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For decades I have been writing down the issue number of the current week's Perceptions just as a matter of protocol, and without really comprehending the number. But this week, writing down the number 2110 struck me as being a very large number. . . over 2,000 issues of Perceptions written to date, b"H, reminding to thank God for the opportunity to have done so, and still do so, and my readers who, hopefully, have benefited from them.

That aside, we need to "see" something else because, perception is everything. We do right or wrong based upon how we perceive reality, and that has been up for grabs ever since Adam made the fateful and epically historic mistake of eating from the *Aitz HaDa'as Tov v'Ra*. It severely damaged our vision.

In fact, the main part of the sin is not even mentioned in the Torah:

The warning was: Do not contemplate or *glance* at anything with which evil is associated, to avoid being drawn to look at the strength of the *Chitzonim* (evil) themselves. . . It is the nature of a person to become attached to what they contemplate, since the mind, the thinker, and the contemplated, become one. Therefore, there is great danger in looking at and contemplating anything to which evil is attached. . . Thus it says. . . "*a delight to the eyes and that the tree was desirable for wisdom*" (*Bereishis* 3:6). . . This is the main, deeper point of the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, regarding which The Holy One, Blessed is He, warned Adam *HaRishon* which he transgressed, stumbled, and which damaged [him as a result]. (*Drushei Olam HaTobu, Drush Aitz HaDa'as, Siman 3*)

It was Adam's looking at the tree that got the sin rolling, making man and the world more material and vulnerable to the *yetzer hara*. Chava's distorted perception of the tree recorded in the Torah and which led to her illicit eating was the result of Adam's illicit looking at the tree. Prior to that, any tree whose fruit God had prohibited could

never have looked “good” to eat, but false to eat. True and false are absolutes; good and evil are subject to human interpretation.

We’ve witnessed this all through history, but it is becoming more pronounced now by the day. But then again, it should come as no surprise since we are living through the tenth of the six days of history, our millennium corresponding to the day of the first sin, and our period of history corresponding to the actual hour in which Adam and Chava sinned.

This is why and how you can see many people, even entire nations today backing the Palestinians over Israel today, and thinking they are doing the “right” thing when, according to the facts, it is just the opposite.

Of course I am saying this, right? I’m Jewish, even Israeli, and that makes me biased in my favor. True, because it is only human to be biased in your own direction. But the good news in this case is that I happen to be biased for the right side because the facts on the ground also support what I am saying. And those who say otherwise either don’t know all the facts, are anti-Semitic to the point of falsifying the facts, or are just accomplices to the evil that the Palestinians are responsible for.

And even though many Palestinians would like to be free of Hamas, making them appear to outsiders like “innocent” bystanders in the conflict, they are far from it. They are the ones raising their children with a built-in hatred of Jews and need to murder as many of them as possible, something they are proud of. Theirs is a culture of hatred and violence.

Israel, on the other hand, not only does not work this way, they go out of their way to employ and pay Arabs well. We’re the only people prepared to work side-by-side with our mortal enemy in the name of peace and cooperation. We have paid dearly for this over the years, October 7th being just one recent example.

As the Ramchal and GR”A have said, when right becomes wrong and vice versa, Moshiach is imminent. As Kabbalah teaches, the Gemora elaborates, and Physics proves, chaos is the norm, not order. Honesty is a virtue because it is not natural. And though the *Aitz HaDa’as Tov v’Ra*, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil may not be the cause of this, it certainly wasn’t the *tikun* for it as well.

The Torah is. The Torah is a corrective lens with which to see more clearly and leave less decisions in life to mistake assumptions about reality. It is not based upon good and evil but true and false which has alluded mankind ever since we went after knowledge at the cost of wisdom. To live without Torah is to live a lie, and nothing hurts and damages people more than this.

This is why Moshe Rabbeinu says in this week’s *parsha*, “*Re’eb—See!*” He wasn’t just

grabbing our attention. He wasn't waking up the nation to the idea that there is more to reality than what the eyes might provide. And Moshe wasn't referring to the vision of the *physical* eyes, but of the *mind's* eye. If you have twenty-twenty physical sight but poor spiritual vision, you get all the distorted takes on history that we are witnessing today.

As the Gemora warns, "people *see*, but they know not *what* they see" (*Chagigah* 12b). That's the reason why the world is so distant from Zechariah's prophecy of God being King over the entire world, and His Name being one in the mind's of men. Imagine the shock and tremendous regret that those people will feel when Zechariah's prophecy does come true. And it's not much further away.

Have a great Shabbos,

Pinchas Winston

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