



Malchut - manifesting the good in three dimensions

Micah 6:8
הַגִּיד לְךָ אָדָם מִה־טוֹב וּמִה־יְהוָה דּוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ כִּי אִם־עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד וְהִצַּנְעַ לְכַת עִם־אֱלֹהֶיךָ:
He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord demands of you; but to do justice, to love loving-kindness, and to walk discreetly with your God.

What does a good person look like in your eyes?

What is the difference between what is good and what the Lord demands of you? How might they work together? Do they ever conflict?

Proverbs 4:2
כִּי לִקְחַ טוֹב נָתַתִּי לָכֶם תּוֹרָתִי אֶל־תַּעֲזָבוּ:
For I gave you good teaching; forsake not My instruction.

A לִקַּח is a teaching in the sense of a 'take-away.' What do you take from Torah?

What is the most important teaching about the good that you have taken from life?

Deuteronomy 3:25
אֶעֱבְרָה־נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן הַהוּא הַטּוֹב הַזֶּה וְהַלְבָּנוֹן:
Pray let me cross over and see the good land that is on the other side of the Jordan, this good mountain and the Lebanon.

The good often functions as an ideal toward which we strive. What vessel for collective good are you working toward? What is its essential organizing point or principle?



Midrash Genesis Rabbah 8:5

The Rabbis say in the name of Rabbi Ḥanina bar Idi, and Rabbi Pinḥas and Rabbi Ḥilkiya said in the name of Rabbi Simon: Meod, this refers to Man [adam]. That is what is written: “God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very [meod] good” (Genesis 1:31) – Man [adam] was good.

רבנן אמרי לה בשם רבי חנינא בר אידי ורבי פינחס ורבי חלקיה בשם רבי סימון אמר, מאד, הוא אדם.
הדא הוא דכתיב (בראשית א, לא): ויבא אלהים את כל אשר עשה והנה טוב מאד, והנה טוב אדם.

How do you reconcile human freedom (and the potential to do evil) with the key role humanity plays in expressing the goodness of creation?

Answer the question in the moral realm as well as that of ‘good as reflective of the will of its Maker.’



The heroic moment

Ecclesiastes 3:1

לְכֹל זְמַן וְזֶמַן וְעֵת לְכָל־חֶפֶץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם:

Everything has an appointed season, and there is a time for every matter under the heaven.

Midrash Tanhuma Ekev 9:1

At that time, etc. (Deuteronomy 10:1): This is what the verse stated (Ecclesiastes 3:1), "A time and season is set for everything, for every experience under heaven." There was a time for the world to be created; there was a time for the generation of the flood to be destroyed in water. There was a time to go into the ark, and a time to exit from it. And there was a time for Avraham to be created, and so too with all the forefathers. There was a time that our fathers were to go down to Egypt, and a time for them to exit from there. And there was a time that they were to be subjugated. And there was a time for the tablets to be broken, and there was a time when others would do that act [of the golden calf]. Hence, "Carve out two tablets of stone." Shlomo said (Ecclesiastes 3:5), "A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones." "A time for throwing stones," these are the first tablets; "and a time for gathering stones," the time to carve out other tablets of stone, as it is stated, "Carve out (pesal) two tablets of stone." Rabbi Yehoshua said, "That he destroy the idols of (pesilei) their gods."

בַּעַת הַהִיא וְגו'. זֶה שֶׁאָמַר הַכְּתוּב: לְכֹל זְמַן וְעֵת לְכָל חֶפֶץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם (קהלת ג, א). זְמַן הָיָה לְעוֹלָם לְהַבְרָאוֹת. זְמַן הָיָה לְדוֹר הַמַּבּוּל שֶׁיֵּאבְדוּ בַּמַּיִם. זְמַן הָיָה לְנֹחַ לְהַכְנִס לַתֵּבָה, וְזְמַן הָיָה לוֹ לְצֵאת מִמֶּנָּה. וְזְמַן הָיָה שֶׁיֵּבְרָא אַבְרָהָם, וְכֵן לְכָל הָאֲבוֹת. וְזְמַן הָיָה שֶׁיֵּרְדוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְמִצְרַיִם, וְזְמַן הָיָה שֶׁיֵּצְאוּ מִשָּׁם. וְזְמַן הָיָה שֶׁיִּשְׁתַּעַבְדוּ. וְזְמַן הָיָה שֶׁיִּשְׁתַּבְּרוּ הַלְּוִיִּם. וְזְמַן הָיָה שֶׁיַּעֲשׂוּ אַחֲרֵימָה אֹתוֹ מַעֲשֵׂה. הוּא, פֶּסַל לָךְ שְׁנֵי לְוִיִּם אֲבָנִים. אָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה, עֵת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ אֲבָנִים וְעֵת כְּנוֹס אֲבָנִים (שם פסוק ה). עֵת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ אֲבָנִים, אֵלֹהֵי הַלְּוִיִּם הָרַאשׁוֹנוֹת. וְעֵת כְּנוֹס אֲבָנִים, עֵת הָיָה לְפֶסַל לְוִיִּם אֲבָנִים אַחֲרֵימָה, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: פֶּסַל לָךְ שְׁנֵי לְוִיִּם אֲבָנִים. אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, שֶׁהוּא מִבְּעַר פְּסִילֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם.

Where do the personal, collective and cosmic dimensions of the quest for good manifest in your life?

Where do they intersect? Are the complementary, contradictory or both?

Looking back, what have been key moments in your life? Were you aware at the time? Which might lie ahead?



Esther's grace

<p>2:15 Now when the turn of Esther, the daughter of Abihail, Mordecai's uncle, who had taken her for a daughter, came to go in to the king, she requested nothing, except what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the guard of the women, would say, and Esther obtained grace in the eyes of all who beheld her.</p>	<p>וּבְהִגִּיעַ תִּרְ-אֶסְתֵּר בֵּת-אֲבִיחַיִל דָּד מֶרְדֵּכַי אֲשֶׁר לָקַח-לָוּ לְבַת לְבֹא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא בִקְשָׁה דָבָר כִּי אִם אֶת-אֲשֶׁר יֹאמֶר הֶגַּי סֵרִיס-הַמֶּלֶךְ שֶׁמֶר הַנָּשִׁים וְתֵהִי אֶסְתֵּר נִשְׂאֵת חֵן בְּעֵינֵי כָל-רְאִיָּה:</p>
<p>2:17 And the king loved Esther more than all the women, and she won grace and favor before him more than all the maidens, and he placed the royal crown on her head and made her queen instead of Vashti.</p>	<p>וַיֶּאֱהַב הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת אֶסְתֵּר מִכָּל הַנָּשִׁים וַתִּשָּׂא חֵן וְחֹסֵד לְפָנָיו מִכָּל הַבְּתוּלוֹת וַיִּשָּׂם כֶּתֶר מַלְכוּת בְּרֹאשָׁהּ וַיְמַלִּכָהּ תַּחַת וַשְׁתִּי</p>
<p>5:2 And it came to pass when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, that she won favor in his eyes, and the king extended to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand, and Esther approached and touched the end of the scepter.</p>	<p>וַיְהִי כִּרְאוֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה עֹמֶדֶת בְּחֹצֵר נִשְׂאָה חֵן בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּזְשֹׁט הַמֶּלֶךְ לְאֶסְתֵּר אֶת שֶׁרְבִיט הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדוֹ וַתִּקְרַב אֶסְתֵּר וַתִּגַּע בְּרֹאשׁ הַשֶּׁרְבִיט</p>
<p>7:3 And Queen Esther replied and said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, O king, and if it pleases the king, may my life be given me in my petition and my people in my request.</p>	<p>וַתַּעַן אֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה וַתֹּאמֶר אִם מִצָּאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ וְאִם עַל הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב תִּנְתֵּן לִי נַפְשִׁי בְּשִׂאלַתִּי וְעַמִּי בְּבִקְשַׁתִּי</p>

How would you define the quality of 'finding favor?' Why is it so often associated with the eyes?

How has grace found expression in your life?

Compare the role that grace plays in driving Esther's story to that of Yosef:

Joseph

<p>Genesis 39:4 And Joseph found favor in his eyes, and he (Joseph) served him, and he (Potiphar) appointed him over his house, and all he had he gave into his hand.</p>	<p>וַיִּמְצָא יוֹסֵף חֵן בְּעֵינָיו וַיִּשְׁרֵת אֹתוֹ וַיִּפְקְדֵהוּ עַל-בֵּיתוֹ וְכָל-יִשְׁלֹו נָתַן בְּיָדוֹ:</p>
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<p>Genesis 39:21 The Lord was with Joseph, and He extended charisma to him, and He gave him favor in the eyes of the warden of the prison.</p>	<p>וַיְהִי יְהוָה אֶת־יוֹסֵף וַיְטֵ אֵלָיו חַסֵּד וַיִּתֵּן חֶן בְּעֵינֵי שַׂר בֵּית־הַסֹּהַר:</p>
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BONUS:

See Exodus ch. 33, especially lines 13&17. What roles does 'finding favor' play in Moshe's heroic moment of seeing all of God's good pass before him?

<p>Esther 4:14</p>
<p>אֶל־תִּדְמִי בְּנַפְשְׁךָ לְהַמְלִיט בְּיַת־הַמֶּלֶךְ מִכָּל־הַיְהוּדִים: כִּי אִם־הִחַרְשׁ תַּחֲרִישִׁי בְּעַת הַזֹּאת רַח וְהִצֵּלָה יַעֲמֹד לַיהוּדִים מִמְּקוֹם אַחֵר וְאֶת וּבֵית־אָבִיךָ תִּאבְּדוּ וּמִי יוֹדֵעַ אִם־לְעַת קְזָאת הַגָּעַת לְמַלְכוּת:</p>
<p>For if you remain silent at this time, relief and rescue will arise for the Jews from elsewhere, and you and your father's household will perish; and who knows whether at a time like this you will attain the kingdom?"</p>

<p>Esther 10:3</p>
<p>כִּי מִרְדֵּכָי הַיְהוּדִי מִשְׁנֵה לְמַלְךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרֶשׁ וְגָדוֹל לַיהוּדִים וְרָצִי לְרַב אֶחָיו דָּרָשׁ טוֹב לְעַמּוֹ וְדָבַר שְׁלוֹם לְכָל־זָרְעוֹ:</p>
<p>For Mordecai the Jew was viceroy to King Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and accepted by most of his brethren; seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all their seed.</p>

**SOURCES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY VIDEO****Sefer Yetzirah 1:7**

עשר ספירות בלי מה נעוץ סופן בתחלתן ותחלתן בסופן כשלהבת קשורה בגחלת שאדון יחיד ואין לו שני ולפני אחד מה אתה סופר:

Ten emanations/sefirot without what - their end is thrust into their beginning and the beginning into their end, like the flame is bound to the coal. For the Master is singular and there is no other, and before one what do you count?

Midrash Genesis Raba parshat Bereshit 1

"In the beginning Gd created..." Six things preceded the creation of the world, some of which were created and some of which 'rose up in thought' to be created. The Torah and the Throne of Glory were created. The Torah, as it is written "The Lord acquired me at the beginning of His way..." (Mishle 8:22) The Throne of Glory, as it is written "Your throne is established of old..." (Tehillim 93:2) The forefathers 'rose up in thought' to be created, as it is written "Your fathers seemed to Me Like the first fig to ripen on a fig tree." (Hoshea 9:10) Israel 'rose up in thought,' as it is written "Remember Your congregation, which You acquired from time immemorial..." (Tehillim 74:2) The Holy Temple 'rose up in thought,' as it is written "As a Throne of Glory, exalted from the beginning, so is the place of our Sanctuary." (Jeremiah 17:12) The name of the Messiah 'rose up in thought,' as it is written "...before the sun, his name will be magnified..." (Tehillim 72:17) R' Ahavah son of R' Zeira said: also teshuvah, this is what is written "Before the mountains were born..." (Tehillim 90:2)

[בראשית ברא אלהים] ו' דברים קדמו לבריית עולם, יש מהם שנבראו ויש מהם שעלו במחשבה להבראות, התורה וכסא הכבוד נבראו, התורה דכת' י"י קנני ראשית (משלי ח כב), כסא כבוד דכת' נכון כסאך מאז וגו' (תהלים צג ב), האבות עלו במחשבה להבראות דכת' כבכורה בתאנה בראשיתה ראיתי אבותיכם (הושע ט י), ישראל עלו במחשבה דכת' זכור עדתך קנית קדם (תהלים עד ב), בית המקדש עלה במחשבה דכת' כסא כבוד מרום מראשון מקום מקדשנו (ירמיה יז יב), שם המשיח עלה במחשבה דכת' לפני שמש ינון שמו (תהלים עב יז), ר' אהבה בר' זעירא אמר אף התשובה הה"ד בטרם הרים וגו'...