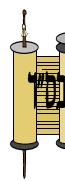




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Parashas Bereshis



The Power Source

Everyone please gather together. We are about to enter the main door of the automobile assembly plant. Mr. Ozem-yodi will be our guide through the tour of the plant."

"Thank you Rabbi Emunim. Before we enter the factory, I would like to explain something to the boys. This auto assembly plant is brand new. It is run by the latest technology. We have a new super-computer that controls the entire operation. It orders the parts, places them on the assembly line, welds them together, screws in bolts, spray cleans the entire body, paints the car, installs the motor, transmission, interior, glass, and all of the accessories. The computer handles everything from start to finish. Now, we are ready to enter. You will see the assembly line starting up this morning."

The group enters the plant. Everything is quiet. The chief engineer approaches the main switch to turn on the super-computer. He presses the button with great enthusiasm, waiting to see the look of amazement on the boys' faces. The boys are totally amazed because . . . nothing happens. The computer does not turn on. It is as dead and worthless as a stone. The chief engineer and tour guide are very embarrassed.

"We have a small technical problem here. I am sure we will solve it in no time. Our super-computer will not let us down."

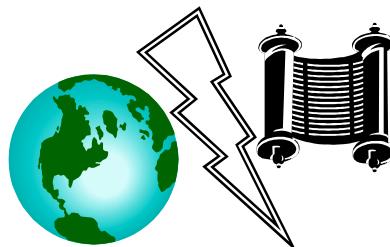
"Mr. Ozem-yodi, are you sure that the computer is plugged in?" a small boy asks. "I assume so, young man. Electricity is the power source for the entire plant. Still, we will check it out."

Sure enough, the great super-computer was not plugged in to the electricity. The entire huge assembly plant, with all of its super-sophisticated equipment was useless without its power source - electricity.

Bereshis - In the beginning of Hashem's creating the heaven and earth" (Bereshis 1:1). Why does the verse begin with the word 'bereshis'? There is no simple answer to this question. Therefore, Rashi explains that the verse says, "Darshen me." Which drasha does Rashi cite? Our sages comment that the world was created for the Torah, which is called 'reishis,' and the world was created for Yisrael, who are called 'reishis.' This answer, however, raises more questions. Can it be that the entire huge world was brought into existence for a people who comprise far less than one percent of its population? There are lands that have never seen a Jewish foot tread on their soil. The Land of Israel, which we inhabit, is so small that it is barely visible on the world map. Additionally, the first Jew, Avraham Avinu, did not make his appearance until almost 2000 years after the creation of the world! The Torah, the other reason for creation, was not given

until the year 2448! How can we say that the world was conceived for an event that took place so long after its inception?

The answer is simple. The creation began with 'Bereshis' and culminated with the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai. The entire universe was brought into existence only on the condition that Klal Yisrael would accept the Torah, 2448 years later. This idea is expressed in the verse, "And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day (*yom ha'shishi*)" (Bereshis 1:31). Why does the Torah add the letter "hey" to the word "shishi" to make it "ha'shishi"? Rashi cites two explanations. The letter "hey" stands for the number five. The world was created on condition that the Jewish people would accept the Five Books of the Torah. Another explanation is that the "hey" means "The." The world was waiting for "The" sixth day - The Sixth of Sivan, 2248, when Klal Yisrael would receive the Torah. On that day, the entire universe was strengthened to the point that it was considered as if it was created at that time.



How did the giving of the Torah complete the creation of the world? To understand this, we have to realize that the Torah is the "energy" that sustains the world. Just as the electricity in our story, provided the power to run the super-computer and the assembly plant, the Torah provides the power to run the world. If Klal Yisrael had not accepted the Torah, the world would have returned to "tohu vo'vohu" - the nothingness that existed before creation. Why? Because the energy source would have been missing - cut off like the electric power switch. Therefore, their commitment to keeping and learning the Torah kept the world going.

This is a very compelling thought. The world is no different today. It is still running on the same system. The power that keeps the world running is Limud HaTorah. When we sit in the Beis HaKinesses or the Beis HaMedrash and learn, we create energy - spiritual energy. That power keeps the sun and moon going, the rain falling, the birds flying, the plants growing, and the people breathing. The lives of all of the millions and billions of plants, creatures, and human beings on this planet are totally dependent upon our learning. What a *zechus* (merit)! What a responsibility.*

Last week, on Simchas Torah, we celebrated the completion of the yearly cycle of reading and learning the Torah. We danced with great joy. This week, we begin the Torah anew. We are always happy to learn it. However, now we have an additional reason to be happy. We know that our learning keeps the world running. We know that our learning is the reason that Hashem created the world. Our Torah learning is the most important thing in the universe! There is no greater reason to be happy.

Kinderlach . . .

Did you see a beautiful fruit tree today? What makes it so green? What makes its fruits so delicious? Your Torah learning. Did you walk out in the sun? What makes it so bright and shiny? What gives it the energy to provide light and warmth to the world? Your Torah learning. Take a nice deep breath of fresh air. Your Torah learning is the reason that it is there. How many people do you see and meet every day? They are kept alive by Your Torah learning. Kinderlach, you keep the world going. Your learning is the most important thing in the world. What a motivation to learn better. What a motivation to learn with a new vitality this year! Learn with great simcha. Put all of your energy into it. Put your energy into the power source that provides the energy to keep the world running.

* See the sefer *Vi'talmudo Bi'yado* – introduction to Sefer Bereshis – for further explanation.

Parasha Questions:

- Yefes was Noach's oldest son. Why was his name written last in the posuk? (Rashi 5:32 and Sifsei Chachomim)
- Make a list of the descendants of Adam until Noach's sons. (5:1-32)
- Why did Hashem ask Kayin where his brother Hevel was? (Rashi 4:9)

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