

In this week's *Parashah*, we read about the creation of the world in six days, the first *Shabbat*, Adam's sin, and his expulsion from *Gan Eden*. Our Sages teach that had Adam not sinned on the day he was created--that first *Erev Shabbat*--the next day would have been "the day that will be completely a Sabbath and rest day for eternal life"--to use the expression we find in *Birkat Ha'mazon* on *Shabbat*. In other words, the world would have attained its ultimate perfection that very day. Now, as a result of Adam's sin, mankind collectively must toil for 6,000 years to attain that state. Only in the seventh millennium will we, G-d willing, reach the "world that is all good."

R' Itamar Schwartz *shlita* (Yerushalayim) writes: Deep down, man still senses that perfection was once within his reach, attainable almost instantaneously. This makes a person impatient for the results of his toil. Man fails to recognize that the world after Adam's sin is different. Now, man must sow and wait patiently until he can reap the rewards. "In the morning sow your seed," in the words of *Kohelet* (11:6), but when the time will come to reap, we cannot know.

What this means as a practical matter, R' Schwartz writes, is that a person must progress deliberately from one spiritual attainment to another. While *Zerizut* / acting promptly and quickly is usually thought of as a good trait, it can be a tool of the *Yetzer Ha'ra* as well, if its consequence is a lack of patience. Achieving growth is like planting, and we must remember that four years must pass between when a tree is planted and its fruit is *Halachically* permitted to be eaten. (*B'lvavi Mishkan Evneh* II p.69-70)

Shabbat

The *Zohar Chadash* (*Bereishit* 29b) states: Until the world was created, there was no one to praise *Hashem* or to recognize Him. When He created His world, He created various types of angels, the heavens and all their legions, and mankind, and all of them stood ready to praise their Creator and to glorify Him. Nevertheless, there still was no glory before Him until *Shabbat* entered. Then, all of the creations were stilled, and they opened up in song and praise--both those "above" and those "below"--and then "He sat on His Throne," *i.e.*, then there was someone to recognize and praise His Honor. [Until here from the *Zohar Chadash*]

R' David Zvi Shlomo Deutsch *shlita* (Yerushalayim) writes: It seems that the creations needed to be "stilled" before they were fully ready to praise *Hashem*. This may be understood in light of the commentary of R' David Kimchi *z"l* ("*Radak*"; 1160-1235; Narbonne, France) to Psalm 92--the "*Shir Shel Yom*" / "Song of the Day" for *Shabbat*. There we read, "A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day. It is good to thank *Hashem* and to sing praise to Your Name, Exalted One." *Radak* explains: *Shabbat* is a better day for praising *Hashem* than are other days of the week, for, on *Shabbat*, a person is free of worldly concerns, and his soul is relaxed and can busy itself with wisdom and Divine service. In his commentary to *Bereishit* (2:3), *Radak* writes similarly: When the Torah says that *Hashem* blessed the seventh day, it refers to the fact that man rests on this day from worldly activities and can occupy himself with wisdom and the word of G-d.

In a similar vein, R' Deutsch continues, R' Chaim Chaikel of Amdur *z"l* (early *Chassidic Rebbe* in Lithuania; died 1787) writes that the primary rest on *Shabbat* is from things that distract a person from serving *Hashem*. R' Shalom Noach Berezovsky *z"l* (1911-2000; *Slonimer Rebbe* in Yerushalayim) writes likewise, based on *Midrash Rabbah*: As long as there was "*Tohu Va'vohu*" / confusion and chaos (see *Bereishit* 1:2), the creation of heaven and earth was not apparent. - **Continued in box inside** -

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“A river comes out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it is divided and becomes four headwaters.” (2:10)

We read (*Yechezkel* 1:1), “As I was in the midst of the exile by the River Kevar, the heavens opened and I saw visions of *Elokim*.” The *Zohar* comments that “the River Kevar” literally means, “The river that was already,” a reference to the river that came out of Eden.

R’ Mordechai Neugroschl *shlita* (Israel) explains: What is the significance of the river that comes out of Eden and splits into four rivers? It hints that man will one day be expelled from Eden, as Adam was, but that he still will be able connect to G-d through prophecy, as *Yechezkel* did in the exile of Babylon. (*Mi’darchei Ha’lev Ha’Yehudi Al Sefer Ha’kuzari* p.176)

“She took of its fruit and ate, and she gave also to her husband with her and he ate.” (3:6)

The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 40a) records an opinion that the *Etz Ha’da’at* / Tree of Knowledge was an *Etrog* tree.

We read (*Vayikra* 23:40), “You shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of a citron tree”--*i.e.*, an *Etrog*. Our Sages ask: Why is *Sukkot* called “the first day” when it actually is the fifteenth of the month? They answer enigmatically: “It is the first day in the accounting of sins.”

R’ Natan Nota Hanover *z”l* (1620-1683; Wallachia) writes (among several other explanations): If the fruit involved in the first sin was an *Etrog*, we can understand the *Gemara* as saying that the *Etrog* is reminiscent of [and an atonement for] the first day when a sin was committed.

(*Ta’amei Sukkah*)

“Hashem Elokim called out to the man and said to him, ‘Where are you?’” (3:9)

R’ Avraham Shimon Halevi Ish Horowitz *z”l Hy”d* (1876-1943; *Mashgiach Ruchani* in Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin in Poland) writes: The foundation of everything is to subjugate one’s will to *Hashem* and not to desire material things or honor from humans. While we have no idea what Adam’s spiritual level was like before his sin--after all, he was the handiwork of G-d’s hand, residing in *Gan Eden*--the one thing of which we can be sure is that he had nothing on his mind except the Will of *Hashem*.

After he ate from the *Etz Ha’da’at*, however, he obtained knowledge of “good and bad.” The biggest change in Adam after his sin was that his thoughts were no longer dedicated solely to G-d, writes R’ Horowitz. This is what *Hashem* refers to in our verse: “Where are you?”--*i.e.*, where are your thoughts wandering to? All too often, we are thinking about ourselves and our wishes, not about *Hashem* and His Will--sometimes, even while we are performing a *Mitzvah*! (*Naharei Aish: Likuttei Dibburim* 212)

“These are the products of the heaven and the earth “*Be’hibar’am*” (בהבראם)/ when they were created . . .” (2:4)

The letter “*Heh*” in the word “*Be’hibar’am*” / “when they were created” is written smaller than the other letters, dividing the word in two and allowing it to be read: “*B’Heh - bera’am*” / “With the letter *Heh* He created them (the heaven and earth).” The *Gemara* (*Menachot* 29b) asks: Why was the world created with the letter “*Heh*”? It answers: So that anyone who wants (to sin) can leave through the bottom. The *Gemara* continues: Why is the left leg of the *Heh* detached from the rest of the letter? So that anyone who wants to repent can enter though the resulting opening. But can’t he re-enter through the same opening through which he left? asks the *Gemara*. It will not work out, the *Gemara* answers. [Until here from the *Gemara*]

R’ Reuven Leuchter *shlita* (*Mashgiach Ruchani* in several Israeli *yeshivot*) explains: When the *Gemara* says that re-entering through the same opening “will not work out,” it is teaching that one cannot succeed at *Teshuvah* merely by reversing whatever he did wrong and resolving to work harder in that area in the future--the equivalent of retracing his steps through the opening through which he departed. For example, if a person has not been *Davening* properly, it is insufficient to simply tell himself, “From now on I will work harder at *Davening* properly.” If a person has not been observing *Shabbat* properly, he will not succeed if he merely resolves, “From now on I will try harder to observe the laws of *Shabbat*.”

Instead, the *Gemara* is teaching that a person must find a new, different path--represented by the small opening near the top of the letter *Heh*. Practically speaking, this means studying Torah, with a focus on the area one wants to work on. If it is *Tefilah* / prayer, for example, one must study both the *Halachot* / laws of *Tefilah* as well as *Aggadic* / non-legal passages about the importance and meaning of prayer. The same applies if one wants to improve his *Shabbat* observance.

R’ Leuchter explains further: The *Gemara* refers to a person “who wants to sin.” The *Gemara* is teaching that whenever we do wrong, it is because somewhere within us there was an improper desire, however subtle. That is why merely resolving to behave differently is insufficient. Rather, *Teshuvah* requires uprooting that negative desire, and that is accomplished through Torah study, with a focus on the area in which one wants to improve. (*Teshuvah* p.7)

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Likewise, man is surrounded by confusion and distractions all week long so that he cannot perceive the Creator within the world. On *Shabbat*, those distractions are removed, and the Creator can be perceived.

(*Zohar Ha’Shabbat* I p.4)