

PARASHAT BEREISHIT / NOACH

Spiritual DNA

Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein

3:1 Now the serpent was more shrewd than any of the wild animals that Hashem had made. He said to the woman, "Is it really true that Hashem said, 'You must not eat from any tree of the orchard?'" 3:2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit from the trees of the orchard; 3:3 but concerning the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the orchard Hashem said, 'You must not eat from it, and you must not touch it, or else you will die.'" 3:4 The serpent said to the woman, "Surely you will not die. 3:5 for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will open and you will be like divine beings who know good and evil." When the woman saw that the tree produced fruit that was good for food, was attractive to the eye, and was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate it. She also gave some of it to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. 3:7 Then the eyes of both of them opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

We see from the above pesukim that the snake got Chavah to eat from the eitz ha'daat. But the question is, how did the snake get into Gan Eden in the first place? The only living beings created in Gan Eden were Adam and Chavah. (The passuk only mentions Adam and Chavah.) So the Medresh says that Adam wanted a servant, and the only animal that could speak was the snake (he was arum). Adam brought the snake into Gan Eden to be his servant. When the snake came into Gan Eden, the snake had a scheme of how he would take over his master. He figured that if he gets Chava to eat and let her give to her husband, they will both die and he will get Gan Eden all for himself. So the snake starts up a discussion with Chavah. We see from here that the worst of sins always starts with a conversation. He asks Chavah, is it true that Hashem told you not to eat any of any trees in Gan Eden? She should have told the snake to ask her husband (because she didn't know, she was created after Hashem commanded Adam), but instead she goes ahead and answers him, and this becomes her downfall.

Chavah thought that the minute you eat from the tree, you die. But she also thought that if you touch the tree, you die as well. The snake knew that she didn't know the information correctly so he made her touch the tree. (When rebbaim speak about shomer negiah and how it will lead to terrible things, the talmid tests it out and sees that nothing happens when he touches her. But the rebbi warns him because the rebbi sees the horrible sins that can come out of it). The snake reasons with Chavah and tells her that the reason that Hashem didn't want you to eat from the tree is because He was afraid that you would become a G-d like him and you will know good and bad. The real effects of eating from the tree was that they knew good and bad, but they couldn't tell the difference. We see then that in a

span of 900 years, the whole world fell apart. Hashem had to destroy the entire world because of the effects of eating from the tree.

In Parashat Noach, Hashem took the whole world and destroyed it. Why? Because we learned good and bad (but we couldn't tell the difference.) So Hashem had to immerse the **entire** world into a mikvah to get us out of the impurity and tumah we created. There was one other place in the Torah where a place was destroyed and that was Sedom and Gemmorah. So whats the comparison? What the yetzer hara put into Chavah was jealousy, that G-d has something that you don't have. If he would have just told her to eat, she wouldn't have. The moment he made her jealous, and she realized that someone has something more than her, she saw the tree as good to eat. But how did she see the tree as good? She never tasted it before! (The guy next door gets a Ferrari it kills you, your jealous of him. Why should he have one and not me. If you never saw it, you never would have been jealous. But since someone else has it, you see it as good, and your jealous.)

Human nature is that it bothers us when someone has something that we don't have. It goes from liking something, and then Chavah has a lust for eating from the tree and then she reasons that there is nothing wrong with eating from it, and then she takes from the tree. She then runs to her husband to give him to eat. But why did she give him to eat? If Chavah saw that this was negative, why would she give it to her husnand? Rashi says that Chavah was afraid that she was going to die and Adam was going to get remarried. So, in effect, she was poisoning him. She figured, if she's dying then he's going down with her. But the question is, there was no other woman in the world at the time! Why did she think he would get remarried? The answer is that when a person is jealous, there is no logic. Jealousy makes no sense at all. Lashon hara is also based on jealousy, if you cant have what others have, you try to bring them down. Adam and Chava subsequently have kids who kill each other because of jealousy.

There is something called DNA and there is something called spiritual DNA. When Chava ate from the eitz ha'daat she ate out of jealousy. She passed down this jealousy to her son Kayin, who also out of his strong jealousy, killed his brother. Kayin brought his worst vegetables as a korban to Hashem while Hevel brought his best animals. Hashem wanted to teach Kayin a lesson that we don't offer a korban out of our worst possessions, but rather from our best. So Kayin got very angry and depressed.

Then Hashem said to Kayin, "Why are you angry, and why is your expression downcast? Is it not true that if you do what is right, you will be fine? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. It desires to dominate you, but you must subdue it."

Hashem was telling Kayin that although in his spiritual DNA he has jealousy, he can overcome it. Every human being has the ability to overcome their bad traits even if they were inherited, even if

they are in his spiritual DNA. There is no reason to be depressed, you can overcome anything. But what does Kayin do? He gets up and murders his brother. The Torah tells us that he told Hevel something but it doesn't write what he says because it didn't matter what he said. Kayin wanted to pick a fight with Hevel and then he killed him. At the eitz ha'daat, Chavah learnt that there is good and bad and you can mix them. You can make bad into good and you could make good into bad. When a person thinks like this, he could never do teshuvah. Kayin knew that killing Hevel was bad, so he had to make it good. "I lost my temper because of what he said and I killed him". This is what happened to the entire world. The world began to mix good and bad. Their psychology became, if G-d gave it to me, I could use it any way I want. They started stealing and doing anything they wanted. They started a religion that took things that were bad and turned them into good.

The only other place we have this is by Sedom and Gemorrah. Sedom was an extremely prosperous place but their psychology was that if G-d made someone poor, you cannot interfere. If you give him money or food then you are anti-G-d, you are going against his plan. If he's starving, then that means that G-d wants him to starve, so you are going against G-d by giving to him. That is why Avraham asked Hashem if there were more than 10 people that were tzaddikim. When Hashem said no, Avraham knew there was no hope because they had turned evil into a religion, they felt it was good. Chazal says that the world was destroyed because of the sin of stealing. But they were doing all the other sins in the world! The reason was that they were all stealing less than a prutah (less than the amount that is technically considered stealing). Everyone would line up in the store and steal one grape. They stole, but it wasn't technically an aveira. This is what we see nowadays. Nudity is an art. Pro-abortion is a legal right and constitutional. Everything that is wrong in our world became ok, it became an art. In rap music, you can curse, put down women and everything else but it's ok because it's called music. Once it's called music, it's kosher. You could have the worst pornography and call it art.

This is exactly the power of the yetzer hara. You could read the worst lashon hara, but it's news. You go to a class which is against Torah values, and it's considered education. You go to a movie, and it's entertainment. We take things that are forbidden and we make them kosher. This is the destruction of the world and this is where we are heading to. We see the world starting to get warmer, flowers don't smell anymore, virus among bees, the natural world is dying. Why? Because we are destroying the world just like they did in the times of Noach. So how did Noach get saved? What was his focus? He was a tzaddik. What's a tzaddik? A person who knows the difference between good and bad. He knows exactly where to draw the line. For hundreds of years he was walking around like a lunatic, didn't have kids for hundreds of years, and people were making fun of him. (Hashem spared his children and allowed them to go straight into the teyvah before they would sin and become like everyone else in the

world) The people thought they were better than Noach because they had kids and he didn't.

But the passuk says “Noach ish tamim” Noach was pure. He didn't mix the good and evil. Even if you are bad to the bone, but you know you are bad, you can come back. But the moment you are confused and you mix good and evil, there is no hope.

The Midresh says that even Noach made a mistake. When he came out of the teyvah, the first thing he planted was grapes to make wine. But why did he want wine? Because everything in the world was destroyed, he needed to be comforted. But what happened when he drank wine? His mind got clouded and mixed up. He didn't see a straight line anymore, the line between good and evil became distorted and this is when his son goes in and castrates him. Why does he do so? So that his father won't have any more kids and he therefore doesn't have to share his inheritance with other potential brothers. But the son looked at this as a good thing. My father is too old to have kids, this is for his own good. I am doing him a favor.

It says that Hashem came to Noach because he was a tzaddik, but ultimately Noach didn't last. Who lasted? Avraham Avinu. But Hashem didn't appear to him. Avraham was searching and looking for Hashem for 75 years. Once he found him Hashem, he was given 10 tough tests as a reward. That's his reward? Yes. That is what turned him into the father of the Jewish people. We all have Avraham Avinu's spiritual DNA. Every Jew that searches for good will ultimately find it because of Avraham Avinu, and it won't take him 75 years. If you are doing bad things, don't make excuses, know you are doing wrong and you will correct it. If you are stuck in the middle, and make excuses, you will never do teshuvah. We need to be like Noach and choose a side, draw a line, and know from good and bad. (Shevatim vs Eisav at Yaakov's burial. They start arguing with Eisav, meanwhile their father is being disgraced. Chushim Ben Dan was deaf, and because of this he knew that what was going on was wrong, drew the line between good and bad, and he chopped Eisav's head off.)

You have to know the difference between good and bad, not to mix the two. Hashem, on the first day of creation separated darkness and light and says “va'yaar ki tov”. Hashem saw that the creation was good because He separated the light and darkness, the good and bad. Knowing the difference between light and dark is the greatest thing you could have. You must draw the line. When you try to beat Hashem's system, then Hashem shuts down the system. You try to steal less than a prutah but Hashem destroys the world. Every aveira we do, we try to make it kosher, but that makes the situation worse. Hashem wants us to admit that we were wrong. “U'modeh ve'ozev yerucham”. Someone who admits and leaves the sin, will be forgiven. Let us learn this important lessons and implement them in our lives so that we could merit to see the coming of Moshiach speedily in our times- amen!