

## The Birthday of Adam or the Birthday of Eve?

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### 1. Excerpt from an email I received in August, 2013

At present, I have given up faith and lead a life in limbo...and have done so for the better part of a decade. I am left lost, wandering, in constant existential angst. I live the life of Kohelet...minus the last lines. I cannot find that Gd to whom I must obey his commandments; so all that is left is the knowledge that all is nothingness, all is worthless. I am desperate to return to the frum world where I once belonged, desperate for that faith which sustained me and gave purpose to my life and reason for my actions, but hopelessly alienated and, unfortunately, intellectually quite secure in my knowledge of the absence of any possible truth in it.

### The Models of Adam and Chavah

#### 2. Midrash, Vayikra Rabbah 29:1

It was taught in the name of Rabbi Eliezer: The world was created on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Elul.

#### 3. Genesis 1:26

And Gd said: Let Us make Man in the image and form We have designed, and he will rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and the beasts and the entire land, and all of the crawling creatures that crawl upon the land.

#### 4. Rabbi Meir Leibush "Malbim" (19<sup>th</sup> century Romania), Commentary to Genesis 2:7 – Free Will

He has the power of free choice, for thus he was created in the image of Gd...

#### 5. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (16<sup>th</sup> century Israel), Tomer Devorah 1

The essence of the higher *tzelem* and *demut* is His actions.

#### 6. Genesis 2:15-16

And Gd took the man, and He placed him in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it. And Gd instructed the man, saying: From every tree of the garden you shall eat.

#### 7. Jerusalem Talmud, Nazir 7:2

Gd took a ladleful from the place of the altar, and used it to create Adam the First, saying, "He should be created from the place of the altar, such that he will endure!"

#### 8. Genesis 1:27

And Gd created Man in His image, in the image created by Gd He created him, male and female He created them.

#### 9. Genesis 2:21-22

And Gd settled a deep sleep upon the man and he slept, and He took one of his sides and sealed the flesh beneath it. And Gd built the side He had taken from the man into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

#### 10. Talmud, Berachot 61a

Gd made Adam of two faces. Psalms 139:5 says, "Back and front He formed me."

#### 11. Genesis 4:1-2

And the man was intimate with his wife Chavah, and she conceived and birthed Kayin, and she said, "I have created [*kaniti*] a man with Gd." And she continued to birth his brother, Hevel. And Hevel was a shepherd, and Kayin was a worker of the land.

12. Genesis 3:5

For Gd knows that on the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like Elokim, knowing good and evil.

13. Rashi (11<sup>th</sup> century France), Commentary to Genesis 3:5

"And you will be like Elokim" – creators of worlds.

14. Exodus 20:2

I am Hashem your Gd, who took you out of Egypt, the house of slaves.

15. Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman (early 20<sup>th</sup> century Poland), *Kovetz Ma'amarim v'lgrot* 1 #5-7

Faith that Gd created this world is obvious to any thinking person, so long as he is rational. No philosophy is needed to achieve this knowledge... The foundations of faith are inherently simple and obvious to every rational person. One cannot doubt their truth – so long as one is not bribed, meaning that he seeks the lusts of this world.

16. Don Isaac Abarbanel (15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century Iberia), *Rosh Amanah* 17

One cannot achieve those beliefs without prior preparation, knowing that which leads to those beliefs... Doubtless, those preparations are a function of desire and choice, and are acquired over time.

A Tale of Two Abrahams

17. Talmud, Nedarim 32a

Avraham was three years old when he recognized his Creator, as it says, "Because [עקב] that Avraham listened to My voice." The numerical value [of עקב] is 172.

18. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 38:13

Terach was an idolater. Once he went out of town, and he assigned Avraham to sell [idols] in his place.

When a man came to purchase, [Avraham] would ask him, "How old are you?" He would say, "Fifty" or "Sixty". Avraham would then say, "Woe to this person, who is sixty years old and yet he wishes to serve a days-old [idol]!" Ashamed, he would leave.

Once a woman came, bearing a jug of flour; she said to him, "This is for you; bring it before the idols." He took an axe in hand and smashed all of the statues, and then he put the axe in the hand of the largest one. When his father returned, he asked, "Who did this to them?!" He replied, "How could I hide it from you A woman came bearing a jug of flour, and she told me, 'This is for you; bring it before the idols.' I brought it before them, and this one said, 'I'll eat first,' and this one said, 'I'll eat first,' and the largest one took the axe and smashed them!" His father replied, "Are you mocking me? Do they know anything?!" [Avraham] responded, "Do your ears not hear what your mouth is saying?" [Terach] took him and gave him to Nimrod...

19. Midrash, Bereishit Rabbah 95:3

How old was Avraham when he recognized his Creator? He was 48 years old when he recognized his Creator.

20. Rabbi Moses Maimonides (12<sup>th</sup> century Egypt), *Laws of Idolatry* 1:3

Once this strong one was weaned, he began to wander in his thoughts, while still young. He began to think, day and night, and he was surprised – how could this sphere continually function without a director and someone to turn it? It cannot turn itself! And he lacked any teacher or someone to tell him anything, but he was embedded in Ur Kasdim among foolish star-worshippers, and his father and mother and the entire nation worshipped the stars and he worshipped with them. But his heart wandered and comprehended until he grasped the path of truth and he understood the path of righteousness from his good understanding... And when he was forty years old [or forty-eight] Avraham recognized his Creator...

## Sarah

21. Genesis 21:1

And Gd remembered Sarah, as He had spoken, and Gd did for Sarah as He had said.

22. Genesis 21:12

...Whatever Sarah tells you, heed her voice...

## Community

23. The Baylor Religion Survey, *American Piety in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (2006): America's Four Gods and Religiosity  
<https://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/33304.pdf>

	Authoritarian	Benevolent	Critical	Distant	Atheist
Catholic	22.6%	28.2%	18.6%	29.2%	1.3%
Black Protestant	68.0%	12.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Evang. Protestant	52.3%	23.6%	12.8%	10.8%	0.5%
Mainline Protestant	23.7%	26.6%	19.7%	29.3%	0.7%
Jewish	19.4%	13.9%	16.7%	<u>41.7%</u>	8.3%
Unaffiliated	2.9%	5.0%	15.7%	35.7%	40.7%

24. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook (19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century Lithuania/Israel), Arpilei Tohar

Faith with which the mind does not agree arouses anger and cruelty [within one's self], because the human being's higher aspect, the mind, becomes frustrated with it. However, in higher faith – although it is quite concealed – Gd's ways are marvelous, and there is such great beauty in them that the anger caused by overpowering the mind is immediately cancelled, converted into great sweetness and pure light...