס ומרקד לפני הכלה, ואומר כלה נאה וחסודה". **They said about Rabbi Yehudah bar Ilai that he would take a branch of myrtle and dance before the bride, saying, "A beautiful and charming bride."**

This, in fact, is the halachic ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 65, 1): "מצוה לשמח חתן וכלה ולרקד לפניהם, ולומר שהיא נאה וחסודה אפילו אינו נאה"—**it is a mitzvah to gladden the Chasan and kallah and to say that she is beautiful and charming even if she is not beautiful.** Regarding this ruling, the Rama writes: **We found that Rabbi Yehudah bar Ilai would dance before the kallah; and we neglect Torah-study for the sake of escorting a kallah to the chuppah.** The source for these rulings is the Tur (ibid.), who adds the following from the Midrash (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 17): **Why didn't the dogs eat Izevel's palms** (of her hands and feet)**? Because she used them to dance before a Chasan and kallah.**

In keeping with our current discussion, we can explain the matter as follows. Consider the motion of dancing. Initially, the body rises upwards and then it moves downwards. This motion is repeated throughout the dance. Now, in Yaakov Avinu's dream, he saw something similar (Bereishis 28, 12): "והנה מלאכי אלקים עולים ויורדים בו"—malachim were ascending and descending on the ladder, moving upwards and downwards. So, we can suggest that the upwards and downwards movements of the dance are alluding to the ultimate purpose of marriage. The couple is meant to produce children and educate them to live by the precepts of the Torah. As a result, a man will be able to ascend and descend, living in both worlds, in keeping with the words: **"Like the days of the heavens over the earth."**

Finding a Good Wife

It gives me great pleasure to conclude this essay with a pleasant tidbit. Shlomo HaMelech said (Mishlei 18, 22): "מצא אשה מצא טוב ויפק רצון מה'"—**one who has found a wife, has found goodness, and has brought forth favor from Hashem.** In his sefer Da'as HaKedushah (Chapter 2), the Ramban writes that the union of a man and woman is a form of the knowledge of kedushah. As it is written (Bereishis 4, 1): "והאדם ידע את חוה אשתו"—**and Adam "knew" Chava, his wife.**

To explain the matter, we will introduce an idea from our sacred sefarim. The divine name associated with "da'as"—knowledge—is אהו"ה; its gematria is seventeen--טו"ב . This name is derived from the first letters of the last four words of the first passuk in the Torah: "בראשית ברא אלקים א'ת ה'שמים וא'ת ה'ארץ"—**the heavens and the earth.** Based on what we have been discussing, we can posit that this teaches us that HKB"H created the world so that we would serve Him in both worlds simultaneously—in both the heavens and on earth. This then is the implication of the divine name of "da'as." It is our intended goal and purpose to serve Hashem by uniting **"the heavens and the earth."**

Furthermore, the Tikunei Zohar (Intro. 9b) teaches us that the sacred name **Havaya** is derived from the first letters of the words (Tehillim 96, 11): "י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ"—**the heavens will be glad, and the earth will rejoice.** We can suggest that this alludes to the following: When a person succeeds in serving HKB"H in both worlds, by uniting the

heavens and the earth, he draws abundant divine mercy—"rachamim"—from the name **Havaya.** As a result, **"the heavens will be glad, and the earth will rejoice."**

This explains beautifully the inherent meaning of the passuk: **"מצא אשה מצא טוב".** By marrying a woman to fulfill the mitzvah of "pru u'rvu," a man merits receiving abundant good from the divine name of knowledge **אהו"ה**, whose gematria equals **טו"ב—goodness.** In the merit of marrying a suitable woman, a man will be blessed with progeny that will follow the path of Torah. Thus, he will be able to serve Hashem in both worlds, in keeping with the ideal of **א'ת ה'שמים ו'את ה'ארץ.** In that merit, **"he will bring forth favor from Hashem"**—i.e., he will receive abundant good from the name **Havaya,** which is an acronym for **י'שמחו ה'שמים ו'תגל ה'ארץ**, indicating that there is joy and gladness in both worlds.

With this understanding, we can provide a wonderful explanation for what the great Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Liska, ztz"l, writes in Ahch Pri Tevuah (Chayei Sarah). He comments on the established Jewish minhag to wish people **"mazal tov"** at a wedding. It is meant to allude to the divine name of "da'as," **אהו"ה,** whose gematria is **"tov."** With these words, we are blessing the Chasan and kallah that they should be privileged to produce righteous, upstanding generations of descendants who will follow the ways of Hashem. As a result, they will be privileged to serve Hashem in both worlds, as alluded to by the divine name of "da'as"--**א'ת ה'שמים ו'את ה'ארץ .**

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