

HOW VERY GOOD IT IS

by Rabbi Label Lam

And G-d saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good... (Breishis 1:31)

Up until this point in the creation everything was labeled with the ultimate seal of approval as plain, "good". What is it that suddenly transforms the world into "very good"?

A combination of approaches of the Kli Yakar can be explained via an analogy. Imagine a master chef making a pot of chicken soup. First he selects a choice sturdy cast iron pot with a lid that fits perfectly. Then he fills the pot with pure water from the most pure mountain source. With a fire beginning to cook beneath, the chef adds one quality assured ingredient after another. The best of Himalayan salt, special gourmet ground pepper, a high quality juicy onion, fresh picked dill, green leafy stalks of celery, earthy orange carrots, and some juicy tidbits of fresh garlic.

Finally the crowning ingredient, the chosen chicken which was raised especially for this occasion and slaughtered according to the highest standards of Kashrus. All of this and more is left to simmer for the required time and then voila, at the appointed time the master chef raises the lid of the pot and with a silver spoon sips his culinary masterpiece.

After a brief thoughtful pause to absorb the full aroma and bouquet, the master chef nods with approval like Elexehente of old hovering over a fresh brew of black coffee. At this point the ultra-joyous music erupts and the observing audience bursts into a spontaneous and cheerful song of sublime exaltation.

What just happened here? You got a good recipe for chicken soup, right!? That and even more! Each ingredient that was entered into the recipe of the chicken soup was a pre-qualified delicacy selected for its excellence.

However, when all the various pieces are joined together they combine in a way that the whole is now greater than the sum of its parts. The synergy of the ingredients creates a new and better product than any individual part could ever be on its own.

So too when The Almighty formulated this world, every element of creation was engineered and placed its designated place for a special purpose. The mineral world, water, the vegetative realm, the animal kingdom, and pure energy were all stirred together in one pot for one purpose. Not until man, the crown of creation, was entered into the equation was the world complete. Then the drama begins!

The angelic world was doubtful about this volatile creature called man. He would be too unstable and unpredictable with the possibility of his free willed decisions and indiscretions wreaking havoc upon the world. The Talmud tells us that when G-d saw everything that He created and behold it was very good this was actually in reference to the negative inclination. This dynamic we are made to understand from the perspective of The Almighty is really a spice of life, an active ingredient that somehow makes the good very much so. With that Kosher stamp the heavenly choir could also confidently join in the celebration.

I remember having heard from Rabbi Avigdor Miller ztl something elegant in its simplicity and powerful in its practicality about the world being very good. He relates the notion, which is actually a Torah Commandment to walk in the ways of HASHEM. Whatever actions ascribed to HASHEM through Torah are important models for us to attempt to emulate. He says that just as G-d looked into the world and saw the entirety of creation observing that it is very good, so we are invited to look at life through a similar lens and then realize **how very good it is!**