

Bereshit Rav J. B. Soloveitchik, zt"l

- Kol Hashem **מתהלך**. Eating of the forbidden fruit.

BERESHIT: RAV J. B. SOLOVEITCHIK

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On the passuk "וישמעו את קול ה' אלוקים מתהלך בגן לרוח היום" (3:8) the Rav discussed the word **מתהלך** based on 3 different interpretations:

- 1) Rabbeinu Yonah explains that man heard the sound of Hashem while he, man, was walking around in the garden.
- 2) The Ibn Ezra explains that the word Mithalech is describing the **קול ה'**; that the sound of Hashem was extending and spreading through the garden.
- 3) The Ramban explains the word Mithalech as indicating accompanying, being present. The Shechina will be ever present no matter where man may go. Adam felt the presence of Hashem in garden.

All three interpretations lead to the same conclusion: there is hope for man no matter how enveloped in wickedness he may be. The empty feeling and frustrations that the wicked derives from his action will drive him back to Hashem. The hopeless realization that his present path in life will not succeed is always there, pushing him to repent and return to Hashem. This is what the Passuk means:

Shalom Shalom Larachok Vlakarov... Vhareshaim Kayam Nigrash Ki
Hasheket Lo Yuchal Vayigrishu Miyamav Refesh Vtit.

There is no peace of mind for the wicked. They are never content with their actions and way of life. This gnawing emptiness can eventually bring him back

to the Derech Hashem and Torah. All 3 interpretations are hinting at this fundamental concept.

The sin of eating from the Eitz Hadaat was that Adam thought that he could throw off the yoke of Hashem, that he could write his own Shulchan Aruch, so to speak, so he could follow his own conscience. Man wanted to be Gd-like in the knowledge of good and evil.

Rabbeinu Yonah explained that man was walking the way he saw fit, as if he was the master of the garden, showing that he was the master of his destiny. But as he was walking around, he could not escape the sound of Hashem, who he recognized was the true master of everything.

The Ibn Ezra explained that as the Kol Hashem began to spread throughout the garden, bit by bit, man began to realize what he did and the enormity of his actions.

The Ramban explained that Adam could never run away from Hashem, just like the Kol Hashem was always surrounding him. The Shechina never leaves man and it is this constant accompaniment that will bring man completely back to Hashem.

Submitted by Nisson Shulman