



Fish With A Purpose

IN HONOR OF 60 YEARS SINCE THE REBBE INTRODUCING HIS REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING RASHI, 5725—5785, THIS MONTHLY COLUMN WILL FEATURE AN ADAPTATION OF ONE OF THE REBBE'S "RASHI SICHOS."¹

**וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת-
הַתַּנִּינִים הַגְּדֹלִים** (א, כא)

"הוא לוֹיִתוֹ וּבֶן זֹוגוֹ שִׁבְרָאֻם זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה וְהָרַג אֶת הַנְּקֵבָה וּמְלַחָהּ לְצַדִּיקִים לְעֵתִיד לְבֹא, שְׂאֵם יִפְרוּ וְיִרְבוּ לֹא יִתְקַיֵּם הָעוֹלָם בְּפְנֵיהֶם" (רש"י)

And Hashem created
the sea monsters...

"This refers to the Leviatan and its mate, for He created them male and female, and He slew the female and salted her away [i.e. preserved her] for the Tzaddikim in the future, for if they would propagate, the world could not exist because of them." (Rashi)

Rashi's commentary demands an explanation: If the world's existence depends upon the female Leviatan being killed, for what purpose did Hashem create it in the first

place? If the purpose is to serve it to "the Tzaddikim in the future" (when Moshiach comes), then it could have been created as a lifeless, already-salted fish?

This can be answered according to Rashi's *pirush* on a different *possuk*:

לֹא-טוֹב הִיּוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ (ב, יח)

"שְׂלֹא יֵאמְרוּ שְׂתֵי רְשׁוּיּוֹת הֵן, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעֲלִיּוֹנִים יַחִיד וְאֵין לוֹ זֹוג, וְזֶה בְּתַחְתּוֹנִים וְאֵין לוֹ זֹוג" (רש"י)

It is not good for
man to be alone...

"Lest they [people] say, 'There are two authorities: Hashem is alone among the heavenly beings and He has no mate, and this one [man] among the earthly creatures has no mate.'" (Rashi)

Based on the reasoning used in the second Rashi, we can explain the first Rashi: Had the male Leviatan been created

לעילוי נשמת אם המלך
 הרבנית הצדקנית מרת חנה ע"ה ז"ל
 אשת כ"ק הרה"ג והרה"ח המקובל
 מוהר"ר ר' לוי יצחק
 בקשר עם יום ההילולא השישים
 ו' תשרי ה'תשפ"ה

נדפס ע"י
 הרה"ת ר' לוי יצחק וזוגתו מרת
 הדסה ומשפחתם שיחיו
 סלונים



alone, without a mate, it would have left room for people to make the mistake of saying that “there are two authorities—Hashem has no mate, and the Leviasan has no mate.”

It was necessary, therefore, for Hashem to create the female Leviasan, and as a live creature.

According to this, however, we are still left with a question: For what purpose does Rashi mention the details of the female Leviasan being killed and “salted away for the Tzaddikim in the future”? What does this add to our understanding of the topic at hand?

The answer can be found in the concluding words of our *possuk*: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים כִּי טוֹב—*and Hashem saw that it was good*” (as well as—and, indeed, even more prominently—later on in the *parsha*, in *possuk* 31: “וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה—*And Hashem saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good*”):

If the entire purpose of the creation of the female Leviasan is only to preempt and *negate* a mistaken assumption (that “there are two authorities”)—a *negative* purpose, without any *positive* and productive element—then it is not possible to define its creation as “(very) good.”

This is why Rashi adds the additional detail of the female Leviasan being “salted away for the Tzaddikim in the future,” in order to highlight a *positive* element in its creation, allowing it to be defined as “(very) good.”

In Likkutei Torah, the Alter Rebbe explains the concept of the Leviasan in terms of *avodas Hashem*: The “Leviasan,” he says, represents an individual who is on an extremely elevated and exalted level of *avodas Hashem*, called יחודא עילאה. Compared to a fish in the sea who can swim very far distances with little effort, these holy individuals—also referred to as “*Nunei Yama*” (Aramaic for “Fish of the Sea”)—ascend higher and higher within the realm of *Kedusha* quickly and effortlessly.

Since these Tzaddikim are on such a lofty level—“*if they*

would propagate, the world could not exist because of them”: This form of *avodas Hashem* is special, and belongs only to a select few. For if it would be a common form of *avoda* that belongs to many, the physical limitations of the world would be overwhelmed with their intense holiness and cease to exist—contrary to Hashem’s desire. Hashem wants an earthly, physical and limited world, and that this world—as it is—should be a home for Him—a *dira lo yisborech ba’tachtonim*. The *avodah* of most people, therefore, is on the lower level of יחודא תתאה.

Takeaway:

Hashem killed the female Leviasan, leaving the male one alive. Also, though the female Leviasan was killed, it didn’t disappear; its body remains for the future Tzaddikim (“Tzaddikim”—referring to all Yidden; “וועמך כולם צדיקים”).

From this we learn that also “regular” people (who are not on the “Leviasan” level) need to incorporate into their *avoda* a bit of the “Leviasan *avoda*” (i.e. not to suffice with just the *bittul* of יחודא תתאה, but also some of the *bittul* of יחודא עילאה.)

And since the *giluyim* of Moshiach depend on our actions in *galus*, the little bit of the higher level of *bittul* that we have now prepares us for Moshiach, a time when all Yidden will constantly be on the level of יחודא עילאה—the level of the Leviasan.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 19)

1. See “*Revolution in Rashi— parts I & II*,” Derher Vov Tishrei (supplement) and Shevat 5775.