

# Industrious Midrash

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## Industrious Midrash

A sort-of-loose rendering (and abridgement) of *Midrash Tanchuma*, *Kedoshim* #8

“When you come to the Land [of Israel], plant” (Leviticus 19:23).

*God said to the Jews, “Even though you’ll find the Land filled with every sort of good, don’t say to yourself, ‘Well, since everything’s already here, we can sit back and take it easy.’ No! ‘Plant every kind of fruit tree’ (ibid.). Make sure you plant! Because just as you found trees planted by others, you should plant for your children.”*

One shouldn’t say, “I’m old. How much longer am I going to live? I’m going to die sooner than later—why should I wear myself out for others?” This is what King Solomon means when he says, “God did everything well; He even placed the *olam* in their heart” (Ecclesiastes 3:11). The Hebrew word-root *olam/elem* (*ayin-lamed-mem*) means both *world* and *concealment*. If God wouldn’t’ve hidden death-awareness from mankind, no one would build or plant. “I will certainly die. Why should I work hard for someone else’s benefit?”

So God planned it that our mortality be buried in the recesses of our consciousness and that one's personal "day of demise" be hidden from him. The plan seems to work, since most people are pretty industrious. Working to improve the world is a win-win proposition. If you're fortunate enough, you'll enjoy what you worked to produce. And if not, others will.

God says to the Jews, "Take a lesson from Me. Do **I** need a garden? But still (Genesis 2:8), "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden."

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