

בראשית

THE REAL MOTHER OF ALL HUMANITY

Adam *Harishon* and Chava were created by Hashem to serve as the progenitors of mankind. Tragically, the seed of their first born, Kayin, was doomed to destruction at the conclusion of ten generations (Rashi, *Bereishis* 4:24; *Bereishis Rabbah* 23:4). Their second son, Hevel, was murdered by Kayin, and had no offspring. Only the third son, Sheis, was ordained to perpetuate mankind. The actual parents of humanity were Noach (Sheis' great, great, great.....grandson) and Noach's wife. Nowhere does the Torah openly reveal to us who this great matriarch of humanity was. It has been left to *Chazal* to determine her identity.

In *Bereishis Rabbah* (23:3) commenting on the verse "And the sister of Tuval Kayin was Na'amah" (*Bereishis* 4:22), we find a fascinating dispute among *Tannaim*, one with potentially great ramifications:

א"ר אבא בר כהנא: נעמה אשתו של נח היתה למה היו קורין אותה נעמה? שהיו מעשיה נעימים, ורבנן אמרי: נעמה אחרת היתה ולמה היו קורין אותה נעמה? שהיתה מנעמת בתוף לעבודת כוכבים.

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana said: "[This] Na'amah was the wife of Noach. Why was she named Na'amah? Because her deeds were sweet." And the Rabbis say: "[The wife of Noach] was a different Na'amah. And why was this Na'amah mentioned in the verse? Because she used to play the tambourine with pleasant melodies for idols."

The *Yefei To'ar* (ibid.) explains the objection of the Rabbis — that the Na'amah mentioned in the *pasuk* (who was a direct descendant of Kayin, the sister of Tuval Kayin, and the daughter of Lemech and Tzila) could not have been Noach's wife, in a very simple fashion. Noach was born nine generations after Kayin. Na'amah was born six generations after Kayin. This Na'amah must have been an old woman by the time of Noach. Therefore Noach must have been married to another woman, who, according to tradition, also happened to be named Na'amah, but was not identified in the Torah.

Another commentary on the *Midrash Rabbah*, the *Peirush Maharzu* (by Rav Zev Wolf Einhorn) (ibid.), explains the position of the Rabbis from a contextual approach. All the other progeny of Kayin who are named in this particular section of the Torah were evildoers whose names were associated with their shameful acts. Therefore, the Rabbis conclude that the name Na'amah must also be associated with similar base conduct. Hence, they associate this Na'amah and her name with idolatry. The *tzaddik*, Noach, must have married a different Na'amah, who perforce must have been a righteous woman (Maharal, *Gur Aryeh*, *Bereishis* 4:22), one worthy of being saved along with Noach.

According to the *Seder Hadoros* in the year 1554 after Creation, Noach, who was then 498 years old, married Na'amah, the daughter of Chanoch (from the lineage of Sheis), who was 580 years old at the time. The *Seder Hadoros* questions why Rashi, in his commentary on *Bereishis* 4:22, quotes only the minority opinion of Rabbi Abba bar Kahana, that the Na'amah of the lineage of Kayin was the wife of Noach, totally disregarding the majority view of the Rabbis.

Various later commentators demonstrate why Rashi chose the opinion that depicts Na'amah, the descendant of Kayin and the sister of Tuval Kayin, as the wife of Noach. First of all, she is the only female descendant of Kayin who is mentioned here. It would make sense that she is being singled out because of her uniqueness as the one true righteous person to come from the seed of Kayin. [The Rabbis who depict her as wicked would have to state that she

is being singled out for her extreme wickedness.] Secondly, Midrashic sources, which Rashi cites, state that Tzila, the mother of Tuval Kayin and Na'amah, had been given a potion to make her sterile in order to protect her beauty from the ravages of childbirth. Since she had been sterilized, her subsequent births to Tuval Kayin and Na'amah must have been of a miraculous nature [See the *Da'as Zekeinim* of the *Ba'alei Tosafos* on verse 4:19 as to the reason it says "and Tzila, she *also* gave birth." Also note the *Meshech Chachmah* on *Bereishis* 19:38 concerning the younger daughter of Lot.] If a miracle occurred, it must have been for good cause. Since Tuval Kayin was an evil man, steeped in the ways of his ancestors, the good that resulted from the miracle must have been the birth of Na'amah [See the supercommentaries on Rashi of Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi, the *Gur Aryeh* by the Maharal of Prague, and the *Divrei David* by the Taz].

It is possible that the difference of opinion between Rabbi Abba bar Kahana and the Rabbis relates to one of the most profound secrets of the Torah. To understand it we must travel backward in time, to the roots of Naamah's ancestry. At the time of Kayin's birth¹, the Torah tells us:

והאדם ידע את חוה אשתו, ותהר ותלד את קין, ותאמר "קניתי
איש את ה'"

And Adam knew Chava his wife; and she
conceived, and bore Kayin; and she said: "I have
gotten a man with Hashem" (*Bereishis* 4:1).

There are many possible ways to translate the above phrase.

The *Targum Yonasan ben Uziel* offers a unique translation of the verse in the following manner:

¹. The author of the *Sefer Yalkut Reuvaini* quotes the author of the *Sefer Pliya* as saying that the circumstances surrounding the birth of Cain should not be revealed (*Parshas Bereishis*). Nevertheless, the *Yalkut Reuvaini* deemed it acceptable to discuss these issues in contemporary times.

ואדם ידע את חוה איתתיה, דהוה חמידת למלאכא, ואעדיעת,
וילידת ית קין, ואמרת קניתי לגברא ית מלאכא דהשם
And Adam knew that Chava, his wife, lusted with
an Angel and she conceived and she gave birth to
Kayin, and she said, “I have gotten a man with the
angel of G-d.” (*Targum Yonasan, Bereishis 4:1*).

The Divine Name, “*Elokim*,” also refers to angels in many places in *Tanach*. Either the *Targum Yonasan ben Uziel* maintains that the Divine Name, Ado-nai, can also refer to Angels, or that the words “Angel of” are missing in the above *pasuk*.

Targum Yonasan ben Uziel says that Kayin was not Adam’s son at all; Kayin was a product of the union of Chava and an angel. The *Peirush Yonason*, a commentary on *Targum Yonasan* further elucidates:

הבין ממה שלא היה דמותו מתחתונים אלא מעליונים לכך ידע
שהמלאך סמאל נתאוה לה ובא עליה וזהו איש את ה', פירוש-
עם המלאך
He [Adam] understood that his [Kayin’s]
appearance was not that of the lower regions
[Earth], but rather from the upper regions [Heaven].
Therefore he knew that the Angel Samael in his lust
for her [Chava] had come upon her, and this is the
meaning of “a man with Hashem” — with an angel
of G-d. (ibid.)

It is clear that Samael, who also happens to be the *Yeitzer Hara*, Satan, the Angel of Death, (*Malach Hamaves*) (*Bava Basra 16•*) and the Guardian Angel of Eisav, is, according to this extraordinary *Midrash*, the true father of Kayin the murderer, the first “naturally born” human being.

The *Yalkut Shimoni*, a compendium of Midrashic material, (*Bereishis 4:35*) elaborates, in the name of Rabban Yishmael:

The rider of the snake came upon her, and she conceived Kayin, after which Adam came upon her and she conceived Hevel, as it is written, “And the

Man knew Chava his wife.” What did he know? He knew she conceived, and she saw that her son’s demeanor was not from the earth, but rather, from the upper regions. And she understood and said, “I have gotten a man from [an Angel of] G-d.”

Before Adam *Harishon* was created, a natural rival to Adam existed, capable of challenging him for supremacy. That being was apparently capable of speech, and was cunning and passionate, to the extent that it identified itself as a replacement for Adam. That creature was the *Nachash Kadmoni* — “Primordial Snake.” This view is evidenced by the *Gemara (Sotah 9:)* which describes the “original snake” as:

נחש הקדמוני..מלך על כל בהמה וחיה... הלך בקומה זקופה...
יהא מאכלו, מאכל אדם... אהרוג את אדם ואשא את חוה
King of the animals... walking erect on two feet...
eating the same food as man... and plotting to kill
Adam, so that it could marry Chava.

The obvious purpose of the snake was to shake Adam out of a state of complacency, forcing him to achieve his potential. Adam would have to recognize his own greatness, and define the distinctions between himself and the serpent. Unfortunately, Adam failed. The Maharal (*Chidushei Aggados Sotah 9•*) explains that the snake was far from being an equal of Adam. It was merely a creation, programmed by Hashem, designed to challenge Adam in certain specific areas. In order to compete in these limited areas, Hashem endowed it with qualities of greatness, as man obviously would not be challenged by a creature whose stature is far below his. Hence it was imperative that the snake possess great attributes. As a creature, however, it only approached, but it did not really rival Adam. It was endowed with limited greatness in order to serve as a test for Man. Man failed this test.

We find a similar thesis in *Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer (13)*. The angels were jealous of the superior qualities of Adam, and plotted his downfall. The *Malach Samael* volunteered to sabotage Adam,

by seeking out the most clever of the animals, the snake (*Bereishis* 3:1), and investing it with great powers. This enhanced being was now poised to challenge Adam. This explains the language of the *Yalkut Shimoni* (*Bereishis* 4:35): רוכב הנחש — “rider of the snake.”

It was actually Samael controlling the snake. Thus, when Rashi (*Sotah* 9:) declares that the snake had marital relations with Chava, he means that Samael, controlling the actions of the snake, actually had relations with Chava. Samael’s actions resulted in Adam’s sin, and Adam’s subsequent decline to the status of mere mortal (see Rambam, *Moreh Nevuchim* 2:30). Samael’s relations with Chava produced Kayin, and with Kayin came the introduction of evil into the “genome” of mankind (see *Shabbos* 146; see Rashi (*ibid.*)).

The question now arises: why would Hashem allow the first “naturally” born human being to be fathered by the *Malach* Samael? We might proceed to answer this first question with a second question: how could Kayin, the son of Adam Harishon, G-d’s handcrafted human, come to commit a murder so early in the history of the human race? We might add an additional query: how could humanity, created by G-d, produce an Amaleik, a Haman, or a Hitler (may their names be eradicated)? From where did murder, barbarism, and cruelty come into the human psyche? Hashem is all good. Although He is the creator of everything, He nevertheless did not want to introduce evil into mankind with (so to speak) His own hands. He therefore created Samael as the agent of evil; the embodiment of the *Yeitzer Hara*, Satan, the *Malach Hamaves* and the Guardian of Eisav. Samael would be the direct conduit of evil into mankind. Even though Hashem is the Creator of all *yeish me’ayin* — *ex-nihilo* — when it came to His prime creation, the human being, the actual introduction of evil would be done through His agent. Hashem chose not to sully (so to speak) His hands with evil, since He is inherently good. Hence, it was necessary to have His agent, Samael, introduce evil directly into mankind (see Redak, *Yeshayah* 45:7).

Our Sages teach us that prior to the sin of Adam, the *Yeitzer Hara* existed only in an external form outside of man. After the sin,

the *Yeitzer Hara* became internalized within man (Rashi, *Bereishis* 2:25).

We can now understand the transition of the *Yeitzer Hara* from an external force to an internal force; this was via the transfer of evil from the outside agent into his human offspring. It was a biological internalization of evil by means of the reproductive process. The first human being born immediately after Adam's sin was Kayin. Hence, the internalization of the *yeitzer hara* manifested itself in Mankind, very naturally. Adam and Chava, and their other offspring, however, still possessed the external form of the *yeitzer hara*.

R. Yehudah *Halevi* in his magnum opus, *The Kuzari (Sha'ar Sheini)*, relates that Adam sired many children, but only Hevel was worthy of taking Adam's place, because Hevel alone possessed Adam's "attributes" (what the *Kuzari* refers to as the "*inyan Eloki*" — "the Divine essence.") After Hevel's murder, this "Divine essence" of Adam was passed onto Sheis. This "Divine essence" was then passed onto Enosh, and so on, down the line of generations until Yaakov; from father to a chosen son. Once Yaakov sired the Twelve Tribes the *inyan Eloki* was transmitted to every single Jewish offspring (see Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulay, *Rosh David*, Balak).

We can now appreciate the dispute between Rabbi Abba bar Kahana and the Rabbis. Hashem foresaw that Kayin and his offspring were destined for extermination by the tenth generation, Noach's generation. It was imperative for Noach to find a suitable mate. Noach, who possessed the "essence and attributes" of Adam *Harishon*, representing the ninth generation from Sheis, was designated to be the progenitor of mankind after the Flood. The *yichus* of mankind would be determined by Noach; however, Noach's spouse would also influence all future offspring (see *Hakdamas Hazohar* 910). It is now also possible to understand the puzzling message of the *Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer* (22):

From Sheis are derived all the righteous of the future generations; and from Kayin are derived all the wicked, sinners, and rebellious ones.

The *Seder Hadoros* (130) attests to the purity of Noach's lineage. There had been no inter-marriage with the offspring of Kayin in Noach's ancestry. Kayin and his descendants possessed the inbred *Yeitzer Hara*, which was transmitted to them from Samael. Sheis and his descendants did not possess this inbred evil. Rabbi Abba bar Kahana's school of thought felt that it was necessary for Noach to take a mate from the seed of Kayin, so that both the "essence and attributes" of Adam *Harishon*, and the evil of Samael, would be transmitted to future generations. If Noach did not join with an offspring of Kayin, the *Yeitzer Hara* as we know it today would not exist in mankind. The Rabbis who disagree with Rabbi Abba bar Kahana, believed that Noach married with the daughter of Chanoch, a descendent of Sheis. This would have left *B'nai Noach* without the inbred *Yeitzer Hara*. Therefore, Rashi felt it imperative to state Rabbi Abba bar Kahana's teaching as absolute.

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