

And to Adam He said, “...the ground will be cursed for your sake.” (3:17)

How often have we read these pesukim and ignored its message? Adam sinned, and he was punished. In detailing the punishment, Hashem says that the earth will be cursed for his sake, and he will have to go through various challenges and vicissitudes in order to earn his daily bread. Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, makes note of the fact that at no point in Hashem's verdict is a curse pronounced against man. The verdict is only against the ground and the animals. Man, however, is not placed under a ban for committing his first act of disobedience. In all that was said, not a single syllable altered man's Divine calling or his ability to achieve it, even by a hairbreadth. It is only the stage and circumstances under which he must carry out this mission that have changed, but it is for his benefit. It will not be as easy, but this creates a situation which will improve his capacity for reward. The mission and his G-d-like calling remain undisturbed. Until this very day, every human child comes from the Hand of G-d, as pure as Adam. Every child born to mankind is as pure as an angel.

The utter nonsense and disconsolate lie that have undermined the whole moral future of mankind have been tempered by this history. The dogma of “original sin” has been espoused by its religious innovators. They have founded and built the entire structure of their religion on it, but it is built upon a misrepresentation of the text. According to them, man has become intrinsically sinful; he has forfeited the ability to be good. He must sin in order for him to return to G-d. Something other than his own ability must contribute to his elevating himself. In other words, he cannot do it by himself.

Against such a distorted set of beliefs, Judaism raises a most vehement protest. We do not need a dead or resurrected intermediary to enable us to reach G-d. Throughout history, we have been taught how great and pure men were able to get as near to Hashem as Adam before his fall. Let us just recall the Patriarchs, Moshe and Aharon, the Judges, the Neviim, individuals who achieved closeness to the Almighty simply by virtue of their faithfulness towards carrying out their duty. The doctrine of original sin and, consequently, the curse of the sinfulness of mankind is an inane attempt at promoting a religion. As the Torah clearly states that no curse was pronounced over man, we continue with the belief that, Elokai, neshamah shenasata bi tehorah he, “My Lord, the soul which You have placed within me is pure.” It is up to me to maintain its purity and to return it to You in its pristine form.

