

# THE PURPOSE OF CREATION PART I

*by Rabbi Aron Tendler*

## To Learn and to Teach

When discussing the origins of the universe, the term "creation" in contrast to the term "chance" means "creation with purpose." The purpose of creation was not left up to us to figure out or decide. G-d gave us the Torah, both Written and Oral, as a detailed instruction manual for realizing the purpose of creation. If we follow His Torah and listen to His instructions we will accomplish G-d's purpose for creating the universe and for creating us, His only free willed creature.

Succinctly put, the purpose of creation is to recognize and accept G-d's total dominion over all things. Logic then dictates that if we accept G-d's dominion we should follow His rules. Our place as the only free willed creatures is to subjugate our free will and decide to listen to G-d's rules so that we will accomplish both our individual purposes for being created and the purpose of all the other non-free willed creations in the universe having been created. The universe and all it contains is the medium through which G-d's presence is manifest and the medium through which humans are able to recognize His presence. Once realized, the ethical human should commit himself to ascertaining G-d's rules and following His wishes.

The first verse in the Torah states this in clear and unambiguous terms. (1:1) "In the beginning G-d created Heaven and Earth." Who created heaven and earth? G-d created heaven and earth! Therefore, regardless of our acclaimed free will and our illusions of independence we must do as G-d says. If we do not do as G-d says we are thieves. The Halacha (Jewish law) states that a Bracha (blessing) should not be recited over a stolen item. The Talmud states, "One who makes a blessing over a stolen item is not blessing G-d; instead, he is cursing G-d!" Why? Because everything in the world was created by G-d to serve His intended purposes. He instructed us through the Torah how to use each item, and if we do not use G-d's world as He wishes we have no right to partake of His world!

The story of Adam and Chava in the Garden of Eden further illustrates this principle. The Garden of Eden was a mini universe. The two humans G-d created were endowed with free will. G-d placed them in the garden to "work and safe-keep the garden;" meaning, to work within the limits of G-d's universe to further reveal G-d's total dominion and to keep the world safe by using it as G-d instructed. Unfortunately, they did not listen to G-d's command and they ate from the single tree that G-d had forbidden to them. Therefore, G-d expelled them from His garden / universe.

So long as Adam and Chava did as they were told they lived in G-d's garden, reveled in His revelation, and exalted in His bountiful generosity. The moment they stopped listening to G-d and began doing what they wanted, they lost the rights to living within the garden. When we say that a righteous person goes to "Gan Eden" after passing from this world it does not mean the actual Garden of Eden. Gan Eden was a physical and materialistic place, and spiritual entities such as souls do not exist in a physical setting such as Gan Eden. However, the meaning of going to "Gan Eden" follows the "measure for a measure" that is the foundation of G-d's perfect justice. The righteous person lived his or her life following the Torah and realizing the purpose of creation. By subjugating his or her free will in service to G-d the righteous person realized G-d's total dominion and attempted to make the world outside of Gan Eden like the world inside Gan Eden. Therefore, the just reward for such a righteous person is that it will continue existing in a setting (Heaven / Gan Eden) that is in total concert with the manifestation of G-d's dominion and glory.

The world was clearly divided between two types of creations, free willed and non-free willed. If the free willed creation, the human, does as G-d intended then the rest of the non-free willed world is justified in its existence. It has purpose! However, if the human goes against the wishes and intentions of the Creator, the non-free willed creations have no purpose to exist.

Rashi on verse 1:1 references the Medresh that says that the world was created for the Torah that is called "Rayshis - the beginning" (Mishlei 8:22), and for the sake of the Jewish people who are called "Rayshis - the beginning" (Yirmiyah 2:3). This Medresh demands further elaboration.

In the beginning there was no Torah and there were no Jews. In the beginning there was only the universe, prophecy (G-d's means of conversing), and the single human creature Adam. Adam was the only free willed creature in existence. (The Nachash (serpent) was a one-time occurrence for the purpose of challenging Adam and Chava.) Adam's purpose was to follow G-d's spoken (not written) instructions (2:15-17). However, this was not G-d's final intention for the creature called Adam. The Torah presents us with the "decision making process" that G-d underwent in finalizing His purpose for the free willed creature. (2:18-25) "The Adam creature should not be alone. Let us make him a helpmate."

The Adam creature was then instructed to name all the other animals. In the process it became clear to the Adam creature that he was unique in the entire universe. He was the only free willed creature. Furthermore, it became clear that his purpose for being created was in some way related to theirs. By "giving them names" he identified their individual purposes as they related to realizing G-d's total control and dominion. However, it also became clear that his purpose was equally dependent upon sharing his increasing realization of G-d's manifest presence.

The problem was that there was no other free willed creature with whom to share his knowledge. Therefore, G-d split the Adam creature into its two inherent components, the Adam - male side and the Chava - female side. The Chava side was called the "the helpmeet," because through the

interaction of the two components male and the female, the human creature could further its recognition of G-d and share that knowledge with each other.

According to the Medresh, the original Adam creature was hermaphroditic and could have reproduced itself. If so, why did G-d go through the process of splitting the Adam into the male and female? Let the Adam continue as it was and eventually it would reproduce itself (and you wondered where cloning was mentioned in the Torah!) and there would be another human creature with which Adam could share his awareness and understanding of G-d's manifest presence?

The Chasam Sofer in his introduction to his responsa on Yoreh Deah asked the following question. Why does G-d send down souls to the world? If life's purpose is to attain purity so that the soul can return to G-d in a state of purity, then keep the souls in heaven and avoid the entire process! The Chasam Sofer explained that in heaven there is a level of purity that is unique to heaven; however, that is not the purity G-d intended for the soul. As pure as the soul is before it is sent to the world it is not complete. The purity that G-d desires for the soul can only be attained through acts of Chesed (kindness) and in heaven there are no opportunities for Chesed. Therefore, G-d sends the Neshama (soul) to our world for opportunities to do Chesed and attain its intended purity.

As Avraham's descendants we are imprinted with the ability and the obligation to do Chesed. Like Avraham, we know that the greatest Chesed we can do for each other is to share our awareness and understanding of G-d with each other.

The Adam creature was created singular and alone. True, it was hermaphroditic and could have reproduced itself. However, for the period of time that it would have taken for the second human creature to be born Adam was alone. Therefore, G-d said, "It is not good for Adam to be alone!" Alone there is no way for Adam to engage in Chesed! Alone there is no purpose for Adam's existence! Therefore I will make for him a helpmeet with whom he will be able to do the Chesed of sharing My manifest presence and accomplish the purpose of creation.

Rashi's referenced Medresh on the first verse of the Torah says this beautifully! Why did G-d create the world? For the Torah that is called "Rayshis - the beginning" (Mishlei 8:22), and for the sake of the Jewish people who are called "Rayshis - the beginning" (Yirmiyah 2:3). The text of the Torah and its attendant Oral Law encompass all the knowledge of G-d that is humanly possible to comprehend. The Jewish people were chosen to "work with the Torah and safe-keep the Torah." meaning, to work within the limits of G-d's Torah to further reveal G-d's total dominion and to keep the world safe by following G-d's commandments.

However, the awareness of the Creator and its attendant obligations must be shared with each other and with all the other nations. That is G-d's intended purpose of life. That is G-d's intended purpose for creation.

Copyright © 2002 by Rabbi Aron Tendler and Project Genesis, Inc.

---

The author is Rabbi of Shaarey Zedek Congregation, Valley Village, CA.

---