

Q: Who was the First to know that G-d created the World?

A: Abraham.

There are many ways to interpret the first two Torah portions. For example, some understand it literally, some allegorically; some even try interpreting it based on modern science. There are questions formulated and answered about so many aspects of it, that one can spend a life studying all that has been said and written about the creation story. When I kept reading and re-reading it, with a variety of commentaries at hand, I have become curious about the human aspect of the creation story.

I have asked myself what did Adam and Hava, their children and descendants thought about them, about G-d, and about the World where they lived? How did they view their relations with each other, with G-d, and with the surrounding World and its inhabitants? How much did they knew and understood about the creation of the World as it is written in the Torah? And how did all that understanding or a lack of it contributed to the events described in the creation story and later, through the travails of the flood and in what had followed -- up until the life story of Abraham?

These questions seem to be quite natural for a Torah reader because he or she is a human being and the creation story describes the lives of the first humans. As it is not rare for someone to hear a human story, real or fictitious, and then question the motives that guided story's protagonists, so it seems quite normal to apply common sense reasoning about the behavior of the very first people as it is described in the Torah creation story.

To follow this line of thought, of course, one might try to put him or herself, so to speak, in Adam's shoes right from the beginning of his life (although obviously he, being naked from his creation, was shoeless). So imagine you were not born to your mother and father, you have not grown up, did not attend any school or college, did not ever work in your life, did not even see any other human being. In essence, you know nothing about anything. You open your eyes and see the incredibly big, complex, and beautiful World around you. You do not know why are you here or how did you get in this World – imagine that this is your first day of your adult life! Suddenly there is G-d that appears to you, certainly not as a material being, but somehow communicating with you anyway. He guides you showing the World's creatures, and seeing your frustration of having not found a partner like every kind of animals has, He gives you a wife – the beautiful Hava.

Everything seems to go quite all right so far, yet something crucial is missing: as evident from the Torah text, G-d has not explained to Adam that all the World, its wonders, Adam himself and Hava are G-d's creations and that He is the only Creator and the absolute master of everything. This is because there is no explanation in the Torah text about G-d telling them that He is the World's Creator, neither there is any mentioning of any revelation that occurred to either Adam or Hava, nor evidence of the Torah itself being read by Adam or Hava. Also, it appears that without an explicit explanation, Adam and Hava have not guessed the creation story on their own, perhaps due to being totally overwhelmed by their first experiences on Earth, as they may have been too busy absorbing the whole environment of the Garden of Eden and its inhabitants.

Thus coming back to your imaginary presence in the garden of Eden, you end up not knowing who G-d is, except, perhaps, that He has some authority over you as He places you in the garden and tells you what to eat and what not to eat. Obviously, there is nothing wrong for you to follow G-d's commandments, and you do... until the snake tells you, it is ok not to. At that time, what would make you not to listen to the snake's inducements? As G-d's commandments did not have any weight behind them, you would think very little of their importance, and instead followed your desires to violate them. After all, you have no idea who G-d is and why do you really need to listen to Him -- you have neither knowledge nor understanding that G-d is the supreme master of the World as He is its sole Creator... So, there is no wonder Adam and Hava did exactly what they did -- they may have had no idea who is G-d!

The irony, however, is in the fact that even after G-d had punished Adam and Hava for their transgression by expelling from the garden of Eden, there is no evidence in the Torah that they have understood that G-d is the World's Creator. Although Hava did realize that she had delivered her children following G-d's commandment to be fruitful and multiply, there is no explicit acknowledgment in the Torah text that either Adam or Hava or any of their children realized their relation to G-d. It appears that they continued to relate to G-d as to some kind of master, as evident by Cain and Abel presenting Him the fruits of their labor, yet again neither they nor their descendants had ever acknowledged G-d as the Creator of the World.

It seems that the inability of the first generations to fully realize the nature of G-d had contributed to the multitude of their transgressions. As there was no immediate reaction to people's actions on G-d's behalf, and as no G-d's authority had been exercised on Earth before the flood, people may have somehow followed their most base instincts and degenerated both morally and physically. The only 'righteous' person in that generation Noah was able not to descend into the pit of immorality, but again Torah does not tell us that Noah truly understood the most important relation between G-d and the World -- that G-d is the only Creator of the World.

Even after the flood, there was only one person out of the entire humankind -- Abram -- who realized that G-d is the supreme master and the Creator of the World. This is evident from multiple explicit statements in the Torah describing Abram's behavior, his acknowledgment of G-d as the Creator of the World, and G-d's attitude towards Abram. Obviously, the pinnacle of that relation was the binding of Isaac, which had demonstrated to G-d that Abraham was absolutely committed to G-d, as he believed that G-d, as the Creator of the World, knows an ultimate reason for everything, even for the unimaginable cruel commandment to bind Abraham's own son. It was because of that Abraham had realized that G-d is the only true infinitely powerful authority in the World being the World's Creator. It is because of such Abraham's realization and his unquestionable belief G-d had decided to make a great Jewish nation out of Abraham's and Sarah's descendants so that that nation would carry through to all Earth's people the truth about G-d -- the Creator of this World.