

א ביסל תורה!

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The Importance of שבת

By Sheva Burstein '27

In this week's פרשה, בראשית, Hashem creates the universe. In His creation He creates days, and on each day He creates something new. On the first day He creates light and separates it from darkness. On the second day He creates the sky. On the third, He separates water from dry land and creates plants and sets them in their cycle of growth. On the fourth day, He creates the sun, the moon and the stars. Through them He creates distinct times. On the fifth, Hashem creates birds and fish. On the sixth day, Hashem creates all other animals, including humans. And on the seventh day, Hashem rests. וַיְכַל אֱלֹקִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבּוּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה "On the seventh day G-d finished the work that had been undertaken: [G-d] ceased on the seventh day from doing any of the work." (בראשית ב:ב) This is very important because after putting in all this hard work, Hashem decides to take a break. This might seem strange because, after all, He is G-d. He should not have to take a break, so why does He?

רש"י, quoting בראשית רבה, says that one explanation is that at the end of the days of creation Hashem realized that what the world was lacking was rest. So, on the seventh day (שבת) He created rest and, therefore, completed the work of creation. Similarly, according to the אור החיים, until שבת was created, the world shook and trembled. With שבת, Hashem gave the world rest. On שבת, Hashem created the world's soul, the נפש, and that is why the פסוק says וַיְכַל אֱלֹקִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבּוּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה

וַיִּנָּפֶשׁ (שמות ל"א:י"ז) "הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפֶשׁ" and the word "נפש" share the same root. The אור החיים also comments that the פסוק says "שבת וינפש" as Hashem rested and with it the soul arrived. On שבת, all creatures were granted an abundance of strength and health, something they did not have before.

רד"ק says that we should not understand the פסוק to be saying that Hashem actually rested, as He does not get tired. Rather, when the תורה uses the expression וַיִּשְׁבּוּת, it uses terminology that humans can relate to. Hashem is, by definition, tireless. רד"ק points out the verse in ישעיה (מ"ב:ח) that say "לא יעף ולא יגע", meaning Hashem does not tire and does not become weary.

According to רבנו בחיי, the פשוט meaning of the verse is not that Hashem completed His work on the seventh day itself, because that would imply that Hashem worked on at least part of שבת. The meaning is that as soon as שבת started Hashem had already finished whatever He had been doing. A similar idea can be found in the discussion of פסח (שמות יב:טו). The פסוק says, "אך ביום הראשון תשביתו שאר מבתיכם," "But on the first day you shall remove חמץ from your houses." Clearly the פסוק is not saying that we should wait until the first day of פסח to remove the חמץ. The פסוק is saying that we should be sure that we have already removed all our חמץ when the first day of פסח starts.

When Hashem completed creating on the first six days, He created שבת. שבת serves both as the final creation - completing the act of creating the world - and as a lesson to humans that we need to take time

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to restore and refresh our soul. Just as Hashem completed His work before the beginning of שבת and then rested, we, too, complete our work and rest on שבת.

The יצר הרע is in All Shapes and Forms

By Ahava Askarinam '29

בראשית is a very difficult פרשה to understand. It is very hard to fathom what a pre-existing world would look like. We are looking at a world in גן עדן, before the מבול, flood, in which there were no sins, until חווה was influenced by the snake. It is very hard to grasp that concept of a truly pure world. When Hashem commanded אדם and חווה not to eat from the עץ הדעת, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, He was very clear, "וּמִעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם, "אֲכָלְתָּ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת" (בראשית ב:יז) "and from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil you may not eat, because on the day that you eat from it, you will surely die". They had all of the information and should have listened to Hashem's rule. They knew that the tree in the middle they could not eat. Hashem gave them everything but that one tree; how could they have been convinced to do such a sin?! The snake was just a small reptile that should not have had such influence on a human being. So, we naturally ask the question of what did the snake have that made it so persuasive to change their minds?

What is the snake? The simple answer is that it is just a regular animal, a snake that cannot speak. How can we figure out the type of communication between חווה and the snake? אבן עזרא, בראשית ג:א, on אבן עזרא, says that the snake was able to communicate directly, speak, and

walk upright. Later, אבן עזרא also explains how the snake used his words to twist what Hashem said. There is a use of the term "אֲףִי כִּי" "even though" (בראשית ג:א) which is interpreted as a form of trickery. At the beginning of the conversation the snake used the format that even though Hashem said this... This term was used by the snake to show that he spoke other things to חווה and tricked her. The snake attempted to twist the words of Hashem in order to confuse her. What was inside of this snake that made it so dedicated to go against Hashem?

There must be something more to the snake than just a snake in order for it to have such a drive for evil. ספורנו says that snake is another word for שטן which means that the snake had an urge to make people sin. The reason this urge was compared to a serpent is because that type of creature makes itself invisible and one doesn't always see it coming. This is something that happens very often in real life with the יצר הרע. The urge might seem natural and while it is not a visible obstacle, it can be more damaging than a visible one. We learn from this whole situation the importance of being aware and holding ourselves back and being able to control our desires, for Hashem, despite the snake in front of us. Next time one feels that there might be a hidden obstacle course, one should try to take a step back and navigate one's way around it.



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