

B”H
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Time, Work and That Which to Consider

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***“Rabbi Tarfon says,
‘the day is short, the work is abundant, the workers are lazy,
the reward is plenty and the owner is desperate.’”***
(Pirkei Avot 2:20)

This is a most unusual saying. Rabbi Tarfon does not seem to be offering to us the same pithy words of wisdom that is the trademark of Pirkei Avot. Rather, there is a pressing sense of urgency to what he is saying here.

Traditionally Rabbi Tarfon’s words have been understood in the following manner. The day is a reference to our lives here on earth. The work refers to our observance of Torah and mitzvot. The lazy workers are a reference to us, who are all under the influence of the Yetzer HaRa (the evil inclination). The plentiful reward refers to life in the world to come. All this makes perfect sense and is easy to understand. Now comes the hard part. The owner is desperate. The owner is interpreted to be G-d. He is desperate for mankind to walk in His ways. Now comes the question, following this interpretation, how could anyone ever say that G-d, the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth is desperate? The answer to this question will take us into some of the deeper areas of Torah mysticism.

Rabbi Tarfon’s statement reveals to us that there is an elemental state of imbalance in the universe between what we call the corporeal (physical) and non-corporeal (spiritual) dimensions. Our Rabbis have revealed to us that this state of imbalance was somehow caused by the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden. In order to understand the imbalance we must first understand its cause.

Adam as we know was created in the image of G-d. Yet, just what was this image? It could not be physical because we know that G-d has no form or semblance of form. The image, therefore, had to be of some spiritual sort. Indeed, throughout Jewish mystical literature, the primordial image of Adam is a topic of great interest. The Rabbis have taught us that originally Adam was not created in the form of a physical human being as we are today. Adam was originally created inhabiting a body of light similar to that of the angels. Adam’s original mind and consciousness encompassed the entire universe. Adam originally had no distinction between his conscious and unconscious mind. Adam’s intelligence understood everything in creation simultaneously.

What exactly was the sin in the Garden of Eden is a subject of great mystical discussion. We know that the sin was the eating of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil. Somehow, this fruit of knowledge manifested in mankind its evil side. Mankind, therefore, suffered the worst fate imaginable. We devolved.

Instead of rising in ascending order, mankind shrunk down to our present physical form and limited consciousness. The vast majority of the human mind became blocked off to us and hidden in what we today call the unconscious. Psychology has only recently become aware of the latent power and dominant role that the unconscious plays within all of us. The loss of angelic bodies and the taking on of physical forms; the split of mind between conscious and unconscious; the loss of comprehensive intellectual abilities; these are the legacy of our eating the forbidden fruit. Mankind has fallen. Instead of being like an angel, we are more close to being like an ape.

Darwin noticed the similarity, but he could never find the “missing link” between humans and primates. He would never have dreamed just how inverse and opposite his theory really was.

So here we stand, fallen mankind. What are we as a race expected to do? The answer is obvious. The only answer to devolution is evolution. Yet, this type of progress and advancement does not happen by chance, as many fools might ridiculously believe. Chance is guided by higher powers, the same higher powers that we humans left behind, when we “fell” into this physical universe. Our long lost neighbors and friends, those races which we refer to as angels, miss us dearly and are doing everything that they can, by the direction of the Creator, to restore us to our former selves.

The process of human restoration is a long one. It requires of us not so much the learning of new things as much as the remembering of old things. That which we need to remember is not academic knowledge, but rather the knowledge of what we call “the heart.” In other words, we must remember the lessons of true humanity, caring, compassion, wisdom, and sensitivity. In spite of our technological and intellectual advancements of the last century, we have not changed at all internally. We stand a good chance that our technological advancements will lead to our downfall. Somewhere, somehow someone can unleash a technological terror of a biological, chemical or nuclear nature and snuff out the lives of innocent millions. With all the progress that mankind has made over the last century, we stand to lose it all and blow ourselves back to the Stone Age. Indeed, there is a tradition in the Jewish mystical circles that this has already happened in our distant past and can possibly happen in our not-to-distant future.

The choice is always before us – to evolve back to where we have come from, or to devolve further into inevitable destruction. Mind you, such destruction is really only an illusion. For although we can destroy our bodies and our world, we would only be forcing upon ourselves the destiny to reincarnate repeatedly until we get it right. Universal laws cannot be broken, as are man-made laws. If we are destined to be

restored to our higher state, then whatever it takes, whatever hardships we must travail, we will eventually and ultimately be restored to where we have come from.

The question remains how long will it take for collective mankind to again rise up and walk among the angels. The answer to this depends upon each one of us. For although the Heavenly powers are patient, not even they can wait forever. The universe demands of them and of us accountability. This is a Divinely ordained law. Sooner or later, we must choose whether or not to evolve back to our original higher state. If we fail to perform this task in the time allotted to us by Heavenly decree, then those failing souls will be taken out of the human race and incarnated in an even lower form of life, one that will not give them as many challenges as does being human. If certain fallen souls choose not to evolve as humans, the only alternative left to them is to evolve from another lower form of life. The time of decision is dawning upon us ever closer, with each passing year.

The Rabbis teach us that mankind's fall affected the entire order of creation. Because of mankind's spiritual/mental retardation, all benefits concealed within creation awaiting man's discovery are now left dormant and unused. Creation therefore suffers. Creation, as we know, occurred over a period of "six days." Just how long these 'days' were according to how we measure time is unknown. One Rabbi postulated that the six days of creation actually occurred over a period of 15 billion years, as we measure time, a number strikingly similar to the scientific Big Bang theory. Yet, regardless of the time G-d took to create His universe, mankind's fall is said to have thwarted a great plan that G-d had in store for all. Mankind was thus said to have blemished the six days of creation.

Corresponding to these six days, the Rabbis teach us, mankind was to be given six thousand years to repair our fallen state or face extraterrestrial intervention (of the Divine/angelic kind). Divine intervention into human affairs is not a new or unique thing. It happens individually on a daily basis. Yet, our Rabbis warn us that a collective intervention is definitely scheduled into the Divine/angelic agenda. A date for this intervention is set to be no later than six thousand years from Adam's original manifestation on the Earth. According to Torah tradition, we are now in the year 5,761 and counting. The six thousand years will conclude by our year 2240. By that time, intervention will occur and mankind, or what is left of it, will be taken to a higher state of existence. This era is religiously called the Epoch of the Messiah.

Rabbi Tarfon's message, much like the others in Pirkei Avot is a warning. While the words of the other Sages are a more subtle and concealed warning, Rabbi Tarfon is most direct. His words are a call and a warning for us to awaken to the true nature of present human affairs.

A human life span is an awfully short time to address the issues of the heart. As we all know, many of us go through our entire lives carrying the pain of this or that emotional hurt. Forgiving, forgetting, healing and moving on in life are lessons that not many people have succeeded in learning. Many therefore get caught up in cycles of continuous

pain. They inflict pain upon another, who in turn inflicts pain in return. On and on this continues, from one lifetime to the next. Indeed, what a waste of time. The “day” of human existence is indeed much too short for such wasteful behavior.

There is much spiritual work to be done, to change our human personalities, and to alter our thinking patterns. For as the laws of motion in physics dictate, nothing really ever stands still. Everything is in motion. This includes the human spirit. We are either moving in a direction of evolution or devolution. We are forever moving closer to either angel or ape. Most of us merely “Ping-Pong” back and forth, oscillating continuously, but never reaching either goal. Most of us are stuck in a continuous back-and-forth cycle. Although our angelic brethren help us daily, we still continue to make choices that cause our own harm. Therefore, in spite of the passage of time, there is still a tremendous amount of work left to be done.

Rabbi Tarfon says that we are lazy. This is true, yet there is more to it than just that. As the story about the Fall makes very clear, Adam had assistance in his descent. There was an entity called the Serpent who aided, if not directly caused all this trouble. We must realize that this Serpent has never left us. The Serpent represents another race of beings, which do not seek the good of mankind. This race of fallen angels became known as demons.

As the old saying goes, misery loves company. When this angelic race chose to incarnate in physical space, they got stuck here. They were unable to return to their celestial heights. Their descent led to their devolution and their hearts became full of what we call evil. They deceived Adam in the Garden through their agent the serpent. They tricked Adam into believing that he was helping their rectification. If Adam was to be like G-d, then Adam could help them ascend. Adam did not heed them, but Eve did. Hers was a mother’s concern for fallen children. Adam’s fault was that he loved his wife and saw her fall. He descended after her, to elevate her and the fallen angelic children.

G-d knew Adam’s sincere intent. That is why He did not destroy His lofty creation and begin again. Instead, G-d gave Adam and all the souls of mankind in him, a period of time to repair that which was broken. Again, misery loves company. The fallen angels have fallen so low that they do not want to ascend again. They hold back Divine retribution, or so they think, by holding the souls of mankind hostage. These fallen angelic souls seduce mankind with all kinds of distractions to keep us from focusing on our own fallen state.

These demonic entities attempt to keep mankind asleep. As such Rabbi Tarfon calls us lazy. Yet, rather than use the word lazy, we should better say that mankind is sluggish. We are sluggish with regards to spiritual affairs; in the same way one is sluggish in bed and refuses to awaken. This is an alarming state of affairs. It can be said that all mankind exists in a state of a drunken or drug induced stupor. The sleeper must awaken.

There is so much good to be achieved, yet we are too “drunk” on the distractions of physical living to remember our true spiritual origins and heritage. What a shame, we

have no idea of what we are missing and what good we are holding back from ourselves. Heaven does not have to exist "above" us. Heaven is supposed to be brought down to earth. In other words, there is supposed to be a harmonious union between our physical and spiritual existences. Yet, for now, instead of unity between worlds, there is a real war between the worlds.

The spiritual planes are under attack from the physical planes. Such an attack is preposterous to the utmost degree. For the spiritual dimension is the source of the life force that holds together the entire physical universe. One cannot attack one's source of being without the most dire consequences to self. In mankind's stupor, we are being led by malevolent forces to act in ways most detrimental to our own self-interests. These enemies of mankind sit back and mock us in our fallen state. They tap into whatever spiritual energy is sent from Heaven to us for our elevation and use it for their own malevolent enjoyment. Needless to say, such a state of affairs is no mere myth or religious story.

Mankind is causing grievous spiritual harm, not only to ourselves but also to worlds surrounding us. Remember that everything in creation is in one way or another interconnected. When mankind in general or even an individual in particular performs any type of harmful deed, the ripple affect of such an act is felt far and wide. Needless to say, in our present state of spiritual retardation, we are totally oblivious to the harm we are doing, to others and ourselves.

This state of affairs cannot continue without consequences. At present, each individual reaps the consequences of his/her individual actions. Yet, the aggregate actions of collective mankind cannot be recompensed in full because such rebalance would ultimately lead to the destruction of the entire human race. Therefore, Divine edict has ordained a type of dispensation for mankind, a kind of spiritual patience, waiting for us to collectively awaken. Yet, this edict of Divine patience is certainly not eternal, nor is it for that matter to remain in affect for much longer.

Mankind in total will soon face the inevitable consequences of our actions when our higher spiritual brothers intervene again in human history to help set us back on our proper spiritual course. Until that time, each one of us is being prodded by our spiritual brethren to do what we must do, to "get our acts together." This is why the "Owner" who is G-d is desperate.

G-d Himself is bound by the laws that He has ordained to rule the universe. He knows full well that a slumbering mankind will have to be rudely awakened. This is not His choice, but it apparently is ours. Rabbi Tarfon, with almost prophetic insight, saw the work ahead and perceived the spiritual state of urgency that overshadows mankind's need for spiritual growth and repair.

Rabbi Tarfon also said, "it's not up to you (or me) to complete the work, but you are not free to avoid your share." (Pirkei Avot 2:21). Let us remember that our time is short and that there is much work to be done. Let us stop our playing around with the frivolous

things in life and start viewing our spiritual responsibilities with greater important and utmost urgency. If you choose not to do this, consider the consequences.

Shalom.