THE GREAT SEA GIANTS

What are these huge fish? Rashi says they are huge fish in the sea. It is likely that Rashi is referring to whale sharks as well as all different types of whales. Although we know whales are not fish but mammals, since they are warm-blooded, give birth to live young and feed them through mammary glands, and have hair on their bodies, nonetheless the Torah's definition of גט should very well include whales and dolphins. A גט is simply an animal that spends the majority of its time in water, and whales certainly fit that category.

Midrash Lekach Tov says the plural word ינים refers to all huge creatures of the sea, creatures that shock people when they see them because they are so huge. That is why they are called ינים – because anyone who sees them will immediately scream out (מןープ) praises of Hashem.

The Zohar (page 34) and Midrash Tehillim (page 189) say these creatures sing to Hashem constantly and are always raising their voices in tefillah to Hashem. It is well-known that whales are constantly "talking" and making noises throughout the sea. Scientists believe it is some form of communication between one another, but according to the Zohar what they are doing is a form of prayer!

Ramban says Chazal (especially in the fifth perek of Bava Basra) and the scientists of his time claim there are creatures in the sea that are miles long (some being 500 miles long, which is around 1000 miles). Since they are so chashuv and so unique in our world – similar to Adam HaRishon – the pasuk points them out and says that, yes, even they were created by Hashem from nothing. Maharsha in Bava Basra says the same, that they are so huge (much more so than any creature of dry land) that they had to be mentioned on their own, separate from the other fish of the sea.

Rashbam questions the explanation of Ramban. The word ונהיה (in Pasuk כו') refers to smaller creatures that swim or crawl around the land or sea, which certainly would not include massive fish. Nevertheless, both were created on the fifth day: the small fish that teem throughout the sea and the massive sea monsters that eat them. This may be the reason why we mention these huge fish, even though we do not specify any other animal or creature that was created over these six days.

In fact, one of the greatest wonders of nature is that the largest animals the world has ever seen (baleen whales like the Right Whale, Fin Whale, and Blue Whale) eat some of the smallest creatures in the sea (Krill and Plankton). Perhaps this pasuk refers to this anomaly by saying that the sea should bring out the smallest of creatures and then the next pasuk mentions the ינים.

THE SPIRIT OF MAN

Sefer Otzar HaChaim notes that standard translations interpret the above passage as if it read "ריית ואפוקפר שפחת חיות" "And [God] blew a breath of life into him and man became (to) a living soul." Bereshis 2:7

The answer lies in the difference between the life of man and the life of animals. Only man has the distinction of having spiritual potential. The meaning of Hashem
blowing into man his life spirit is that man has the capacity to rise above the life form of an animal. Indeed, this is imbued in his nature. In this sense we may interpret the phrase “and man became for a living soul” as saying that man’s purpose in this world is for the sake of developing his spiritual self, that which was blown into his essence by Hashem in his creation.

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Rabbi Brachya said: The Torah begins with an act of benevolence, it ends with an act of benevolence, and the middle of the Torah relates an act of benevolence. The beginning describes how God fashioned Chava as a wife for Adam. Later, we find that God visited Avraham when he was ill, and at the end of the Torah, God buried Moshe when he died. - Midrash

In Ateres Mordechai on the Torah, Rabbi Mordechai Rogow explains that the first incident cited in the Midrash refers to when Hashem helped arrange for the marriage of Adam and Chava, and when He later clothed them. The second occurrence is when Hashem visited Avraham as he recovered from his illness. The third event is when Hashem buried Moshe Rabbeinu. It is noteworthy that the Torah is not only replete with examples of lovingkindness, but that the order in which these particular illustrations are arranged is also significant. The lesson is that we should be involved in chesed whenever it is needed, and we should not just wait until a crisis is at hand.

Let us analyze the Midrash. The first incident of chesed which is cited concerns Hashem providing for the physical and emotional needs of Adam and Chava. Hashem assisted Adam in his quest to find a helpmate, and He fashioned clothing for the two of them to wear. Hashem then accompanied and escorted the new couple until they were firmly set in their roles as the ones from whom the world was to be built. For us, this represents a model for us to offer counsel and advice which is essential for those who are desperate for emotional encouragement at various crossroads of their lives. We must also offer a financial boost at a timely moment to those in need. When we can aid other human beings before they reach a state of crisis, we have served their needs properly.

The Torah displays the principle of chesed by showing how Hashem first provided clothing and companionship. When the need arose, He visited the sick. Finally, when the situation presented itself, He also took care of Moshe’s burial.

There are those who intercede to assist others, but they do so in a manner which is the reverse of the order of the Torah. One extreme is a person who will only involve himself when another person has already died, and he only responds to the need to bury him. While the person still lived, he remained aloof and unconcerned. There are those who do come to the aid of others while they still live, but they begin at Parashas Vayera, where we find Hashem visiting the ill. While a needy person is still managing, and is on his feet and is healthy, these people are not sensitive to his cries for help in order to aid him before he falters and begins to collapse.

A story is told of a man who desired to fulfill these mitzvos of kindness, visiting the ill, and providing for the needs of the deceased. But when would he be able to have the opportunity to perform all these acts? One day, a hungry guest arrived in his neighborhood, and the man quickly invited him to his house. Being more than a bit stingy, he offered him a piece of spoiled fish as a meal. After eating, the guest became ill, and, to the delight of the host, he now was able to tend to the needs of the sick traveler. The host was then ecstatic when his guest died from the tainted food, for he was now granted the opportunity to care for the dead!

This misguided approach to helping others dramatically illustrates how chesed is not the need for us to express our goodwill to others, whereby we look upon others as mitzvah objects and as opportunities waiting for us to exploit. Rather, chesed is an expression of our being sensitive and genuinely concerned with the lives of others, looking out for their needs, and often coming to their side even before a situation of crisis occurs.

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THE DESIGNER’S CLOTHING

Reb Mendele of Vizhnitz derived an important lesson from this pasuk. He noted that it had become customary for both men and women to dress quite extravagantly. People were spending a great deal of their time and money trying to appear as royalty.

Sefer Tzemach Tzedek uses a parable that illustrates this very well. There was a
king who had a dear friend. Once, this friend committed a crime against the king, for which he deserved death. However, due to the king’s great love for his friend, he was spared. Instead, the king commanded that the friend and all of his descendants wear a special collar as a sign that he should have been executed but was spared by the king. The friend observed the sentence strictly, wearing a simple collar. His son, however, wore a silk collar, and his grandson a golden collar. Eventually, the original purpose for the collar was forgotten, and when people saw the golden collar they thought that it was an ornament. However, an old man who remembered the original crime revealed the truth to everyone.

The application of the parable is simple. Before their sin, Adam and Chava did not need clothing. When they sinned, they were liable to be put to death, but Hashem, in his great love, spared them. He minimized the punishment, causing them to require clothing. Therefore, they covered themselves with fig leaves. The need to wear clothes is therefore the result of a sin. Yet, we, Adam and Chava’s descendants, seem to have forgotten this, as we have made clothing an object about which we are proud, and a great deal of effort and money is spent in order to dress in a luxurious fashion. Perhaps, although we should dress with dignity, in light of this negative reason for the need to wear clothing, we should try to keep the lavishness of our clothing from playing too important a role in our lives.

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**CHAVA – THE MOTHER OF MANKIND**

“וַיִּקְרָאֶהָ חָוָה שֵׁם אָדָם אֶצְאָל צְרְחָה כִּ֣י הָיָה אִשָּׁתֹֽו׃”

Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein points out that the incident of Adam and his wife in Gan Eden ends with their being banished from the garden and suffering the appropriate retribution for their actions. Remarkably, nowhere in the Torah is there any indication of Adam expressing any anger towards his wife for her role in the catastrophe of sin and for being the cause of death to the world. This omission is a great tribute to Adam for his control of his character. Adam possessed an outlook of truth, one where anger played no role.

Furthermore, in our verse, the Torah highlights how Adam HaRishon proclaimed the name of his wife to be “Chava” in honor of her role as the one who provided life for the entire world. At this point, which follows the incident at Gan Eden, Adam might have chosen to name his wife with a title which would have reflected her role in the death of the world, rather than being its mother. And if this would have been too severe, we would at least not expect Adam to refer to her with the honorable title of being “the mother of all mankind”. Yet, Adam was fashioned directly in the image of his Creator, and his traits were pristine and un tarnished. Although Chava had to face the consequences of the errors she did commit, nevertheless, Adam saw her virtues and credited her for her accomplishments.

The lesson we learn from Adam can serve us well, especially when the tendency of many people is to emphasize the failures and weaknesses of others, while choosing to overlook their strengths and talents. Does a person deserve to be maligned for any mistake he might have committed? Should his character be destroyed due to an individual incident, while his contributions and abilities are ignored and erased? The Torah teaches us that we are not to judge people and commit character assassination, even if there might be some basis for criticism. We must be aware of how an unbalanced reaction to others might itself be worthy of criticism.

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**A WANDERER NO MORE**

“וַיִּאַלְמָן כָּרָם מְלֶכֶת הָאֲוָרֶץ בִּקְרָצָה נְזָר׃”

Originally Kayin was told that he would be נְזָר גַּנֵּה, which means not only one who is exiled from his home but one who is constantly moving and has no place at all to rest. Yet, now we are told that Kayin settled in the land of Nod. Though he was indeed exiled from his home, the curse to be constantly wandering was not implemented. How do we explain this change in the decree?

**Sefer Kehillos Yitzchak** points out that every sin has two aspects to it, the actual sin itself and the effect it has on a person that makes it easier to do the next sin. From the standpoint of the sin itself, there are some sins for which teshuvah alone will not atone without suffering or even death. However, if a person does true teshuvah, involving remorse for the past, confession, and a determination not to repeat it in the future, he can remove the effect it has on him to sin again.

Two devastating outcomes affected Kayin after the murder of his brother Hevel.

*If a person does true teshuvah, he can remove the effect it has on him to sin again.*
LONGEVITY - BEFORE AND AFTER THE FLOOD

Because these first men lived such long lives, the Torah states their ages before they begot children again afterwards, then sums them all up in the end, until the generations which followed the flood. Ramban explains that the reason for their longevity is that the first man, who was the handiwork of Hashem, was made in absolute perfection as far as beauty, strength and height. Even after it was decreed upon him that he would be mortal, it was in his nature to live a long time. Until the flood, people’s lives were about the length of Adam’s. Some even lived longer than Adam’s 930 years. Mesushelach, for example, lived 969 years. However, since the atmosphere became impure as a result of the flood, their days kept decreasing. Even Noach’s son Shem, born before the flood, lived 600 years. He benefited from his innate strength, but was harmed by the tainted air after the flood and died at a younger age than the preceding generations. The lives of his sons who were born after the flood were even shorter, until they reached 400 years. This degree of longevity remained with them until the generation of the Dispersion, when the change of climates caused by the Dispersion affected them and their days were again shortened. Thus the life of Peleg, “in whose days the earth was divided’ (Beresish 10:25), came down to 200 years, half of what it had been previously.

It would appear that in the generations of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, people lived seventy or eighty years, as Moshe Rabbeinu mentioned (Tehillim 90:10). Even Pharaoh had wondered about Yaakov’s old age, although he was 130 at the time. Yaakov in turn had spoken of the long days of his fathers (Beresish 47:9): “They have not attained the days of the life of my fathers in the days of their traveling.” However, for those who were righteous in their generations, “the fear of Hashem prolongs days” (Mishei 10:27).

Questions for Thought and Study

1. What halachos of Havdalah are learned from Hashem’s creation of light?
   See Ba’al HaTurim 1:4
2. What did Hashem do when he called (וַיֵּיהָר) the dry land “גָּן” in Pasuk 1:10? Didn’t the “גָּן” already have that name in Pasuk 1:1?
   See Ohr HaChaim 1:10
3. How does a person become a partner with Hashem by keeping Shabbos?
   See Ohr HaChaim 2:3
4. How was the snake punished with the term “עַל” - “from all of the animals and from all of the beasts of the field”?
   See Ramban 3:14
5. Besides creating clothing for Adam and Chava, what kindness did Hashem do for them? Why?
   See Ha’amek Davar 3:21

Halachic Corner

Even though a person hears all of the Torah read on Shabbos throughout the year, every man is still obligated to read by himself פָּרָשָׁת מִשְׁמָרָה - the parasha of that week twice and the Targum (Onkelos) on it once פָּרָשָׁת אָרֵר סְמָך - the parasha of the week before. If one does not understand the Targum, as is often the case, it is appropriate that the commentary of Rashi should also be studied. In fact, there are many sections which cannot be fully understood with Targum alone (e.g. parts of Vayikra). It is best to finish this double reading of the parasha and the single reading of the Targum before eating lunch on Shabbos. If this is not possible, then it should be done before Mincha, since the parasha of the following week is read during Mincha. There are also those who say that a person can fulfill his obligation by finishing the parasha with Targum (and/or Rashi) by Tuesday night of the following week, and others who say until Simchas Torah פָּרָשָׁת הָעָרָבָה. Whoever finishes this obligation with the reading of the congregation every Shabbos morning will be rewarded with an extended life פָּרָשָׁה בְּנַחֲמָת.

Halachic Corner is dedicated by Benyomin Freeman in memory of his father Gedalia Freeman. Bere’dolah let be refesh ma’aleh, aleh. May his memory be for a blessing.

Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan will take place Tuesday, and Wednesday, Yom Shlishi v’Yom Revi'i.

Zemanim for Parashas Bereshis 5780

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6. Why is the first week of the year called ‘Kodesh lev Yisrael’ and not ‘Kodesh lev Yisrael’ like all the other weeks of the year? See Ta’anai Minhagim וניית הימים

This Week Likutei Peshatim is Sponsored

• By Yeshivas Bais Yisroel - Hebrew Theological College wishing mazal tov to Rabbi Michael & Bonnie Myers on the birth of their great-grandson, born to Dov & Rivka Pechman; to HTC Board of Governors member Michael Nussbaum and his wife Dvora on the birth of a great-grandson, born to Eli & Arianne Weinstein; and to HTC Board of Governors member Moshe Kahn and his wife Shoshie on the birth of a granddaughter, born to Abbi & Rachel Kahn.

• Blitstein Institute invites women of the community to the Edith Tessler Rosh Chodesh Project for Women. Rabbi Moshe Schmelzer will present a lecture l’zeher nishmas his father, the esteemed Telshe Rosh Yeshiva, HaRav Chaim Schmelzer, ש"ח, “Chessed: Our Inheritance from Avrohom Avinu”, on Wednesday, October 30th, Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, at 7:30 PM at Shallots Bistro. Come early and receive 10% off your lunch order.

• Hebrew Theological College’s Gourmet Torah at Shallots Bistro will take place this Thursday, October 31, 12:35-1:15. Rabbi Yaakov Sussman will speak. Complimentary appetizers as well as a discounted menu available for shiur participants. Men and women invited to attend. For more info: Rabbi Joshua Zisook at 847-982-2500 or jzisook@htc.edu.

• Yeshivas Hakayitz 2020 enrollment is now open. Eligibility: Boys entering grades 6 through 11. Camp dates: June 30 - July 27. Join the 200 campers & counselors from coast to coast for the 41st year of summer camp. We offer exciting Torah Studies, competitive sports leagues, electives, bunk activities, awesome daily trips, & the most inspiring Shabbosos. For application, related camp media, and more info: please visit ykh.htc.edu. Early-bird discount available until November 30.

• Information regarding Hebrew Theological College’s week-long summer program in August, the Kayizt Adventure Trip, for boys entering grades 8 through 10, to follow soon.

• This Sunday - Join Yeshiva Women of Hebrew Theological College as we hear Rabbi Yaakov Robinson help us prepare for the New Year, 5780. Rabbi Robinson will speak o “Now What?: Action Steps for the New Year”. Our hosts for brunch will be Leah and Alan Cohen. Men and women are invited - guests welcome. For reservations & information, contact Cheryl Kares at 773-805-7617.

• Hebrew Theological College in Skokie seeks full-time Bookkeeper/Payroll Manager with strong analytical & problem-solving skills to be successful in a fast-paced environment. Bachelor’s Degree or equivalent in a Business or Accounting field & at least 3 years of accounting experience. Handle daily cash management, banking/tuitions receivables, payroll & related tax filings & journal entries. Experienced candidates: send cover letter & résumé to careers@htc.edu. No phone calls please.

• Are you downtown? Get 5, 15, 30 or 45 minutes? Learn & daven at M. Geller, Ltd, 29 E. Madison, Ste 1805. 1:05 PM, 30 minute shiur; 1:35 Mincha; 1:47, 5 minute dvar Torah. Shiurim led by: Mon.-Rabbi Pinnchas Zusis; Tues.- Chicago Community Kollel- Rabbi Shmuel Sussman; Wed.- YU Torah Mitzion Kollel- Reuven Brand- Lunch & Learn at 1:00- call 312-984-1041 by Mon., Oct. 28, 10 AM, to place your lunch order from Romanian Kosher lister; Thurs.- Chabad- Rabbi Menachem Slavatiacki.

• Park Plaza Senior Living Community enriches the quality of life for our residents through daily shiurim, live music, exercise classes, lectures, outings and much more. Park Plaza also has beautifully furnished apartments for rent: daily, weekly and long term or for your simcha. For more information, visit our website at www.park-plaza.org or contact Adina at 773-465-6700 or at adina@park-plaza.org.

• TAG Chicago is here to help! Offering filtering solutions for smart phones, tablets and computers. We offer free volunteer assistance to keep your devices safe. Visit tagchicago.org, call 847-920-8245 or email Help@TAGchicago.org to book your appointment. 8150 Central Park, Skokie. Remember - “Call before you buy!” We will help guide you.

• Moshe and Tira Gubin invite the community to meet with Rabbi Doniel Lehrfield, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivas Bais Yisroel, in celebration of 34 years of Limud HaTorah. A Buffet Melava Malka will be held on their host, Motzaei Shabbos, Parshas Noach, November 2nd, at 8:30 PM, 2900 West Birchwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

• NILL-Chicago's Institute for Women's Learning is excited to present a new learning program for women, Tanach B'Shana! Learn the highlights of the sefarim of Tanach through a weekly shiur with Mrs. Emma K. NILL, Wednesdays at 12:45 PM at KOLAR, 7200 E. 111th (North Shore Avenue). For more info, contact the NILL office at 773-973-6557 or office@torahchicago.org.

• Please join No Shame On U on Sunday night, November 3rd, at the Holiday Inn Chicago North Shore in Skokie, for our 5th Annual Event featuring actor & mental health advocate Sean Astin, who will speak about mental health awareness & what it means to live with a relative with bipolar disorder. Attendees will have an opportunity for a photo with Sean. An ICJA teen will share his mental health journey. Student prices available. For more info and to RSVP: www.nso2019.eventbrite.com or Miriam@noshameonu.org.

• Please join Wendy Keter, Director Emeritus at IDC Herzliya, in Chicago to learn more about studying in Israel. Wednesday, October 30th, 7:30-9:00 PM, at Ida Crown Jewish Academy, Room 401, 8233 Central Park Avenue, Skokie, IL 60076. Link to RSVP: https://www.afidc.org/events-1/israel-university-night-ida-crown-with-wendy-keter. For questions, e-mail Wendy Keter at Wendyk@idc.ac.il.

• Come tour the Bernard Horwich JCC Chicago Early Childhood Center! 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds programs, half-day and extended options. Warm, experienced teachers provide open-ended learning opportunities with extensive Judaic content. Plus, children and parents love our British Swim School program. Call Miriam at 773-516-5881 for a private tour! Registration opens November 18, 2019 for the 2020/2021 school year. jccchicagoearlychildhood.org

• Mizrahi - Religious Zionists of Chicago, in partnership with YU Torah MitZion Kollel, proudly presents the first shiur in our 5780 lecture series, “Exploring the Foundations of Religious Zionism”, sponsored by the Bellows family, on Wednesday, October 30, 2019, 7:30 PM, in the RZC Center, 3740 Dempster, Skokie. Join us as Rabbi Yona Reiss speaks on “Conversion to Judaism in Modern Day Israel – Challenges and Opportunities”. For more info: office@rzc.us or 847-674-9733 x2.

• Beginning in Nov., Chicago Chesed Fund will be a mobile WIC site, in addition to being a CEDA-LIHEAP partner site & Medicaid & SNAP benefit help site. More services under one roof! WIC is a federal program that assists eligible individuals in gaining access to healthy food, nutrition-education, breastfeeding support, & referrals. Mothers with a child under age 5, pregnant women, foster parents, & caregivers who meet the program’s income guidelines are eligible for benefits. More info: chanj@chicagocshedfund.org.
5. Answers:

- Kiddush will be sponsored in his memory at Congregation Adolph Weiss - Avi Horovicz and family, in loving memory of their father, grandfather and great-grandfather, occasion of his fifteenth yahrtzeit on 1 Cheshvan. His love and devotion to his family are an example to us all. May his memory be for a blessing.
- Yehuda Moshe - Session 1 continues: D) “Baby, Baby, Can’t you Hear My Heartbeat?”; Tales From the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit”, Dr. Michael D. Schreiber, M.D., Chief, U of C Neonatology. All invited to Session 2 at 8:50: “Representing Israel One Day at a Time” - The Consulate Press Officer, C) “A Yekke Returns to his German Roots - A Visual Presentation”, Norman Goldmeer, Attourney.

The Super Science Sunday fuses fun and learning for kids in grades N-8! Join us on Sundays at Walder Science Center for exciting experiments and activities. Grades 1-8 meet and actively 10:15-11:30 AM, boys grades 4-8: 1:45-3:00, boys grades 1-3: 3:30-4:45. Special classes for Kindergarten and Nursery: 10:15, 1:45, and 3:30. Classes start October 27. Space is limited; reserve your spot now. Located at 3050 W. Touhy Avenue. Sign up/info: www.walderlab.org/sunday or 773-649-5360.

- The Wi-Fi Chevra recommends that you start your day with a Good Morgan! Good Morgan Café! Offers fried whitefish sandwich and other tasty sandwiches and wraps. Open daily 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.
- For up-to-date zmanim. Visit https://www.yechadchicago.org/events.html.

Lekvat Peseshitim is endowed by Les & Ethel Sutker in loving memory of Dr. Yehuda Moshe, 4721 Touhy, Night of Knowledge 22, Sat., Nov. 9, 7:00 Registration. Rabbi Joel Gutstein 7:45. Mrs. Judith Gutstein: Kristallnacht Remembrance. Session 1, 8:00: Select 1 lecture: A) “A Salute to the Prizker Military Museum”, Leah Cohen Gaynes, Prizker Military Museum; B) “Lessons from our Avot & Imahot”, Rabbi Ephraim Goldman, Reheb; or C) “A Yekeks Returns to his German Roots - A Visual Presentation”, Norman Goldmeer, Attourney.

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