

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Beresheet	26 Oct. 2019	27 Tishrei 5780	Gen. 1:1-6:8	Isa. 42:5-43:10	John 1:1-12

In this week's Torah portion Beresheet, it begins with the Creation of the world. It is written, "Now no shrub of the field was yet on the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for יהוה Elohim had not sent rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground." (2:5) What is the connection between rain, and Hashem not having yet sent rain, and a man to work the soil, for these to be mentioned together in this verse?

Rashi teaches us that while everything else in creation had already been completed by the sixth day, before the creation of man, nothing had blossomed forth yet. Nothing had sprouted. All the trees and plants and herbs stood at the edge of the soil, stood waiting at the edge, just below the surface, until that sixth day, because it had not yet rained. And why had it not yet rained? Because "there was no man to work the soil," there was no one to appreciate rain, to appreciate it's benefit to the earth.

But when man came and understood the world's needs, he prayed for rain and the rains came, and all the trees and plants burst into blossom. Man made sure the world's needs were met. That's part of man's job. In a manner of speaking, Hashem created an incomplete world, everything needs to be completed. That is, the ultimate *tikkun* of every aspect of creation is facilitated by man, and thus he is a full partner in creation.

It is written, "And Elohim blessed the seventh day and set it apart, because on it He rested from all His work which Elohim in creating had made." This is an unusual expression, "which He created to make?" He created. What does that mean? Hashem created everything in this world in order for a person to make them, to finish them. Man has to plow and plant, fashion vessels and tools and clothing, he has to knead and bake and cook.

Why did Adam have to pray for rain? Hashem designed the world for man to understand and acknowledge that everything was created for his sake, so that he, man, will sanctify Hashem's name through the things of this world, thorough every aspect of creation. That is the real purpose of creation. Everything just a little underdone so that man will come and finish it. For Himself Hashem didn't need to create this world. It was only for the benefit of man so that we would know who Hashem is.

Without man in this world, without someone recognizing Hashem in it all, the earth has no real purpose and remains incomplete. Man, alone possess the power, the ability to bring in to fruition, to bring it altogether. Hashem created the world for the benefit of man. After creating all the physical creatures from the earth, Hashem created man, his body from the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, endowed him with understanding and speech.

Hashem placed man in the garden so that Adam would be the gardener. The Mishneh in Tractate Sanhedrin, 'a person is obligated to say, the world was created for me,' on my account. Therefore, we need assume responsibility to take care of this world and see to it that its needs are met. Yet he was last to be created. Since that is the case, why was man created last? Hashem prepared everything in advance for man, a perfect world. The sages teach that Hashem created man last, so that if he becomes arrogant and conceited about his importance, the order of creation should remind him that even the mosquito preceded him.

By the end of the parasha everything has gone south. Humanity forgot Hashem altogether and the world became totally, incorrigibly corrupted. Creation was polluted by man's evil. It is written, "And יהוה saw

that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And יהוה was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart.” (6:5-6) When we read these verses carefully, it was not Hashem’s decision to destroy the world and man altogether, but to restart. So, when Hashem ‘saw the wickedness of man,’ was He surprised? Did He not see it coming? And can Hashem indeed have heartfelt sadness? He’s not a man who feels sadness, and for that matter, what does it mean that He regretted having created man?

Rashi teaches us that this ‘regret’ means that Hashem mourned over the destruction of His handiwork. He cites from Midrash Rabbah, “This I wrote to refute the heretics: A heretic asked Rabbi Joshua ben Korchah, “Do you not believe that the Holy One, blessed be He, foresees the future?”

Rabbi Joshua replied to him, “Yes.”

The heretic retorted, “But it is written: and He had heartfelt sadness!”

Rabbi Joshua replied, “Was a son ever born to you?”

“Yes,” the heretic replied.

“And what did you do?” he asked.

He replied, “I celebrated; I rejoiced and made everyone rejoice.”

“But did you not know that he was destined to die?” the rabbi asked.

The heretic replied, “At the time of joy, joy; at the time of mourning, mourning.”

Rabbi Joshua said to him, “So is it with the work of the Holy One, blessed be He; even though it was revealed before Him that they would ultimately sin, and He would destroy them, He did not refrain from creating them, for the sake of the righteous men who were destined to arise from them.”

In other words, Hashem took His chances, looking forward to the righteous, who would perform good deeds, however far and few between them they may be. So, He created the world for the sake of man, but more specifically, for the sake of the righteous...which we are all called upon to be.

It is written, “The Nephilim were on the earth in those days.” When Hashem created the world, there were some angels who opined that it was not a good idea to create man since he will stray from His Torah and bring disappointment to Hashem. Hashem didn’t listen to their opinion, because He believed in man. Nonetheless because it was voiced, that negativity made an impression on the universe. It’s a nagging, negative voice of self-doubt that niggles at the edge of our consciousness, that says you’re not good enough, you can’t do anything right, Hashem doesn’t need you in this world. The power of negativity comes from the fact that we don’t hold ourselves in enough esteem. We don’t realize how holy we can be and how much our positive actions make a difference in the world. All our mistakes come from not realizing the great value of our lives, and what we are supposed to be doing in this world.

When we listen for Hashem’s voice in our lives, when we search for Him, when we make the right choices, then we are proving that Hashem made a good decision in creating man, and we are validating creation. We are to remember how important it is to be a man. That the world was created for the sake of man. That he is the center and purpose of all creation. And how righteous behavior can uplift, and how he can complete and finish the creation process, thereby ultimately validating creation.

Everything depends on man. Because there is that nagging voice of negativity, and with just the right amount of false modesty and inflated ego that leads one to abrogate responsibility, he can invert every truth in the world and call it truth, even if it is the opposite of responsibility.

Hashem declared (6:7) that He will blot out all living creatures, but what did animals do? Why should they be destroyed as well? Rashi offers two explanations. He cites the Midrash which relates that the animals also became total deviant and corrupted in their ways, breeding – unnaturally – outside their species.

This week's parasha teaches us that the man's role in this world is that we are a gardener who sets the tone for all creations and they take their cues from us. We are the gardener who can rectify tikkun through the Creation, but we can also be a destroyer.

Second, Rashi says, "Everything was created for the sake of man...and if man is finished, what purpose do these have?" It is written in Isaiah 45:18, "For thus said יהוה, Creator of the heavens, He is Elohim, Former of earth and its Maker, He established it, He did not create it to be empty, He formed it to be inhabited: "I am יהוה, and there is none else."

Thus, Yochanan said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Elohim, and the Word was Elohim. He was in the beginning with Elohim. All came to be through Him, and without Him not even one came to be that came to be. In Him was life, and the was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (John 1:1-5)