YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

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**The Philosophy of Manitou**

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**Shiur #31: Adam's Sin, the Shattering of the Vessels, and the Repair of the World**

Let us elaborate further on Manitou's assertion, as set forth in the previous *shiur*, that the sin of Adam was fully repaired by King David. Although this assertion is based on *Chazal*'s teaching that seventy years of Adam's life were given to David, nowhere do we find any explicit statement by *Chazal* that David repaired Adam's sin. On the contrary, a great number of important sources outline the very long and arduous road that humanity will have to travel until the sin is repaired. These sources, first and foremost among them the writings of the Ari, suggest that the sin will be repaired only at the End of Days.

Manitou himself mentions the Ari's approach. Apparently the kabbalist teachers with whom he studied conveyed oral traditions handed down from the Ari, from which he deduced – or which included sources supporting his assertion – that Adam's sin had been repaired by David. In any event, Manitou shifts the focus from the story of Adam backwards in time, to the beginning of Creation and the "chaos and void" that existed at the outset, as well as forwards, to the sin of Kayin and Hevel:

I know that many people emphasize the sin of Adam, but that is a mistake, because on the collective level this problem was resolved already by King David. All of world history is a repair of the sin of Kayin, and this is the problem that should concern us on the collective level throughout the generations: repairing the fraternal relations between people.  (*Sod Midrash Ha-Toladot* III, p. 151)

This shift of focus from Adam to Kayin and Hevel is of great significance for many reasons. One is that while the sin of Adam belongs to the relationship between man and God, the conflict between Kayin and Hevel belongs to the interpersonal realm.

**David’ Repair of the Sin of Adam**

In their attempts to provide sources for Manitou's view, the editors of his works refer twice to an excerpt from the Shelah (*Parshat* *Toledot*, *Torah Or*):

We see from the above that both Yaakov and Yosef repaired damage caused by the "the ruddy one" since both hated Esav. What our sages said about Adam giving 70 years of his life to David is also true. The whole point of granting life to David was to repair the damage done to G‑d's universe by Adam… Adam's divine image needed to be restored first and foremost through the constructive lives of the Patriarchs. In other words, the 70 years Adam donated to David were "illuminated" – i.e., they assumed positive meaning – through Yaakov and Yosef having donated 70 years of their already meaningful lives. We have explained earlier that the "beauty" of Yaakov was of the same quality as the beauty of Adam [before his sin]. The Torah (*Bereishit* [39:6)](https://www.chabad.org/8234#v6) describes Yosef as having handsome features; he evidently inherited these from his father, seeing as Yosef is viewed as his father's replica. We see that David's features are described in similar terms (*Shmuel* I 16:12). When *Mashiach* comes, Adam will achieve his complete repair, as hinted to in his name, which is an acronym for Adam, David, *Mashiach*.

The Shelah does indeed mention David as a stage in the repair of Adam's sin, but he very clearly refers to the repair being completed only by *Mashiach*, in the future. There may still be a long road to cover before this is achieved.

What underlies the connection between David and the sin of Adam? Adam wanted to be like God and to place himself at the center, rather than obeying God's command. David, as king, stands at the center but nevertheless subjugates himself to God's command. David fulfills that which was required of Adam; now no further process of repair for Adam's sin is necessary. All we need to do is to recall and recreate the level of David. This requires work, but no innovation, since the model already exists in the world.

**Life of Atonement vs. Life of Partnership in Repair**

Man is faced with two fundamental questions: his purpose in the world and why both he and the world were created deficient. Manitou argues that we cannot trace deficiency as a whole back to Adam. Recall his words, quoted in the previous *shiur*, concerning the Christian view that lurks in the background of such a view:

On the individual level, the identity of each person corresponds to a greater or lesser extent with the Creator’s command via the *mitzvot*, and there can be a situation in which a certain individual repeats the sin of Adam and rebels against the Creator. This is his own sin, committed out of his own free will; it is not the inevitable result of any primordial sin. In this regard the dispute with Christianity is a most fundamental one. Christianity argues that since Adam’s sin, every human being is by definition sinful. Unfortunately, there are Jews who have not studied enough and who express similar ideas. According to Christianity… man fell from his level and is unable to overcome [sin] unless he is granted Divine grace, and this is dependent not on his behavior, but rather on an arbitrary decision by the Creator. The Torah’s position is entirely different. Whoever sins, sins. (*Sod Midrash Ha-Toladot* I, pp. 137-141)

According to Manitou, the deficiency goes further back in time and is a consequence of the way in which the world was created. Adam did indeed sin, but even prior to his sin, deficiency was built into Creation. The Torah presents two pictures: Chapter 1 depicts the deficiency that is part of Creation itself; chapters 2-3 depict Adam's sin. In chapter 1, the world is chaos and void, and it is God who repairs it and creates order in it over the course of Creation. In chapters 2-3, the world is whole and perfect, and man spoils it.

These two pictures are also presented in two *midrashim* in *Bereishit Rabba*:

All that was created during the six days of Creation requires human action. For example, mustard requires sweetening, peas require sweetening; wheat requires grinding; even man himself requires repair. (*Bereishit Rabba* 11)

R. Berakhia said in the name of R. Shmuel: Although things were created perfect, when Adam sinned they were spoiled, and they will not return to their state of perfection until the arrival of the descendant of Peretz [*Mashiach*]. (ibid. 12)

According to the first *midrash*, the world was created deficient, and even after the work of Creation is completed, the world is still in a state that requires action in order to bring it to completion. According to the second *midrash*, the world that exists after the process of Creation is complete, and all deficiencies in it arise from the sin of Adam. These are two different approaches among *Chazal*. The latter places Adam's sin at the center; the former views the source of deficiency in Creation itself, an idea developed by the Ari as part of his teachings concerning the "shattering of the vessels."

The real difference between the two views concerns our understanding of man's position. Is man’s mission limited to repairing sin, or is he God's partner in the task of repairing the world? According to Manitou, man is here in the world to do more than just repairing failure and sin. He has a role to play in the project of completing the purpose of Creation.

As noted, Manitou emphasizes the sin of Kayin and Hevel, thereby shifting the focus from the opaque and mysterious reality of the Garden of Eden to our own world and our own reality. The story of Kayin and Hevel occurred in a long-gone time, but nevertheless in our world, outside of the Garden.

Thus, Manitou turns from the sin of Adam in two different directions: the more metaphysical dimension of the "shattering of the vessels" and the more realistic, human dimension of Kayin and Hevel. Is there any connection between these two dimensions?

This question will occupy us in the next and final shiur in this series.

Translated by Kaeren Fish