

# Toras Aish

## Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

**RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS**

### Covenant & Conversation

In The Lonely Man of Faith, Rabbi Soloveitchik drew our attention to the fact that there are two accounts of creation. The first is in Genesis 1, the second in Genesis 2-3, and they are significantly different.

In the first, God is called Elokim, in the second, Hashem Elokim. In the first, man and woman are created simultaneously: "male and female he created them." In the second, they are created sequentially: first man, then woman. In the first, humans are commanded to "fill the earth and subdue it." In the second, the first human is placed in the garden "to serve it and preserve it." In the first, humans are described as "in the image and likeness" of God. In the second, man is created from "the dust of the earth."

The explanation, says Rabbi Soloveitchik, is that the Torah is describing two aspects of our humanity that he calls respectively, Majestic man and Covenantal man. We are majestic masters of creation: that is the message of Genesis 1. But we also experience existential loneliness, we seek covenant and connection: that is the message of Genesis 2.

There is, though, another strange duality -- a story told in two quite different ways -- that has to do not with creation but with human relationships. There are two different accounts of the way the first man gives a name to the first woman. This is the first: "This time -- bone of my bones / and flesh of my flesh; / she shall be called 'woman' [ishah] / for she was taken from man [ish]." /

And this, many verses later, is the second: "And the man called his wife Eve [Chava] / because she was the mother of all life."

The differences between these two accounts are highly consequential. [1] In the first, the man names, not a person, but a class, a category. He uses not a name but a noun. The other person is, for him, simply "woman," a type, not an individual. In the second, he gives his wife a proper name. She has become, for him, a person in her own right.

[2] In the first, he emphasises their similarities - she is "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." In the second, he emphasises the difference. She can give birth, he cannot. We can hear this in the very sound of the names. Ish and Ishah sound similar because they are similar. Adam and Chava do not

sound similar at all.

[3] In the first, it is the woman who is portrayed as dependent: "she was taken from man." In the second, it is the other way around. Adam, from Adamah, represents mortality: "By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground (ha-adamah) since from it you were taken." It is Chava who redeems man from mortality by bringing new life into the world.

[4] The consequences of the two acts of naming are completely different. After the first comes the sin of eating the forbidden fruit, and the punishment: exile from Eden. After the second, however, we read that God made for the couple, "garments of skin" (or with an ayin). and clothed them. This is a gesture of protection and love. In the school of Rabbi Meir, they read this phrase as "garments of light" (or with an aleph). God robed them with radiance.

Only after the man has given his wife a proper name do we find the Torah referring to God himself by His proper name alone, namely Hashem (in Genesis 4). Until then he has been described as either Elokim or Hashem Elokim -- Elokim being the impersonal aspect of God: God as law, God as power, God as justice. In other words, our relationship to God parallels our relationship to one another. Only when we respect and recognise the uniqueness of another person are we capable of respecting and recognising the uniqueness of God Himself.

Now let us return to the two creation accounts, this time not looking at what they tell us about humanity (as in The Lonely Man of Faith), but simply at what they tell us about creation.

In Genesis 1, God creates things -- chemical elements, stars, planets, lifeforms, biological species. In Genesis 2-3, he creates people. In the first chapter, He creates systems, in the second chapter He creates relationships. It is fundamental to the Torah's view of reality that these things belong to different worlds, distinct narratives, separate stories, alternative ways of seeing reality.

There are differences in tone as well. In the first, creation involves no effort on the part of God. He simply speaks. He says "Let there be," and there was. In the second, He is actively engaged. When it comes to the creation of the first human, He does not merely say, "Let us make man in our image according to our likeness." He performs the creation Himself, like

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NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTED VIA EMAIL  
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sculptor fashioning an image out of clay: "Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

In Genesis 1, God effortlessly summons the universe into being. In Genesis 2, He becomes a gardener: "Now the Lord God planted a garden..." We wonder why on earth God, who has just created the entire universe, should become a gardener. The Torah gives us the answer, and it is very moving: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it." God wanted to give man the dignity of work, of being a creator, not just a creation. And in case the man should such labour as undignified, God became a gardener Himself to show that this work too is divine, and in performing it, man becomes God's partner in the work of creation.

Then comes the extraordinarily poignant verse, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'" God feels for the existential isolation of the first man. There was no such moment in the previous chapter. There, God simply creates. Here, God empathises. He enters into the human mind. He feels what we feel. There is no such moment in any other ancient religious literature. What is radical about biblical monotheism is not just that there is only one God, not just that He is the source of all that exists, but that God is closer to us than we are to ourselves. God knew the loneliness of the first man before the first man knew it of himself.

That is what the second creation account is telling us. Creation of things is relatively easy, creation of relationships is hard. Look at the tender concern God shows for the first human beings in Genesis 2-3. He wants man to have the dignity of work. He wants man to know that work itself is divine. He gives man the capacity to name the animals. He cares when he senses the onset of loneliness. He creates the first woman. He waits, in exasperation, as the first human couple commit the first sin. Finally, when the man gives his wife a proper name, recognising for the first time that she is different from him and that she can do something he will never do, he clothes them both so that they will not go naked into the world. That is the God, not of creation (Elokim) but of love (Hashem).

That is what makes the dual account of the

naming of the first woman so significant a parallel to the dual account of God's creation of the universe. We have to create relationship before we encounter the God of relationship. We have to make space for the otherness of the human other to be able to make space for the otherness of the divine other. We have to give love before we can receive love.

In Genesis 1, God creates the universe. Nothing vaster can be imagined, and we keep discovering that the universe is bigger than we thought. In 2016, a study based on three-dimensional modelling of images produced by the Hubble space telescope concluded that there were between 10 and 20 times as many galaxies as astronomers had previously thought. There are more than a hundred stars for every grain of sand on earth.

And yet, almost in the same breath as it speaks of the panoply of creation, the Torah tells us that God took time to breathe the breath of life into the first human, give him dignified work, enter his loneliness, make him a wife, and robe them both with garments of light when the time came for them to leave Eden and make their way in the world.

The Torah is telling us something very powerful. Never think of people as things. Never think of people as types: they are individuals. Never be content with creating systems: care also about relationships.

I believe that relationships are where our humanity is born and grows, flowers and flourishes. It is by loving people that we learn to love God and feel the fullness of His love for us. *Covenant and Conversation 5780 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l ©2019 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and rabbisacks.org*

**RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN**

## **Shabbat Shalom**

"**A**nd God saw everything that He had made and behold it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) A sensitive reading of the biblical description of the creation of the world forces the reader to come to some understanding of the relationship between Judaism and scientific discovery. Contrary to popular opinion, Judaism does not balk at modernity, especially if it furthers God's honor. For example, the invention of the printing press more than 500 years ago changed the nature of reading and literary transmission. The rabbinic leadership at the time welcomed it as a way to make sacred texts available to everyone. Now we're living in the midst of another communications revolution, and many Jews are involved in the development of the computer and Internet, allowing almost instantaneous call-up of a specific passage in the Talmud or a difficult area of medical ethics in our Responsa literature. The challenge is not to reject

inventions but to refine them; not to censor modernity, but to sanctify it.

Commenting on the opening verse of Genesis, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,' the Seforno demonstrates how to place Torah insights into the context of scientific developments. He points out that the word *shamayim*, (usually translated as 'heavens') is the plural of the Hebrew *sham*, meaning 'there' or 'two theres,' and writes: 'therefore the word *ha-shamayim* indicates a distant object in relation to us, the distance being equal from each side, which cannot be unless it is situated in a wheel that is revolving in a completely circular fashion.' Thus every point on the planet is equidistant from the heavens (*ha-shamayim*) and for this phenomenon to be true, the world must be moving in a spherical pattern. Two 'far-aways' that are the same distance can only exist if the planet is a revolving sphere.

Interestingly, Seforno lived approximately at the same time as Copernicus (1473–1543), the famed astronomer who spent considerable time in Italy pursuing his studies before returning to his native Poland. Before Copernicus, the center of the universe was the earth; his new scientific theory, suggesting that the earth revolves around the sun, clearly demotes the earth from its formerly exalted position as the center of divine concern.

It stands to reason that a rabbi of Seforno's stature, who was also a doctor by profession and a respected intellectual of his day, had heard of Copernicus' theories and had apparently accepted his vision of an earth revolving around the sun. But especially noteworthy for us is how Seforno interprets the ramifications of a scientific theory rejected as blasphemous by most Christian theologians of the period. Not only does Seforno accept the Copernican position, which we now know to be scientifically accurate; he deduces a crucial moral lesson from an earth constantly revolving on its own axis, as it revolves around the sun. This lesson is that the human being is placed squarely at the center of the earth, equidistant from the two 'theres' or 'far-aways' of the heavens, which can only happen if the earth is constantly revolving.

The medieval sages speak of four levels of creation: the inanimate level of earth and rock, the vegetative level of plants and trees, the locomotive level of roaming animals and beasts, and finally the communicative level of humans who speak. Each level receives its sustenance from the previous level: vegetation depends on earth and water, animals receive sustenance from the vegetation, and humans gather food, drink, garments and tent-skins from the animals. If the human being communicates both horizontally and vertically with the world and with God, he has the capacity to uplift and ennoble the world, to redeem the earth; if he short-circuits his relationship to

the divine, if he poisons rather than perfects the physical environment all around him, the entire earth will fall and fail with him.

With this in mind, the human being stands at the center of the universe. Only the human being has the gift of free choice. Our planet earth depends on proper human exercise of his free choice if it is to be redeemed and not destroyed. This is what I believe Seforno meant to extract from a constantly revolving earth. Interestingly enough, Rashi deduces a similar lesson from a later verse. At the end of our portion of *Bereshit*, after human conduct disappointed the Divine Creator, the Bible states: And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.... And God said, I will blot out the human being whom I have created...both human and beast, and creeping thing, and fowl of the air... (Gen. 6:5-7)

The obvious question asked is, why blot out the innocent animals and the silent beasts if the sin belongs to human beings? Rashi explains: Everything was created for the human being, and if he is to be destroyed, what need is there for the rest?! (Rashi on Gen. 6:7)

A central biblical dictum proclaims that 'human beings must walk in God's ways.' Yet, how do we determine God's ways? When Moses requested of God: 'Now therefore I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Your eyes, show me now Your ways, that I may know You...' [Ex. 33:13], God's answer is that Moses cannot hope to see Him completely, but can receive a partial glimpse into the divine – His back, as it were: 'And God passed by before him, and proclaimed: The Lord, the Lord, God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth' [Ex. 34:6]. Maimonides insists that God is not merely informing us of a description of His conceivable essence, but He is presenting us with a divine injunction as to how we humans ought to live: Just as He is gracious, so ought you to be gracious; just as He is compassionate, so ought you to be compassionate; just as He is called holy, so ought you to be called holy. (Laws of Knowledge 1:6)

This divine description, as it were, is not as significant for its theology as it is for its anthropology; it is less a definition of God and more a guide for human morality. Once again, humanity is the central concern even of a definition of the divine!

After each creation, there is a biblical value judgment, 'And God saw that it was good.' There is but one exception: the creation of the human being, after which the Bible does not give its usual afterword, 'And God saw that it was good.' Seforno explains the reason: the human being is not functional but moral. Whether or not his creation will turn out to have been good depends on his free choice. This is the sense in which the human being stands smack at the center of the earth. Will he sanctify and redeem it, or plunder and

destroy it? Will he realize his potential to act in God's image, placing God's attributes as the measure of all things and thereby perfect the world, or will he idealize his own frailty and ultimately drown in his weakness, bringing the entire world down with him? The jury has not yet come in with the final verdict. Until that time, the human being remains at center stage, to a great extent holding the whole world in his hands and in the grip of his free will. ©2019 Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin

#### **RABBI BEREL WEIN**

### **Wein Online**

**T**he Garden of Eden is portrayed for us as being the perfect place. Mortality had not yet entered the way of the world and our aged father and mother lived in an environment where everything was provided; food, shelter and freedom from external dangers. Yet, in this most idyllic of situations – one that we cannot begin to contemplate or imagine – temptation lurked even in this setting.

Humans are the union of the body and soul, and as such, perfection cannot be achieved. Humans are destined to always be unsatisfied. We desire foods and pleasures that we do not need, and in fact are not beneficial to us, but we want them just because we haven't acquired them yet. Once having achieved our goal and desire, so to speak, we are always disappointed and look to find another area of seeming pleasure, in order to satisfy our unquenchable thirst to attain more..

There was a famous comedic skit that was popular in the United States many decades ago about a very wealthy man who built an enormous mansion with many more rooms that he could ever populate or use. Nevertheless, he invited all his friends to the housewarming dedication of his mansion and gave them all a tour of this enormous building. As everyone was showering compliments upon him for having created this monstrosity, he was heard to remark: "This is nothing! Wait to you see the next house that I am going to build for myself." His Garden of Eden was certainly still not enough.

The rabbis of the Mishnah accurately observed that the more one has, the more worries one acquires. Though Judaism does not preach poverty or asceticism, it does emphasize moderation and for satisfaction not to be found in material items and pleasures alone. When Adam and Eve were driven from the perfect world that they had originally inhabited and were sent out into the dangerous and less-than-perfect world that we now inhabit, they never lost the original human drive that brought about their expulsion from that perfect world.

Wise men and women throughout the ages have always defined the struggles of society, its wars and decisions, its lack of fairness and the presence of so much evil, as being the futile attempt of humans to

try and batter down the gates of that garden and reenter and create a perfect world. The obvious inability of human beings to do so only adds frustration and disappointment. It destroys societies and political systems and destabilizes seemingly great and powerful countries and nations.

But there is an inner voice that reminds us that we do have within us a piece of that perfect world, a system of morality and human goodness, kindness and obedience to the moral code that our Creator has fashioned for us. This enables us to survive and thrive in the imperfect world in which we now live. ©2019 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](http://www.rabbiwein.com). For more information on these and other products visit [www.rabbiwein.com](http://www.rabbiwein.com)

#### **RABBI AVI WEISS**

### **Shabbat Forshpeis**

**W**hy does the Torah begin with the Genesis story? If it is a book of Law, ask the rabbis, why not start with the first commandment?

To teach us Rashi says, that God, having created the whole world, is its owner and has the right therefore to give Israel to the Jewish people. Here. Rashi turns a universalistic story into a nationalistic one.

The Midrash sees it differently. Why start with Genesis? To teach us that just as God created light from darkness, so too do human beings have the power to transform their lives, face all challenges and turn the deepest night into day. As the Hasidic rebbe said, a little bit of light has the power to drive away all the darkness.

But it's left for Ramban to suggest that we begin with the Genesis story to teach a fundamental truth—sin results in exile.

I've always been bothered by this idea. After all, many sinners live in mansions, and in the post Holocaust era it's impossible to conclude that those who suffered sinned.

Perhaps Ramban was suggesting that exile is not only a physical but a psychological state. Sin, separates one from God, and in that metaphysical sense one is exiled.

God, for example, tells Cain after he murdered Abel, that Cain will be a wanderer. The text then says that Cain left the presence of God and lived in the land of Nod.

Is not the last part of this sentence contradictory? If he lived and took up residence why is he a wanderer?

But the answer may be; having sinned and left the presence of God he became a wanderer. Although living, physically in the land of Nod he was in perpetual inner exile.

One of the key messages of Judaism is to feel

the presence of God. If I can feel Him, if I can feel that God cares about me and caresses me, says David in the Psalms, then even in the midst of suffering, I am not alone. © 2019 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale

**RABBI DAVID S. LEVIN**

## Completing Hashem's Work

**T**he conclusion of the Creation of the World took place on the moment between the Sixth Day and Shabbat, the Day of Rest. There are two key words in the paragraph describing the end of the Creation and the Day of Rest. The first of these words is *vayichulu* (completed, finished) which is related to the word *col* (all, everything). The second of these words is *m'lachto* (his work). It is important to see them in their context. The Torah states, "And the Heavens and the Earth and all of their Hosts were completed (*vay'chulu*). And Elokim completed (*vay'chal*) on the Seventh Day His work (*m'lach'to*) that He made, and he rested on the Seventh Day from all of His work (*m'lach'to*) that He made. And Elokim blessed the Seventh Day and made it Holy, because He rested on it from all of His work (*m'lach'to*) that Elokim created in order to make it."

Rashi deals with one aspect of the term, "He completed." The Torah says that Hashem completed His work on the Seventh Day which would mean that the world was really created in seven days and not the six days followed by a day of rest. Rashi explains that Man is incapable of calculating and determining the split second between sunset and the coming out of the stars which precisely separates Day and Night. For that reason, Man must add time before the beginning of the Shabbat for lighting the Shabbat candles so that he will not accidentally encroach on the Shabbat. Hashem, however, as the source of creation, has that capability to know the precise moment to end His work. Hashem created Shabbat in that split second between true Day and true Night. This distinction that Hashem did not create on Shabbat but at the split second between the Sixth Day and Shabbat was so crucial to the Rabbis, that the seventy Rabbis, each placed in a different room by King Ptolome for the translation into Greek, each changed this sentence to read that "Elokim completed on the Sixth Day His work that He made."

Alternatively, Rashi says that the coming of Shabbat created rest from work, and in that way Hashem's work was concluded on Shabbat. HaRav Zalman Sorotzkin quotes Rav Hamnuna that Hashem wished that Man would participate in His creation but was struck with the dilemma that Man, through no fault of his own, did not exert any effort towards that creation. Rav Hamnuna posits that Man's recital of the

paragraph beginning with *Vay'chulu* and accepting upon himself the "rest from work" that Hashem demonstrated was Man's participation in the act of creation. The Me'am Loez, a 17th century Sephardic scholar, insists from here that the repetition of this paragraph during Friday night prayers is an obligation, and the inclusion of this paragraph in the Friday night kiddush (blessing over wine) is to enable the other members of his household to fulfill their obligation as well.

HaRav Shmshon Raphael Hirsch explains that our root, *col*, can mean two apparently opposite things: (1) completed as ceasing to exist, and (2) completed as having reached perfection. Perfection can only come by giving oneself up completely to that end. Hirsch explains that this can only come in seeking perfection in one thing at a time. When describing the creation, Hirsch helps us to understand the passive voice of our first pasuk: "Of heaven and earth, of the whole universe, at one time there was nothing in existence except as a thought in the Mind of their Originator. The cause of heaven and earth's existence does not lie in themselves, they themselves are not the cause of their having come into existence ... the cause of their existence lies external to them. They are not the result of some force working blindly, but the work of One thinking Being, creating them with intention and purpose."

Most Torah commentaries explain that the world was created at the beginning of the First Day but that the assignment of each creation's role was spread over the six days. The Me'am Loez then proceeds to question why there were six days, not more or fewer. He explains that each day was a symbolic representation of the six stages of Mankind over his existence on earth. Day One was symbolic of the good (light) in which Man was created followed by the deterioration into darkness from Cain down to Noah at which time Hashem brought the Flood. Day Two was symbolic of the Flood as the waters above the heavens rejoined the waters below the heavens until they were separated again. Day Three marked the ingathering of the waters and the appearance of grasses and trees which symbolized the Exodus from Egypt and the receiving of the Torah. This double blessing is the reason for the double "ki tov, that it was good" on the Third Day but no "ki tov" on Day Two. Day Four was the double lights of the Sun and Moon which illuminated the world both day and night. This was symbolic of the days of the Kings and the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. Torah scholarship reached an exceptional level at this time. Day Five involved the creations of fish and the creatures of the sea and the air and was symbolic of the destruction of the Temples and the time when nations were like fish, swallowing up each other under the banners of eagles and other large birds of prey. Day Six was the creation of animals and

finally Man, who was the apex of creation. Man will again rise to his appropriate leadership position and govern the world with wisdom and peace. This will be the time of Mashiach. The Seventh Day, Shabbat, is a view of the World to Come.

We saw that Rashi offered a second explanation of "completion on the Seventh Day", that the arrival of Shabbat brought "rest". The Or HaChaim has a different approach to this concept. He quotes the paragraph in Shemot (31, 16-17) which talks about Shabbat and ends with the words "shavat vayinafash, He rested and was refreshed." The term "vayinafash" comes from the word "nefesh, soul". The Or HaChaim understands this to mean that when Shabbat arrived, Hashem created a nefesh, a soul, for everything in the world. Before Shabbat arrived, there was not an established soul for everything in the world. The Or HaChaim explains that this is the reason given in the Zohar that we do not have a Brit Milah (circumcision) of a child until the eighth day and we do not allow a sacrifice of an animal under the age of eight days. In eight days, a child and an animal will have experienced at least one Shabbat and will have established its soul.

We have been blessed with a marvelous gift from Hashem, an opportunity each week to "refresh" our soul and refocus our energy to improving ourselves through Torah study, family togetherness, contemplation, void of the distractions of work and social media. To think of Shabbat as a time of rest can be a misconception; Shabbat is a time of family and community, learning and improving, a time for our nefesh to go beyond the confines of our bodies and explore the beauty of the World to Come. When we observe the Shabbat we can each partner with Hashem in completing His world. © 2019 Rabbi D. Levin

#### RABBI LABEL LAM

### Dvar Torah

**T**he Torah states, "In the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1)...

God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He abstained from all His work which God created to make (Gen. 2:3).

These two verses encompass all of Creation. The opening three words end in the Hebrew letters taf, aleph, mem which comprise "emet" (truth), and the closing three words end in aleph, mem, taf which spells "emet." Reb Simcha 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, 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. Only one trait cannot be more or less: 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 word 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. *Dvar Torah from Twerski on Chumash by Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski, M.D.*  
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#### ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIT

### Divrei Harav

### V'divrei Hatalmid

*Translated for the Encyclopedia Talmudit  
by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss*

**O**stensibly, the serpent in this week's portion when he convinced Eve to eat from the tree of knowledge could have used the argument that after all, it was not his fault. For Eve, when hearing the words of G-d ("Harav") and the words of the Serpent ("The Talmid in this case the Nachash"), should have heeded the words of G-d. In truth this is why we say that one cannot appoint a messenger to perform a directive for committing a sin, because "Ein Sheliach L'dvar Avera" ("you cannot appoint a messenger to carry out a sin"). Thus in such a case the messenger would be liable for his actions. In our case the serpent would be vindicated and Eve would be culpable (this is the view of Rashi).

There are those however who state that in such a scenario it only frees the sender from culpability, in our case the "Nachash". Others state that in such a scenario, the entire action of the sender is nullified.

When a farmer leaves over "Leket", (gleanings of the field left for the poor) if he pronounced before it became "Leket" that his field is ownerless ("Hefker"), can a wealthy person possess this "Leket"? Once again we apply the principle "The words of the teacher (in this case the mitzvah commanded by G-d of "Leket") and the student (the owner of the property), we follow the word of the teacher and the gleanings remain in their state of "Leket" and cannot be made "Hefker".

This principle is not only applicable to those commandments between G-d and man, but also in a practical way; if there is a dispute of law between the Rabbi and the student, the law follows the Rabbi.  
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RABBI DOV KRAMER

## Taking a Closer Look

"This is the land about which I (G-d) made an oath to Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants'" (D'varim 34:4). The Talmud (B'rachos 18b-19a), apparently trying to explain why the word "saying" is needed, tells us that G-d was asking Moshe to tell our forefathers that He had fulfilled the oath he had made to them centuries earlier. These instructions to Moshe, the Talmud says, proves (1) that the deceased converse with each other, as Moshe fulfilled G-d's request and spoke to our forefathers after he died, and (2) that the dead are aware of what is happening to the living, as if they were totally removed from our world, Moshe relaying this information wouldn't register (see Rashi).

In his commentary on Chumash, Rashi references the Talmud's explanation of the word "saying," but doesn't mention the context. It is clear from the way he worded it, though, that he understands the information Moshe was to relay to be based on what he saw while he was alive, which raises the issue of how he could tell our forefathers that G-d had fulfilled his oath if the Promised Land wasn't conquered by the Children of Israel until after Moshe's death (see <http://tinyurl.com/mal8whc>). The Talmud must have also assumed that Moshe was supposed to relay information gathered while he was alive, since it was trying to prove that the dead are aware of what happens in our world from our forefathers being aware of what happens, as opposed to from Moshe being aware of what happened after he died (and then reporting the information to them). However, once it was established that the dead are aware of what happens to us, it is possible that G-d wanted Moshe to tell them what happened after he died, after the land was actually given to the nation.

As far as why Moshe would be asked to tell the forefathers something that happened after he died rather than our forefathers knowing about it on their own, the Talmud asks this question, answering that the reason G-d asked Moshe to inform them of something they already knew was "so that they could give Moshe credit for it." What this means is unclear. Or Hachayim (D'varim 34:4) suggests it means so they can be thankful that Moshe worked so hard on their behalf to bring the nation to their place. I'm not sure why they wouldn't have already realized how much Moshe had done to bring the nation out of Egypt, lead them through all the trials and tribulations in the desert, and bring them to the doorstep of the Promised Land, nor why they wouldn't have already been grateful for all he had done even if he didn't give them information they already knew. Perhaps Moshe wouldn't have bothered them, nor would they have disturbed him, had G-d not asked Moshe to speak to them, with the information

itself not being the focus, but the means through which our forefathers could express their thanks. It is also possible that G-d wanted to give Moshe one final mission, one that could only be accomplished by dying and speaking to our forefathers on the "other side," to help ease Moshe's transition from a life dedicated to doing things for G-d and His people to an existence where he couldn't do that anymore (see Ohav Yisroel, quoted by Bais Yosef on B'rachos 19a).

One thing that seems puzzling about the Talmudic discussion about whether or not the dead are aware of what occurs in our world is the omission of an earlier Talmudic explanation (B'rachos 9a-9b) of G-d's request of Moshe to have the nation ask the Egyptians for expensive items before they left "so that [Avraham] won't say that G-d kept His word regarding the slavery and the oppression but didn't keep His word about leaving with a great amount of possessions." If Avraham wasn't aware of what was happening, this wouldn't be an issue, yet the Talmud does not quote this verse (or this explanation of the verse) to prove that Avraham was aware of what was happening in Egypt with his children. [As a matter of fact, the "great amount of possessions" referred to the spoils gathered at the splitting of the sea a week later, not the gold and silver items they took out of Egypt (see Vilna Gaon on B'rachos 9), so Avraham would have had to be so on top of things that G-d was concerned he would be worried for the week in-between that the promise hadn't been fulfilled!]

It should be noted that the source of the Talmudic teaching regarding the gold and silver taken out of Egypt was "the study hall of Rabbi Yannai" and the source of the Talmudic teaching regarding Moshe being asked to tell our forefathers that G-d had fulfilled His oath about the Promised Land was Rabbi Yonasan. Since Rabbi Yannai and Rabbi Yonasan were contemporaries (see Jerusalem Talmud, Kidushin 1:7), a teaching coming out of "the school of Rabbi Yanai" was later than Rabbi Yonasan's teaching. Since the Talmud's focus was on Rabbi Yonasan's opinion about what the dead are aware of (see Maharsha), something taught afterwards could not be included in this discussion. Besides, it may have only been after it was established that the dead are aware of what goes on in this world that leaving Egypt with expensive items could be explained in that context. Nevertheless, there is another possibility.

It is quite unlikely that Avraham would question G-d fulfilling His promise. And if it was G-d's promise that was being questioned, there is a larger issue than just Avraham questioning it, as G-d would have to fulfill it whether or not it bothered Avraham (or anyone else). Why attribute the need to fulfill the promise to how others would perceive things rather than to the need to fulfill the promise itself? I would therefore suggest that although the Talmud attributes this "concern" to



Avraham, it is really a euphemism for a concern that some of his children might have had at the time of the exodus. Not a concern about whether or not G-d would fulfill His promise, but whether or not the time had come for G-d to fulfill that promise.

Although Avraham was told that his descendants would be "strangers in a strange land for 400 years" (B'reishis 15:13), they were only in Egypt for 210 years (see Rashi there). Some, such as Dasan and Aviram, doubted that it was time for the redemption yet, thinking that there were still 190 years of exile left (see [www.aishdas.org/ta/5765/beshalach.pdf](http://www.aishdas.org/ta/5765/beshalach.pdf)). A large percentage of the Children of Israel didn't think it was time to leave yet either, which is why so many died during the plague of darkness (see Rashi on Sh'mos 13:18 and Rosh on Parashas Bo). Doubts about whether it was really time for the redemption may have also entered the minds of those who were about to leave Egypt, especially since along with the 400 years that Avraham was told about was a promise that they would leave with great riches, and here they were, moments from what was supposed to be this redemption, and they had nothing! Getting the spoils at the sea a week later may dispel these doubts, but if they leave Egypt empty-handed, the doubts could persist until then. Therefore, G-d asked Moshe to have the nation ask the Egyptians for expensive items, whereby they would leave with riches.

If the reason for this request was not (or might not have been) to alleviate Avraham's concerns, it has no bearing on the issue of whether or not the dead are aware of what is happening in this world. There was therefore no reason for the Talmud to bring it into that discussion. © 2014 Rabbi D. Kramer

### SHLOMO KATZ

## Hama'ayan

**H**evel became a shepherd, and Kayin became a tiller of the ground." (4:2) The midrash Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer (ch.21) relates: Kayin enjoyed working the ground and Hevel enjoyed shepherding sheep. This one gave the fruits of his labor to the other one to eat, and the other one gave the fruits of his labor to the first one to eat. When the night of Pesach arrived, Adam said to his sons, "On this night Yisrael is destined to offer Pesach offerings. You, too, should offer offerings before your Creator." Kayin brought the leftovers of his meal -- flax seed, while Hevel brought the best of his flocks -- lambs which had never been shorn. Kayin's gift was despised by Hashem and Kayin's gift was found to be desirable, as is written (verse 4), "Hashem turned to Hevel and to his offering."

R' David Luria z"l (Poland; 1798-1855) comments: From the beginning of Creation, Hashem implanted in man's heart the idea to prepare what others need and to barter with them to obtain one's own needs. This is what the sage Ben Zoma meant when he

praised G-d by saying, "How many tasks Adam [who was alone in the world] had to perform before he found bread to eat -- plowing, planting, harvesting, gathering, threshing, winnowing, selecting, milling, sifting, kneading, and baking, while I wake up and find everything ready for me!" (Be'ur Ha'Radal)

R' Avraham Aharon Broide z"l (early 19th century) observes: The sheep products that Hevel gave Kayin must have been milk, butter and wool, since eating meat was forbidden before the flood. Alternatively, perhaps they were permitted to eat an animal that died of natural or accidental causes. (Bayit Ha'gadol -- Be'ur Maspik)

R' Yitzchak Binyamin Wolf Gottingen-Ashkenazi z"l (Poland and Germany; died 1686) asks: The Torah says about the korban Pesach (Shmot 12:48), "No uncircumcised male may eat of it." If so, how could Kayin and Hevel have brought a korban Pesach? Do not say, R' Gottingen-Ashkenazi, writes, that this prohibition did not apply to them since they lived before the mitzvah of circumcision was given. They also had no mitzvah of korban Pesach, but Adam told them to observe it. Presumably, then, they observed it correctly to the extent possible [though they were not actually permitted to slaughter a lamb].

So the question stands: How could they bring a korban Pesach if they were not circumcised? The answer, R' Gottingen-Ashkenazi writes, is found in the Torah commentary of R' Moshe Alshich z"l (1508-1593). He writes that, if not for Adam's sin, all men would have been born circumcised, just as Adam himself was. If so, continues R' Gottingen-Ashkenazi, Kayin and Hevel, who were born before the sin, must have been born circumcised as well. Thus they could offer a korban Pesach. (Nachalat Binyamin, mitzvah 2)

R' Eliyahu Hakohen Ha'ltamari z"l (Izmir, Turkey; died 1729) asks: Why didn't Adam himself practice what he preached and offer a korban Pesach himself? He explains: Earlier, the quoted midrash Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer (as explained by the commentaries) stated that the souls of all tzaddikim are offshoots from the soul of Adam's third son, Shait, while the souls of all wicked people are offshoots from the soul of Kayin. When Adam told his sons to bring a korban Pesach, writes R' Ha'ltamari, his intention was to test Kayin. Kayin was the spiritual ancestor of Pharaoh. Indeed, Kayin was a farmer of flax, a crop for which Egypt would later be known. Would Kayin rejoice at the news that Bnei Yisrael would bring a korban Pesach and escape Pharaoh's grip, or would he be saddened by the news? (The answer, as events revealed, was that Kayin was saddened.) In any event, Adam's intention wasn't that his sons would fulfill the mitzvah of korban Pesach. Thus, one cannot ask why Adam did not bring that offering himself. (V'lo Od Ela) © 2013 S. Katz and torah.org

