

## PIRKEI AVOS CHAPTER 5 MISHNAH 6

עֲשָׂרָה דְּבָרִים נִבְרָאוּ בְּעֶרְבַּ שַׁבָּת בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת, וְאֵלוֹ הֵן, פִּי הָאָרֶץ, וּפִי הַבְּאֵר, וּפִי הָאֵתוֹן, וְהַקֶּשֶׁת, וְהַמָּן, וְהַמָּטָה, וְהַשְּׁמִיר, וְהַכֶּתֵב, וְהַמְּכַתֵּב, וְהַלְּוָחוֹת. וַיֵּשׂ אֲוֹמְרִים, אִף הַמַּיִקִּין, וְקִבְרֹתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה, וְאֵילוֹ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ. וַיֵּשׂ אֲוֹמְרִים, אִף צֶבֶת בְּצֶבֶת עֲשׂוּיָהּ:

Ten things were created on the eve of the Sabbath at twilight, and these are they: [1] the mouth of the earth, [2] the mouth of the well, [3] the mouth of the donkey, [4] the rainbow, [5] the manna, [6] the staff [of Moses], [7] the shamir, [8] the letters, [9] the writing, [10] and the tablets. And some say: also the demons, the grave of Moses, and the ram of Abraham, our father. And some say: and also tongs, made with tongs.

Commentators question this *mishnah* from a historical perspective. The *mishnah*, seemingly, is teaching that the ten items enumerated in our *mishnah* were created during *bein hashemashos* – twilight of the first *Shabbos*. That would mean, for example, that the ram Avrohom Avinu would use as a *korban* in place of Yitzchok Avinu was about 2000 years old. Similarly, Bilaam's talking donkey would be more than 2400 years old. Are we supposed to take the *mishnah* literally as far as these declarations are concerned? Furthermore, we know of many miracles that happened in history that trace themselves back to creation. For example, the *midrash* relates that the splitting of the sea when the Jews left Egypt was coded into creation. Why was that miracle as well as similar miracles not listed in the *mishnah*?

Commentators explain the *mishnah* according to the Rambam's view of miracles. Rambam maintains that from the outset of creation, Hashem does not step in and override laws of nature. Rather, all of the miraculous incidents were planned from creation and although in the moment they appear to be violations of nature, in reality, it was planned and destined from the beginning of creation. Accordingly, when the *mishnah* enumerates the ten items that were "created" during *bein hashemashos*, what the *mishnah* really means is that the potential for these items was created during *bein heshemashos*. That potential did not actualize itself for thousands of years, but the potential was there from creation. It is like a recessive gene. The potential is present but cannot express itself unless conditions fall into place just perfectly.

The question that remains, however, is why the ten, or more, items in our *mishnah* are enumerated as having been created during *bein hashemashos* as opposed to many of the other miracles that occurred over the course of Jewish history. The answer to this is that the other miracles that occurred that are not listed in our *mishnah* were created on the day the original thing was created. For example, on the second day of creation Hashem separated the upper waters from the lower waters. As Hashem was forming the waters of the universe, He included in those plans that when the Jews will march out of Egypt,

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the sea will split so that they can pass safely and immediately after the Jews finish passing through the sea, the waters will come crashing down on them as it resumes its normal path. Similarly, on the fourth day of creation, as Hashem was creating the sun, moon and other constellations, He included the plan for the sun to stand still when Yehoshua would need it as he was conquering the land of Israel. What is unique about the items enumerated in our *mishnah* is that their potential was not created on a particular day of creation, they were created during *bein hashemashos*.