



## *The dichotomy of emotion, Parshas Bereishis 2022*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Leah Mintche Bas Gittel, and Shaul Ben Berta.*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is in loving memory of Edward Ben Efraim, Shlomo Ben Edward, and Yirachmiel Daniel Ben Gedalia. May their souls be uplifted and their memories a blessing.*

*This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, known as a lawyer of the Jewish people. The anniversary of his passing, his Yahrzeit, is on the 25th of Tishrei. His love for every Jewish person, regardless of religiosity, is an example for us to follow and pursue. Reb Levi Yitzchak recognized the G-dly soul within every Jew and understood their significance in G-d. May his memory be a blessing!*

As we enter the new year with a clean slate, we also restart the cycle of reading the Torah from the beginning with Parshas Bereishis. However, we must understand that it is not just a physical but spiritual cycle. We have the opportunity to gain a more profound understanding of the Torah and its lessons. Each year, a unique level of spirituality is given to the world, which is relevant to that day and age.

The Torah begins with the words "**Bereshis bara Elokim es hashamayim ve' es ha'ares-In the beginning, G-d created the heaven and the earth.**" The Parsha then goes through what was made each day.

G-d created darkness and light on the first day. On the second day, He created the heavens and separated them from the earth. He created land & sea boundaries on the third day with trees & greenery. The sun, moon, and stars were created and positioned on the fourth day. He created fish, birds, reptiles, and land animals on

the fifth day. He created the first human being, Adam, on the sixth day, On the seventh day, G-d stopped working and sanctified it as a day of rest.

However, a question comes to mind: The Torah is not a history or record book, yet it begins with a detailed account of how G-d created the world. In theory, the Torah should have started with laws and commandments; why does it begin with the creation of the world?!

Rashi (*Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki, the leading commentary on the Torah*) gives a simple explanation. He writes that the Torah begins with an account of creation to show the world why we are Israel's rightful and legitimate owners. How we were enslaved in Egypt and redeemed by G-d through Moshe to settle in the promised land.

Rashi explains that G-d begins the Torah with the creation of the universe to demonstrate the significance and importance the land has to the Jewish nation. From Avraham Avinu's willingness to sacrifice his only son on Mt. Moriah to the Beis Hamikdash that was and will be built in the same place. The Jewish people have always had and will always have an intrinsic and inherent connection and right to the land of Israel.

However, Reb Levi Yitzchak, in his Sefer, *Kedushas Levi (a commentary on the weekly Torah portion based on Chasidic philosophy)* gives a deeper and more profound explanation. He writes that the Torah begins with the account of creation to demonstrate G-d's love and devotion to mankind. For all of the amazing and magnificent creations that He created, nothing comparable to the creation of mankind. Because only we are capable of fulfilling His most profound desire, a spiritual home in this physical world.

Reb Levi Yitzchak continues that this understanding should evoke two sets of emotions. On the one hand, ego and pride for we are the purpose and intention of creation. On the other hand, humility and humbleness as we recognize the responsibility and duty that lies on our shoulders.

Reb Levi Yitzchak gives a parable to explain this dichotomy of emotions. Once a great and powerful king invited one of his most trusted servants to accompany him to his treasure chamber. When they arrived, the king showed his servant the crown

jewels and explained the significance of the other valuable artifacts. The servant was in high spirits and immensely joyful as his king personally asked him to escort and attend to him as he viewed his treasures.

Yet, upon reflection, the servant became overrun with feelings of lowliness and humility. How could he ever live up to the expectations of his noble king? When the king heard of his servant's dilemma, he called him into a private audience.

The king explained to his servant that although his expectations may be great, his belief that his servant will exceed those expectations is greater than the expectations themselves. The king has expectations in the first place because he knows that his people can surpass and exceed them.

Reb Levi Yitzchak explains that this is the conversation we must have with ourselves; on the one hand, we are the purpose and intention of creation. We are unique, exceptional, and unmatched within G-d's creations. On the other hand, all the responsibility and obligation lie on our shoulders. But all that burden is nothing relative to how low and tiny we are compared to G-d.

Yet, nevertheless, **G-d chose us**. He believes we are capable, adaptable, and knowledgeable enough to exceed His expectations and fulfill his deepest desire. Reb Levi Yitzchak clarifies that the eminence and nobility of G-d are there for us to recognize our power and strength to achieve and exceed His aspirations and intentions for this

In our daily life, we must realize that the intention of the challenges we face is to awaken the strength and energy we didn't know we possessed. To demonstrate that we are more capable than we thought possible, to realize the deeper purpose of our creation, and to sanctify G-d's holy name.

**"Stalking sin and pursuing good are admirable quests.  
But be sure to look for sin in yourself and for good in others."**

*-Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev*

*Have a meaningful Shabbos,  
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*