



תכלית הבריאה

UNIT II

YAHADUS
CURRICULUM

KIVUN



תכלית הבריאה

OPENING:

In Unit 1, we reached the conclusion that the recognition of Hashem as Creator and Sustainer (*Boreh* and *Manhig*) leads Man to ask why Hashem created the world and question the meaning of his own existence.

In Unit 2:

I. The Purpose of Creation

G-d's purpose in Creation was to bestow of His good to another.

(*Ramchal, Derech Hashem, I, 2:1, translated by R' Aryeh Kaplan, Feldheim*)

הנה התכלית בבריאה היה להיטיב
מטובו יתברך שמו לזולתו.

(דרך ה', חלק א', פרק שני)

Animals also have instincts that ensure they actualize their potential and fulfill the role they were created for.

Now, behold separately each creation from the blade of grass to the vast orb of the sun, each with its special purpose and each specially adapted in its form and matter for that purpose by the same Almighty wisdom. This Divine wisdom called to the light, “Serve the day;” to darkness, “Serve the night;” to the firmament, “Be the heaven over the earth;” to the gathering of waters, “Be the ocean;” to the dry substance, “Become thou the earth, the soil of life and development;” to the planets, “Be rulers of the seasons.” Divine wisdom determined the purpose, and, in accordance with the purpose, ordained form, force and dimensions. He spoke – *vayehi ken* – and it was as it is, infinitesimally small or infinitely great. All was created by the word of G-d, determined by His will, formed by His finger. To G-d, the Universal Force, belong all the forces which are at work in nature and the universe and all the laws which regulate life: from the force and the law which govern the fall of the stone or the growth of the seed, to those which determine the orbit of the planets or the unfolding of the human mind. These all belong to Hashem, the Universal Force, and His word rules every law.

(HaRav Hirsch, The Nineteen Letters, Third Letter, Feldheim)

Q: How does R' Hirsch explain the word “called” in the *pesukim*?

A: _____

When the creations exist and function according to the laws that Hashem established for them, they fully actualize their potential and fulfill their purpose.

Good are the luminaries that our G-d created... Strength and power did He place in them, to be dominant within the world... Glad when they go forth and exultant when they return.

טובים מאורות שברא אלקינו... כח וגבורה נתן בהם להיות מושלים בקרב תבל... שמחים בצאתם וששים בבואם.

(Berachah before Kriyas Shema, ArtScroll Siddur)

Q: How are the heavenly bodies described when they fulfill their mission and actualize their potential?

A: _____

We can define happiness as the fulfillment of one's role and the actualization of potential.

Conclusions:



III. The role of Man and his purpose

Animals want _____

Man wants _____

This is the account of the descendants of Adam... He blessed them and called their name Man.

(Bereishis 5:1-2)

זה ספר תולדות אדם... ויברך אותם
ויקרא שמם אדם.

(בראשית ה'; א'-ב')

“And you, what is your name?” Adam said to Hashem, “It is fitting to call me אדם (Adam) since I was created from the אדמה (earth).”

(Bereishis Rabbah 17:4)

ואתה מה שמך? אמר לו, אני נאה להקרא אדם, שנבראתי מן האדמה. (בראשית רבה י"ז,ד)

This is the case concerning Man; his perfection is in potential and must be actualized. Therefore, it is fitting that his name is אדם, since he shares a similar quality to the earth — אדמה — which is distinctive in bringing potential to actuality with fruits and vegetation and everything else relevant to it. In the same way, Man actualizes his potential, and thus the perfection he attains is the “fruit” he produces.

(Maharal, Tiferes Yisrael, Ch. 3)

וזהו ענין האדם שהוא בכח ויוצאת שלימותו אל הפועל, ולפיכך שמו ראוי לו שהיה משתתף עם האדמה, שהיא מיוחדת לצאת מן הכח אל הפועל בפירות וצמחים וכל אשר שייך אליה, וכן הוא האדם יוצא כחו אל הפועל, ולכן שלמות האדם נקראת גם כן פרי... (מהר"ל, תפארת ישראל, פרק ג')

This is because he is like the earth in which is sown wheat, which is a pure seed, and the earth brings the potential of the seed to actuality. Similarly, in the body of Man is

וזהו כי דומה אל האדמה שנורעת בה החיטה, שהוא זרע נקי, והאדמה מוציאה הזרע אל הפועל עד שהיא בפועל, וכך נורעה בגוף האדם הנשמה

sown the *neshamah*, which is pure, clean, and without any dross. Man's task is to actualize the potential sown within him. Therefore, he is called "Adam," and the Torah and his deeds are the fruit...

שהיא זכה ונקייה בלא פסולת, וצריך האדם להוציא אל הפועל הדבר הנזרע בו, ולכך נקרא אדם, והתורה והמעשים הם פרי...

(שם פרק ט"ו)

(*Ibid.*, Ch. 15)

Man's role is to actualize the potential of his neshamah.

Activity:

Read the handout and answer the following questions:

1. What is the accepted view of the connection between wealth and happiness?

2. Which phenomenon caused researchers to investigate this assumption?

3. How did people in developing countries use the money that they gained in an improving economy?

4. What are the findings of the research regarding the connection between money and happiness?



Physical pleasure vs. spiritual pleasure

Example 1:

a. _____

b. _____

Example 2:

a. _____

b. _____

Example 3:

a. _____

b. _____

Levels of pleasure:

Mountain example: _____

Artist example: _____

A person is not at peace until his spiritual potential is expressed.

Yet the soul will not be satiated.

(Koheles 6:7)

וגם הנפש לא תמלא.

(קהלת ו', ז')

To what can this be compared? To a commoner who married a princess. Even if he would give her all the delights in the world, they will be meaningless to her. Why? Because she is royalty.

(Koheles Rabbah 6:17)

...משל למה הדבר דומה, לעירוני שנשא בת מלכים, אם יביא לה כל מעדני עולם, אינם כלום לה, למה? שהיא מן העליונים.

(קהלת רבה ו', י"ז)

הנה התכלית בבריאה היה להיטיב מטובו יתברך שמו לזולתו.

Q: What is the "good" for which Hashem created us?

A:

Since G-d desired to bestow good, partial good would not be sufficient. The good that He bestows would have to be the ultimate good that His handiwork could accept. G-d alone, however, is the only true good, and therefore His beneficent desire would not be satisfied unless it could bestow that very good, namely the true, perfect good that exists in His intrinsic essence... His wisdom therefore decreed that the nature of this true benefaction be His giving created things the opportunity to attach themselves to Him to the greatest degree possible for them.

(Ramchal, Derech Hashem, I, 2:1, translated by R' Aryeh Kaplan, Feldheim)

ועל כן בהיות חפצו יתברך שמו להיטיב לזולתו, לא יספיק לו בהיותו מיטיב קצת טוב, אלא בהיותו מיטיב תכלית הטוב שאפשר לברואים שיקבלו, ובהיותו הוא לבדו יתברך שמו הטוב האמיתי, לא יסתפק חפצו הטוב אלא בהיותו מהנה לזולתו בטוב ההוא עצמו שהוא בו יתברך מצד עצמו, שהוא הטוב השלם והאמיתי, ... על כן גזרה חכמתו שמציאות הטובה האמיתית הזאת יהיה במה שיתן מקום לברואים לשיתדבקו בו יתברך שמו, באותו השעור שאפשר להם שיתדבקו...

(דרך ה', חלק א', פרק שני)

Conclusions:



The nature of spiritual happiness:

Examples:

Real happiness is what you experience when you are doing what you should be doing.

(Rabbi Akiva Tatz, *The Thinking Jewish Teenager's Guide to Life*)

Q: In light of the *Ramchal's* words, we would expect the reality of this world to be an ideal reality. Reality, as we know, is completely different. If so, how do we understand the words of the *Ramchal*?

A: _____

Man was created in order to give him the opportunity to achieve closeness with Hashem.

Conclusions:



HOMework

1. Give an example of each of the following truths:
 - Potential proves role.
 - Instincts and desires indicate a role.
2. Give examples from the Torah which show that a creation wants to fulfill its role.
3. Quote sayings of *Chazal* that express the idea that filling only physical needs does not satisfy a person.
4. Here is a list of some world records:
 - The shortest time to peel 25 pounds of potatoes.
 - The largest number of blocks that were stacked on the back of a hand in 30 seconds.
 - The greatest “battle” when the “weapon” was food. (The battle was held near Valencia in Spain, and around 125 tons of tomatoes were used.)

Explain, based on what was learned in this unit, what motivates people to invest time, effort, and money in order to achieve these records?

5. Look at *Bereishis 25:34*. This *pasuk* is the source of an accepted expression.

מכר בכורתו בעבור נזיד עדשים.

He sold his birthright for a lentil stew.

Connect it to what we learned.

6. Read the following story, and explain it according to what we learned in this class.

A man was sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment with hard labor. He was forced to turn a wheel that was attached to a flour mill on the other side of the prison wall. For 25 years, the man turned the wheel and ground flour. He didn't see the mill or the flour that was being ground, but was diligent in his work, knowing that he was benefiting people.

When he was freed from prison he was told that the wheel he had been turning was not attached to a mill, and he had actually been doing nothing for 25 years. Upon hearing this, the man collapsed and died.

