

Time, and Other Tidbits

1. Is G-d spiritual or physical?

Neither. G-d created both the spiritual and the physical, as it says, “In the beginning G-d created the heavens and the earth.”¹

2. What marked evening and morning on the first three days? (Avi Haberfeld).

It could not have been the sun, as there were three days of creation before the celestial bodies existed; they were created on the fourth day (Bereishis, 1:14–19). This shows us that there were days even before there was a sun. Therefore, the sun is not what makes days, rather it is what has been designated to let us know when it is day.

So, then, what does make up a day?

In the spiritual realms, there are 24 shifts of angels, each one praising Hashem at a different hour. Twelve of those shifts correspond to the 12 configurations you can make out of the 4 letters of the name *Adonai* (which, in Hebrew, has 4 letters and is pronounced *Ado-noy*), and the other 12 are for the 12 configurations you can make out of the 4 letters of the name ‘Havaya’ (the Tetragrammaton, the 4-letter name of Hashem that we don’t pronounce, made up of the Hebrew letters *yud*, *hay*, *vov* and then another *hay*). One of these sets of 12 represents evening, and the other, morning.

It is interesting to note that long before the clock was invented, the Jewish people divided their day into 24 hours: 12 for evening and 12 for morning. Of course, the length of each “Halachic” hour differs depending on the time of year: the nighttime hours get longer in the winter and shorter in the summer, and the opposite is true for daytime hours.. The spiritual reason behind this method we have of calculating halachic times is the 24 shifts of the angels.

If you remember the Torah story where Jacob was wrestling with the angel, the angel asked Jacob to allow him to go. Why did he want to go? Because it was getting close to his shift to praise Hashem.

So, it seems that Hashem set the sun to the same schedule as he did the angels.

However, according to the Ohr Hachaim, everything was created on the first day, but the angels were created on the second day so that no one would say that the angels had a part in Creation. If so, then how did the 24 hours work before the angels had their shifts?

The system of 24 hours – 12 evening and 12 morning – could have begun on the first day, even before the angels were around, and then after Hashem brought them into being, He could have put on them that schedule He created on the first day. In other words, there was already a system of evening and morning in the spiritual realms. And even though everything was created on the first day, the sun and the other celestial bodies weren’t put into place, to make it easier for us to mark them, until the fourth day.

3. What was the first creation to go against G-d’s will?

It was the earth. On the third day of Creation, G-d said, “Let the earth sprout...fruity trees bearing fruit...” (Bereishis, 1:11). But when the earth brought forth trees, the Torah states, “The earth gave forth...trees bearing fruit...” (Bereishis, 1:12). The wood of the trees was also supposed to taste like fruit, but the earth went against G-d’s will and didn’t make the actual trees fruity. Later, the first man, Adam, was created from the earth, and that is where humanity got the nature to go against Hashem’s will.

I hope you enjoy these Torah tidbits! Next time I will start a series explaining the Shabbat dinner and the symbolism it holds.

¹ Bereishis, 1:1.