

Parshas Lech Lecha 5762

צא מאיצטגנינות שלך, אברם אינו מוליד, אברהם, On which Rashi comments: ויוצא אותו החוצה כו' מוליד.

Obvious difficulty: Because אברם was מוליד - he had ישמעאל, thirteen years *before* his name was changed to אברהם .

Answer I heard from R' Moshe Shapiro, at length; I recently saw the basic idea, given tersely in two lines, by the old Gerrer Rebbe, the אמרי אמת, in a gloss to the פרדס יוסף:

שבת נ"ג Gemara:

תנו רבנן: מעשה באחד שמתה אשתו והניחה בן לינק, ולא היה לו שכר מניקה ליתן, ונעשה לו נס ונפתחו לו דדין כשני דדי אשה והניק את בנו. אמר רב יוסף: בא וראה כמה גדול אדם זה, שנעשה לו נס כזה! אמר לו אביי: אדרבה, כמה גרוע אדם זה שנשתנו לו סדרי בראשית!

Difficult - our history begins with ניסים - especially יציאת מצרים, which we commemorate every day. How can that be גרוע?

World has a natural order; the laws of physics, of chemistry, of history, of human behavior. We are used to thinking that a נס is a rupture of those laws; a rip in the סדר of the world.

מהר"ל explains that that is not always true. The ניסים of יציאת מצרים, for example, were not simply ruptures in the natural סדר of the world. The ניסים themselves had a strict order & logic; furthermore, חז"ל say that the names of the מכות were engraved on the מטה which existed from ששת ימי בראשית. So the ניסים were part of a סדר that was built into the world. Not, however, the סדר of nature and history as we know it; rather, to a higher סדר, a higher order; the סדר of אחרית, part of the process of גאולה which unfolds through history and culminates in גאולה. הימים.

There are two סדרי בראשית; there is the סדר of nature that is basically cyclical, קיץ, יום ולילה, and וחורף; and the סדר of גאולה, the process of גאולה that begins with אבינו אברהם and culminates in אחרית הימים. This process is subterranean, hidden from the eye, and is made manifest only on special occasions - which we call a נס - which means, literally, an elevation, because it is an event in which the hidden process of גאולה breaks through the surface of events.

The שם משמאל adds that that is why on the first night of Pesach, when we commemorate the ניסים of יציאת מצרים, we call that commemoration a סדר; to emphasize that the events we are celebrating were not simply disruptions of סדר בראשית but, rather, belonged to a higher סדר.

However, the נס of the man who nursed his child was not of that kind. It was simply a rupturing of the laws of nature for the benefit of one individual. And that, said אביי, is מגונה, it's simply bizzare. סדרי בראשית were not meant to be ruptured; and a thing outside of nature introduces chaos into the world.

כמה גרוע אדם זה שנשתנו לו סדר בראשית.

Avram saw in the stars that he could not have children. In the natural order of things, in the course of nature, he was sterile. Of course, הקב"ה could make a נס for his benefit; indeed, he did - Avram had ישמעאל. But that נס was simply be a thing outside of nature; and the product of that נס was something outside of the natural סדרי בראשית, a force of chaos.

That child, as the מלאך told הגר, would be a פרא אדם, something wild and uncontrollable.

And such a child could not possibly be the agent of גאולה in the world.

And so הקב"ה told him: אבל אברהם מוליד, אברם אינו מוליד. In the natural order of things Avram is sterile, and he cannot have a child without rupturing סדרי בראשית, without creating a פרא אדם. But there is a higher סדר, a סדר of גאולה, which begins with אברהם; without the assumption of the name of אברהם he becomes the father of כלל ישראל, and steps into a different order of things altogether. He becomes part of the process of גאולה, which continues through יצחק and יצחק's progeny.

Famous vort of חפץ חיים - פרא is the noun. This is not just a vort. Because אברם אינו מוליד Yishmael's creation was a rupture of nature; a thing outside of סדר בראשית, something wild and chaotic. And so Yishmael is a force of chaos in the world.

It remains to us to be the agents of גאולה, and to connect ourselves as much as we can to the process of גאולה - by being involved, as far as we are able, with תורה וגמ"ח - as חז"ל teach - מה - יעשה אדם וינצל מחבלי משיח יעסוק בתורה ובגמ"ח.