Themes in Chumash*:* a *Tanach* based approach to the life of Mitzvot

**Case study #2: Understanding the Sin of Adam & Eve:**

**Genesis -*Bereshit* chapter 3.**

Fellowship 2016/2017

Rabbi Pinny Rosenthal

Expansion of last class – “Tzelem Elokim”

To clarify, humankind is unique in Creation as a *Tzelem Elokim*, a mind with access to the “Divine Craft/worksman's” Wisdom of Creation.

There are two distinct archetypes of people in whom this unique ability as a Mind shows itself. Let’s illustrate these archetypes:

1. Creative Man

The *Tzelem* can express its unique access to Divine Wisdom in creative production. Our understanding of Divine Wisdom allows us power to control and remake the world. Our creative application of Wisdom is the source of a myriad of products from the light bulb to the great symphonies and literature. Examples are Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Mozart, Shakespeare, and Noach.

2. Scientific Man:

The *Tzelem* can also express its unique access to Divine Wisdom in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Exploration of Creation is thrilling and brings sanctity and profound meaning into the lives of scientific men. Examples are Einstein, Socrates, Euclid, Newton and Adam the 1st man.

There is a tension between these two applications of mind. If Edison applies his mind to the problems of inventing the light bulb, he cannot put the same emphasis on pure research in Space, time and matter. The same applies to Einstein- to put emphasis on problems of space, time and matter is to not put focus on the practical issues needed to invent a light bulb.

The Torah discusses both types of *Tzelem*, Creative and Scientific.

Noach represents Creative Man. Like Edison, Noach wanted to ease the life of his fellow man by invention. He discovered the plow [according to the midrash]saving society countless hours of hard labor.

Adam represents scientific man. Like Einstein, Adam explored the external world, seeking to name animals for the pure joy of understanding, without any particular application to controlling the environment. The Rabbis note that this pure understanding brings Sanctity and deep meaning-Shechina- into the marriage relationship.

Does the Torah expect us to emulate Adam, seeking the Sanctity and profound meaning of pure knowledge? Or are we to emulate Noach, seeking knowledge which allows us to ease the suffering of others materially???

Shabbos resolves this tension. Six days shall you do craft/work... but the seventh day is a Shabbos to Hashem. 6 days we do our craft/work- we emulate Noach and Edison, applying our minds to control of the world for the benefit of ourselves and humankind.

But the 7th day is a Shabbos to Hashem, we emulate Adam and Einstein applying our minds to the adventure of discovery of Divine Wisdom to bring meaning and sanctity to our lives.

Please note that Rabbi J.B. Solovietchik wrote -“the Lonely Man of Faith” which expresses these two portraits of *Tzelem Elokim as two aspects of Adam himself– Adam 1 of chapter 1 and Adam 2 of Chapter 2.*This book is in the MJE library and is only 110 pages.

**Preparation for class**

Bereshit - Ch. 2:16-17

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2:16 | God gave the man a commandment, saying, 'You may definitely eat from every tree of the garden. |
| 2:17 | But from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, do not eat, for on the day you eat from it, you will definitely die.  D’varim ch 8:5   |  |  | | --- | --- | | 8:5 | You must carefully reflect on the fact that in the same way that a man disciplines his child, so God your Lord is disciplining you. |   Questions: |

1. Hashem disciplines us in the manner of a loving Father. What educational purpose is served by giving humankind a prohibition to eat something?
2. Would a loving Father discipline his child with a death penalty ???

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lHWWsVOduqU>

the world of food preparation

3:1 The “Nachash” was the most cunning of all the wild beasts that God had made. [The "Nachash"] asked the woman, 'Did God really say that you may not eat from any of the trees of the garden?' 3:2 The woman replied to the "Nachash", 'We may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden. 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God said, 'Do not eat it, and do not [even] touch it, or else you will die.' ' 3:4 The "Nachash" said to the woman, 'You will certainly not die! 3:5 Really, God knows that on the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you become great leaders, knowers of good and evil.'

The “Nachash” [commonly translated as “Serpent] is understood in two basic ways by the great commentators:

1. Ibn Ezra views the “Nachash” as an intelligent speaking creature.
2. Seforno and others view ‘Nachash” as a representation of Chava/Eve’s own internal debate with her lower impulses.

In either event, our interest lies more in the human frailty exposed by this conversation, than in whether Eve spoke with an external entity or internally.

1. How does the Nachash’s strategy of having Chava/Eve repeat Hashem’s prohibition to him reveal a sophisticated understanding of “influence”?
2. In what sense is a great leader a “knower of good and evil”??
3. Did the Nachash expect Chava/Eve to be receptive to his rebellion against Hashem or not? Prove your answer from the text.

3:6 The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and desirable to the eyes, and that the tree was attractive as a means to gain intelligence. She took some of its fruit and ate [it]. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate [it]. 3:7 The eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked. They sewed together fig leaves, and made themselves loincloths.

Questions:

The “Tree of Knowledge” eytz hadaat had 3 elements of attraction. The woman saw that the tree was:

a. “good to eat” (delicious dish)

b. “desirable to the eyes” (restaurant quality identifiable features of aesthetic ideal)

c. the tree was “attractive as a means to gain intelligence” (An “intellectual” is able to discourse as a connoisseur).

1. Give an example of an attractive object which is “good to eat” ?
2. Give an example of an attractive object which is “desirable to the eyes” (restaurant quality identifiable features of aesthetic ideal)
3. Give an example of an attractive object which is “attractive as a means to gain intelligence”.
4. What would think of a diabetic who chooses foods based on their being “desirable to the eyes” ? (Gourmet cakes).
5. What lesson would a Doctor have to teach this immature diabetic patient to “open their eyes” regarding “good food”?

3:23 God banished [man] from the Garden of Eden, to work the ground from which he was taken. 3:24 He drove away the man, and stationed the cherubim at the east of Eden, along with the revolving sword blade, to guard the path of the Tree of Life.

D’varim:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 8:5 | You must carefully reflect on the fact that in the same way that a man disciplines his child, so God your Lord is disciplining you. | |
|  | | 1. How does banishing Mankind from the ideal educational environment, to a place where attaining material needs requires much toil and effort, help them grow? Wouldn’t it be harder to grow in a non-ideal environment? 2. What is the best way to deal with a selfish child -obsessed with his own greatness? 3. Would Hashem be a spoiling parent, if He ignored Adam’s drive for personal greatness, allowing mankind to remain in the easy environment of Gan Eden? | |