

## Parshat Bereishit 5778

**Let there be light** On Day 1 of Creation, G-d said “Let there be light”, and there was light.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, יְהִי-אוֹר; וַיְהִי-אוֹר

G-d saw that the light was good, and G-d separated between the light and the darkness. G-d called the light “Day”, and to the darkness He called “Night”.

וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאוֹר, כִּי-טוֹב; וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים, בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ

וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם, וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה

However, it was not until Day 4 of Creation that G-d places the sun and the moon in the sky. Though G-d already separated between light and darkness on Day 1, we find on Day 4 that it is the role of the sun and the moon to separate between day and night, and between light and darkness. What we find on Day 4 of Creation accords with our understanding of the earth today. We now have artificial light sources, but without them the existence of light in the world is dependent on the sun shining, which we equate with Day. In the absence of the sun shining on the earth, the moon may provide some light, as a reflection of the sun, during Night.

The Torah does not say that the sun and the moon were created on Day 4, but only that they were put in place on Day 4. Rashi deduces that the sun and the moon among other creations were created on Day 1, and then later set in place on the appropriate later Day of creation.

Rashi also refers to there being original light in the seven days of creation, which was too good to be used by the wicked, so G-d set it aside for the righteous to be used by them in the future. Only after the seven days of creation, once the original light had been hidden away, did the sun and moon serve to separate between day and night.

The commentary of Kli Yakar by Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim ben Aaron Luntschitz (1550-1619) questions whether there is a contradiction between the two Midrashic sources that Rashi used: if the light from Day 1 was hidden away for the future, how could it have been set in place on Day 4 and have remained there for all to see? Either it was hidden or it was on show. Both cannot be correct at the same time.

Kli Yakar answers his own question. There is no contradiction. The light from Day 1 was hidden. The lights set in the sky on Day 4 that were left on show and not hidden were not the same as the light created on Day 1. Rather, they received their light from the source light created on Day 1.

Kli Yakar further notes that on Day 1 of creation the word אור – light appears five times, whereas on Day 4 of creation each light is referred to as מְאוֹר – with an additional letter “mem” – and the word מְאוֹר appears five times on Day 4. The letter “mem” is often used as a prefix meaning “from”. Kli Yakar sees here a hint that each מְאוֹר on Day 4 received its light from the אור created on Day 1.

**All the Children of Israel had light in their dwellings** We next meet אור – light, and חֹשֶׁךְ – dark, in the ninth of the ten plagues which G-d brought on the Egyptians before the Exodus (Shemot 10:21-23). This plague lasted for three days, during which the Egyptians could not see each other or rise from their place, but all the Children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

As far as I can see from my research, this is the only other place in the Torah that we find the word אור – light.

In a detailed analysis of the text, Kli Yakar proposes that G-d caused the plague of darkness by removing the darkness of night from the land where the Jewish people were, and putting instead over the Egyptians during the day. Thus the Egyptians had double darkness, to which Rashi alludes, while the Jewish people had light even at night. Kli Yakar sees an allusion in the words of the text וַיִּלְכְּל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַיָּה אֹר וַיִּלְכְּל-בְּמוֹשְׁבֵיהֶם, because the final letters of the first four words spells לַיְלָה – night, when the Jewish people in Egypt had light that was lacking to the Egyptians, as well as the normal light that the Jewish people had during the day that was also lacking to the Egyptians.

**G-d controls nature** We see here how G-d controls what we call nature. G-d has retained special elements from Creation to use at His will, and can also change the way “nature” behaves at His will.

For us, the Torah is our light, our connection to the Divine. Once a year we also have the opportunity to elevate light through the lights of Chanuka – commencing on 25 Kislev, and alluded to by the fact that the word אור is the 25<sup>th</sup> word of Torah, as pointed out by the Vilna Gaon.