

## **And G-d created the great sea-giants... G-d blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. (1:21; 2:3)**

Upon studying the story of Creation, we confront what seem to be two inconsistencies in the language of the text. On the fifth day of Creation, Hashem created the taninim ha'gedolim, the great sea-giants. Interestingly, this is the only creation of which the Torah does not conclude with the words, va'yehi chein, "and it was so." Why is this? Clearly, if Hashem created them, then it was so. Why is this creation different than the others? Rashi cites a comment from Chazal in Meseches Bava Basra 74b that these giant sea-creatures are none other than the Livyasan and its mate. After creating them, the female was then slain, salted and preserved for a future banquet to be held in the company of Moshiach Tzidkeinu and attended by the tzaddikim, righteous persons, of all generations. This is an incredible statement, considering that this amphibious creature was created only to be immediately killed and stored for the sake of a special meal sometime in the distant future.

Another such instance is in Creation, and at first seems highly irregular. Hashem rested on the seventh day of Creation, designating it as Yom Shabbos Kodesh (Va'yikadeish oso). The Torah teaches us that Hashem blessed the Shabbos. How did Hashem bless Shabbos more so than any other day of the week? Rashi explains that Shabbos was blessed with the Manna, which they received daily, but on Friday, in honor of Shabbos, Klal Yisrael were provided with a double portion. This seems strange, considering that the Manna was not received until thousands of years later, and it only lasted for the forty years in which the Jewish People sojourned in the Wilderness. Both of the aforementioned creations had very limited and restricted purposes; yet, their creation occupies a central role in Hashem's plan. How are we to understand this?

In an insightful commentary, Rabbi Yaacov Haber notes that this is a question only to those who assume that the significance of an object is measured by time and space. This is a grievous error. We should not determine the value of an object based on its overt value. Some things are here for but a moment, but, to someone, that moment is critically important.

Let us take an example from the episode of Noach and the raven. The pelting rain had ceased, but was the land dry? Noach sent out the raven in search of dry land. Chazal relate that the raven kvetched and asked, "Why me? There are so many other creatures aboard the Ark. Send one of them!" Noach replied, perhaps with more frankness than was necessary, "You do not have much purpose in the world. You are not a kosher fowl. You may not be offered on the Mizbayach, Altar, as a sacrifice. You do not sing sweetly. Truthfully, if something were to happen to you, it would not engender a great loss in the world." Noach was wrong, because not only did the raven survive, but much later, its descendants actually served a crucial function in providing sustenance to Eliyahu HaNavi in the desert.

Noach erred in that every creation has a function and a purpose. Hashem does not waste creations. They all have significance in His eyes. We have no right to question Hashem, just because we do not quite understand the significance of something.

Another classic example of this idea is when Moshe Rabbeinu is commanded by Hashem to wage war with Midyan. Moshe felt that he should also battle Moav, since the Moavites were much worse than the Midyanites, who only assisted Moav in their attacks on the Jews. Hashem did not agree. Perhaps at the time Moshe did not understand, but when we look ahead in history, we can understand why Hashem spared Moav. Rus descended from Moav. If there had been no Moav – there would have been no Rus and no Malchus Bais David, kingdom of the House of David. Many generations of this degenerate and evil nation were allowed to live so that the diamond, Rus, would ultimately emerge.

If Moshe can misjudge, we surely can, and we often do when we question the value of a nation, a group or an individual. In our limited perception, we see little value, but Hashem's vision encompasses an entire world as a whole in its historical context. We can never estimate the purpose, or value in life, of an individual. It might take one single action to justify an entire life's existence. It might be his descendants down the line that justify his creation. Since we can never know, we have no right to pass judgment, surely not to question the Almighty.

This thesis strikes home, since I have had the privilege to spend time with Jews who are living in restricted environments, such as those incarcerated for various crimes. I used to wonder about them, since some of these individuals are doing hard time with little or no hope of parole or commutation. I say 'I wondered', in the past tense, until I saw a forty-five year old man putting on Tefillin for the very first time and reciting Shema Yisrael. There is no simple way to describe the experience. These are people who, for the most part, were raised with no clear understanding of

what Judaism means or its relevancy to them. For some, had they not ended up in prison, they would probably never have donned a pair of Tefillin. When they perform that mitzvah, it is with such feeling and passion that it could serve as an inspiration – and it does. Maybe that is their purpose – to perform a mitzvah with pure, unadulterated emotion, for no other reason than to finally serve Hashem.