

Upon his creation, man was placed in the Garden of Eden and was commanded to work the land and protect it. He was given all forms of vegetation for sustenance, as he was enjoined from consuming meat or animal flesh: (בראשית 1:28-29):

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל־עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל־פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־בוֹ פְּרִי־עֵץ זֶרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לֶאֱכֹלָה וְלִכְל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִכְל רֹמֵשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־בוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת־כָּל־יִרְק עֵשֶׂב לֶאֱכֹלָה וַיְהִי־כֵן

Indeed, the entire animal kingdom was commanded to consume vegetation and fruit of the trees. He was called Adam as he was formed from the ground, אדם. God created a tree and vegetation paradise for man as it says (בראשית 2:9):

וַיִּצְמַח הָשֵׁם מִן הָאֲדָמָה כָּל עֵץ נֹחֵמֵד לְמִרְאָה וְטוֹב לְמֹאכֹל וְעֵץ הַחַיִּים בְּתוֹךְ הָגֶן וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרַע אֱלֹקִים

Apparently, when placed in the garden, man did not have to struggle for food. It was readily available, plentiful, and required minimal, if any, preparation before consuming it. After the נחש/יצר הרע entices Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge and gives of the fruit to Adam, God punishes them all in different, yet similar, ways. The serpent loses the ease of motion it previously had and is condemned to slither along the ground. Eve, the mother of all human beings, is punished with the forfeiture of the gift of easy pregnancy, labor and childbirth. And Adam is punished with the loss of his ready and abundant food supply. He will have to toil for his food (בראשית 3:17-19):

וְלָאָדָם אָמַר כִּי־שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתְּךָ וְתֹאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בְּעִבּוּרְךָ בְּעֵצְבוֹן תֹּאכְלָנָה כָּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדַּר תִּצְמִיחַ לָךְ וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה בְּזַעַת אִפֶּיךָ תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם עַד שׁוֹבֶךְ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לִקְחָתָה כִּי־עָפָר אֶתָּה וְאֶל־עָפָר תָּשׁוּב

Rashi explains:

וקוץ ודרדר תצמיח לך הארץ כשתזרענה מיני זרעים, תצמיח קוץ ודרדר קנדס ועכביות, והן נאכלין על ידי תקון

When you plant various seeds (to grow different types of fruit) you will grow thorns and thistles that require much preparation to consume.

Man was cursed with the loss of three important gifts:

- 1) readily available and abundant food supply;
- 2) the ease in which he would prepare and consume his food;
- 3) the dependability of growing and harvesting whatever he planted.

In Parashat Nitzavim, the Torah says and Rashi comments:

העזתי בכם היום את השמים וגו', אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל, הסתכלו בשמים שבראתי לשמש אתכם, שמה שנו את מדתם? שמה לא עלה גלגל חמה מן המזרח והאיר לכל העולם כענין שנאמר (קהלת א') "וזרח השמש ובא השמש"? הסתכלו בארץ שבראתי לשמש אתכם, שמה שנתה מדתה? שמה זרעתם אותה ולא צמחה או שמה זרעתם חטים והעלתה שעורים?

Observe heaven and earth I created to serve you! Have they changed their nature? Perhaps you planted the land and it did not grow? Or perhaps you planted wheat and barley grew instead?

Is this not the curse of thorns and thistles shall you grow instead of the crop you intended to? God punished Adam that the certainty of the earth producing the expected crop could no longer be relied on. Why did Moses offer the earth as an example of consistency regarding reward and punishment?

Apparently, another punishment was meted out to Adam and Eve for their sin. Man learned the difference between having a gift from God and the loss of that gift. Because of his sin and loss, he now must struggle to compensate and survive. Ultimately, he realizes that despite his efforts, he will never again enjoy the ease of attaining satisfaction as he did when the gift was still his. Eve will never again enjoy the ease of bearing children, the fruit produced jointly by man and woman. Childbearing will be a painful and difficult struggle.

When God initially caused the land to give forth its produce, as it says, **וַיַּצְמַח ה' אֱשֶׁר**, man did not have to assist. It was a complete gift from God. Every seed produced exactly what it was supposed to, everything that grew was easy to prepare and satisfied Man's needs and desires. However, after he was punished, man had to grow and prepare his own food. It transitioned from **וַיַּצְמַח ה'** to **תַּצְמִיחַ לְךָ**. Where God brought forth perfection, man must now struggle and the best he can do is take the things he ultimately harvests, which are not what he originally intended to grow, and try to transform them into something edible. Indeed, everything about man's life that should have been easy and readily provided by God for his benefit, from sustaining himself to procreating, will be a struggle to attain.

In Parashat Nitzavim, Rashi adds a comment regarding heaven and earth: **שָׁמַיָּא וְאֶרֶץ**, for they exist forever. Moses warned the people that if they adhere to the Torah, the same heaven and earth commanded at creation to produce wheat where wheat was planted and barley where barley was planted and consistently brought it forth for man's benefit without toil or struggle, will provide the same consistency God intended when man entered the Garden of Eden. If they don't, they will find the thorns and thistles man was cursed with before he was exiled, and ultimately, they will also be exiled from the land, like Adam and Eve before them.

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