

# Letting in the Light

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*Mazel tov!* As you hopefully noticed, we missed publishing Pathways *Bereishit* last week, the first week of the year. Although I was sad to have skipped a week, I do have a happy excuse: we were blessed with a baby girl. So, in honor of the new baby, we will attempt to make up for her “timely” arrival and connect *Parashat Bereishit*, the creation of the universe,

and our *parashah* this week.

The Torah says that God created two great luminaries – the great luminary to rule the day (the sun) and the lesser one to rule the night (the moon) (Genesis 1:16). Noting the discrepancy between the beginning of the verse, where the luminaries are both called “great,” and the end of the verse, where the moon is called “lesser,” Rashi explains that they were created equal, but the moon was made smaller because it contended, “It is impossible for two kings to share the same crown.”

Although the sun and the moon both shine brightly, they are very different from one another. The sun shines its own light, whereas the moon simply reflects that light. The light of the sun is representative of the Divine. Just as truth is blinding, so does God’s light reflect the true reality of the universe. The final letters of the words in the Torah’s first verse, *barA ElokiM eT* (God created), spell *EMeT* (truth). The very purpose of Creation is for God and His true nature to become known even down on Earth.

The moon, which represents our planet, was supposed to be just as bright as the sun. However, were they to “share the same crown,” there would essentially be no difference between Heaven and Earth. God’s true reality would permeate Creation in a way that all would be one angel-like existence. Therefore the moon was made smaller; it would no longer shine as brightly as the sun, leaving room for darkness and for the human experience.

If often we feel distant, cold and disconnected from God, it’s because His light is hidden in this darkness. For every wrong move we make, every misstep and bad judgment call, we are surrounded by even more forces of darkness grabbing hold of our spiritual receptors and jamming our connection even further. Have you ever found yourself in a downward spiral, wanting to get out and do something meaningful, but being

badgered by distractions at every turn? Do you want to make that meaningful prayer and begin building a true relationship with God, but find yourself sidetracked whenever the opportunity presents itself? What is the key to opening our hearts and minds to the reality that we know exists?

This week's *parashah* says, "You shall make a light for the ark" (ibid., 6:16). The word *teivah* (ark) also means "word." By verbalizing words of prayer with truth and sincerity, we illuminate them and cause them to shine brightly. Commenting on the type of light described in the verse, Rashi says, "Some say it was a window, and some say it was a precious gem." What's the difference? The gem has its own light, but the window only reflects light that is already there. There are some great Tzaddikim who burn with such tremendous desire for the absolute truth that they dispel all darkness and can always speak directly to God. And then there are the rest of us.

True, we may often be surrounded by darkness, but there is never reason to despair. If we can utter but a few words of the honest truth, we can always create a window of opportunity, allowing in the light that reveals the pathways back to spirituality and Godliness. With but one word of truth, we can ultimately fulfill the purpose of Creation and return the moon to its original glory. Amen!

*Based on Likutey Halakhot, Dayanim 3; Likutey Moharan I, 9*