

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI DOV KRAMER

Taking a Closer Look

“**A**nd all the trees of the field had not yet existed in the land, and all the vegetation of the field had not yet sprouted.” When was the land barren from all growth? If you just knew the story line of the six days of creation, but not the specific verses, you might have thought that this was prior to third day, when G-d commanded the earth to bring forth its vegetation (Beraishis 1:11-12). However, the above-quoted verse (2:5) is actually part of the more detailed creation of man (who was created on the sixth day), with the Torah telling us that until G-d caused rain to fall (which the commentaries tell us did not occur until man was created and could ask G-d for it and/or appreciate it) and there was someone to work the ground, nothing had grown. So which one was it? Did plant life precede mankind, as indicated in the initial six-day creation story, or did the creation of man precede the earth's vegetation, as implied in the retelling of man's creation?

Rashi, quoting the Talmud (Chulin 60b), tells us that until man was created, vegetation had grown up to ground level, but had not sprouted above the surface. Although the land "bringing out" animal life (1:24) on the fifth day obviously doesn't mean that the animals hadn't yet poked their heads out from beneath the surface, vegetation taking root and growing up to the point just below the surface can still be called "bringing out" vegetation. Or, as the Rambam puts it, plant life was created on the third day, and was already an entity given over to the land and in its possession before man was created, even if man was created before it broke through the surface. This is the most common approach to resolving these verses, with other commentators (even those "parshanim" that do not automatically explain verses to be consistent with Talmudic and Midrashic explanations) using terms like "potential" (on the third day) and "actual" (on the sixth day, after man was created).

The Rokayach and R' Chaim Paltiel (both from the Tosafist school) suggest that although plant life did start to grow (even above ground) on the third day, it was not fully grown (and recognizable as a "tree" or anything else beyond just greenery) until after man was created.

The Chizkuni (1:11), explaining the connection between the waters gathering/dry land showing and

vegetation sprouting forth, says that the land was still wet from the just-receded waters, and did not dry out until the sun was created on the fourth day, allowing vegetation to grow even before it rained. It can therefore be suggested that the land did in fact bring out vegetation on the third day, but because there was no rain until after man was created, it had withered away and did not grow back until the sixth day.

Another approach, found in Midrashim (see Torah Shelaimah 1:590) and several commentaries (see his footnote on 2:89), has plant life growing from the third day, but not having the ability to reproduce until it rained on the sixth day. (This could provide an additional explanation for the discrepancy between the commandment that the earth bring forth "fruit trees that produce fruit" and the earth actually bringing forth "trees that produce fruit," as on the third day they didn't produce any fruit, yet still had the ability to do so once it rained, when they would be "fruit trees," i.e. trees that had fruit on them.) According to this explanation, the expression "had not yet sprouted" refers to fruit and seeds not yet sprouting from the tree or stalk.

One thing these approaches have in common is that they redefine the type of vegetation that existed from day three until man was created on day six in order to reconcile the two creation stories. However, the Midrash Lekach Tov (a.k.a. Pesikta Zutrasa, 1:12) tells us that not only was plant life created at full maturity, but that when man arrived on the scene everything was set for him. How could vegetation have been fully developed before man was created if the verse tells us explicitly that before man was created, plant life (at least as we know it) did not yet exist?

Several Midrashim, including Beraishis Rabbah 13:1 and 15:3, have the Garden of Eden being created on the third day, with fully grown trees and vegetation, while plant life on the rest of the earth didn't sprout until after man was created on the sixth. Man had everything prepared for him in the Garden of Eden, and until he sinned and was expelled from it, didn't need any other plant life. However, if the point of other plant life needing the rain (and Adam's prayer for rain) was only relevant after he sinned, why is it mentioned before he was created rather than as part of the consequences of his sin? [It should be pointed out that these Midrashim would seem to be inconsistent with the Talmud (Pesachim 54a) and numerous other Midrashim (i.e. Tanchuma Naso 11/19) that state that the Garden of Eden is one of the things that were created before the

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world was created, not as part of it. It is possible, though, that this refers to a spiritual entity, while the physical Garden of Eden was created as part of the physical world.]

The Ramban noticed that the word "field" is used twice in the above-quoted verse, but not even once regarding the creation of plant life on the third day. This, he says, is because the word "field" connotes an area that was worked on by humans. Based on this, he suggests that on the third day plant life was created and grew to maturity, but before there was anyone to work in the "field," no "fields" existed. (The Malbim makes a similar point, explaining the verse to mean that although much plant life had grown starting on the third day, not every type of vegetation had grown; those types that needed man's labor did not yet grow.) Although this explains how every type (or at least most types) of fruit and vegetable could have been available even before man was created while also explaining what didn't exist until afterwards, it does not explain why it was important for the Torah to tell us that no field existed yet. True, technically a field did not exist yet, but neither did a barbershop, a gas station, or many other things that man would eventually "build." What is the significance of there being no man-made "field" before there was a man to make it?

Much goes into producing food crops; plowing the field so that it is soft enough for seeds to take root (and possibly replowing it to bury those seeds deeper into the ground), seeding, weeding out unwanted growth that would take nourishment away from the desired crop, and making sure it is adequately irrigated. (If crops would grow naturally without all of those steps, no farmer would bother putting so much work into it!) Even though the types of trees that one would have an orchard of, and the types of crops that a farmer would want an entire field of, existed since day three, they only existed in the wild. The raw materials were there for a crop to be cultivated, but there were no farmers to have done so, and there was no human yet that G-d would cause it to rain for, or for Him to plant a field for. Then, as soon as G-d created man, He "planted a garden" for him (2:8), showing him what a field (or garden), cultivated properly using the raw materials He created, would look like. The contrast of the "before" (only wild vegetation) and "after" (a garden cultivated by G-d, with every type of fruit and vegetable ready to be enjoyed) is

striking; without pointing out what was "before," we couldn't fully appreciate the value of what the "after" was.

I recall being taught in grade school that finished loaves of bread grew in the Garden of Eden, so that Adam didn't have to do any work; no threshing the wheat to separate the kernel from the chaff and stalk, no grinding of the wheat to make it into flour, no kneading of the dough, no baking. Although "The Midrash Says" mentions that "pastries" grew, its "source" (Sanhedrin 59b) only says that Adam had everything prepared for him, including meats roasted for him by angels. Nevertheless, aside from the Talmud verifying that Adam didn't need to do anything for his food, if we "connect the dots" we will find that completed loaves must have grown in the Garden of Eden.

The Talmud (Shabbos 30b) tells us that in the future, the Land of Israel will produce already finished loaves. The Or Hachayim (Vayikra 12:3, see also Maharal, Netzach Yisroel 50 and Nesiv Ha'avodah 17) explains that this is because the labor needed to be done to get food is a result of Adam's sin, and in the future, when there will no longer be any sin, the consequences of the land's curse will be reversed. It can easily be deduced that the Garden of Eden before Adam was expelled produced the same thing that Eretz Yisroel will produce when things return to a pre-sin state. If the land will grow completed loaves (or "pastries"), then the Garden of Eden must have grown them as well.

This concept of already-baked bread being available to pick may sound foreign, and could easily be placed in the category of Midrashim not to be taken literally. However, if G-d provided Adam with a well-tended garden, one that Adam didn't have to plow, plant, prune, weed or water in order to enjoy, is it any more unnatural for G-d to have provided him with ready-to-pick fresh bread? Is there a difference between a garden suddenly growing as if it had been worked on for months or a loaf of bread suddenly appearing as if it had been baked? Even if the concept of "fresh bread" was used to illustrate the amount of work no longer needed, the contrast of the wild vegetation that was created on the third day with the luscious garden G-d presented Adam with on the sixth day teaches us what Adam lost by disobeying G-d's command. Instead of everything being prepared for him so that he could focus on his spiritual growth, he could only "eat bread" through "the sweat of his brow" (3:19). A situation that will hopefully be reversed very, very soon. © 2009 Rabbi D. Kramer

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

The rabbis of the Talmud characterized all beginnings as being difficult. Well, for the Lord nothing can be said as being difficult. Nevertheless

we can all certainly agree that the universe created by G-d is exceedingly wondrous and complex and difficult for us ordinary humans to grasp in its entirety. So this beginning is a difficult one as well, at least for us, to consider and deal with.

Science has advanced many theories and only limited certainties as to the origin of our species-humankind-and of our planet, Earth, and certainly in regard to our galaxy and the immense universe of which we are barely a tiny speck. What are we to make of all of this?

The Torah has purposely hidden the secrets of creation from us in the narrative that it portrays of the six days of creation and of the arrival of Shabat. It is as though the Torah is telling us that "how" is not important as to this universe but rather the issue is simply "what." What are we supposed to do with our lives, our planet, our galaxy, our universe now that we are temporary residents here?

Human curiosity and further scientific and technological advances will continue to pursue the elusive "how" of creation. That is purely basic human nature- to attempt to know the unknown and to understand the infinite. But that will have only limited effect, if any at all, on human behavior. That certainly remains at best a work in progress. And it constantly demands more work from us.

Human beings were placed on our earth, according to the Torah, "to work and exploit its riches and yet to guard and protect that world." That is the clear instruction given by the Almighty to Adam in the Garden of Eden. If humans are able to harmoniously blend the two-the work and the guarding- then this planet is and will remain a veritable paradise.

However, if humans lose their sense of proportion and balance regarding these two goals and veer towards working and exploiting too much or guarding overzealously then neither of these goals will be achieved. Harmony and a balanced relationship one to the other is the only way to ensure success. Human society seems to veer from plundering its habitat to overprotecting it at tremendous cost to human comfort and society's economic wherewithal.

The watchword of our day is "green"-green energy, green housing, a green economy. This is a worthwhile goal but it cannot be the only goal on the human agenda. After the rapacious treatment of the earth's resources over the past centuries, the reaction of "green" has set in with a vengeance. Eventually we humans will have to find the balance between working and guarding that the Lord bade us to do at the beginning of the story of humankind.

Common sense, political wisdom and a balanced view of life and its problems can all help fulfill G-d's blessings to Adam and Chava and their descendants to truly inherit this earth and live in harmony with it. © 2009 Rabbi Berel Wein - Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete

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RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

Why did Adam and Eve disobey G-d and eat from the tree of knowledge? Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch argues that Eden was a society based on the system of divinely rooted ethics. For this reason, G-d instructs Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil as G-d is the ultimate arbiter. In disobeying G-d and eating from the tree of knowledge Adam and Eve were rejecting this principle. They opted for a world based on ethical humanism, where human beings alone decide right and wrong. This is dangerous for human thinking tends to be relative. What is unethical to one person is ethical to another. If, however, ethics have their source in G-d they become objectively true.

From this perspective, the goal of redemption is to return to the Eden milieu where G-d is acknowledged by all as the ultimate decider of good and evil.

Another possibility comes to mind. Perhaps Eden represents the perfect "angelic world" where evil does not exist. Adam and Eve found themselves dissatisfied in this world. After all, in a society which is totally good, there would, in reality, be no good says Rav Avraham Yitzhak Ha-Kohen Kook. For good is a relative term. There is good only when evil exists.

Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler adds, there would be no challenge in a perfect world. There would be nothing to overcome.

And Rabbi Chaim Volozhin notes, that without evil we could not do wrong; the essential part of humanity would be lost, the ability to possess free will and choose between good and bad. Without freedom of choice, we would be stripped of our humanity.

Adam and Eve eat from the tree of knowledge because they opt to leave the "angelic world" and enter the "real world" - a world in which good exists, challenge prevails and the human being is blessed with freedom of choice.

From this perspective, the goal of humankind is not to return to Eden. Rather it is to shape a messianic society in which one attains goodness despite the existence of evil. The pathway to reach that "ideal world" is in fact the Torah and the halakhah. (Halakhah comes from the word halakh, to go, as it takes us on the path toward redemption.)

Eden is not the ideal. For this reason Adam and Eve leave Eden, to face evil and overcome it. The expulsion from Eden is commonly perceived as the gravest sin of humanity. Yet the Eden experience is rather a lesson in human nature. And is even a necessary prerequisite for the redemption of the world.

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RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

It is the most famous, majestic and influential opening of any book in literature: "In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth." What is surpassingly strange is the way Rashi-most beloved of all Jewish commentators-begins his commentary:

"Rabbi Isaac said: The Torah should have begun with the verse (Ex. 12:1): 'This month shall be to you the first of the months', which was the first commandment given to Israel."

Can we really take this at face value? Did Rabbi Isaac, or for that matter Rashi, seriously suggest that the Book of books might have begun in the middle-a third of the way into Exodus? That it might have passed by in silence the creation of the universe-which is, after all, one of the fundamentals of Jewish faith?

Could we understand the history of Israel without its prehistory, the stories of Abraham and Sarah and their children? Could we have understood those narratives without knowing what preceded them: G-d's repeated disappointment with Adam and Eve, Cain, the generation of the Flood and the builders of the Tower of Babel?

The fifty chapters of Genesis together with the opening of Exodus are the source-book of biblical faith. They are as near as we get to an exposition of the philosophy of Judaism. What then did Rabbi Isaac mean?

He meant something profound, which we often forget. To understand a book, we need to know to what genre it belongs. Is it history or legend, chronicle or myth? To what question is it an answer? A history book answers the question: what happened? A book of cosmology-be it science or myth- answers the question: how did it happen?

What Rabbi Isaac is telling us is that if we seek to understand the Torah, we must read it as Torah, which is to say: law, instruction, teaching, guidance. Torah is an answer to the question: how shall we live? That is why he raises the question as to why it does not begin with the first command given to Israel.

Torah is not a book of history, even though it includes history. It is not a book of science, even though the first chapter of Genesis-as the 19th-century sociologist Max Weber pointed out-is the necessary prelude to science, because it represents the first time people saw the universe as the product of a single creative will, and therefore as intelligible rather than capricious and mysterious. It is, first and last, a book about how to live. Everything it contains-not only commandments but also narratives, including the narrative of creation itself-is there solely for the sake of ethical and spiritual instruction.

How this relates to creation is a topic for another time. It is, however, an introduction to this year's Covenant and Conversation. Each week I will be looking at an ethical issue addressed by the parsha of the week. Sometimes this is a matter of halakhah, but not always. Jewish ethics is not confined to law. It includes virtues of character, general principles and role models. It is conveyed not only by commandments but also by narratives, telling us how particular individuals responded to specific situations.

It moves from the minutest details to the most majestic visions of the universe and our place within it. But it never deviates from its intense focus on the questions: What shall I do? How shall I live? What kind of person should I strive to become? It begins, in Genesis 1, with the most fundamental question of all. As the Psalm (8:4) puts it: "What is man that You are mindful of him?"

Pico della Mirandola's 15th century Oration on Man was one of the turning points of Western civilization, the "manifesto" of the Italian Renaissance. In it he attributed the following declaration to G-d, addressing the first man:

"We have given you, O Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with premeditation, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgement and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down; you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. I have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine."

Homo sapiens, that unique synthesis of "dust of the earth" and breath of G-d, is unique among created beings in having no fixed essence: in being free to be what he or she chooses. Mirandola's Oration was a break with the two dominant traditions of the Middle Ages: the Christian doctrine that human beings are irretrievably corrupt, tainted by original sin, and the Platonic idea that humanity is bounded by fixed forms.

It is also a strikingly Jewish account-almost identical with the one given by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik in *Halakhic Man*: "The most fundamental principle of all is that man must create himself. It is this idea that Judaism introduced into the world." It is therefore with a frisson of recognition that we discover

that Mirandola had a Jewish teacher, Rabbi Elijah ben Moses Delmedigo (1460-1497).

Born in Crete, Delmedigo was a Talmudic prodigy, appointed at a young age to be head of the yeshivah in Padua. At the same time, he studied philosophy, in particular the work of Aristotle, Maimonides and Averroes. At the age of 23 he was appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Padua. It was through this that he came to know Count Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who became both his student and his patron. Eventually, however, Delmedigo's philosophical writings-especially his work *Bechinat ha-Dat*-became controversial. He was accused, by other rabbis, of heresy. He had to leave Italy and return to Crete. He was much admired by Jews and Christians alike, and when he died young, many Christians as well as Jews attended his funeral.

This emphasis on choice, freedom and responsibility is one of the most distinctive features of Jewish thought. It is proclaimed in the first chapter of Genesis in the most subtle way. We are all familiar with its statement that G-d created man "in His image, after His likeness". Seldom do we pause to reflect on the paradox. If there is one thing emphasized time and again in the Torah, it is that G-d has no image. "I will be what I will be", He says to Moses when he asks Him His name.

Since G-d transcends nature-the fundamental point of Genesis 1 -- then He is free, unbounded by nature's laws. By creating human beings in His image, He gave us a similar freedom, thus creating the one being capable itself of being creative. The unprecedented account of G-d in the Torah's opening chapter leads to an equally unprecedented view of the human person and our capacity for self-transformation..

The Renaissance, one of the high points of European civilization, eventually collapsed. A series of corrupt rulers and Popes led to the Reformation, and to the quite different views of Luther and Calvin. It is fascinating to speculate what might have happened had it continued along the lines signalled by Mirandola. His late 15th century humanism was not secular but deeply religious.

As it is, the great truth of Genesis 1 remains. As the rabbis put it (*Bereishith Rabbah* 8:1; *Sanhedrin* 38a): "Why was man created last? In order to say, if he is worthy, all creation was made for you; but if he is unworthy, he is told, even a gnat preceded you." The Torah remains G-d's supreme call to humankind to freedom and creativity on the one hand, and on the other, to responsibility and restraint-becoming G-d's partner in the work of creation. © 2009 Rabbi J. Sacks and torah.org

RABBI NAFTALI REICH

Legacy

Why would the Creator need any help to complete the work of creation? Surely, the One who formed the world out of nothingness, who created all the hosts of the heavens and the teeming life

of the earth, was perfectly capable of creating anything He chose to create. And yet, on the seventh day of creation, He said, "Naaseh adam. Let us make man." Whose help was He seeking? And why?

The Sages explain that Hashem was consulting with the angels, inviting their participation in the process of creating mankind. Although He obviously did not need their participation, Hashem was teaching us to be sensitive to protocol and proper behavior. Before undertaking a major project, consult with others.

The questions, however, continue to baffle. The angels were created on the third day, yet Hashem did not consult with them until the sixth day when He created mankind. Why didn't he invite their input when He was creating the mountains and the valleys, the tress and the flowers, the animals and the fishes?

The commentators explain that the creation of mankind was indeed the most appropriate setting for teaching the lessons of proper etiquette. How do we measure the worth of a person? On the one hand, every person is infinitely valuable, worthy of having the entire universe created for his sake, as the Sages tell us. On the other hand, there are people who are undoubtedly a disgrace to their purpose and design.

How then do we evaluate a person? We see if he is attuned to others or if he is totally egocentric. Only a person who recognizes that there is much to be learned from the knowledge and experience of his peers, who is sensitive to the feelings and sensibilities of others, truly has the potential for growth and fulfillment as a sublime human being.

Therefore, it was in the context of the creation of man that Hashem teaches us this important lesson. A tree is a tree and a flower is a flower no matter what, but a human being who has no use for other people's advice is not much of a human being. He is not a mensch.

A young lady came to seek the advice of a great sage. "I am so confused," she said. "I have many suitors who have asked my hand in marriage. They all have such fine qualities, and I simply cannot make up my mind. What shall I do?"

"Tell me about their qualities," said the sage.

"Well, they are all handsome and well-established. I enjoy their company, they are so entertaining. Why, I can sit and listen to any of them for hours and hours."

The sage shook his head. "These are not the qualities you should be seeking. It is all good and well if a man is handsome and wealthy, but does he have a good character? Is he a fine person? As for their being so entertaining, it is far more important that your husband be a good listener than a good talker. Look for a fine man who knows how to listen. He will bring you happiness."

In our own lives, we must learn to differentiate between selfconfidence, which is an admirable quality, and egotism, which is not. It is all good and well to

believe in one's own talents and abilities. The truly wise person, however, knows that all people have limitations, and there is always someone of value to be learned from other people. And even in situations where other people do not have anything worthwhile to contribute, the wise person will be sensitive to their feelings and make them feel involved and helpful. If we can find it in ourselves to overcome our egotistic tendencies and behave in the sublime manner of which human beings are capable, we will reap not only spiritual rewards but material and emotional rewards as well. © 2009 Rabbi N. Reich & torah.org

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

“**A**nd of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for on the day in which you shall eat of it, you shall die, yes, die” (Genesis 2:17) Of the many questions about the eating of the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, one of the most glaring is why Adam and Eve did not die immediately. How is it possible that following G-d's explicit warning, their sin did not result in their immediate deaths?

A proper understanding of their Divine punishment may help us understand the ramifications of their transgression, and the existential significance of our lives and our mortality.

First, a cursory glimpse into several traditional commentaries. Targum Yonatan ben Uzziel translates, "For on the day on which you eat of it, you shall be guilty of death," that is, judged worthy of death, but not necessarily subject to an immediate execution. R. Haim ibn Atar follows this line of thinking, but adds the traditional Jewish perception of original sin: "All created beings have been punished with death (as a result of Adam and Eve's transgression) until the venom with which the serpent infused the first human creatures will evaporate, and 'then death will be swallowed up forever.'" The commentaries who expand Rashi's words suggest that we must utilize the Psalmists teaching, "A thousand years in Your eyes are like a day that passes," (Psalms 90: 4) and therefore when Adam died at age 930, the Divine law was judicially executed.

But I believe that the Ramban (Nahmanides) explains the Biblical verse best, both in light of the human existential condition as well as in light of the Festival period which we have just experienced: "From the time that you eat of it [the forbidden fruit], you shall be a child of death [ben mavet], as it is written, 'Whenever you go here or there, you shall know, yes, know, that you shall die, yes die'... that in accordance with My will, you shall not exist forever..."

And, indeed, the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur prayer services, cry out to us: "On Rosh Hashanah it is inscribed and on the Fast Day of Kippur it is sealed, who shall live and who shall die, how many shall be born and how many shall pass away," a

statement that poignantly reminds us how very fleeting and fragile our lives really are.

I can never forget visiting my grandmother when she was in her 90th year, dying of old age and ovarian cancer, yet totally unafraid, grateful to the Almighty for weakening her slowly and preparing her for transition to the other world, which she called her "true home." As I opened the door to her one room "efficiency" apartment (she actually lived together with my aunt and uncle), she smiled weakly: "You see, my child - that is the whole of life: like an opening and closing of a door. You, at age 20, might see me as an old woman; but for me, my entire life passes before me as the opening and closing of a door..."

From this perspective it really isn't strange that we read the Scroll of Ecclesiastes on Sukkot, "Futility of futilities [hevel havalim] said Kohelet 'all is futile'" (Kohelet, 1:1; hevel in Hebrew is the vapor emitted from one's mouth when one breathes out into the cold air).

Yet this solemn reading somewhat contradicts the calendrical reality that calls Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot joyous Festivals! How may one explain the progression that moves from "Rosh HaShanah Feast with apples and honey to U'netana Tokef, then to the fragile sukkah and finally to sober, somber Kohelet?

Let us return to the Ramban who explains that initially, on the sixth day of creation, Adam was created as a functional being, no different from the sun, moon and stars. He/she did G-d's will automatically (Ramban, commentary to Genesis 2:9). The irony is that by exhibiting the free will to eat the forbidden fruit in defiance of G-d's will, the human moved from a functional being to a moral being.

This fundamental change in the human persona occurred on the same sixth day of creation as part of the process of human creation; and from this vantage point, we see that our freedom of choice is the ultimate will of G-d who wants the human to be a partner rather than a puppet, G-d's help-mate in perfecting the world in the Kingship of the Divine (Tikkun Olam).

This mammoth mission cannot be accomplished by one generation alone; it must be cumulative and developmental, a journey of trial and error, successes and setbacks over the course of many generations. The old must leave room for the new, but the past generations which nurtured and inspired the future generations remain part of the new, rooted in the positive actions of the new, integral to their genetic fabric. And living in the shadow of death, with intimations of mortality, dare not frighten us into anxiety-paralysis; much the opposite, given the Divine guarantee that redemption will ultimately prevail, the sense of human time limitations must inspire us to utilize every moment wisely. Since life is short, every moment becomes that much more precious, meaningful and significant!

It is told that next to the home of Rebbe Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev there lived a shoemaker. Late one night, when the Rabbi was about to close his Talmud and go to sleep, he could still hear the banging sounds of the shoemaker repairing old shoes. The Sage paid a nocturnal visit to the laborer. "Aren't you tired? After all, it is past midnight, and we must be at morning services in less than six hours," asked the concerned Rabbi. "Yes," said the shoemaker, pointing to the light of the candle. "But as long as the candle remains alight, there is still time to mend." Rav Levi Yitzhak began to weep. "How truly do you teach, my master," he said to the shoemaker. "As long as the candle of our soul remains alight with life, there is still time for each of us to mend ourselves and the world..."

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RABBI ZVI SOBOLOFSKY

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The mitzvah of Shabbos first appears in Parshas Bereishis. Although technically Shabbos is only the actual seventh day of the week, there is a mitzvah to add on to Shabbos at its beginning and at its conclusion. This mitzvah, known as tosefes Shabbos, is derived by Chazal from a posuk in Parshas Emor which requires us to begin Yom Kippur early and end it late; this is extended to Shabbos as explained in Rosh Hashana 9a.

There is a fundamental debate as to the halachic nature of this mitzvah. One possibility is that this mitzvah is meant as a safeguard against Shabbos desecration. Since it is possible for human beings to err as to the time when Shabbos begins and ends, the Torah imposes this buffer to prevent a mistake which could result in chillul Shabbos. Rashi (Beraishis 2:2) takes this approach in explaining that it was unnecessary for Hashem to begin His Shabbos early because Hashem knows the precise time when Shabbos begins. Alternatively, one can understand that the Torah wants us to begin Shabbos early and end it late not merely to be cautious, but because we are supposed to infuse a small part of the week with the sanctity of Shabbos.

There are practical halachic differences between these two approaches. According to the first understanding, when we accept Shabbos early we are merely refraining from melacha. It is still halachically Friday for all purposes. We refrain from melacha at a time which is not yet Shabbos lest we violate the actual Shabbos. The second approach views the time of tosefes Shabbos as being endowed with actual kedushas Shabbos, i.e. Shabbos has begun even though the astronomical day of Friday has not ended. Tosfos (Pesachim 99b) quotes two opinions whether one can fulfill one's obligation of eating the Shabbos meal during the period of tosefes Shabbos. If this time is not yet Shabbos, although one is refraining from

melacha one cannot fulfill the mitzvah of eating a Shabbos meal. If tosefes Shabbos transforms Friday into Shabbos, one can fulfill the Shabbos obligation of having a meal during this time.

These two approaches to tosefes Shabbos are not only relevant in terms of technical halacha, but each approach highlights a different dimension of Shabbos observance. The terms shamor and zachor in the Aseres Hadibros describe the dual aspects of Shabbos observance. The Ramban in Parshas Yisro comments that shamor, which is synonymous with refraining from melacha, is rooted in yiras Hashem—the fear and awe we feel in the presence of Hashem. All prohibitions in the Torah emanate from yiras Hashem. Yirah requires one to step back and not act in violation of Hashem's word. Zachor, which is synonymous with the positive mitzvos of Shabbos, is rooted in ahavas Hashem—the love of Hashem. All positive mitzvos are rooted in ahavas Hashem as we try to actively come closer to Hashem by expressing our love by doing His mitzvos.

Each of these dimensions of Shabbos is expressed during the period of tosefes Shabbos. Shamor requires us to be extra careful not to violate melacha on Shabbos, and as such begin Shabbos early lest we chas v'shalom do melacha when it is actually Shabbos. Zachor fills us with such a love of Shabbos that we are not supposed to be satisfied with kedushas Shabbos being limited to the day of Shabbos itself. Rather, we are to be eager to begin Shabbos that we actually endow part of Friday with kedushas Shabbos.

Having just completed the yomim tovim of Tishrei we have experienced both of these Shabbos themes in our celebration of yom tov. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, known as the Yomim Noraim, highlight yiras Hashem. Succos and Shemini Atzeres-Simchas Torah, known as Zman Simchasenu, highlight ahavas Hashem. Shabbos is the t'chila l'mikroei kodesh—the first of all the holy days. Shabbos sets the tone for our celebration of the yomim tovim. As we begin a new year with Shabbos Bereishis, let us focus on these two dimensions of Shabbos. The mitzva of tosefes Shabbos enables us to express both our yiras Hashem and our ahavas Hashem. Hopefully this mitzvah will impact upon our entire avodas Hashem improving both our yirah and ahava for Hashem. © 2009 Rabbi Z. Sobolofsky & The TorahWeb Foundation

