



## Biblical Perspectives on What Makes us Human Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

The Friday night kiddush ends with a hanging clause, "*Asher bara Elokim lasot...*" Hashem created us to do what? It's as if he stopped creation at a certain point and said, "Ok, now you have a go at it. Let me see what you can make of this world. It's yours to complete, elevate, and sanctify or destroy if you so choose." In *Tehilim*, chapter 8 it says, "*Tamshleihu b'masei yadecha* - You made him ruler over all the works of your hand." "*Kol shata tachat raglav*- All of existence is under his feet." And suddenly you get that picture that you often see in kabalistic writing of a human being standing with his legs akimbo, his arms this way, and a crown on his head. All of creation is ours. "The sheep and the rams and even the wild beasts, he who crosses the pathways of the seas." Man himself imitates creation. He has learned how to fly like the birds and cross the seas and has taken dominion over earth. While this psalm seems like a paean to Hashem, it is truly a hymn about the greatness of the human being.

The Malbim says that *Vatimshlehu* comes from the root word *maschal*, a parable. The human being is a parable for all of creation. All forms of all beings on earth are gathered in

the human being. He's a microcosm, a small world that represents a larger world. Puny man represents *kivyachal Hashem* himself in whose image he was created.

In chapter 144, we find the same questions asked but under completely different circumstances. David is at war. He thanks Hashem, "Who formed me, who taught my hands to do battle and my fingers to go to war." In this situation he suddenly feels his vulnerability and he knows full well that he might face death at any moment. "You've been my shield, I've hidden behind you. And you gave me dominion, putting my nation underneath me." Now as a king leading his people to war, he exclaims, "What is man that you know him." The word *yadaat* is reminiscent of, "*V'Adam yada et chava ishto*-And Adam knew Chava his wife." Hashem loves and cares about us.

At this moment, David Hamelech feels completely vulnerable and in the hands of Hashem. As he goes into battle, he knows that in a moment he could be finished. At the same time, he dares to ask, "Send your hand from above, rescue me from these waters, this torrent, from the hands of these alien people whose mouth speak emptiness and vanity.

Their right hand (the hand by which one takes an oath) is a right hand of falsehood." Instead of being a paean for man, David Hamelech sees Hashem almost leading him to do things for the price of his own death.

Let's examine a third circumstance. Iyov was a righteous person whose suffering we just can't explain He did nothing to deserve it. He was an *ish tam yarei Elokim*. He says, "I will speak in the agony of my heart, bespeak the bitterness of my soul, am I the ocean, the leviathan, that you need to watch over me to prevent me from washing over the land." Hashem doesn't allow the ocean to swallow up the land. It's great waves lap against the shore but keep being pulled back. The leviathan too needs to be reigned in. It doesn't reproduce much to keep it from devouring everything in its path. "...My days are nothing but hot air. I'll die anyway, why torture me." "...Why did you make me your target ... I became a burden to myself. Won't you bear my soul, won't you look over any wrongdoing I've done... I would lay down in the dust and should you come looking for me in the morning, I won't be here anymore. Let me die. " All of this begs the question, what is man?

## Antisemitism in America Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah (Heller) Gottlieb

There are predictions in the prophets about the terrible wars and suffering that will take place before *Mashiach* comes. But many of our contemporary Rabbis say we've already gone through most of it. What will happen next is described in the *Talmud*. When it get towards the end, we'll be pushed to the wall, not necessarily by physical oppression. We'll begin to look for truth, who are we really? But the answer won't come easily. "*Emet needar me'haretz* -Truth will be absent from the world." *Ne'edar* comes from the root word *eder*, a flock. We'll be fragmented as a people. There will be scattered flocks of Jews belonging to this and that group. The fragmentation of the Jewish people is unprecedented. Why?

When Hashem created the world, he invoked

his attributes and asked them, "Shall I create humans?" Kindness said yes, justice said no, and truth went into a panic claiming it couldn't exist with humans. Why not? Truth is seeing the whole picture and humans only see the partial picture. So, Hashem picked up truth and threw it forcefully to the earth until it shattered. People find their little piece of truth and because they are so desperate for it, they'll convince themselves it's the whole truth. That's why we're so fragmented. One group may say, we should be generous and there's truth to that. They'll extend that to people who are our enemies. Another group will say we should drive our enemies away from us, we have to defend ourselves, and there is truth to that too. We should defend ourselves, but for what price and under whose say so and under what circumstances? There are those who are

going to say that retaining a sense of who we are is where it is and we have to learn Torah. That's true, but is it true for every young man, all day, every day, for his entire life? People have to find their own truth and respect the truths of others. We're being forced into this by people who are saying, "You can't be us." We have to respond, "You're right, we can't be you, we don't want to be you, we want to be ourselves."

*Maharal* says redemption means going back to being ourselves. What made the Jews salvageable when they were in Egypt was that they didn't change their language, clothing, and names. We're passed that. We've changed all of that. We don't have to just externalize our Judaism. We have *mitzvot* and some speak louder to one group than another.

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We have to find ourselves in the world of *mitzvot*. This is what Hashem wants of us. There has to be respect for the different fragments if you want to get to the whole picture.

The Second Temple was destroyed because of senseless hatred. Usually people have reasons for hating others such as difference

of opinion, threats, or being emotionally afraid of people who are more observant than them. We have to make each other feel safe and respected because what we need is to see the whole picture, the truth. Hashem is making us see what the options aren't. The Jews in Europe know they will never be at home there. The last people to let go of the illusion that exile is home, are the Jews in America.

America is a wonderful, tolerant, free, country. Nevertheless, we will never be truly ourselves there because our reason for existence has to do with being a people who are a nation of priests and a holy nation. We have to rediscover our ability to be elevated. We have to rediscover our true selves. May it not come through suffering and pain, but from a place of hope, and light and goodness.

## Shir Shel Yom: Yom Shishi Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

The sages tell us that when Hashem completed the six days of creation, He became king upon the earth. What is the connection between the sixth day of creation, the completion of creation, the creation of man, and Hashem becoming king?

If one examines the story of creation, one can see that when Hashem created Adam, He blessed him and told him that all of creation was given to him, "*Kivshuha*-conquer it." Hashem tells Adam he is so to speak the king on earth, he was given all of creation to explore and use for his needs.

What does the verse mean when it says Hashem became king? Every day something else was created, light on the first day, heaven on the second day... Everything that was created was a being of its own. It was only when creation was completed that it become one entity. All parts of creation are interconnected. This is compared to the human body. We have separate limbs and organs, each an entity on its own and built perfectly to do its function. But they cannot fully work without

the complete body. Each limb and organ is interconnected in its functioning with all the others. An eye on its own is nothing, unless there is a brain that makes it work. So too with creation. Vegetation goes through the process of photosynthesis and produces oxygen which humans need. In turn, vegetation absorbs carbon dioxide expelled by humans. There is a symbiotic existence.

When all of creation was in place, it could start interacting one with another and become one. This is what it means on a physical level, *nigmara melachto*, that Hashem completed creation. Up till now there were parts and pieces, now it became one reality. Rav Tzadok Hakohen explains it on a spiritual level. On the sixth day of creation, there was a unification, an inner connection of all the details into one entity. After each day of creation it says, "*Vayar Elokim ki tov*- Hashem saw it was good." After the sixth day of creation it says, "*Vayar Elokim et kol asher asa v'hinei tov moed*- Hashem saw everything that he did and behold it was very good." Each part on its own was good, but now that creation was completed they

could form together as one entity and it was very good. All that was created has no meaning or value and no reason for being if not for man. Man is the one that unites all of creation into one.

We find that on the second day of creation. Hashem created angels and He became a king over them. The angels have total clarity. They don't have a physical body to limit their ability to see Hashem. So, He was to an extent a king on Monday. But there's a difference between this and what happened on Friday. Monday tells us a reality. Creatures were created who recognized Hashem and He became their king. On Friday, man was created and we have a choice if we want to make Hashem king or not. It's up to us. Obviously, the fact that we chose to crown Hashem king makes what we do much more meaningful. The way Hashem meant for us to live is a lifetime job and cannot be accomplished by one person. It's an accumulation of all the generations who we hope will accomplish the mission.