

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

CHIEF RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

If you want to understand Jews and Judaism, think of Simchat Torah. It's the only festival that is the pure creation of the Jewish people. All the others were either written in the Torah or came about through historical events, like Purim and Hanukkah. Not so Simchat Torah, which isn't mentioned in the Torah, not even in the Talmud. It appeared for the first time in the early middle ages.

Now you might have thought that with all their dispersion and persecution Jews would have created a fast, but they didn't. They created a day of pure joy. And joy in what? In the Torah, a book of law.

Imagine a group of English or American judges or law professors, so seized with the beauty of their subject that they dance around the supreme court holding books of legislation in their arms. You're right. It couldn't happen. On 14 October 1663 the great diarist Samuel Pepys visited a synagogue in London. It happened to be Simchat Torah. He couldn't believe what he was seeing. People dancing around in a house of G-d? He'd never seen anything like it. The majesty and impartiality of law you can find elsewhere, but Simchat Torah, the joy of the law-for that you need to go to Shul.

If you want to understand Jews and Judaism, think of Simchat Torah and we realise that Judaism is really a love story: the story of the love of a people for a book, the book with which we dance with on Simchat Torah as if it were a bride.

There is a deep question at the heart of Jewish faith, and it is very rarely asked. As the Torah opens we see G-d creating the universe day by day, bringing order out of chaos, life out of inanimate matter, flora and fauna in all their wondrous diversity. At each stage G-d sees what He has made and declares it good.

What then went wrong? How did evil enter the picture, setting in motion the drama of which the Torah- in a sense, the whole of history-is a record? The short answer is man, Homo sapiens, us. We, alone of the life forms thus far known to us, have freewill, choice and moral responsibility. Cats do not debate the ethics of killing mice. Vampire bats do not become vegetarians. Cows do not worry about global warming.

It is this complex capacity to speak, think and choose between alternative courses of action, that is at once our glory, our burden and our shame. When we do good we are little lower than the angels. When we do evil we fall lower than the beasts. Why then did G-d take the risk of creating the one form of life capable of destroying the very order He had made and declared good? Why did G-d create us?

That is the question posed by the Gemara in Sanhedrin: When the Holy One, blessed be He, came to create man, He created a group of ministering angels and asked them, 'Do you agree that we should make man in our image?'

"They replied, 'Sovereign of the Universe, what will be his deeds?'

"G-d showed them the history of mankind.

"The angels replied, 'What is man that You are mindful of him?' [Let man not be created].

"G-d destroyed the angels.

"He created a second group, and asked them the same question, and they gave the same answer.

"G-d destroyed them.

"He created a third group of angels, and they replied, 'Sovereign of the Universe, the first and second group of angels told You not to create man, and it did not avail them. You did not listen. What then can we say but this: The universe is Yours. Do with it as You wish.'

"And G-d created man.

"But when it came to the generation of the Flood, and then to the generation of those who built the Tower of Babel, the angels said to G-d, 'Were not the first angels right? See how great is the corruption of mankind.'

"And G-d replied (Isaiah 46:4), 'Even to old age I will not change, and even to grey hair, I will still be patient.'" [Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 38b]

Technically the Gemara is addressing a stylistic challenge in the text. For every other act of creation in Genesis 1, the Torah tells us, "G-d said, 'Let there be'... And there was..." In the case of the creation of humankind alone, there is a preface, a prelude. Then G-d said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness..." Who is the "us"? And why the preamble?

In their seemingly innocent and childlike-actually subtle and profound- way the sages answered both questions by saying that with (to quote Hamlet) an enterprise of this pith and moment, G-d consulted with the angels. They were the "us."

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But now the question becomes very deep indeed. For, in creating humans, G-d brought into existence the one life form with the sole exception of Himself, capable of freedom and choice. That is what the phrase means when it says, "Let us make mankind in our image after our likeness." For the salient fact is that G-d has no image. To make an image of G-d is the archetypal act of idolatry.

This means not just the obvious fact that G-d is invisible. He cannot be seen. He cannot be identified with anything in nature: not the sun, the moon, thunder, lightning, the ocean or any of the other objects or forces people worshipped in those days. In this superficial sense, G-d has no image. That, wrote Sigmund Freud in his last book, *Moses and Monotheism*, was Judaism's greatest contribution. By worshipping an invisible G-d, Jews tilted the balance of civilization from the physical to the spiritual.

But the idea that G-d has no image goes far deeper than this. It means that we cannot conceptualize G-d, understand Him or predict Him. G-d is not an abstract essence; He is a living presence. That is the meaning of G-d's own self-definition to Moses at the Burning Bush: "I will be what I will be"-meaning, "I will be what I choose to be." I am the G-d of freedom, who endowed humankind with freedom, and I am about to lead the children of Israel from slavery to freedom.

When G-d made humanity in His image, it means that He gave humans the freedom to choose, so that you can never fully predict what they will do. They too- within the limits of our finitude and mortality-will be what they choose to be. Which means that when G-d gave humans the freedom to act well, he gave them the freedom to act badly. There is no way of avoiding this dilemma even for G-d himself. And so it was. Adam and Eve sinned. The first human child, Cain, murdered the second, Abel, and within a short space of time the world was filled with violence.

In one of the most searing passages in the whole of Tanakh, we read at the end of this week's parsha: "G-d saw that man's wickedness on earth was increasing. Every impulse of his innermost thought was only for evil, all day long. G-d regretted that He had made man on earth, and He was pained to His very core." (Gen. 6:5-6)

Hence the angels' question, the ultimate question at the heart of faith. Why did G-d, knowing the

risks and dangers, make a species that could and did rebel against Him, devastate the natural environment, hunt species to extinction, and oppress and kill his fellow man?

The Talmud, imagining a conversation between G-d and the angels, is suggesting a tension within the mind of G-d himself. The answer G-d gives the angels is extraordinary: "Even to old age I will not change, and even to grey hair, I will still be patient." Meaning: I, G-d, am prepared to wait. If it takes ten generations for a Noah to emerge, and another ten for an Abraham, I will be patient. However many times humans disappoint Me, I will not change. However much evil they do in the world I will not despair. I despaired once, and brought a Flood. But after I saw that humans are merely human, I will never bring a Flood again.

G-d created humanity because G-d has faith in humanity. Far more than we have faith in G-d, G-d has faith in us. We may fail many times, but each time we fail, G-d says: "Even to old age I will not change, and even to grey hair, I will still be patient." I will never give up on humanity. I will never lose faith. I will wait for as long as it takes for humans to learn not to oppress, enslave or use violence against other humans. That, implies the Talmud, is the only conceivable explanation for why a good, wise, all-seeing and all-powerful G-d created such fallible, destructive creatures as us. G-d has patience. G-d has forgiveness. G-d has compassion. G-d has love.

For centuries, theologians and philosophers have been looking at religion upside down. The real phenomenon at its heart-the mystery and miracle- is not our faith in G-d. It is G-d's faith in us. © 2011 Chief Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and torah.org

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

“**A**nd [the snake] said to the woman, 'did G-d really say that you can't eat from any of the fruits of the garden?' This verse (B'raishis 3:1) is the beginning of the conversation between the snake and Chava (Eve) that led to the sin of eating the fruit of the "Tree of Knowledge." The notion of talking animals as part of a Biblical narrative is not unique to this story (see Bamidbar 22:28); the context of the narrative, however, does raise several issues.

First and foremost is the question raised by numerous commentators- if the snake had the power of speech and lost it, why isn't it mentioned as part of the curse G-d placed on the snake? The text (3:14-15) mentions the snake having to crawl on its belly (implying it originally had legs), eating dust (i.e. everything it eats will taste like dust, see Yuma 75a), and the animosity that will exist between snakes and people, but says nothing about losing its ability to communicate via the spoken word. With speech being such a defining

human characteristic, shouldn't the text mention that it was taken away as part of the snake's punishment?

Oznayim L'Torah (see also the alternate version of Ibn Ezra; Ibn Ezra is one of the commentators who says the snake literally spoke) suggests, based on other Biblical verses, that the expression "eating dust" is a euphemism for not being able to speak. After all, one cannot speak with a mouth full of dust, which is why telling someone to "put dust in your mouth" is the equivalent of saying "keep quiet." It still seems a bit strange that the snake's loss of speech is only hinted to, which may be why most commentators don't understand the text to mean that it literally spoke. Torah Sh'laimah (1:9) quotes Sefer Hayovelim's suggestion that until Adam was evicted from the Garden of Eden every animal had the ability to speak; if this ability was taken away from every animal (the snake was cursed more than the other animals, see 3:14, implying that the other animals were cursed too), we can understand why it could not be included in the curse that was limited to the snake.

Or Hachayim is among the commentators who suggest that Adam and Chava were able to understand the "language" that animals "spoke." A similar explanation (see Abarbanel) has the actions of the snake indicating that the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was especially tasty. Either way, the back-and-forth of the "conversation" between the woman and the snake are complex and detailed enough to make it more difficult to accept that there was such a high level of communication between the two. Are there "animal words" for "becoming like G-d" or "knowing good and evil?" Was the snake so good at "charades" that it could act these concepts out? Chazal (Sanhedrin 59b and B'raishis Rabbah 19a) do say that mankind suffered a great loss when the snake was cursed, as snakes had made for great personal assistants. (They were intelligent enough to go places and strong enough to carry heavy loads, so could deliver packages without any human being accompanying it.) Were they so much more advanced than carrier pigeons that they could have theological discussions? Without any indication from the text that part of the curse was losing much of their intellectual capacity, it doesn't seem very likely.

The most widely given explanation for there being no mention of the snake losing its capacity to talk is that it wasn't the snake that did the talking. Rather, it was Satan, who was "riding" on the snake, who spoke with Chava (see Pirkay D'Rebbe Eliezer 13). She must not have known that snakes are not supposed to talk, or the "speaking while riding" orchestrated by Satan might have been movements, motions or animal-speak that translated to a high-enough level of communication for the advanced "conversation" to occur. If it wasn't really the snake doing the talking, there's no need to include losing the ability to speak in its curse. However, many commentators dismiss this approach for a different reason-if it really was Satan that convinced Chava to

eat from the Tree of Knowledge-and not the snake-why was the snake punished? This question really applies to all the approaches, even those that say it was the snake that convinced Chava to sin. After all, animals do not have free will; only man was made "in G-d's likeness" (see Sefornu on 1:26). Since the snake did not choose to sin, how could G-d have punished it at all?

Although animals do not have free will, pet owners will confirm that they do have distinct personalities. Even within the same species (and breed), each individual animal has its own personality. They make decisions, based on their personality, but those decisions do not qualify as "exercising free will," as, from a theological standpoint, "free will" refers to having the ability to choose between right and wrong (or, as Rav Dessler, z"l, put it, between truth/reality and falsehood/fantasy, see <http://rabbidmk.posterous.com/pesach-5771>), not the freedom to choose what you prefer. Most decisions people make are about preference, not right vs. wrong, although the consequences of choosing wrong usually makes people prefer what's right. Reward and punishment have value besides the inherent value of choosing what's right and the inherent consequences of choosing what's wrong. Reward and punishment are powerful motivators that shape preferences, and are therefore used when teaching and training those who do not have (or do not yet have) free will. Some forms of punishment (such as prison) can act as a deterrent in two ways-providing a strong reason not to do what's wrong, and physically preventing those who did wrong from doing it again.

Malbim (3:1) points out that the specific curses/punishments given to the snake should correspond to aspects that led to the sin of eating from the forbidden fruit. Just as the curse of having to crawl on its belly indicates that it used to have legs, the curse that it always eat dust indicates that until now it enjoyed more tasteful food, and the curse that there would be animosity between it and mankind indicates that before this they got along well, or at least worked very well together. Rabbeinu Bachye (3:14 and 15) says that the snake's characteristics were such that it was very easy for it to have a primary role in man's downfall. I would suggest that the snake wasn't punished for choosing bad over good (as animals, even the most cunning, do not have free will). Rather, G-d cursed the snake so that it could no longer cause man to sin.

The snake had a relationship with man, in the sense that it would do things for him (and her), and, in turn, they would "reward" his loyalty by giving him "treats." Whereas other animals only ate vegetation (1:30), man could eat both vegetation and fruit (1:29). If the treats the snake was given were the fruits that other animals couldn't eat, the snake might have started indicating which fruit it wanted, which led to its asking for some of the forbidden fruit. Alternatively, the snake's "cunningness" might have included the ability to seek out which foods were most tasty, a talent Chava

appreciated and took advantage of when figuring out what she (and her husband) would eat. Chava taking notice that the snake often went to the Tree of Knowledge (or had indicated that it wanted its fruit) was enough of an opening for Satan to start "riding" the snake, communicating with Chava (through real speech, snake language-which Chava understood, or movements that conveyed the ideas well enough for Chava to have the conversation in her mind, see Abarbanel) in a way that led her to try the fruit herself.

After such disastrous results, G-d had to end the arrangement between snake and man, so that it would no longer be able to (or have a need to) seek out life's delicacies, and no longer be able to assist man as it once did. This was accomplished by making everything the snake ate taste like dust- thus removing any incentive to seek out anything tasty, by further limiting its utility to man by removing its legs, and by placing animosity between the snake and mankind. The divide created between them may have included removing the ability they previously had to communicate with each other, but the point was separating them, not taking "speech" away from the snake.

Why isn't the snake's inability to speak mentioned among its curses? Either it never had such an ability, it's ability to communicate with man wasn't unique, or the reason it lost its ability was a subset of ending its utility to mankind. Why was the snake punished if it can't be held responsible for Adam's sin? It wasn't being punished per se, but being prevented from having the ability to become a repeat offender.

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RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

“**S**ince we conclude the yearly reading of the Five Books of Moses at the conclusion of the Tishrei festivals (Shmini Atzeret-Simhat Torah), there is certainly a link according to the calendar between Genesis and the New Year festivals. I believe there is a remarkable conceptual connection as well.

In this portion, we read of Cain/Kayin, which is derived from a Hebrew word meaning material acquisition (4:1), and Abel/Hevel, which means the vapor that appears when one exhales in cold air. We are informed that Abel was a shepherd and Cain a tiller.

The 19th-century German scholars would suggest that a shepherd - who nurtures domestic animal life, and has plenty of time for meditation and the transmission of a tribal narrative, represents the development of culture, whereas Cain the tiller - who is engaged in the back-breaking work of tending the soil and garnering fruits and vegetables - fosters the development of the technological endeavor known as civilization.

Perhaps it was these very different outlooks and lifestyles which defined these two brothers and led the one, Cain, to murder the other. The very name Hevel has come to mean 'a breath' - attesting to the seemingly insignificant period in which this hapless twin celebrated the world.

Nevertheless, seven generations later Cain has a direct descendant named Jabal/Yaval (born to Lemech and Adah), "the ancestor of those who dwell in tents and amidst herds of cattle;" (4:20) The names Yaval and Hevel are so similar that it would prompt the reader to think Yaval must have been at least inspired by his great-great uncle in terms of lifestyle and occupation; and Jabal's brother Jubal - another name related to Hevel - is described as "the ancestor of all who play the lyre and the organ (4:21)" - an even more striking example of a non-material, aesthetic involvement with and attachment to "culture" rather than "civilization."

The sages of the Midrash expand on this idea when they link King David, progenitor of the Messiah, to Adam by suggesting that Adam, who lived to the age of 930, gave 70 years of the 1,000 years he had been granted to King David, who had been decreed to die at birth; and the Zohar, mystical commentary on the Bible, maintains that David was a reparation for - or a soul transmigration of - Abel.

When we remember that David began his early years as a shepherd, that he was proficient in playing the lyre, and is credited by our sages with the composition of the Book of Psalms, and that he is described as having danced with ecstatic frenzy when the Holy Ark was returned from Philistia to Jerusalem, it is clear that David is a student of culture rather than civilization.

As another example of the unity of the Five Books of Moses, Leviticus describes the 50th year following the seven Sabbatical years as a foretaste of Redemption (messianic times) when all debts are to be rescinded, everyone is to return to their ancestral homestead and all slaves are to be freed: "And you shall sanctify the fiftieth year, proclaiming freedom throughout the land for all its inhabitants; it is for you a Jubilee [Yovel]" (Leviticus 25:10) Now the declaration of this Jubilee Year is to be made by the blast of the shofar (ram's horn) on Yom Kippur of the 50th year. Rashi maintains that the very term "Yovel" means shofar, and most commentaries find the etymological root in the Arabic yovel, which means ram, or ram's horn.

I would rather suggest that the word Yovel is derived from hevel, or breath: referring to the breath of the Divine which inspired a clod of earth to form man (Genesis 2:7), and the breath of the religious "musician," who inspires the "instrument" of the ram's horn with the breath he received from G-d in order to extract from the animalistic aspect of the world a sound

which will hopefully return humanity to the divine will of the King of the Universe.

The connection is profound. The breath with which the human being is endowed by G-d to communicate to others is a gift unique to humanity, and must be used to pass over to the next generations a vital message of culture and ethical conduct. Hevel, then, has the capacity to transform a fleeting and insignificant mortal into an eternal link in the great chain of human and humane history. It is about such hevel that our sages teach: "The world exists only because of the hevel of the young students in the Torah study halls of their masters."

Hence, the true mission of the Sanctuary - or succah - is to re-create and perfect the earth. That's why its architect had to be endowed with the same attributes the Almighty used to create the world. And so on Succot we bring special vegetation - the Four Species - into the Synagogue/Temple, through whose vegetable roof we can see the stars.

And on the last day of the festival - Shmini Atzeret-Simhat Torah - we pray for G-d's life-giving waters and take Torah scrolls out into the streets so that every human being may accept the yoke of the heavenly kingship. So we have come full circle advancing from the broken *terua* to the glorious redemption of the world. © 2011 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

MACHON ZOMET

Shabbat B'Shabbato

by *Rabbi Amnon Bazak*

Two holidays have many similarities with each other. Pesach and Succot both start with "a holy day" on the first day and end with "a holy day" on the last day. On both holidays, the last day is called "atzeret," a pause (the seventh day of Pesach, Devarim 16:8, and Shemini Atzeret, Vayikra 23:36, Bamidbar 29:35). However, there are differences. The last day of Pesach is the seventh day of the holiday and the mitzva of eating matza continues on this day. On the other hand, the last day of Succot is the eighth day, and the special mitzvot of dwelling in a succah and taking hold of the four species are no longer required. What is the reason for this difference?

Evidently, while the last day of Pesach is still an integral part of the holiday and serves as a festive end to it, the fact that Shemini Atzeret is celebrated after the seventh day of the holiday shows that it has its own independent significance. This can be seen in the Torah portion of Pinchas, where the sacrifices for all the holidays are listed. The sacrifices of Succot are linked together with the word "and"—"And on the second day... And on the seventh day" [Bamidbar 29:17,32]. However, the eighth day begins without this: "On the eighth day" [29:35]. Our sages have discussed the elements that

separate Shemini Atzeret from the rest of the holiday, abbreviated as "pazar kashav" (see Succah 48a).

But this does not indicate the reason for the separate day.

Perhaps the significance is indicated directly in the Torah by the sacrifice for the day, "one bull." On all the other holidays, there are more than one bull—two on Pesach and Shavuot, and a different number for every day of Succot, from thirteen on the first day down to seven on the seventh day. The only other days when the sacrifice is "one bull" are the Day of Memory (new year) and Yom Kippur. Among other things, both these days are special in that they symbolize a beginning. Yom Kippur is the beginning of the year of Yovel (see Vayikra 25:9-10), and the day of the new year is the beginning of a holy month, as we discussed in a previous article. What is it that begins on Shemini Atzeret?

The answer to this question is simple. In several places, Succot is seen as a holiday of the harvest, that is, the end of the agricultural year. For example: "The harvest holiday, at the end of the year" [Shemot 23:16]; "At the end of seven years, at the time of Shemitta, on the holiday of Succot" [Devarim 31:10]. Thus, Shemini Atzeret can be viewed not only as the end of the agricultural year but also as its beginning.

As is fitting for the beginning of the agricultural year, it is reasonable to have a special prayer on this day for rain, where we pray to the Almighty, who sends the wind and the rain. We ask for sufficient rain, life and not death, giving a blessing and not a curse, providing satisfaction and not a situation of lacking. © 2003 *Rabbi A. Bazak and Machon Zomet*

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

The parsha ends with the description of the birth of Noach. The Lord so to speak acknowledges Noach's righteousness and Noach finds grace and acceptance in the eyes of the Lord. The rabbis taught that there were ten generations from Adam till Noach. No one else appeared in those ten generations that apparently merited finding special grace and acceptance in the eyes of the Lord until the arrival of Noach. And Noach reaped the unclaimed reward of all of those generations.

But Noach himself receives, at best, mixed reviews from the Midrash and Talmud as to his greatness. This attitude is seen throughout the commentators and the Torah text itself of next week's parsha of Noach. In fact the Midrash states at the conclusion of this week's parsha that it was Noach who found grace in the eyes of G-d - as Noach believed that he found such acceptance. But that the Lord did not find such grace to be present in the situation.

This comes to emphasize the crushing disappointment that the beginning ten generations of

the human race reflected. The Torah itself gives expression to this fact in stating that G-d, so to speak, regretted the entire venture of creating humans and allowing them freedom of will and behavior.

Humankind, even mostly righteous humankind such as Noach, is a big bust, a huge failure, a mistake of major consequence. The parsha of Bereshith contains within it every major type of criminal behavior imaginable - idolatry, murder, immorality, depravity, slavery, conquest, curses and rampant violence. It is a very bleak picture that the Torah paints for us in its opening words and chapters.

So why then does G-d so to speak put up with all of this evil? Again, as we will see in next week's parsha, the punishment of the flood, of the destruction of millions for their sins, has little effect upon the next generations of humankind. So why not give up on the whole venture and let G-d stick to creating angels - those who have no free will and never sin and always do His bidding?

But the Lord has patience. He will now wait another ten generations until finally a human being arises to vindicate G-d's experiment in creating human beings. Rashi quotes Midrash in this week's parsha that the creation of the heavens and of the earth, of our entire complex and wondrous universe is justified only through the arrival of our father Avraham.

G-d is willing, so to speak, to wait twenty generations, to see millions of people go astray and rebel against Him, because one individual will make it all worthwhile. Adam could have been that individual but he never recovered from his fall from grace in the Garden of Eden. Noach could have been that individual but he never recovered from the trauma of the flood and his resultant drunken behavior.

But we see that in G-d's eyes one lone individual can vindicate the entire process of creation. Each of us in our daily lives and interaction with others can be that one individual. The rabbis said that every person has to say to one's self "the universe was created for me alone." The task of humans to vindicate through their actions and behavior G-d's creation remains the challenge to all of us - certainly as the new year begins. © 2011 Rabbi Berel Wein- Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com

RABBI EFRAIM LEVINE

Hadrash Ve-Haiyun

Adam knew his wife again, and she bore him a son and named him Sheis, because: "Hashem has provided me another child in place of Hevel, for Kayin had killed him." (Bereishis 4:25)

In the fourth blessing of the shemona esrei prayer we recite "You graciously endow Adam with da'as and teach Enosh, binah." In this phrase we

encounter two different titles for man and two different terms for wisdom. The commentators explain the word Adam relative to Enosh connotes a positive reference to man whereas Enosh connotes the weakness, frailty and mortality of man.

Similarly, the word da'as generally refers to the basic building blocks of understanding whereas the word binah represents a higher level of understanding. Chazal explain this refers specifically to the insight that is gained when one compares one thing to another.

We may note that it would seem proper to match the weaker title for man with the simpler term for understanding and the stronger term for man with the deeper level of understanding. In other words, it would seem that the phrase should properly read "you graciously endow Enosh with da'as and teach Adam, binah? Why are the terms and titles reversed?"

In order to answer this question we must understand the difference between the words Adam and Enosh. The most fundamental difference between the two is that Adam does not have a plural whereas the Enosh does, namely An'osh'im.

Rav Zadok HaKohen explains the word Adam comes from the word ad'am'eh which means "to be similar." Man is called Adam to convey "ad'am'eh la'el'yon," I will be similar to the most High, i.e., Hashem. Man's name reminds him that his goal in life is to emulate the characteristics and attributes of Hashem. This interpretation explains why the word Adam has no plural. Just as Hashem is One, likewise when man emulates Hashem he achieves a similar uniqueness of being one.

In contrast the word Enosh does have the plural An'osh'im. The singular word Enosh connotes an individual man's willingness and desire to join others and work together as a team. Indeed, this is man's weakness. An individual can accomplish very little, it is only through a group or community that magnificent things are achieved and accomplished.

We may now understand why Sheis named his son Enosh. Originally, Adam's two sons Kayin and Hevel were not willing to live with each other. From our perspective it is difficult to understand how Kayin could kill Hevel when they were the only people in the world besides their parents and twin sisters. Was the whole world not large enough for both of them to share? The answer is that both Kayin and Hevel strove to fulfill their mission of being created as an Adam. They strove to be similar to Hashem. Just as Hashem is One above likewise they considered themselves one below. However, two kings cannot share the same crown. Kayin and Hevel thus could not coexist. One had to go. After the death of Hevel, Chava gave birth to Sheis. The posuk tells us that he was to be the replacement of Hevel. What was the purpose of a replacement? Just as Kayin and Hevel could not coexist, it would just be a matter of time before Kayin and Sheis try to kill each other.

In answer to this question the posuk says: "And as for Sheis to him also a son was born and he named him Enosh" (Bereishis 4:26). Enosh connotes man's willingness and desire to coexist with others. An Enosh has the plural An'osh'im. Sheis acknowledged that to prevent the tragedy of Kayin and Hevel from reoccurring he was to abandon the focus of being an Adam. Man's new mission was to be an Enosh. Man needs to live in peace together with his brother.

This idea further explains why precisely now there was a proliferation of idolatry. The posuk goes on to say "Then, they began to call in the name of Hashem" (Bereishis 4:26). Rashi explains this posuk to mean that at the time of Enosh the proliferation of idolatry began. At this point the focus of man was on the need to work together and build the world. They abandoned the concept of Adam which represented the idea of being similar to Hashem. They acknowledged that on earth there are many men who could coexist peacefully. They began to think that perhaps in heaven there are also many gods that coexist.

We may return to our question as to why we match the term binah with Enosh. The commentators explain the da'as represents the basic building blocks of wisdom. Binah represents a deeper form of understanding. Binah requires one to combine multiple pieces of information and compare them one to another.

One important example of binah is what the Mishna (Avos 6:6) lists in its forty-eight ways with which the Torah is acquired as pilpul hatalmidim, sharp discussion with students. Here, one gains insight through debate and dialogue with another, similar to the understanding one gains by comparing one thing to another. We may now understand that binah, which can only be accomplished through engaging one's fellow man relates to the word Enosh which also connotes man's willingness to work together with his fellow man.
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RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

Sukkot is the only festival referred to as zeman simhateinu, the time of happiness in our liturgy.

The Torah in its last description of the festivals, mentions the word simcha twice when discussing Sukkot. (Deuteronomy 16:14, 15) This in contrast to Shavuot where it appears only once. (Deuteronomy 16:11) On Passover, the word is totally absent. (Deuteronomy 16:1-8) Sukkot is described in the liturgy as the days of happiness, as the term simcha is most associated with this holiday. Why is Sukkot deemed as the ultimate holiday of happiness and joy?

On a historical level, Sukkot is the culmination of the three festivals. Passover is the holiday of physical freedom. Yet, freedom without purpose is void of happiness; hence the word simcha is not linked to

Passover. Shavuot gives meaning to our freedom since on that day, we received the Torah. Hence simcha is mentioned in reference to Shavuot. Sukkot takes us to another dimension. Real joy occurs when one is able to sustain meaning in life well beyond the dramatic moments. As Sukkot is a commemoration of the fragile homes in which we lived during the 40 years in the desert, this holiday represents the maintenance of belief, even beyond the experience at Sinai. So, the Torah mentions simcha twice relative to Sukkot.

On an agricultural level, Sukkot teaches another important lesson about happiness. The ultimate holiday of gathering our produce is Sukkot. Thus, the festival is called Hag ha-asif. The Torah, immediately preceding the laws of the holidays in Deuteronomy, mentions the laws of giving tithes. (Ch. 14:22) This serves as a reminder that true happiness is achieved when one takes of what one has gleaned and gives it to another. Most people believe that happiness is achieved by taking more. The reverse is true. The more one gives, the more one experiences exhilaration of having given of themselves to others. In the end, happiness is a feeling. Giving, on the other hand, is an action. While one cannot automatically achieve an emotion, each of us has it in our power to act. Through action, feelings emerge. In the case of Sukkot, from giving of our produce, happiness surfaces.

Not coincidentally, Sukkot comes on the heels of Rosh Hashanah, when we wish each other Shana Tovah. Shana Tovah is commonly translated, "have a happy year." This translation, in fact is a take-off of the American New Year, when happiness is the only goal. In truth, Shana Tovah does not mean "happy new year," but "good new year." In fact, not everything that is happy is good and not everything that is good is happy. When we wish each other a Shana Tovah, what we are really saying is, "may you have a year of doing good." By experiencing a High Holidays of tov, of goodness, and internalizing the message of Sukkot, we can ultimately realize the description of Sukkot as found in our prayers-zman simhateinu, the time of true joy.
© 2011 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and President of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School - the Modern and Open Orthodox Rabbinical School. He is Senior Rabbi at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, a Modern and Open Orthodox congregation of 850 families. He is also National President of AMCHA - the Coalition for Jewish Concerns.

RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY

Goal Tending

This week we are introduced to a formidable foe who greets us upon our entry into this world and attempts to accompany our every action throughout our mortal existence. He is known as the Yetzer Harah, the Evil Inclination. After Kayin has an inferior offering rejected, he is very upset. G-d talks to him frankly about the nature of his act and the hidden

beast that undermines our good intentions, the Yetzer Harah. "Surely, if you improve yourself, you will be forgiven. But if you do not improve yourself, sin crouches at the door. Its desire is toward you, yet you can conquer it." (Genesis 4:7). Though the imagery of sin crouching in wait seems quite ominous, the allegorical allusion to an evil force blocking a doorway lends a simile to a story I recently heard that may be quite applicable to the lessons of the finale of any sport season. It may even be a lesson to those of us who have our ears glued to the rumblings of the subway, shuttling high-flying frivolity from the Bronx to Queens.

Rabbi Sholom Schwadron had noticed that one of the students at the yeshiva was missing on Sunday and Monday. Tuesday morning he approached him, inquiring to the reason he missed those two days.

"I know you for two years. You never missed a day of yeshiva. I am sure that something important is happening. Please tell me what's going on." The boy did not want to say, but after prodding, the boy finally blurted out. "I would tell, but, Rebbe, you just wouldn't understand."

"Try me," begged Reb Sholom, "I promise I will try my hardest to appreciate what you tell me."

"Here goes," responded the student, conceding to himself that whatever explanation he would give would surely be incomprehensible to the Rabbi, who had probably had never seen a soccer ball in his life.

"I missed yeshiva because I was at the Maccabi Tel Aviv football (soccer) finals. In fact," the boy added in embarrassment, "I probably won't be in yeshiva tomorrow as well. It's the final day of the championship."

Rabbi Schwadron was not at all condescending. Instead, he furrowed his brow in interest. "I am sure that this game of football must be quite exciting. Tell me," he asked, "How do you play this game of football? What is the object? How do you win?"

"Well," began the student filled with enthusiasm, "there are eleven players, and the object is to kick a ball into the large goal. No one but the goalkeeper can move the ball with his hands or arms!"

Rabbi Schwadron's face brightened! He knew this young boy was a good student and wanted to accommodate him. "Oh! Is that all? So just go there, kick the ball in the goal, and come back to yeshiva!"

The boy laughed. "Rebbe, you don't understand! The opposing team also has eleven men and a goalkeeper, and their job is to stop our team from getting the ball into their goal!"

"Tell me," Rabbi Schwadron whispered. These other men the other team. Are they there all day and night?"

"Of course not!" laughed the student. "They go home at night!"

What was the Rabbi driving at? He wondered.

Rabbi Schwadron huddled close and in all earnest continued with his brilliant plan. "Why don't you sneak into the stadium in the evening and kick the ball

into the goal when they are not looking! Then you can win and return to yeshiva!"

The boy threw his hands up in frustration. "Oy! Rebbe! You don't understand. You don't score if the other team is not trying to stop you! It is no kuntz to kick a ball into an empty net if there is no one trying to stop you!"

"Ah!" cried Reb Sholom in absolute victory. Now think a moment! Listen to what you just said! It is no kuntz to come to the yeshiva when nothing is trying to hold you back! It is when the urge to skip class is there, when the Yetzer Harah is crouching in the goal, that it is most difficult to score. That is when you really score points. Come tomorrow, and you can't imagine how much that is worth in Hashem's scorecard!"

Needless to say, the boy understood the message and was there the next day the first in class!

The Torah tells us not only about the nature of the Yetzer Harah as an adversary, but rather as our ultimate challenger. He stands crouched in the door, ready to block any shot and spring on a near hit. Our job is to realize that we must overcome him when the urge is the greatest. Because when it is most difficult to do the right thing, that is the time we really meet, and even score, the goal! © 2000 Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Project Genesis, Inc.

RABBI SHLOMO RESSLER

Weekly Dvar

If you ask any kid why there's a sun, you'll invariably be told that it's to give us light so we can see. That's where the Torah comes in, to tune our sense of reality. Parshat Bereishit tells us that light was created "to separate between the day and the night, and to serve as signs, for festivals and for days and years" (1:14). How could our most basic belief of the sun's purpose be so wrong?

The truth is that as human beings, the sun plays the most critical role of our day, telling us when the day starts and when it ends. But to take that concept one step further, as JEWS, the sun tells us when Shabbat and Holidays start and end. The Torah is telling us right from the start: There's the natural reason, and then there's the Jewish reason. To see deeper, we must look beyond the obvious! The best way to accomplish this is to look at things in our world that seem obvious to us, and ponder its true purpose!

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