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BS"D

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON BEREISHIS - 5781

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From Internet Parsha Sheet 5757 (1996)

From: jr@sco.COM (**Josh Rapps**) mj_ravtorah@shamash.org

Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Breishis

On the passuk "Vayishmu Es Kol Hashem Elokim Mishalech Bagan Leruach Hayom" (3:8) the Rav discussed the word Mishalech based on 3 different interpretations: 1) Rabbeinu Yonah explains that man heard the sound of Hashem while he, man, was walking around in the garden. 2) The Ibn Ezra explains that the word Mishalech is describing the Kol Hashem, that the sound of Hashem was extending and spreading through the garden. 3) The Ramban explains the word Mishalech as indicating accompanying, being present. The Shechina will be ever present no matter where man may go. Adam felt the presence of Hashem in garden.

All three interpretations lead to the same conclusion: there is hope for man no matter how enveloped in wickedness he may be. The empty feeling and frustrations that the wicked derives from his action will drive him back to Hashem. The hopeless realization that his present path in life will not succeed is always there pushing him to repent and return to Hashem. This is what the Passuk means:

"Shalom Shalom Larachok Vlakarov... Vhareshaim Kayam Nigrash Ki Hasheket Lo Yuchal Vayigrishu Miyamav Refesh Vtyt".

There is no peace of mind for the wicked. They are never content with their actions and way of life. This gnawing emptiness can eventually bring him

back to the Derech Hashem and Torah. All 3 interpretations are hinting at this fundamental concept.

The sin of eating from the Eitz Hadaas was that Adam thought that he could throw off the yoke of Hashem, that he could write his own Shulchan Aruch, so to speak, so he could follow his own conscience. Man wanted to be Gd like in the knowledge of good and evil.

Rabbeinu Yonah explained that man was walking the way he saw fit, as if he was the master of the garden, showing that he was the master of his destiny. But as he was walking around, he could not escape the sound of Hashem, who he recognized was the true master of everything.

The Ibn Ezra explained that as the Kol Hashem began to spread throughout the garden, bit by bit, man began to realize what he did and the enormity of his actions.

The Ramban explained that Adam could never run away from Hashem, just like the Kol Hashem was always surrounding him. The Shechina never leaves man and it is this constant accompaniment that will bring man completely back to Hashem.

This summary is Copyright 1996 by Dr. Israel Rivkin and Josh Rapps, Edison, N.J. These summaries are based on notes taken by Dr. Rivkin at the weekly Moriah Shiur given by Moraynu V'Rabbeinu Harav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveichik ZT'L over many years.

From Internet Parsha Sheet 5759 (1998)

From mj_ravtorah@shamash.org (**Josh Rapps**)

breishis.98 Shiur **Harav Soloveichik ZT"L** on Parshas Breishis (Shiur date: 10/26/76) "And Elokim called the light day and the darkness He called night, and it was evening, and it was morning, day one (Yom Echad)". The Midrash Rabbah comments that the term Yom Echad refers to Yom Kippur. What is the connection between Yom Echad and Yom Kippur?

The Rav explained that in Hebrew, the word Echad has 2 meanings: the number one; and unique (singular or different). For example, Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokaynu Hashem Echad means that He is the one God as well as He is unique and beyond comparison with His creation. Similarly, Yom Kippur is one day yet it is a singular and unique day, different from all other days in the year.

The Ramban (1:5) quotes the Ibn Ezra that the beginning of the night is called Erev because all forms are mixed up and confused. Morning is called Boker because in daylight man can distinguish and discriminate between those same forms. Erev means confusion, an indistinguishable mixture that prevents me from discriminating between good and bad, Issur Vheter (as in Hilchos Taaruvos). Likewise, in the evening man has difficulty distinguishing between objects, as their shapes and identifying characteristics tend to blur. The morning, Boker, is when man uses his talents to discriminate and distinguish between similar objects, when he realizes that Ata Chonen L'adam Daas (Hashem graces man with intelligence, as we recite in our daily prayers).

Why did Hashem divide time into day and night? Why not leave man in a constant state of Boker, clarity? The Rav answered that if man would remain in a constant state of clarity, Teshuva would be impossible. The basis of Teshuva is that man acts in a state of confusion, it is this confused state that explains why he acted as he did. Hirhur Teshuva, the contemplation of Teshuva, is the beginning of the long process towards becoming a Baal Teshuva. It represents man's confusion, the shame and pain of the sin, the weight of his actions on his mind, as signified by Erev.

The Gemara (Kiddushin 49b) says that one who betrothes a woman on condition that he is a righteous person creates a valid Kiddushin (betrothal) even if he was a wicked person all his life, perhaps he contemplated Teshuva. This initial stirring to repent is the first and most necessary step. At this point, he recognizes that there is a mixing of thought processes between good and sin that he is not yet able to fully sort out, but he knows that he must attempt to make sense of it. Boker represents the rest of the Teshuva process, of Viduy (admission of the sin) and the disassociation from the act of sin in the future.

On Yom Kippur, man experiences both of these aspects. On the night of Yom Kippur, he acts out of the confusion brought about by the mass of conflicting thoughts and

emotions he feels when contemplating his actions. He undergoes Hirhurei Teshuva. With the clarity that comes with the arrival of the morning of Yom Kippur, the Boker, man can truly distinguish between good and evil, he can now embark on fulfilling the course of Teshuva. These unique aspects of Yom Kippur and their relationship to Teshuva are why Yom Kippur is referred to as Yom Echad.

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From Internet Parsha Sheet 5762 (2001)

From: **RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND** [SMTP: ryfrand@torah.org] Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2001 Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Bereshis "RavFrand" List

The "Ki Tov" (That It Was Good) of Monday Was Delayed Until Tuesday

The third day of Creation [Bereshis 1: 9-13] is the only day in which the expression "G-d saw that it was good" is mentioned twice. This expression is mentioned both following the gathering of the waters which divided the seas from the dry land, and following the sprouting of vegetation and seed bearing plants—both of which occurred on the third day of Creation.

As a result of the fact that Tuesday had a double portion of "ki tov" [that it was good], Tuesday is considered a particularly fortuitous day of the week. Many people specifically plan their wedding for this day. When moving into a new house, many people plan to move on Tuesday. Many people try to start a new job on Tuesday.

On the other hand, on the second day of Creation, there is no mention at all of the expression "that it was good". Rash"i comments that the reason "ki tov" is not mentioned on the second day is because the creation of the water (i.e. its assignment to the seas) was not completed until the third day. A value judgment of "ki tov" could not be pronounced until the work was complete. Therefore "ki tov" is mentioned twice on Tuesday—once in connection with the completion of the water (which was started previously) and once in connection with the vegetation (which was both started and completed on that same day).

This, however, begs for further explanation. G-d is all powerful. What does it mean that "he did not complete the job on Monday?" Why not? Clearly, He does not become tired or run out of time. Rather, He purposely did not finish the job on Monday. What is this trying to teach us?

The Shemen HaTov writes that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, is teaching us a lesson through the events of Creation that we as human beings must learn. This lesson is that "it's not over, until it's over." Sometimes things occur in life and we do not see the benefit therein. Sometimes we do not understand exactly what is happening.

Sometimes we will be able to understand what the event was really about, on the very next day. Then we will see the benefit of the inexplicable occurrence of the previous day. In the middle of creating the world, the All Powerful went out of His way to leave something undone, to leave something with a question mark at the end of the day, to leave something where the "ki tov" was not immediately apparent. The lesson is that "life" follows the same pattern as the days of Creation. We do not always immediately perceive the "ki tov".

Life would be much easier to live if within 24 hours we would immediately perceive that elusive "ki tov". Sometimes we do not even understand events the following week or year. Sometimes we do not even understand until the next lifetime. But the lesson of the delayed "ki tov" is that we should not expect to always see immediate results and immediate outcomes. Sometimes the good does not come until later.

G-d disrupted the order of Creation, leaving something purposely unfinished, in order to teach us this crucial lesson of life.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, WA DavidATwersky@aol.com
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These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 300, A Mamzer's Obligation in Mitzvos. Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117 0511. Call (410) 358 0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. RavFrand, Copyright 1 2001 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B learn@torah.org Baltimore, MD 21208

from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>
to: ravfrand@torah.org

date: Oct 15, 2020, 6:07 PM

subject: Rav Frand - Midrashim Speak to Us in Code

Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya

Parshas Bereishis - Midrashim Speak to Us in Code

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly portion: #1176 – Chupa: Inside or Outside? In a Shul or Not in A Shul? Good Shabbos!

The Torah says, "And G-d made the two great luminaries, the greater luminary to dominate the day and the lesser luminary to dominate the night; and the stars." [Bereshis 1:16] Rashi quotes the Talmud, which says [Chulin 60b], "Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi raises a contradiction: First it says 'G-d made the two great luminaries' (implying both were great) then it says 'the greater luminary... and the lesser luminary' (implying one was great and one was small)." He resolves the contradiction by explaining that originally both luminaries were the same size until the moon came before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and said "Master of the Universe, can two kings both wear the same crown?" To which G-d responded, "Go make yourself smaller." The moon is in fact much smaller than the sun. This came about because the moon argued, "Two kings cannot simultaneously rule with a single crown." When we hear such teachings from Chazal—the moon complained, the moon felt bad, etc.—we need to understand what is being taught. The moon is an inanimate object. These are metaphors. The teachings are clearly allegorical. The point of such Midrashim is to teach us lessons. There is a similar Medrash in Parshas Noach, where the raven "complains" to Noach, "You are after my mate!" These are allegorical messages meant to teach us lessons in human nature.

Medrash is a specific mode of Torah expression. Chazal are speaking to us in code. So what is the lesson to be learned here by the "conversation" between the moon and the Ribono shel Olam?

The Tolna Rebbe writes that this story is very indicative of human beings. The moon thought that its claim to fame was its size. "I am as big as the sun." This is my 'thing'—my uniqueness! The truth of the matter is that the moon was wrong from the get go. Rabbeinu Bechaye writes, as do other meforshim, that the moon was never in the same league as the sun. Even when the moon was as big as the sun, it did not have an independent source of light. Even initially, the light of the moon was merely a reflection of the light of the sun. The moon is dark. We can only see it from earth because it reflects the sun's light.

Rabbeinu Bechaye infers this from the expression "...Yehi me'oros b'rekiya ha'Shamayim" (let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven) [Bereshis 1:14]. He points out that "Yehi" is singular. If the intention was to speak about two different lights, the Torah should have written "Yi'heyu me'oros..." in the plural. Thus, says Rabbeinu Bechaye, the moon never had its own light, and on the contrary – the bigger it was, the more light it needed to illuminate its surface! The moon was thus way off base in thinking that its greatness stemmed from its size.

To drive home this error, the Ribono shel Olam, reduced the moon in size: "Go make yourself small." But the reason Klal Yisrael sets their holidays by the moon is precisely because it is smaller. The Ribono shel Olam likes

'small': "...You are the smallest of all the nations." [Devorim 7:7] Klal Yisrael resembles the moon, while the nations of the world resemble the sun (in terms of size and magnitude). Because of its smallness, the moon merited to symbolize Klal Yisrael. In fact, all of our holidays are based on the lunar calendar.

The moon assumed that its uniqueness and talent lay in its large size. Wrong! Just the opposite! "Your uniqueness and your special strength lie in the fact that you are smaller than the sun, not bigger!"

The Tolna Rebbe says this happens to people all the time. They focus in on one area of themselves. They assume that this will be the area where they excel and show their talents to the world. However, in the end, it turns out that they got it all wrong. Sometimes the very area in which a person assumes he is not so good turns out to be the very area where he indeed excels.

This is the lesson Chazal teach with the story of the moon complaining and the Almighty commanding it to reduce in size. Self-misperception can cause a person to be totally off regarding self-realization of his talents and how and where he will be able to make his mark in life. This is a very common problem. People are not good judges of themselves. That is why people need to consult outside opinions—Rebbeim, parents and friends—people who can correct and redirect our misperceptions about ourselves and tell us "This is not where you are going to make it!"

The moon made this mistake and people make this same mistake all the time. The Tolna Rebbe quotes Ibn Ezra, the classic Chumash commentary. The Tolna Rebbe mentions that the Ibn Ezra was extremely poor and he had no mazal. He once said about himself: "If I would go into the business of making shrouds for the dead, people would stop dying." The Ibn Ezra was also a poet, as many of the Sephardic Rishonim were. He wrote poetically (in Hebrew): "I would go to the wealthy man in town (to request funds) and they would tell me 'he left for work already.' I would come back in the evening (to ask him for a donation) they would tell me 'he already went to sleep.' Woe is to me, a destitute person, I was born without any mazal."

The Tolna Rebbe commented: Here we are almost a thousand years after the time of the Ibn Ezra. You can open any Mikraos Gedolos Chumash and see the Ibn Ezra's commentary. The Ramban quotes him all the time. Who is this "wealthy man" that he spoke about in his poem? That man faded from the map of history. The Ibn Ezra thought he was the unluckiest person in the world. He wrote about himself like he was a schlemiel and a nebech. He considered the 'Gevir' to be a person with great mazal! Not true. Sometimes, only time will tell.

This, the Tolna Rebbe writes, is the same lesson Chazal teach about the moon and the sun.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Rav Frand © 2020 by Torah.org. Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org (410) 602-1350

from: **Rabbi Jonathan Sacks** <info@rabbisacks.org>

date: Oct 14, 2020, 3:17 PM

subject: ♣ Taking Responsibility (Bereishit 5781)

Taking Responsibility

Bereishit 5781

If leadership is the solution, what is the problem? On this, the Torah could not be more specific. The problem is a failure of responsibility.

The early chapters of Genesis focus on two stories: the first is Adam and Eve; the second, Cain and Abel. Both are about a specific kind of failure. First Adam and Eve. As we know, they sin. Embarrassed and ashamed, they hide, only to discover that one cannot hide from God:

The Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Gen. 3:9-12)

Both insist that it was not their fault. Adam blames the woman. The woman blames the serpent. The result is paradise lost: they are both punished and exiled from the garden of Eden. Why? Because Adam and Eve deny personal responsibility. They say, in effect, "It wasn't me."

The second story is tragic. The first instance of sibling rivalry in the Torah leads to the first murder:

While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?" The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground." (Gen. 4:8-10)

Cain does not deny personal responsibility. He does not say, "It was not me," or "It was not my fault." He denies moral responsibility. In effect he asks why he should be concerned with the welfare of anyone but himself. Why should we not do what we want if we have the power to do it? In Plato's Republic, Glaucon argues that justice is whatever is in the interest of the stronger party. Might makes right. If life is a Darwinian struggle to survive, why should we restrain ourselves for the sake of others if we are more powerful than they are? If there is no morality in nature, then I am responsible only to myself. That is the voice of Cain throughout the ages.

These two stories are not just stories. They are an account, at the beginning of the Torah's narrative history of humankind, of a failure, first personal then moral, to take responsibility – and it is this for which leadership is the answer.

There is a fascinating phrase in the story of Moses' early years. He grows up, goes out to his people, the Israelites, and sees them suffering, doing slave labour. He witnesses an Egyptian officer beating one of them. The text then says: "He looked this way and that and saw no one" (vayar ki ein ish Ex. 2:12, or more literally, 'he saw that there was no man').

It is difficult to read this literally. A building site is not a closed location. There must have been many people present. A mere two verses later we discover that there were Israelites who knew exactly what had happened. Therefore, the phrase almost certainly means, "He looked this way and that and saw that there was no one else willing to intervene."

If this is so, then we have here the first instance of what came to be known as the "Genovese syndrome" or "the bystander effect,"[1] so-called after a case in which a woman was attacked in New York in the presence of a large number of people who all knew that she was being assaulted but failed to come to her rescue.

Social scientists have undertaken many experiments to try to determine what happens in situations like this. Some argue that the presence of other bystanders affects an individual's interpretation of what is happening. Since no one else is coming to the rescue, they conclude that what is happening is not an emergency.

Others, though, argue that the key factor is diffusion of responsibility. People assume that since there are many people present someone else will step forward and act. That seems to be the correct interpretation of what was happening in the case of Moses. No one else was prepared to come to the rescue. Who, in any case, was likely to do so? The Egyptians were slave-masters. Why should they bother to take a risk to save an Israelite? And the Israelites were slaves. How could they come to the aid of one of their fellows when, by doing so, they would put their own life at risk?

It took a Moses to act. But that is what makes a leader. A leader is one who takes responsibility. Leadership is born when we become active not passive, when we do not wait for someone else to act because perhaps there is no one else – at least not here, not now. When bad things happen, some avert their

eyes. Some wait for others to act. Some blame others for failing to act. Some simply complain. But there are some people who say, "If something is wrong let me try to put it right." They are the leaders. They are the ones who make a difference in their lifetimes. They are the ones who make ours a better world. Many of the great religions and civilisations are based on acceptance. If there is violence, suffering, poverty and pain in the world, they accept that this is simply the way of the world. Or, the will of God. Or, that it is the nature of nature itself. They shrug their shoulders, for all will be well in the World to Come.

Judaism was and remains the world's great religion of protest. The heroes of faith did not accept; they protested. They were willing to confront God Himself. Abraham said, "Shall the Judge of all the earth not do justice?" (Gen. 18:25). Moses said, "Why have You done evil to this people?" (Ex. 5:22). Jeremiah said, "Why are the wicked at ease?" (Jer. 12:1). That is how God wants us to respond. Judaism is God's call to human responsibility. The highest achievement is to become God's partner in the work of creation.

When Adam and Eve sinned, God called out "Where are you?" As Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the first Lubavitcher Rebbe, pointed out, this call was not directed only to the first humans.[2] It echoes in every generation. God gave us freedom, but with freedom comes responsibility. God teaches us what we ought to do but He does not do it for us. With rare exceptions, God does not intervene in history. He acts through us, not to us. His is the voice that tells us, as He told Cain, that we can resist the evil within us as well as the evil that surrounds us.

The responsible life is a life that responds. The Hebrew for responsibility, *achrayut*, comes from the word *acher*, meaning "other." Our great Other is God Himself, calling us to use the freedom He gave us, to make the world that is more like the world that ought to be. The great question, the question that the life we lead answers, is: which voice will we listen to? Will we heed the voice of desire, as in the case of Adam and Eve? Will we listen to the voice of anger, as in the case of Cain? Or will we follow the voice of God calling on us to make this a more just and gracious world?

Shabbat Shalom

[1] For a discussion, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Kitty_Genovese.

[2] Noted in Nissan Mindel, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, A Biography (New York: Kehot Publication Society, 1969).[2] Brachot 33b.

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<https://www.jpost.com/>

October 16, 2020

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, the former chief rabbi of Great Britain, was recently diagnosed with cancer, a spokesperson for his office announced on Thursday.

Rabbi Sacks will be stepping back from his work for a short period of time to focus on his treatment. Rabbi Sacks' office notes that he is looking to get back into the swing of things as soon as possible...

For those who wish include Rabbi Sacks in their prayers, his Hebrew name is **Harav Ya'akov Zvi ben Liba**.

From Internet Parsha Sheet 5764 (2003)

From: Rafael Salasnik [rafi@brijnet.org] Sent: Oct. 22, 2003 To: daf-hashavua@shamash.org

Subject: daf-hashavua Bereishit 5764/2003

U N I T E D S Y N A G O G U E - L O N D O N (O)

...

JEWISH VALUES

by CHIEF RABBI DR JONATHAN SACKS

ON G-D AND GOOD

Today we are delighted to commence a new monthly feature to be written by the Chief Rabbi on Jewish Values, which will appear in the Daf Hashavua every Shabbat Mevarchim

How we live and what we become depends on what or who we worship.

Other civilizations in the ancient world built monuments of stone. Israel - our ancestors - were summoned to a quite different task: to build a society out of holy lives and generous deeds. Ethics, along with kedushah, sanctity, stands at the very core of Jewish values. To worship G-d is, for us, not an escape from the world and its challenges but an engagement with the world and its challenges. To honour G-d is to honour His image, mankind.

It is often said that you don't have to be religious to be good. That is true. There were people who, without any particular faith, rescued Jews during the holocaust, fought for justice in South Africa, or dedicated their lives to curing disease, relieving poverty, and giving shelter to the homeless. Implanted within us (part of what makes us G-d's image) are strong instincts of justice and compassion. Without them, homo sapiens would not have survived.

But in the long run, without a nonnegotiable code whose authority transcends all earthly powers, societies have a tendency to lose their way. The moral sense becomes confused. People begin to think less of society than of self, less of duty than desire, more of rights than responsibilities.

Tolstoy gave a powerful analogy: "The instructions of a secular morality that is not based on religious doctrines are exactly what a person ignorant of music might do if he were made a conductor and started to wave his hands in front of musicians well rehearsed in what they are performing. By virtue of its own momentum, and from what previous conductors had taught the musicians, the music might continue for a while, but obviously the gesticulations made with a stick by a person who knows nothing about music would be useless and eventually confuse the musicians and throw the orchestra off course."

That is why, seven times in its first chapter, the Torah repeatedly uses the word "good." Virtually every other account of creation, mythological or scientific, emphasises power and process, the "how" but not the "why." The Torah is remarkably uninterested in the "how." Its entire account of the emergence of the universe takes a mere 34 verses. Its interest is in the "why." Goodness, for Judaism, is the purpose of creation. Morality is not something we invent. It is written into the structure of life itself.

Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Mecklenburg offered a fascinating interpretation of the phrase, *ki tov*. Normally we translate this as " [And G-d saw] that it was good." He translated it as "because He is good." Creation was a moral act on the part of G-d. He made the universe because He is good, in order to bestow blessing on His creations. And whenever we bestow blessings on others, we become "G-d's partners in the work of creation."

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from: OU Israel Torah Center <Rliff@ouisrael.org> date: Oct 15, 2020,

subject: Torah Tidbits Parshat B'reishit -Issue 1390

RABBI BARUCH TAUB

Rabbi Emeritus, The BAYT Toronto OU Israel Faculty

Why Did The Torah Not Begin With The Mitzvah Of Sanctifying The New Moon (Kiddush Hachodesh)?

Torah Tidbits is proud to celebrate Rav Taub's new Hebrew sefer on Parshat Hashavua, *Kanfei Yonah* (see pg. 79). We are honored to share a wonderful dvar Torah here in our pages. The OU Israel family offers our blessings on this momentous occasion: May Rav Taub, *shlit'a*, continue to be *marbitz* Torah and inspire Jews across the globe with his exquisite teachings!

In Rashi's first comment on the Torah, he quotes the well-known Midrash which asks why the Torah did not begin with the first Mitzvah given to the Jewish people, *Kiddush Hachodesh* (the establishment of the Jewish

calendar according to the lunar cycle). The basic premise upon which this question is based is that the Torah is not a book designed to record the history of Creation and the Jewish people, but rather a book of conduct instructing us how to live our lives according to God's word. As such, the Torah really should have started with the first mitzvah given to the Jewish people. The Midrash responds by informing us that the Torah began from the story of creation in order to provide a true response to the nations who claim that the Jewish people are a "band of robbers" who stole Eretz Yisrael from its original inhabitants – an accusation levelled against us to this day. To this we respond, that since God created the world, as detailed in the first chapter of the Torah, He also decides that Eretz Yisrael belongs to whichever nation He chooses.

According to the Torah, God did in fact take the land away from its original inhabitants and gave it to the Jewish people. Oznayim LaTorah elaborates on this Midrash and uses it to resolve other difficulties related to Eretz Yisrael. The Torah tells us in (Devarim 27:3) that God commanded the Jewish people to write the entire Torah on twelve stones. The Talmud (Sotah 7a) understands this to mean that the Torah was to be written and translated into the seventy languages and that these stones be erected subsequently on the mountain of Eival. There are several difficulties regarding these instructions.

The rabbis tell us that when God revealed the contents of the Torah to the nations, He only related the laws of the Torah to them

Firstly, the rabbis have taught us that God offered the Torah to the nations but they declined upon hearing what the Torah demanded of them. It is implausible that the goal in writing the Torah upon entering Eretz Yisrael could have been to influence its inhabitants, or even other nations to accept the Torah. If the nations had already declined the offer from God Himself, why would they be convinced to accept the Torah from the Jews who they actually despise?

Secondly, the mountain of Eival is in the center of the land, surrounded by enemy territory. What is the logic in instructing the Jewish people to enter deep into enemy territory in order to erect the Torah-inscribed stones, before retreating to their original lines in Gilgal? Aside from the extreme danger involved, the subsequent retreat would give the impression of a weak and confused nation. This could not have been the impression the Jewish people would have wished to give the inhabitants before having conquered it. What then, was the true meaning of this Mitzvah?

Thirdly, this Mitzvah (of the stones) is seemingly a prerequisite to conquering the land, as it was commanded by God as soon as they arrived at its borders. This is stressed by the verse: "When you cross, you shall write upon them all the words of this Torah, in order that you may come to the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you; a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, God of your forefathers, has spoken to you." (Devarim 27:3)

There are those who suggest that the land is ours because we conquered it in 1948

Oznayim LaTorah explains, using the Midrash cited by Rashi, that it is true that the nations were not going to be influenced by the Jewish people to accept the Torah. However, precisely because the Jewish people did accept the Torah which prohibits theft and murder, the nations of the world could claim that the Jewish people were not acting in accordance with the Torah that they themselves had accepted, which would be a terrible Chilul Hashem. In order to prevent such a Chilul Hashem, the Jewish people were commanded to publicize the Torah deep inside enemy territory. In this way, the nations could clearly see that the Torah had given the land to us and that by conquering the land we were not taking part in an act of theft, but were acting wholly according to what the Torah had commanded. This is so, since the rabbis tell us that when God revealed the contents of the Torah to the nations, He only related the laws of the Torah to them. The sections of the Torah that describes the creation of the world was not part of this exchange between God and the nations.

We can now understand the meaning of the Mitzvah to write the entire

Torah on the twelve stones – including the account of Creation – as a prerequisite to conquering the land. This was done in order to refute the claim that those who accepted the Torah do not actually observe its laws. Since they have now become aware of the story of Creation they will understand that the Jewish people's actions are not to be viewed as a theft but rather as a claim to what belongs to them rightfully, since it was given to them by the Creator Himself.

This idea is very well grounded in the fact, mentioned earlier, that the Mitzvah to write the entire Torah on the twelve stones concludes with the words, "When you cross, you shall write upon them all the words of this Torah, in order that you may come to the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as the Lord, God of your forefathers, has spoken to you." Without this explanation, one might question as to why the Torah made the entry into the land dependent on the writing of the Torah. However, now that we understand that acceptance of Torah, symbolized by the stones, is the prerequisite of entering the land, the very rejection of Torah by those who would oppose our claim, is that which empowers our rightful claim to Eretz Yisrael.

Let us elaborate on this very important idea that is expressed in the first Rashi in the Torah. There are those who suggest that the land is ours because we conquered it in 1948. This is not the reason the land is ours. True, our military victory was clearly part of the miraculous process of what occurred in 1948, but it is not the reason that it is ours. Others suggest that because of the Holocaust the land belongs to us. This is also not accurate; once again, it was part of the process that brought us here but not the reason that it belongs to us. The reason that Eretz Yisrael is ours is because everything in the physical universe belongs to God, and He decided to give it to the Jewish people.

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Rabbi Yaakov Neuburger

Finding the Words and Maintaining Connections

The brothers, kayin and hevel, were already distanced and Hashem's encouraging words of caution and heartening attention to kayin was to no avail. The mounting tension is now described with intriguing brevity: (4:8) "Kayin said to Hevel, his brother. And it was as they were in the field, Kayin rose up against Hevel his brother and killed him."

What did Kayin say to Hevel? Why is the conversation worthy of record but its substance of little significance? There are many suggestions. Whereas Targum Yonasan details a philosophical debate about G-d, the afterlife, and providence, Rashi says that indeed there was no conversation of substance. According to Rashi, Kayin was merely setting the stage for the murder. A contrived conflict and heated confrontation would provide the pretext for what would follow.

In a not dissimilar approach, Ramban and Ohr Hachayim understand that the conversation was a strategy meant to draw Hevel into the field, have him relax his guard and make him vulnerable.

Ibn Ezra suggests that Kayin related Hashem's message to him. According to Tosafos Kayin sensed some joy in Hevel and that riled Kayin further.

Yet after all the suggestions are studied, the question remains: if the conversation was indeed noteworthy, as Targum Yonasan indicates, why is it not recorded? If the conversation was merely a strategy, then why mention what adds so little to the storyline?

It seems to me that the Torah is alluding to a sad but instructive truth. Two brothers are distanced. It may be that one has suffered a crushing and devastating disappointment and he sees his brother as having a role in that; it may be about finances; it might be about philosophy. Their arguments and confrontations may be very sad and the volume may become deafening, but their brotherhood is still promising because they are still talking.

It is only when they stop talking to one another, when there is no common language or when they simply cannot be bothered to find it...
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<http://www.ucalgary.ca/~akiva/HOJMI/droscho.html>
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Dvar Torah: Breishit, 5757

Rabbi Moshe Shulman

NEW IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER

How does the world measure values? How does society judge and select which ideas are good and which are bad? Today, society and its values change so quickly. How do we judge if we are going in the right direction?

Generally speaking, the world judges based on technological advancement. The more advanced a society scientifically, obviously the more sophisticated is their knowledge, and therefore the more "correct" their values. Today, we divide the world into "Western", and "third world" countries, based on their technological development. Together with that comes an assumption of values. Modernity brings with it culture. With the exception of archeology, **THAT WHICH IS NEWER IS BETTER!**

That's why so many people, swept up by this mistake, try to "modernise" the Torah, trying to make Judaism "new", and therefore better. But Judaism believes in just the opposite! **NEW IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER!**

The Torah teaches us to respect our elders, because they know more than we. The Torah teaches us that right and wrong are based on a link of tradition tracing all the way back to Mount Sinai. The Torah teaches us that the oldest values, those in the Torah those written by our prophets, are better, because they come from G d. The Torah teaches us that the most central key to the survival and development of mankind is the oldest concept in history: that the world was created by G d, and man in His image.

Parshat Breishit traces what happens to humanity when they forget this lesson, and is a devastating condemnation of the advancement of society!

Begin with Adam and Eve. In the garden, they had everything they needed. They didn't need to till the soil, or work the land. Their needs were simple, and provided. They had but one task: Recognise the authority of G d who created the world. Understand that you are NOT in charge, that this world, while yours to use, is not yours to dominate!

Their response: What do you mean 'don't eat of that tree'? It's ours! We care for it! We deserve it. This world, if ours to use, IS ours to DOMINATE! They rebelled. And with that rebellion came the response: Now work the soil. Now you are on your own. You have dethroned G d! Now see what you do with your world without Him!

So Cain and Abel developed, modernised "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. (Gen. 4:2) What did their modernity bring? Sibling rivalry, hatred, jealousy, and ultimately murder. Having dethroned G d, the door was now open to deny creation, deny the Divine Image in which man was created, deny spirituality. Mankind is all their is. Lesson 2 had been learnt: **ONCE FREE TO DOMINATE MAN IS FREE TO DESTROY.**

The next stage: Cain's son, Chanon, "built a city" (ibid. 17) His children "...learn to handle the lyre and the pipe, and forge sharp instruments in brass and iron." (ibid. 21 22) Man learns to use metal, make tools, develop art, music, science, technology... and in so doing learns how to kill professionally. "I have killed a man for wounding me." (ibid. 23) "Then man began to call by the name of G d," (ibid. 26) as Rashi explains, they would call everything they made "god". Because they had no other god. Idolatry, murder, violence, crime, jealousy all the achievements of "modern G dless societies".

A few generations later, Noah's society had broken down completely. "And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that all the impulse of the thoughts of his heart is evil continually." (ibid. 6:5)

10 generations later, Sodom and Amorah taught the world how to deal with

the "guest" and the stranger, how to create the perfect society, void of outsiders, homogenous, all one... "aryanised"!!

Abraham understood this. In his day, even in such modernised and advanced civilisations such as Egypt and Gerar, he realised: "Only the fear of Heaven is missing in this place, so they will kill me on account of my wife." (ibid. 20:11) Murder sanctioned by law is the result of a G dless society. Because without the fear of G d, without the basic tenant of man created in the image of G d, man as steward of this world and not master over it, the basic lessons of creation without these ideas, even the most "modern" of societies will sanction violence, and ultimately destroy itself.

Look at Germany no nation had "developed", modernised, more than she technologically, the greatest scientific advancements, the centre of culture and arts, of music and "all manner of sharp instruments"... And it didn't take Germany very long to literally follow in the footsteps of Sodom and Amora... Our "modern world" almost destroyed itself numerous times in a nuclear arms race. And that threat is by no means over. The names change. But the game is the same.

As "new" and "modern" as the world may be, without the oldest concept in history, without the foundation of belief in G d, and in the immortal spirituality of every human being, there is NOTHING stopping humanity from annihilating itself.

"I created the Evil inclination, and I created the Torah as its cure" (Talmud, Kedushin 30a) Teach our Sages: G d created man, with all his shortcomings, and his preponderance for evil. And he gave him the antidote called Torah. The answer is there it may be "old", cliched, and outdated but it's there. and it is our only hope for a brighter future!

"For the Mitzvah is a candle, the Torah its light" (Prov. 6:23) The Torah is the light of the world. Today, that light is the inheritance of those who accept it, and live by it. But the day will come, when it will be the light of the entire world. The day will come when Redemption will be complete, the Mashiach will arrive, and light of Torah will be understood by every nation in the world.

That's the eternal message of all our prophets: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid..." (Isaiah 11:6) Nations which once were mortal enemies shall live together in peace. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (ibid. 9) In a world where man is created in the Image of G d, everyone understands that violence is a crime. It becomes naturally abhorrent!

That's what the promise of Redemption is all about. The belief, ingrained into the essence of Judaism since Mount Sinai, in the coming of Mashiach, when the whole world will finally learn that **NEW IS NOT NECESSARILY BETTER.** They will learn that a better world is one based on belief in G d, and His Dominion, like in the Garden of Eden, before we dethroned the Almighty, and learnt how to kill.

In the meantime, until Mashiach comes, we have a small taste of that world, every week. It's called Shabbat. It's one day where we focus on this message of Creation, and understand its implications. Shabbat is a day to cease from dominating the world, to restore G d to the throne of creation, and focus on the Divine Image, the spirituality, of every human being. Shabbat is a day to teach the world what true peace is all about peace with ourselves, peace with nature, peace with society, peace with G d.

Shabbat is called "me'ein olam haba", a miniature of the world to come, a taste of a what it will be like when all of mankind recognises that the oldest book in the world, and oldest belief in the world, is the only true hope for a better world. "May the All Merciful bring us to see that day which will be like a great Shabbat, a day of peace and eternal life." (Grace after meals) **THAT'S THE WORLD WE BELIEVE IN! THAT'S THE WORLD WE HAVE TO BUILD!!**

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<http://www.koltorah.org/ravj/shnayimmikra.htm> Parshat Ki Teitzei Vol.10

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**Shnayim Mikra V'echad Targum
by Rabbi Howard Jachter**

Introduction The Gemara (Berachot 8a) teaches, "one should always finish the Parshiot with the community [by studying] Shnayim Mikra V'echad Targum (the Parsha twice and Targum Onkelos once)." The Aruch Hashulchan (O.C. 285:2) notes that this is a rabbinical obligation. It seems that women are not obligated to study Shemot (the common acronym for Shnayim Mikra V'echad Targum), since it is a time bound positive obligation. In this issue, we will examine the parameters of this obligation.

Reason for the Obligation In the introduction to the Sefer Hachinuch, the author explains a reason for this obligation in a simple yet beautiful way:

Our sages established that we should read a portion of the Torah every week in the synagogue to inspire us to observe the Torah...The sages also obligated us to study in our home every week the Torah portion that is read in the synagogue to further enhance our understanding of the Torah.

The aforementioned Gemara notes that all those who engage in Shemot "have their days and years lengthened." One may interpret the Gemara as saying that this practice greatly enhances the quality of one's life. Surely, the joy on Simchat Torah of one who has fulfilled his Shemot obligation is exponentially greater than one who has not done so. Moreover, the Shabbat of those who observe this Halacha is immensely enhanced. Indeed, the Tur and Shulchan Aruch present this Halacha in the context of Hilchot Shabbat. Rav Soloveitchik told this author that the primary time for Shemot is Shabbat. This author also heard from Rav Soloveitchik (in a public lecture delivered at Yeshiva University) that every Shabbat is characterized by the Parsha of the week. For instance, the Shabbat on which we read Parshat Ki Teitzei is not simply Shabbat; it is Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei. One may argue that while the public reading of the Torah characterizes Shabbat as, for instance, Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei, on the communal level, individual Shemot study characterizes the Shabbat as Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei for the individual.

Of course, the primary way that Shemot enhances one's life is by promoting fluency in our most basic and holy text, the Torah. The Jew who is not fluent in the Torah certainly does not enjoy a good Jewish quality of life. Accordingly, even women, who are not technically obligated to study Shemot, receive abundant reward for doing so.

A Defense for Those Who Do Not Study Shemot Many individuals do not engage in Shemot for a variety of reasons. There is a "Limud Zechut" (limited Halachic basis) for these people. The Bait Yosef (Orach Chaim 285 s.v. Aval Misham) cites the opinion of the Raavan that Shemot is an obligation only for an individual who has not heard Kriat Hatorah in shul. According to the Raavan, Shemot is merely a substitute for Kriat Hatorah.

However, the Bait Yosef points out that almost all Rishonim reject the view of the Raavan. For example, he cites the Rambam (Hilchot Tefila 13:25) who writes that "although one hears the communal reading of the Torah he must study the Parsha every week Shnayim Mikra V'echad Targum." In fact, the Vilna Gaon (Biur Hagra O.C. 285:1) specifically notes that the Shulchan Aruch rejects the opinion of the Raavan.

Accordingly, those who do not study Shemot are not "sinners." However, it is proper to study Shemot in addition to hearing Kriat Hatorah in shul. All authorities concur, though, that one must study Shemot if he did not hear the communal Torah reading.

When Must We Complete Shemot Study? The Gemara does not specifically state that one must complete Shemot by a specific time. Tosafot (s.v. Yashlim), however, states that it is preferable to complete Shemot before eating on Shabbat. In fact, the Magen Avraham (285:2) cites the Shelah Hakadosh who writes that it is preferable to complete Shemot on Friday after Chatzot (midday). This preference stems from Kabbalistic concerns (Kabbalists attach profound significance to Shemot study - see Baer Heiteiv and Shaarei Teshuva 285:1). Tosafot notes, though, that it is acceptable to complete Shemot study even after the meal. However, Tosafot believes that Shemot must be completed before Shabbat ends. Indeed, the

primary opinion presented by the Shulchan Aruch states that one must complete Shemot before Shabbat ends.

Nevertheless, the Shulchan Aruch cites two lenient opinions that appear in the Rishonim. One lenient view allows one to finish Shemot until the Wednesday after Shabbat in which we read the particular Parsha. This view is based on the Gemara (Pesachim 106a) that permits one to recite Havdala until Wednesday if he forgot to do so on Motzei Shabbat. A second, even more lenient view allows one until Simchat Torah to finish Shemot. The Aruch Hashulchan (285:10) writes that this is a viable opinion. The Mishna Berura (285:12) cautions that all authorities concur that it is preferable to complete Shemot before Shabbat ends.

When May We Begin Study of Shemot? Tosafot writes that the earliest time to begin Shemot study of a particular Parsha is after the Mincha on Shabbat afternoon when we begin to read from that Parsha. This opinion is codified by the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 285:3, and see Mishna Berura 285:7).

One may suggest that this opinion of Tosafot reflects their view that Shemot is a weekly obligation (i.e. that we must study Shemot of a particular Parsha within the week in which we publicly read that particular Parsha). However, the lenient opinion that believes that one may complete Shemot until Simchat Torah regards Shemot as a yearly obligation (i.e. that every year one must complete Shemot). It would appear that just as the lenient view permits completing Shemot late, it also permits starting Shemot as early as Parshat Bereishit. Thus, if one finds difficulty in completing Shemot during the course of the year but is able to do so during a vacation period, he should take the opportunity and complete Shemot for the entire year during the vacation period. Rav Efraim Greenblatt and Rav Mordechai Willig told this author that they agree with this analysis.

Rashi or Targum Onkelos The Rosh (Berachot 1:8) and the Tur (O.C. 285) assert that Rashi's commentary to Chumash constitutes an alternative for Targum Onkelos for the study of Shemot. The Bait Yosef (O.C. 285 s.v. V'im Lamad), however, cites the Ri (Rashi's great grandson) as disputing this assertion. He thus rules that a "God fearing individual" should study both Targum Onkelos and Rashi. Similarly, in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 285:3), Rav Karo rules that Rashi serves as a viable alternative to Onkelos, but a "God fearing person" should study both Rashi and Onkelos.

It seems from the Shulchan Aruch that if one had enough time to study either Onkelos or Rashi that one could choose either and that there is no preference between the two. The Mishna Berura and the Aruch Hashulchan also do not seem to indicate a preference between Onkelos and Rashi. It would thus appear that one with limited time is permitted to study either Onkelos or Rashi, according to his own preference. See, however, the Shaarei Teshuva (285:2) who presents a dispute among the Acharonim whether Onkelos or Rashi is preferable for one with limited time.

Alternative Translations Tosafot (s.v. Shnayim) cites an opinion that asserts that any translation of the Chumash into the local vernacular constitutes a viable alternative to Onkelos. Tosafot then rejects this opinion stating that Onkelos is special because Onkelos not only translates the Chumash but also explains many obscure words and passages. Both the Mishna Berura (285:5) and the Aruch Hashulchan (285:12) cite Tosafot's view as normative. However, the Mishna Berura writes that if one cannot comprehend Rashi he may use a Yiddish (or any other language) translation based on Rashi and traditional sources that are rooted in the Talmudic tradition.

Conclusion The study of Shemot is within the grasp of virtually anyone. If one cannot fulfill this obligation at the optimal level, he should nevertheless make every effort to fulfill this Mitzva as best he can. It might be a good idea to carry a small Chumash in one's attache case or car so that one can seize available moments to study Shemot.

From Internet Parsha Sheet 5763 (2002)

<http://www.tzemachdovid.org/thepracticaltorah/bereishis.shtml>
THE PRACTICAL TORAH

BY RABBI MICHAEL TAUBES

Parshas Bereishis:

THE TIME SHABBOS ENDS

No definitive Halacha LeMa'aseh conclusions should be applied to practical situations based on any of these Shiurim.

After describing what Hashem created on the first day of Creation, the Torah indicates that the day came to an end, and uses the phrase "and there was evening and there was morning..." (Bereishis 1:5). This phrase is repeated following the description of the creation which took place on each of the other five days of Creation (Ibid. psukim 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). The Mishnah and Gemara in Chulin (83a) understand from his phrase, as explained by Rashi (Bereishis Ibid. s.v. Maaseh), that according to the Torah, the new day begins at night, meaning that in considering the 24 hour day, the night-time precedes the day time. When night begins, then, a new calendar day has begun as well.

The question is precisely how to define the beginning of night and, consequently, the end of the previous day according to Halacha. This is a question which obviously has ramifications for a great many Mitzvos and Halachos which depend upon the end of the old calendar day or the beginning of the new one, and is the subject of much discussion among Rishonim and Acharonim. For example, regarding the latest time one may daven Minchah in the afternoon, the Mishnah in Berachos (26a) quotes one view that it may be done until evening, that is, until the end of the day. Rashi (Ibid. s.v. Od HaErev) understands this to mean until nightfall, while Rabbeinu Yonah (Ibid. 18a. In the Rif s.v. Tefillas HaMinchah) learns that it means until sunset. The discussions relating to the first topic of Maseches Berachos, focusing on the time for Maariv and the evening Kerias Shema, also touch on this question.

HaRav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik discusses the precise definitions of day and night and their application to various Halachos in an article on this very subject in one of his Seforim (Shiurim L'Zeicher Abba Mari Z"L Vol. 1 from p. 91). He mentions the interesting point there (p. 102) that the Torah itself seems to leave us in doubt as to when the old day ends and the new day begins. In this Parsha, the first Posuk cited above (Ibid. pasuk 5) declares that Hashem called the light "Yom" day, and He called the darkness "Lailah", night. The implications of this Posuk is that the day is defined by the presence of light, and the night by the presence of darkness. Thus, even after the sun has set, the night (and hence the new calendar day) has not yet begun because it's still light out; night begins only once it's dark. However, another Posuk in this Parsha (Ibid. pasuk 16) states that the sun is to be out during the day and the moon during the night. The implication of this Posuk is that the day is defined by the presence of the sun; once the sun has set, the day is over and the night begins, even though it is still light out. In short, the basic questions are what moment defines the end of the old day, whether when the sun sets or when the sky gets dark, and how we treat the time known as "Bein HaShemashos," or twilight, when the sun has already set, but the sky is not yet dark.

Another important question is how to precisely define nightfall. Even if we assume that the new day begins not at sunset but when it gets dark, how exactly can one figure out when that is? How long after sunset is this time? One of the many issues that depends upon this question is the issue of when Shabbos is over. Because of the aforementioned doubt about whether the new day begins at sunset or nightfall, we observe Shabbos (and Yom Tov) on both ends: Shabbos begins at sunset on Friday afternoon, but does not end until it gets dark on Saturday night; the Mishnah Berurah (Orach Chaim Siman 261 Sif Katan 23) and the Kaf HaChaim (Ibid. Ote 1) elaborate on some of the details about this. The question is how long after sunset one must wait.

The Gemara in Pesachim (94a) states that the time from sunset until it gets dark is equivalent to the time it takes to walk four "Mil." Exactly how long that takes is the subject of another dispute among the Poskim, as presented by the Mishnah Berurah (Orach Chaim Siman 459 Sif Katan 15), and elaborated on in the Biur Halacha (Ibid. s.v. Havei). The Vilna Gaon (Biur

HaGra Ibid. s.v. V'Shiur) and the Chok Yaakov (Ibid. Sif Katan 10) discuss this matter at length. The most widely accepted view is that one "Mil" can be walked in 18 minutes; the time between sunset and darkness, which is four "Mil", would thus be 72 minutes. The Gemara in Shabbos (35a), however, implies that from sunset to nightfall is only 3/4 of a "Mil", which is only 13 1/2 minutes, as explained in Tosafos there (Ibid. s.v. Trei). To resolve this contradiction, Tosafos there (Ibid.) and in Pesachim (Ibid. s.v. R. Yehudah) quotes Rabbeinu Tam who explains that there are actually two stages to sunset. The first is what people commonly call sunset and what he calls "the beginning of sunset," and actual nightfall takes place four Mil (72 minutes) after this, as the Gemara in Pesachim (Ibid.) indicates. But then there is what he calls "the end of sunset," which takes place 3/4 of a Mil (13 1/2 minutes) before this actual nightfall, and this is the stage which the Gemara in Shabbos (Ibid.) refers to when stating that from sunset to nightfall is 3/4 of a Mil. It seems clear from Tosafos in Menachos (20b s.v. Nifsal), though, that Rabbeinu Tam considers the time until that last 3/4 of a Mil before this actual nightfall (that is, until 58 1/2 minutes after what people commonly call sunset) to be daytime for all Halachos. This is followed by 13 1/2 minutes called Bein HaShemashos, and finally, 72 minutes after what people commonly call sunset, comes nightfall. Consequently, only then, after those 72 minutes, would Shabbos be over.

Although many Poskim accept this view, including the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim Siman 261 sif 2), the Vilna Gaon (Biur HaGra Ibid. s.v. She'Hu) questions it, saying that one can tell by looking outside that darkness falls long before 72 minutes after what people commonly call sunset, and it's difficult to consider the entire period of 58 1/2 minutes after that sunset to be daytime when it's obviously already dark out. He therefore concludes that sunset has only one stage, and when the sun sets, Bein HaShemashos begins immediately and lasts for 3/4 of a Mil, or 13 1/2 minutes, after which comes nightfall, as the Gemara in Shabbos (Ibid.) states. The 4 Mil period of the Gemara in Pesachim (Ibid.) is the time from sunset until a later time at night, when all the stars are visible, which is relevant for other purposes. The Gaon (Ibid.) adds, however, that this 3/4 of a Mil represents Bein HaShemashos only in Eretz Yisrael and Bavel, and only at certain times. In other locations, depending on their latitude and longitude and depending on the time of year, the time between sunset and nightfall would be different, and nightfall can be determined by seeing three small stars in the sky (See Ibid. Biur Halacha s.v. MTechilas). In the New York area, it is generally assumed that at least with respect to the end of Shabbos, nightfall is about 42 minutes after sunset according to this view, which is commonly followed.

Nonetheless, many people do wait longer to conclude Shabbos, following the view of Rabbeinu Tam. Again, there is much discussion as to what he meant by 72 minutes after sunset, and whether that time too varies with one's location and the time of year, and hence there are different customs. The Mishnah Berurah, while in general accepting the Vilna Gaon's definition of sunset (See Siman 233 Ibid. Sif Katan 14), recommends in the Biur Halacha (to Siman 261 Ibid. s.v. She'Hu) that one should wait 72 minutes after sunset before ending Shabbos, seemingly regardless of location or season, although he quotes other views. Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Orach Chaim Cheilek 1 Siman 24) suggests this as well. It should be noted that it is always proper to add a few minutes on to Shabbos both at the beginning and at the end, as indicated by the Gemara in Rosh HaShanah (9a) and implied by the Gemara in Shabbos (118b), and as codified in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim Siman 261 Ibid. and Siman 293 Ibid. Sif 1).

from: Mordechai Tzion <toratravaviner@gmail.com>

date: Oct 15, 2020, 2:37 PM

subject: Short & Sweet - Text Message Q&A #326

From the teachings of the Roshe Yeshiva of Ateret Yerushalayim

[HaRav Shlomo Aviner shlit"a]

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample: Renewing Sanhedrin

Q: Can we renew the Sanhedrin in our time?

A: No. We do not have Rabbis on the level of the Sanhedrin. See what Maran Ha-Rav Kook wrote about this in Igrot Ha-Reeiyah (Volume 2, p. 59).

Tachanun on Day of Making Aliyah

Q: Does one recite Tachanun on the day he makes Aliyah? What about on the anniversary of making Aliyah?

A: No, since it is a holiday for him, as brought in Sefer Charedim that the Rambam established a holiday for his family on the day he arrived in Eretz Yisrael. But others in the Minyan should recite Tachanun, since this is a novel ruling (Chiddush). This is similar to a Bar Mitzvah in that he does not recite Tachanun but everyone else in the Shul does. See Piskei Teshuvot 131 note #141 (and in Shut Mishneh Halachot 11:101, Ha-Rav Menashe Klein was asked this question by the Admor of Slonim, and he ruled that one does not recite Tachanun based on the Gemara in Ketubot 111a where Rabbi Elazar says: "Anyone who lives in Eretz Yisrael dwells without sin". This is similar to a groom whose sins are forgiven. And just like a groom does not say Tachanun, so too someone who makes Aliyah. Rav Klein holds that this applies to all others who Daven with him as well).

Desire to Ascend onto Temple Mount

Q: Should one have a desire to ascend onto the Temple Mount despite that he is unable to because it is forbidden?

A: One also has to do Teshuvah for a desire to perform a transgression.

Holiness of Laptop Computer

Q: It is permissible to put a laptop, which has many Sefarim on its hard-drive within the computer, on top of a Sefer?

A: No. This is not the type of script which the Torah meant when speaking about holiness of Sefarim (Ha-Rav Avigdor Nevenzal, however, allows it if it is for the purpose of learning. In the book "Ohel Yaakov" on the holiness of Sefarim, p. 25).

Losing a Child

Q: My child passed away. Instead of saying: I lost a child, can I say: I returned a child to Hashem?

A: Yes. This is what Rabbi Meir's wife said (Midrash Mishlei, Chapter 31).

Property for Embassy in Eretz Yisrael

Q: Is there a halachic problem in giving property in Eretz Yisrael for a foreign embassy because of the prohibition of transferring parts of Eretz Yisrael to non-Jews?

A: No, since they do not have military sovereignty.

Questions in Emunah

Q: Someone told me that it is not good if one does not have questions in Eemunah, but I can't think of questions to ask.

A: This is not true. One is not obligated to ask. But if one has questions, we answer them. And look, you just asked a question!

Rambam's 13 Principles of Faith

Q: Why aren't the Rambam's 13 Principles of Faith, which are printed in the Siddur, included in the Davening itself?

A: The Rambam explains in Moreh Nevuchim that all of the Principles of Faith are found in the Davening, just not in one place.

Torat Eretz Yisrael

Q: What is the definition of Torat Eretz Yisrael?

A: See Orot Ha-Torah of Maran Ha-Rav Kook, Chapter 13.

Standing during Kadish

Q: Do Ashkenazim have to stand for Kadish?

A: Yes. But see Piskei Teshuvot 56:4.

Special thank you to Orly Tzion for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parashah Sheet

This parasha series is dedicated in memory of Michael Jotkowitz, z"l.

Dedicated in loving memory of Esther Okon, on the occasion of her yearzeit.

The Snake's Sin and Its Punishment

By Rav Yaakov Medan

THE SNAKE'S SIN "The snake was the most cunning of all the beasts of the field that the Lord God had created...." (3:1) What was the snake's sin? Rashi (3:14) explains, based upon the Gemara (Sanhedrin 29a), that it is considered a "mesit" - an inciter: "Rabbi Shemuel bar Nachman said in the name of Rabbi Yonatan: From where do we learn that no arguments are presented for an inciter? From the primeval snake, as Rabbi Salmai taught: The snake had many arguments which it did not present. And why did the Holy One, Blessed be He, not argue for the snake? Because the snake itself did not argue." Tosafot and Chizkuni have difficulty with this explanation, "for no one is called an 'inciter' unless he incites to idolatry." They go on to explain that the transgression of eating from the Tree of Knowledge bordered on idolatry, since the snake told Chava that eating of the tree would turn her and Adam into "gods, knowing good and evil."

It is possible that the idolatry of the snake involved not only its comparison between the creature and its Creator, but also its slander against the Creator.[1] The snake accuses God of fearing that man will become as wise as He, knowing good and evil, and therefore forbidding him to eat of the tree. The idea that God "fears" man and therefore tries to curtail his activities is a familiar theme in various mythologies - from the Greek back to the Canaanite. The story of Prometheus, in Greek mythology, is an example. According to legend, life for man was bitter and difficult until Prometheus discovered fire. Since man did not know the secret of fire, he was forced to suffer from cold, he ate raw meat, and was unable to develop any sort of real industry. The secret of fire was known only to the gods, and they kept it to themselves so that man would never have the possibility of elevating himself from his lowly state and endangering their hegemony. Prometheus had mercy on man and violated the prohibition against publicizing the information: he revealed the secret of fire. As a result, he was punished with eternal torture by the chief god. In the snake's view, God is incomparably strong and powerful, but He lacks moral stature. All the pettiness that afflicts man's heart is to be found in God's heart, too. And, just like any evil and petty ruler, with a little cunning he can be overcome. Since the snake passed on these perverted values to Chava, his act is considered incitement to idolatry. Although there is no incitement here to serve a different god, this view treats God Himself as a "different god," as it were - as something other than what He is. This teaches us a general lesson about slander: it always reflects the subjective view and interpretation of the speaker, at the expense of the objective truth.

"IT PLACED ITS CONTAMINATION IN HER" In the Midrash, Chazal stray far from this understanding and conclude that the snake and Chava sinned in an entirely different manner: "For what reason are idolaters contaminated? Because they did not stand at Mt. Sinai. For when the snake conjoined with Chava, he contaminated her. When Israel stood at Mt. Sinai, their contamination ceased. Idolaters, because they did not stand at Mt. Sinai - their contamination did not subside." (Shabbat 145b) The attempt to attribute to the snake the sin of sexual immorality rests upon the results of the sin: "The eyes of both of them were opened and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves and made themselves loincloths." (3:7) Commentators with a linguistic bent have noted the connection between the Hebrew words "beged" (garment) and "begida" (infidelity, treason), and between "me'il" (coat, covering) and "me'ila" (duplicity, perfidy). The need to cover the genital area - especially for the woman - is connected to the most despicable of all sins: that of infidelity and adultery. It is from the results that Chazal deduce the sin; since, following the sin, Adam and Chava sewed themselves loincloths, the woman must have committed the sin of adultery, and Adam is likewise guilty of sinful sexual relations, since he does not separate from her despite her adultery with the snake.

Based upon our conception of a snake, it is difficult to conceive of any sort of "adultery" with Chava. Even if we imagine the snake as having legs (before his legs were chopped off and God commanded him, "You shall go about on your belly"), the distance between it and humankind remains enormous, and it is quite unclear how it would have enticed the woman to sexual relations. We are forced to conclude that the change undergone by the snake after the punishment was so drastic that the snake we know today is in no way similar to its primeval ancestor. Unless we attribute to Chava some perverse sexual orientation, we must accept that the snake resembled humankind, at least externally. It is perhaps for this reason that the snake also knows how to express itself so articulately, and perhaps his intellect was not inferior to that of man. But man - and only man - was created in the image of God, and in my opinion, the "image of God" within man is his conscience. Man is created with an inner knowledge of which good traits are desired by God. Man did not need to learn ethics from some outside source, for his conscience - his inner truth, which is the image of God within him - would lead him to them. It is possible that

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From Yeshivat Har Etzion Office <office@etzion.org.il>

By Rav Yaakov Medan

To: yhe-parsha@etzion.org.il Date sent: 6 Oct 2004

Subject: PARSHA65 -01: Parashat Bereishit

Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm)

the snake had intelligence, but it certainly lacked conscience, for it was not created in God's image.[2]

"I HAVE ACQUIRED A MAN FROM GOD" There may be something attractive in the snake's determination, in its lack of doubts and pangs of conscience, and Chava is drawn after this temptation. When her first son is born, she derives his name, Kayin, from the expression, "I have acquired a man from God." It is interesting that there is not the slightest hint of the third partner in the child's creation – her husband, Adam. It is possible that she knows the real, hidden reason for this; she knows who Kayin's father really is. Kayin and his descendants – Lemekh and his sons – are intelligent, strong and creative people, but they have no conscience. Concerning Hevel we know almost nothing; only when it comes to Shet does the Torah tell us, "He [Adam] bore in his image, as his likeness." Perhaps this implies that Kayin was not in Adam's image.

Science tends to divide prehistoric man into two species: the strong and violent type – homo erectus, and the weaker, gentler, more thinking type – homo sapiens. This categorization may parallel the division known to us from parashat Bereishit, between the sons of Kayin and the sons of Shet. The vulgar, violent descendants of Kayin ruled the world, as proved by Lemekh's declaration. They are the "children of elo-him" who snatched human women for themselves, and therefore the Holy One decides to wipe them from the face of the earth. But the contamination remains for many more generations, since Noah's wife, Na'ama, was a descendant of Lemekh (see Bereishit Rabba 23:3). Only among Bnei Yisrael, who stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai and accepted with the promise, "We shall do and we shall hear," the seventh Commandment – "You shall not commit adultery" – did the contamination subside, and they were purified from the source of living waters: "God is the 'mikveh' of Israel."

"WE DO NOT SEARCH FOR THE MERIT OF AN INCITER" "The Lord God called to Adam and He said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said: 'I heard Your voice in the Garden, and I was afraid, for I am naked, and I hid.' And He said: 'Who told you that you naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?' Adam said: 'The woman whom You put with me – she gave me from the tree, and I ate.' The Lord God said to the woman: 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said: 'The snake tempted me, and I ate.'

The Lord God said to the snake: 'Because you have done this, you are cursed above all the animals and above all the beasts of the field. You shall go upon your belly and eat dust all the days of your life. And I shall place hatred between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. They shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise their heel.' To the woman He said: 'I shall surely increase your pain in childbearing; in sorrow shall you bring forth children, and you shall desire your husband, and he shall rule over you.' To Adam He said: 'Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree concerning which I commanded you, saying, "You shall not eat from it" – cursed be the land because of you; you shall eat from it in sorrow all your life. It shall produce thorns and thistles for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread until you return to the earth, for from it you were taken; for you are dust and you shall return to dust.'" (3:9-19) Reviewing the respective punishments of Adam, Chava and the snake, it is difficult not to be struck by the lack of symmetry between God's attitude towards Adam and his wife, who are questioned as to their motives for the sin, and His treatment of the snake, which receives an immediate punishment with no attempt to give him or his motives the benefit of the doubt. As we noted at the outset, Rashi (3:14) explains this on the basis of the Gemara (Sanhedrin 29a), teaching that "We do not make an effort to find merit for an inciter." From Rashi it would appear that we do not make an effort to find merit in the inciter precisely because he has a potential defense – he may claim that the "victim" need not have listened to him: "If the teacher says one thing and the student says another, to whom do we listen?!"[3] Alternatively, it is possible that we do not make an effort to find some defense for the inciter because of the severity of his offense, since he is considered as having "sinned in order to anger [God]." We seek defense only for someone who performed a transgression out of a desire, having been overcome by his evil inclination, but not for someone whose intention was specifically to anger God and to rebel. It would seem that the actual principle according to which we do not make an effort to seek a defense for an inciter may be learned from the language of the text in the parasha dealing with an inciter: "If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife of your bosom or your neighbor who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and worship other gods' – which you have not known, neither you nor your forefathers..." (Devarim 13:7) According to the simple reading of the text, the "victim" – the person who is incited – is the witness. Proof for this conclusion lies in the fact that he is the first commanded to kill the inciter, as the Torah teaches explicitly: "Your hand shall be upon him first to kill him, and the hand of all the nation thereafter" (Devarim 13:10). Witnesses are generally commanded to be the first to put to death the person they have testified against: "The hand of the witnesses

shall be upon him first to put him to death, and the hand of all the nation thereafter" (Devarim 17:7). However, this gives rise to a simple question. The Torah tells us that the inciter tried to lead astray someone close to him: "Your brother... or your son or your daughter, or the wife of your bosom..." But a relative is invalid as a witness; he cannot testify that his relative enticed him! [4] From here Chazal learn that "We do not invest effort in finding a defense for an inciter": the reason for the invalidation of a family member for testimony is because of his tendency to try and find justification for his relative's act. Because of this, he is not invalid for testimony as to incitement, for we do not give the inciter the benefit of any doubt. Even a relative is considered a "witness" (at least for the purposes of "the hand of the witnesses shall be upon him first to put him to death"), although a relative is invalid for any other type of testimony in Torah law. We have hereby solved another difficulty posed by the Rishonim: the snake received no prior warning as to the prohibition of and punishment for incitement – so how could it be punished? It would seem that an inciter is punished even if there was no prior warning (as the Rambam writes explicitly – Hilkhos Avodot Kokhavim 5:3), because the need for warning prior to the deed is meant for the purposes of easing up on the suspect: perhaps he didn't know, or perhaps he forgot that it was forbidden. No attempt is made to find defense for the inciter – and therefore the snake is punished even though it received no warning. Indeed, it appears that this very point explains the difference between man and the snake. At the beginning of the story of Gan Eden, we are told that God prohibits man from eating from the Tree of Knowledge, and warns him as to his punishment if he should eat: "And from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil – you shall not eat from it, for on the day that you eat of it you will surely die." (2:17) The Gemara (Sanhedrin 40b) tries to derive the requirement of warning a sinner before his act (so that he will be liable if he commits it) from far-fetched sources and forced applications. Perhaps what Chazal viewed as the background to the law of warning was this difference between man and the snake: God forbade man from eating of the Tree of Knowledge and warned him as to what his punishment would be if he did so, while the snake received no explicit warning. From here we learn that an inciter is punished without having received warning, while any other transgressor is punished only after first having been warned.

ONE WHO SINS DELIBERATELY VS. ONE WHO SINS IN ORDER TO ANGER GOD Moreover, the law of warning was implemented by Chazal so as to render it all but impossible to mete out punishment: "Both a scholar and an ignoramus need warning, for warning is given in order to distinguish between one who sins inadvertently and one who sins deliberately, in case he was acting inadvertently. How is he to be warned? He is told, 'Desist, or do not do it, for it is a transgression and you will be deserving of death or lashes.' If he desists – he is exempt, and likewise if he was silent or lowered his head – he is exempt. Even if he says, 'I know' – he is exempt, unless he forfeits his life and declares, 'I am doing it because it is forbidden' – then he is put to death. And it is necessary that he performs the deed immediately after the warning, right after speaking; but if he performs it after the amount of time necessary to speak – he need a separate warning." (Rambam, Hilkhos Sanhedrin 12:2) A warning so close to the deed, and accompanied by an explicit declaration that "I am doing it because it is forbidden," seems impossible, and it is quite illogical that this should be the distinction between one who sins inadvertently and one who sins deliberately. It is possible, however, that such a warning serves to clarify whether the person is performing the sin in order to anger God, or out of desire. Halakha does not allow a court to put a person to death unless he has sinned in order to anger God – i.e., only if he says, "I am doing it because it is forbidden," and actually commits the sin as he says these words.[5] Thus a death sentence passed by a Jewish court became a very rare phenomenon, and a Sanhedrin that put a person to death once in seven years (or once in seventy years) was called a "Sanhedrin of Destruction" (Mishna, Makkot 7a) – for most sinners do not transgress in order to anger God. This principle, too, would appear to have its source in the Torah. In all of the Torah there are only two instances of a death sentence being carried out by a court: the person who blasphemed (Vayikra 24), and the one who gathered wood on Shabbat (Bamidbar 15). It is obvious that the former transgressed in order to anger God, and therefore he was put to death.[6] From the context of the parasha, it would seem that the latter, too, sinned with the intention of angering God, since we are told: "A person who acts presumptuously, whether a native citizen or a stranger – he dishonors God, and that soul shall be cut off from among its nation. For he has despised the word of God and has violated His command; that soul shall surely be cut off, his sin is upon him. And Bnei Yisrael were in the desert, and they found a man gathering wood on Shabbat. And those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moshe and Aharon and to all the congregation..." (Bamidbar 15:30-33) The Torah tells us that a person who "acts presumptuously" is considered to "dishonor God," since he is acting knowingly, to anger God. There is some foundation for the theory that the man who gathered wood did so in response to the Divine decree

following the sin of the spies. After it was decreed that Am Yisrael would wander in the desert for forty years, the wood-gatherer claimed that the acceptance of the Torah had been solely for the purpose of receiving an inheritance in the land, and if he was not to receive any inheritance – he would not fulfill the Torah. He also tried to lead the whole nation into a rebellion against Moshe; it is no wonder that this narrative is placed directly before the story of Korach. It is possible that Chazal learned from these two parashot that the essence of the law concerning the death sentence referred only to one who sinned in order to God, whose whole intention is to rebel and to incite. In such a situation, his punishment is the same as that meted out to the primordial snake: there is no need to give him warning, nor is any attempt made to give him the benefit of the doubt.

MAN'S ADVANTAGE Perhaps the lack of attempt to seek merit for the snake can be understood in a different way than the one proposed by Rashi. It would appear that there should be no benefit of the doubt for Adam and Chava, either. They were aware of the command and the prohibition, and they decided to transgress them in following the advice of the snake. How can this be justified? Nevertheless,

God addresses Adam with questions: "Where are you?" "Who told you that you are naked?" "Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?" God expects an answer (teshuvah) from man, but not necessarily the answer to His questions. He expects an act of teshuva (repentance): an admission of guilt, a request for forgiveness, a search for some way of making amends. God opens the door for Adam to say, "I have sinned" – but he does not use the opportunity. Instead of admitting the sin, he blames his wife. God goes on to question Chava, but she too – instead of admitting her guilt – blames the snake. Thus, the first human act of teshuva failed to happen, and the continued stay in the Garden of Eden and the continued revelation of the Shekhina were consequently curtailed. Adam and his wife acted as did King Shaul, much later on, when confronted by the prophet Shemuel: "Shemuel said: 'What is this sound of sheep in my ears, and the sound of cattle that I hear?' Shaul said: 'They were brought from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the flock and of the cattle in order to sacrifice to the Lord your God; the rest we destroyed.'" (Shemuel I 15:14-15) Shemuel begins with a question so that Shaul may confess, but the first king of Israel chooses to blame the nation instead of accepting responsibility himself, and thus the heroic moment of the first Israelite dynasty was likewise lost. God does not address any questions to the snake. The snake is part of nature, and it is judged with the attribute of strict justice. The rigid laws of nature leave no room for teshuva. Sin brings punishment; there is no third option. Only man, God's friend, created in His image, merits the demonstration of the attribute of mercy – the ability to return to God, to make amends for the sin. Only to man does God extend the opportunity to confess and repair; He knocks on man's door and asks him questions. A similar lesson may be learned from the story of R. Elazar ben Dordaya: "We learn: It was said of R. Elazar ben Dordaya that there was not a single prostitute in the world with whom he had not had relations. Once he heard that there was a certain prostitute over the sea, who demanded a bag of dinarim as payment. He took a bag of dinarim and went, and he crossed seven rivers to reach her. In the midst of their intercourse, she passed gas. She said, 'Just as that air cannot return to its place, so Elazar ben Dordaya will not be accepted as a penitent.' He went and sat between two mountains and hills. He said: 'Mountains and hills, beg for mercy on my behalf!' They said to him: 'Before we ask mercy for you, first we must ask for ourselves, as it is written, "For the mountains shall move, and the hills collapse."' He said: 'Heavens and earth, beg for mercy for me!' They said: 'Before we ask for you, first we must ask for ourselves, as it is written, "The heavens shall vanish like smoke, and the earth shall expire as an old garment."' He said: 'Sun and moon, beg for mercy on my behalf!' They said to him: 'Before asking for you, first we must ask for ourselves, as it is written: "The moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed."' He said, 'Stars and constellations – beg for mercy on my behalf!' They said: 'Before asking for you, we must first ask for ourselves, as it is written, "All the host of the heavens shall rot away."' He said: 'I have no one to rely on but myself.' He placed his head between his knees and wept and sobbed until his soul departed from him. A heavenly voice emerged and said: 'R. Elazar ben Dordaya is invited to Eternal Life.'" (Avoda Zara 17a) There is no repair and no teshuva – not through the heavens and the earth, neither by the agency of the mountains and hills, nor any hope in the sun and moon or the stars and constellations, nor through the snake. Teshuva and repair exist only within man, and we have no one to rely on but ourselves.

Fw From Hamelaket@gmail.com (2020)
Drasha - Parshas Bereishis - Opposites Attract
Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky
Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya

The creation of man was no simple feat. In fact, Hashem seems to be disappointed with his less-than-perfect creation. He looks at Adam and declares, "It is not good for man to be alone I will create an ezer k'negdo." The word ezer means helper, and the word k'negdo takes on various explanations, each defining the role of woman in completing and perfecting creation.

Simply put, the word k'negdo means opposite him. It can even mean against him. Rashi quotes the Talmud that explains that there is no middle ground in relationships. If one merits than the spouse is a helper; and if one does not merit, then the spouse is a k'negdo, against him.

Though the word k'negdo may mean opposite him, it need not mean a negative connotation. Opposite him, however, defines a relationship. One can not be opposite of no one. Why, then, does the Torah define this helper in such interesting terms? Why would it not have sufficed to call the new spouse a helper and leave it at that?

With the baseball playoffs fast approaching, a therapist in our community told me a fascinating story that reflects upon the strange state of affairs in some households.

A couple came to him for counseling in their predicament.

"My husband is only interested in the baseball playoffs! All he's interested is in that stupid baseball! Yankees, Shmankees! That's all he wants to do each night."

"That problem," thought the doctor, "is not so unique. It occurs pretty often in households across the country."

He was expecting to hear the husband defend himself with lines like, "it's only once a year," or only when New York is in the playoffs."

He didn't. In response the husband put his hands on his hips and faced-off.

"And what about her? All she wants to watch are the evening sitcoms and serials! They are meaningless fantasies! How does she expect me to see real men earning an honest living playing ball, when she wants to watch those silly dramas?"

The therapist pondered this modern-day struggle and offered his suggestion. "I see that your interests in televised entertainment are quite polarized. But I think there is a simple solution."

He smiled broadly and with the confidence of responding with Solomonic wisdom he continued. "You are quite an affluent couple, and," he added, "you have a large home. Why don't you just buy an additional TV set, and each of you watch your desires in different rooms!"

The therapist's smile faded as the couple stared at him in horror. "DIFFERENT ROOMS??" they shrieked in unison. "How can we watch in different rooms? That's the time we spend together!"

Through its contrasting definitions of a spouse's capacity, the Torah does more than warn us of problems. It explains what the best helper is. The appropriate helper and mate is not one who spends his or her time in a different world with different interests and no concern for the other's. Rather, it is one who stand opposite the spouse and faces him. The shared enjoyment of each other's company, the companionship of k'negdo, should outweigh a set of four eyes glued to an event in the distance. The Torah wants two sets of eyes facing each other. Sometimes in agreement, sometimes in disagreement as long as they are k'negdo, opposite the other.

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From Internet Parsha Sheet 5756 (1995)

From: "Jeffrey Gross <75310.3454@compuserve.com>" To: "Halachic Topics Related to the Week... Date: 10/17/95 9:20pm Subject: Braishis 5756 To All Our Subscribers, We have a new format for 5756. We hope that you will continue to enjoy it. There was not an issue for Parshas V'zos Habracha.

HALACHA FOR 5756 SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS BEREISHIS

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Compiled from the Mishna Berurah and from other contemporary Poskim on a subject that pertains to the parsha of the week. For final Halachic ruling consult your Rav.

SUBJECT: SELECTED SHABBOS HALACHOS

Mincha after Candle Lighting

QUESTION: May a woman Daven Mincha after she has lit candles on Friday night?

DISCUSSION: L'chatchillah, all Poskim agree that one must Daven Mincha before lighting candles. When a woman lights candles she is automatically accepting the Shabbos. This precludes her Davening the previous day's Mincha. If, however, a woman remembers at the last moment before lighting candles that she has not Davened Mincha, the Poskim debate at to what she should do. There are three views:

- 1) She should go ahead and light anyway. Then, she should Daven Shabbos Maariv twice to compensate for the lost Mincha¹. Even though women usually do not Daven Maariv, she may do so in this case in order to make up the lost Mincha²;
- 2) Before lighting, she should stipulate that she is not accepting the Shabbos until after she has Davened Mincha³. This should not be done on Yom Tov if Shechiyanu is recited at candle lighting⁴;
- 3) A minority view rules that she may Daven Mincha after lighting candles, even if she did not stipulate that she was not accepting Shabbos⁵.

It should be noted that when men light candles they do not automatically accept the Shabbos upon themselves⁶. They may Daven Mincha after the lighting.

Kiddush before Maariv

QUESTION: Can one recite Kiddush before Maariv? This situation may be arise during the summer months, when many people would like to Daven Maariv after nightfall, yet they would also like to eat earlier with their family. A possible solution would be to accept Shabbos after Plag Hamincha, eat the meal with the family, and then Daven Maariv with a later Minyan. Is this permitted?

DISCUSSION: Mishnah Berurah⁷ rules that there is no objection to reciting Kiddush before Maariv, provided that the meal begins at least one half hour before nightfall. After that time, it is prohibited to begin a full meal before saying Krias Shema and Davening Maariv. According to the Arizal's Kabbalah, however, it is not proper to recite Kiddush before Maariv. It is considered as if one is performing the Mitzvos in the wrong sequence⁸. Additionally, the Gr"a⁹ proves from the Talmud (Brachos 27b) that one should not recite Kiddush before Maariv.

Havdalah Fingernail Inspection

QUESTION: When is the right time to inspect one's fingernails during Havdalah, before the Bracha of Borei Meorei Ha'eish or after?

DISCUSSION: There are two opinions on this matter. Mishnah Berurah¹⁰ rules that the inspection should be first, before reciting the Bracha. The reason is that this Bracha is considered a Birchas Ha'shvach, similar to the blessing over thunder and lightning. Obviously, therefore, one needs to first hear or see the phenomenon for which he is going to praise Hashem. Other Poskim¹¹ rule that the Bracha is recited first, and the inspection follows. That is because they consider this Bracha to be a Birchas Ha'nehenin. The general rule governing that type of Bracha is that the Bracha is recited before pleasure is derived from the item. Harav Moshe Feinstein¹² rules according to the second view.

FOOTNOTES: 1 This is the view of the Mishnah Berurah 263:43. 2 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 43:110) 3 Aishel Avraham 263:10; Kaf Hachaim 263:35. 4 Tzitz Eliezer 10:19 5 5 Several Poskim quoted in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 43:128 6 Mishnah Berurah 263:42. It is still, however, preferable to stipulate that Shabbos is not being accepted (ibid). 7 271:11 quoting the Magen Avraham. 8 Kaf Hachayim 271:22;272:3. 9 Maasei Rav 117. See Peulas Sachir ibid. 10 296:31. All the early sources discussing this Halacha

mention the inspection before the blessing. 11 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 96:9; Siddurei Hatanya, Hagra, Yaavetz. 12 Written responsa published in "The Radiance of Shabbos".

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network Peninim on the Torah - Parshas

פרשת בראשית תשפ"א

Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

ותרא האשה כי טוב העץ למאכל וכי תאוה היא לעינים... ותקה מפריו ותאכל

And the woman perceived that the tree was good for eating and that it was a delight for the eyes... and she took of its fruit and ate. (3:6)

A horrible tragedy occurred in Telshe, Lithuania, during the tenure of *Horav Yosef Yehudah Leib Bloch, zl*, as *Rosh Yeshivah* and *Rav* (about one hundred years ago). A secular Jewish student with no ties whatsoever to religion rented an attic apartment in town and succumbed to the severe depression that plagued him. Following the incident, the owners of the house in which the deed was done would hear and then see plaster fall from the ceiling. The owner of the house was himself also not an observant Jew, so, at first, he ignored it. (A religious Jew takes nothing at face value. Whatever occurs in his life, he views as a message, however subtle, from which he should learn or gain perspective). At the time, Telshe was going through the pangs of *Haskalah*, the Jewish Enlightenment movement, which taught that Torah was archaic and its disseminators deadbeat parasites who refused to come to terms with modernity and a world that was moving progressively forward. The landlord of this house was a card-carrying *Haskalah* member, proudly spewing his misplaced (it was really self-loathing) animus against anything that smacked of religion. After a few weeks of observing his ceiling deteriorate before his very eyes, he finally relented and deferred to the advice offered by his more common-sensical friends: Go see the *Telzer Rav* and ask his sage advice.

The (*Alter*) *Rav* explained to the landlord, "It is quite possible that when the student abruptly ended his life, some of the blood seeped into the wooden floorboards – and these blood droplets want to be buried in a Jewish cemetery. Therefore, whenever a drop of blood descends from the ceiling, some plaster also falls down to cover it." The landlord thought that the *Rav* had lost his mind, until he came home and looked beneath the fallen plaster and discovered blood! They buried the blood-soaked floorboard, and everything turned back to normal; no more plaster fell.

Obviously, the incident took the city by storm. The community hummed with conversation; everyone was impressed with the *Rav's* penetrating Torah knowledge. They agreed that the *Rav's* unusual insight was the result of his vast Torah knowledge. A few days later, the *Rav* was "accosted" by one of the city's well-known *kofrim*, heretics, a Jew who had fallen prey to the *Haskalah* rhetoric. The man remarked to the *Rav*, "I refused to enter the house to view the spectacle, because I feared that I would become impressed and influenced to become a believer."

The *Rav* smiled and countered, "You need not worry. Miracles do not impress you. Every day, you see the sun rise in the sky. It nourishes and sustains the world. You look up at the sky and see the wonderful clouds which provide the necessary moisture for vegetation to grow. You are not blind. You see miracles every day. They are miracles, because no human can possibly replicate what they are doing. You observe how an infant picks up words and, over time, begins to speak and become proficient in a language. Yet, you have remained a heretic. This proves that you want to disbelieve. The miracle in the house would not impress you because you refuse to be impressed. You know the truth, but you refuse to concede to it."

A similar incident happened concerning Chavah. Imagine *Gan Eden*. We have before us every luscious fruit; all sorts of vegetation; the nourishment that anything we could consume would be beyond comprehension; and, the best part is, it is all ours for the picking. There is one slight catch: one tree, the Tree of Knowledge; its fruit is off limits. In fact, to eat it brings about death. No problem. It is not as if we have nothing else to eat. We can have everything, but – one fruit. It should not be a major challenge.

Everything was fine until the *nachash ha'kadmoni*, ancient serpent, entered onto the scene and commenced with his awesome salesmanship. He succeeded in swaying Chavah. She ate; she was a good wife and fed her husband, and the result was banishment from *Gan Eden*, death, difficulty in earning a livelihood and all of the adversity with which we have lived from the beginning of time. How did this happen? They had it all, but one fruit. How did Chavah fall for the serpent's blandishments? What was her misstep? The Torah relates the sequence of her downfall. "She perceived that the tree was good for eating. And that it was a delight for the eyes." What does taste have to do with it? The snake never mentioned food/taste. He talked about opening up her eyes, knowing the difference between good and bad. How did food enter into the equation?

Rav Yitzchak HersHKowitz, Shlita, explains this with a story. A student in one of the mainstream *yeshivos* was not holding his own in learning. While he had not been dealt a large helping of acumen, he did not even bother to make the attempt. Slowly, his learning followed and, soon afterwards, his commitment dwindled away to just about nothing. He left the *yeshivah* and joined the world of fun and misery, becoming totally alienated from Torah and *mitzvos*. Years passed, and one day he was walking down the street when he confronted his *Rosh Yeshivah*. Having nowhere to hide, he dug in and said, "Shalom." The contrast between the *Rosh Yeshivah*, long beard, dressed in the black regalia of a distinguished Torah scholar, and the young man with a long ponytail, tee-shirt and jeans, was palpable. "Where did you go?" the *Rosh Yeshivah* asked. "One day, I looked around, and you were gone. No good-bye, nothing. I thought I deserved better than that."

"*Rebbe*, I had questions and doubts. Finally, I decided that this way of life was just not for me," the young man replied.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* smiled, "Trust me, if you had questions, I had answers. I do not think that this was the sequence you followed. You decided that you would like to try to live a life of abandon, to see what it was like not to learn, not to *daven*, not to observe *Shabbos* and *kashrus*. You tried it, and it felt good. Now you needed an excuse to justify reneging the Torah. 'Suddenly,' now you have questions. Veritably, you have no questions because then I could give you answers. You have all the answers. I have no answers to your answers!"

This is what the Torah is teaching us. Chavah saw, and Chavah smelled. Chavah had an implacable desire to eat. Once she ate, she blamed it on the serpent's presentation of a life of greater knowledge, of good and evil. Truthfully, it was not about intellectual pursuits. It was about eating a tasty fruit. And we are still paying for her experience.

words end in aleph, mem, taf, which again spell *emet*. Rabbi Simchah Bunim of P'shis'che cites the Talmudic statement, "The seal of God is *emet*", and comments, "It is customary for an author to place his name in the opening of his book. God placed His Name *emet* – truth, in the opening chapter of the Torah. *Emet* thus envelops all of creation, a testimony to God as the Creator."

Divrei Shaul notes that all traits can be a matter of degree. There can be greater beauty and lesser beauty, greater wisdom and lesser wisdom, greater strength and lesser strength, etc. Only one trait cannot be more or less: truth. There is no such thing as greater truth and lesser truth. Something is either true or it is not true.

God is identified with truth. Just as truth can never be altered, because altered truth is no longer truth, there can be no change in God. (Malachi,2:6). The Talmud says that *emet* is broad-based, consisting of the first letter of the alphabet, aleph, the middle letter, mem, and the last letter, taf (Shabbos 55a). Truth therefore, has stability and durability. Falsehood, on the other hand, is the Hebrew *sheker*, consisting of three letters near the end of the alphabet. *Sheker* is top-heavy and cannot endure.

To the extent that a person lives with truth is the extent one identifies with God. Any falsehood distances a person from God.

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Seal of God is Truth

Bereishit (Genesis 1:1-6:8)

Sep 29, 2020

by **Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski**

In the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth... God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He abstained from all His work which God created to make

These two verses encompass all of Creation. The opening three words end in the letters taf, aleph, mem, which spell *emet* – truth, and the closing three