

At the end of our *Parashah's* description of Creation, we read (1:31-2:3): "And *Elokim* saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. *Vy'chulu* / Thus the heaven and the earth were finished, and all their legions. By the seventh day, *Elokim* completed His work which He had done, and He abstained on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. *Elokim* blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on it He abstained from all His work which *Elokim* created to make."

The *Zohar Chadash* asks: The verse (2:1) beginning, "*Vy'chulu*" / "They were finished," seems superfluous! The Sage Rabbi Berachyah answers: In addition to "finishing," the root of the verb "*Vy'chulu*" can express "longing" (see *Tehilim* 84:3). The verse is teaching that, when Creation was completed, all who saw it "longed" for it. The Sage Rav Huna answers: On the day when Creation was completed--*Shabbat*--*Hashem* looked back at His handiwork and "longed" for it. [Until here from the *Zohar*]

R' David Zvi Shlomo Deutsch *shlita* (Yerushalayim) explains (based on earlier works): Rabbi Berachyah is teaching that the arrival of *Shabbat* causes a fundamental change in Creation. At that moment, all of Creation--from sticks and stones to all living things--are suffused with the light of the *Shechinah*. A perceptive person can see that Creation is different on *Shabbat*, and this causes him to long for a connection to its Creator.

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## Shabbat

"To welcome (literally, 'Toward') *Shabbat*--come, let us go,  
For it is the source of blessing.

From the beginning, from antiquity, she was crowned,  
Last in deed, first in thought."

(From the Friday night poem *Lecha Dodi*)

R' Gedaliah Eisman z"l (1910-2011; *Mashgiach Ruchani* of Yeshiva Kol Torah in Yerushalayim) asks: How do I know that I will "meet" *Shabbat* when I go toward it? Maybe I will "meet" nothing!

He answers: The way to ensure that one "meets" *Shabbat* is to reflect on *Shabbat's* incredible worth, to come to an appreciation that "it is the source of blessing." *Shabbat* is "Last in deed, first in thought." Literally, it was the last step in Creation. We can also learn, however, that when one thinks about *Shabbat* in advance ("First in thought"), he is guaranteed to "meet" *Shabbat* in the end.  
(*Gidulei Mussar: Elul V'yemei Ha'din* p.24)

The *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 10b) relates that *Hashem* told Moshe, "I have an excellent gift in My treasury, and its name is '*Shabbat*.' I wish to give it to *Yisrael*. Go inform them." [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R' Aharon Rubinfeld *shlita* (Belz Yeshiva, Yerushalayim) explains: If you give a person the latest wristwatch but do not explain all of its features, he will think it is a simple timepiece, and most of its capabilities will be wasted. Likewise, *Hashem* wanted Moshe to inform us of the immense spiritual benefits to be gained from *Shabbat*, so that that gift will not be wasted.  
(*Yesodot B'avodat Hashem: Shabbat Kodesh* p.2)

R' Avraham Mordechai Alter z"l (1866-1948; *Gerrer Rebbe* in Poland and Israel) explains: Our Sages teach that *Shabbat* is "a little bit of *Olam Ha'ba* / the World to Come." Our world is lacking the perfection of the World to Come; therefore, special preparation is required if we are to experience a bit of *Olam Ha'ba* in this world. That is what *Hashem* told Moshe to inform *Bnei Yisrael*: Prepare yourselves in advance in order to fully experience *Shabbat*.

(*Imrei Emet: Likkutim* p.104)

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**“The woman whom You gave to be with me--she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” (3:12)**

R' Yosef Albo *z"l* (Spain; 1380-1444) writes: One of the behaviors that prevents a person from doing *Teshuvah* / repenting is making excuses or blaming others. One who does this will never regret his actions and will never confess. Such a person is called, “One who covers-up his sins,” as in the King Shlomo’s warning (*Mishlei* 28:13), “One who covers-up his sins will not succeed.” This is what Adam did in our verse, and it did not save him from punishment.

R' Albo continues: Man was given the intelligence to “supervise” his own behavior. This is why even an unintentional sinner is called a sinner, and it is why a person bears some responsibility even for his mistakes, and even when someone else leads him astray. *Hashem* said to Adam (verse 17), “Because you listened to your wife’s voice and ate of the tree about which I commanded you saying, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ . . .” Adam was not commanded not to listen to his wife, but he was expected to independently evaluate everything his wife or anyone else told him, and to decide on a correct course of action. This is why Adam’s excuse--“My wife gave me the fruit”--did not help him. (*Sefer Ha'ikkarim* IV ch.26)

R' Uri Weisblum *shlita* (*Mashgiach Ruchani* of Yeshivat Nachalat Ha'levi'im in Haifa, Israel) elaborates: In the *Yom Kippur* prayers, we recite the description of *Hashem's* judgment found in the *Mishnah* (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a): “All people pass before Him like ‘*Bnei Maron*’.” The *Gemara* and *Rashi* explain that “*Bnei Maron*” means: Like sheep that walk single file to be counted for tithing.

What is the significance of walking single file on the Day of Judgment?

As Adam did at the very beginning of history, man has a tendency to dismiss his faults by blaming them on his environment, his friends, his parents, his teachers, or any number of other causes--anyone or anything but himself. But, on the Day of Judgment, each of us stands before *Hashem* all alone; there is no one but ourselves to blame for our sins.

R' Weisblum continues: There is no denying that a person can be influenced negatively by other people or by his surroundings. However, those negative influences are tests we are meant to struggle with and, ultimately, withstand. If we do not, we are held accountable.

Without this recognition, R' Weisblum adds, there can be no repentance. A person cannot repent if he does not believe he sinned--if he does not acknowledge that a particular action was improper and if he does not accept responsibility. That is the meaning of the first word of *Viddui* / confession: “*Ashamnu*” / “We have been guilty.”

(*He'arat Ha'derech: Mo'adim* p.68)

**“And Elokim saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.” (1:31)**

R' Shalom Shachna Zohn *z"l* (1910-2012; *Rosh Yeshiva* in *Mesivta Torah Vodaath* in Brooklyn, N.Y.; later head of a network of *Kollelim* in Yerushalayim) writes: The *Zohar* comments on our verse that there is a sheltered place in *Gehinnom* for one--even the most wicked individual--who has a momentary thought of repentance before he dies, even if he is unable to complete the formal steps of *Teshuvah* / repentance before leaving this world. That thought of repentance that he had burrows its way into *Gehinnom* and helps him to rise out of that place, says the *Zohar*.

R' Zohn continues: Perhaps, in light of this, we can understand a comment by R' Moshe ben Nachman *z"l* (*Ramban*; 1194-1270; Spain and *Eretz Yisrael*) about the beginning of Creation. *Ramban* writes that the beginning of Creation--the creation of *Yesh Mei'ayin* / “something from nothing”--was like a tiny point, nearly lacking in substance. From that tiny point, *Hashem* formed all other creations. [Until here from *Ramban*]

What, asks R' Zohn, was the purpose of creating the world in that manner? It is obvious, R' Zohn answers, that the Torah wishes to teach us the importance of the small point from which bigger things begin. *Teshuvah*, for example, begins with just a “tiny” thought that does not yet have any substance.

The *Gemara* (*Kiddushin* 49b) teaches: If a man gives a woman an item of value [e.g., a ring], and says, “You are betrothed to me on the condition that I am completely righteous,” she is married to him, even if he is known to be wicked, for perhaps he had a thought of *Teshuvah*. [Until here from the *Gemara*.] We see, writes R' Zohn, that a “thought of *Teshuvah*” has the potential to change a wicked person into a completely righteous person.

R' Zohn concludes: Our Sages say, regarding *Teshuvah*, “You open an opening like the eye of a needle, and Heaven will open an opening like the door of the *Bet Hamikdash*,” which was approximately 40 feet wide by 80 feet tall. All of this is teaching us not to denigrate even the smallest thought of *Teshuvah*, whether our own or someone else’s. Rather, we must cherish it, guard it, and attempt to convert it into action--true repentance.

(*Pirkei Teshuvah* ch.1)

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R' Deutsch continues: Rav Huna is teaching that when *Shabbat* arrived, *Hashem*, so-to-speak, “appreciated” what He had created. Until then, say our Sages, the universe was unstable, lacking a soul. *Shabbat* is the soul of Creation and gives it its staying power. Therefore, *Hashem* “longed for”--i.e., appreciated--His Creation more once *Shabbat* arrived.

(*Zohar Ha'Shabbat* p.1)