

Biblical Perspectives on What Makes us Human Part III

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

There are two things that stand out differently with the creation of man. It says, "*Vayomer Elokim naaseh adam b'tzalmeinu kidmuteinu* -And Hashem said let us make man in our form and image." This indicates intention. Man was created with the purpose that he would have dominion over all creation. "*B'tzelem Elokim bara oto...zachar u'nekeva bara atom*"- He created him in the image of Hashem as an androgynous creature." What does naaseh mean? Who is we? Some of the early *Rishonim* suggest that it refers to the majestic plural as the queen says, "We are not amused," and speaks in the plural. But then Hashem does speak in the singular. Rashi takes the position of the *Midrash* that it's meant to teach us *derech eretz* (proper conduct). Even *Hashem kivyuchal* informs the governed and takes advice from his court, the angels, although He doesn't need it. And in case you might think in error that there were partners to Hashem creating Adam, the next verse tells us they did not do anything. It was only Hashem. "*Elokim bara et ha'adam* -Hashem created man."

We say in *Adon Olam* that Hashem has no shape or form. The Torah tells us, "You shall make no image of Him." When we stood at *Har Sinai* there was no visible picture. What then does *tzelem udemut* (in His form, in His image) mean? The Ramban explains that Hashem spoke to the earth and all the creatures thereof, not merely informing them that he was now appointing a king, as Rav Hirsh says, but rather to make them partners in the creation of man who was formed by the earth and by Hashem. The body came from earth and the soul came from Hashem. Therefore Hashem said, *Naaseh*- We'll do this together.

Some say *tzelem Elokim* means that man was given conscious intelligence, not just that he knows, but that he knows that he knows. With that came the ability to reason and to draw conclusions from one thing to another and to grow in the process. It was understanding and knowing more, sufficient to have dominion over earth, to improve, develop, and safeguard it. This was essentially what He gave him.

Others say what He gave him was not merely rationality or consciousness, but freedom of choice. And that made him a *tzelem*. *Tzelem* comes from the root word *tsel*, a shadow of Hashem, says the Abarbanel. What man does here on earth is supposed to be a reflection of what Hashem does up in heaven.

Some explain that Adam was called so because he came from the earth (*adama*). Rav Hirsh says it comes from the root word *domeh* (similar). Man is a similitude of Hashem and an image maker of words. All of his words are essentially metaphors and similes. He sees comparisons between one thing and another. This ability stems from his creative imagination, his *dimyon*. Man, though limited in time and space, has a mind that can remember the past, live in the present, and project a future that does not yet exist. For man to be able to conquer the depths of the seas, the stars, the ravages of disease, he must have the ability to draw analogies and see similitudes and that is why he is called adam.

Introduction to the Book of Mishlei Part I

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

Mishlei was authored by *Shlomo Hamelech*. *David Hamelech* had a soul that stemmed from Adam who gave him 70 years of his life. Adam was the ancestor of all future people. There are three who have this *neshama kolelet*, a soul that includes all future souls. Adam, David, and *Mashiach*, which are the acronym Adam. David came from a very interesting background and this tells us something about the Messianic destiny. He was a descendant of Ruth, a Moavite, one of the only nations that cannot convert to Judaism, other than women. It doesn't go much lower than that. His grandfather however, was Boaz from the tribe of Yehuda, as elite as it can get. The mission of *Mashiach* is to be able to reach down to every aspect of reality and elevate it.

David was married to six wives and he was told by the prophets that if it was too few he could have again and again, meaning two

times six. And he did indeed have 18 wives. He wanted to share his capacity with many elements. Why the number 18? The *Magen David* design is two triangles and six points. There's a central place in everyone's soul that is called *malchut*, the ability to bring Hashem into the world through negating one's personality. This signifies the essence of Adam, David and *Mashiach*. The idea of six being the central configuration has to do with the idea of being able to express *malchut* in six different ways. The seven weeks of *Sefira* represent seven different traits, one of which is *malchut*. And *kahena, kahena* you could do it towards the right side which symbolizes that which is more predominant. You could also do it to the left side which symbolizes the side that struggles, fights battles, and overcomes.

The Messianic soul needed to be experienced by different sorts of people. David had many wives and many children, but *Batsheva* was

paramount. The word *Batsheva* means daughter of seven, one whose trait is *malchut*. She was David's female parallel. The David and *Batsheva* incident is a very complex story. *Batsheva* was technically divorced but the whole chain of events wasn't the way it was expected to be. Where was the consultation with the *Sanhedrin*? Where were all the factors that should have been addressed? So, while it wasn't a sin it wasn't quite how it should have been, similar to the birth of David's ancestor, Moav.

The first child that was born of the marriage was critically ill. David fasted, wouldn't sleep in a bed, and refused to receive people. Then the child died and the servants were afraid to reveal the news. When they had no choice, they told him. David got up, washed himself, put on fresh clothes, went to daven, and then sat down to eat a meal. He said, "For once in my life I want to thank Hashem for the bad with

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the same joy and sincerity that I thank Him for the good." This was David Hamelech. This is *malchut*.

The second child was Shlomo Hamelech. It says about him, "*Melech shehashalom shelo*-The king to whom harmony belongs." It is this ability to take all of the different pieces and draw them together as one, that David wanted in his child, the ancestor of *Mashiach*.

David died at the age of 70. He knew his death was imminent and he tried to change Hashem's decree through fasting and repentance just as when the child was ill. Although the child died, the fasting and repentance accomplished something major. As a result of it, David could say in Chapter 51, "My heart is empty within me." The heart has two ventricles. The left side is always full and

the right side is always empty. The left side is the animal side. When he said his heart was empty he was saying, "I've already accomplished that the left side, the animal side of me, is as holy as the right side." Shlomo was born after that point in David's life. He was born to a level of holiness and purity, understanding instinctively what life was about.

Shir Shel Yom: Yom Shishi Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

Saying no to what might seem all powerful although it is only physical, is a real indication that we have accepted Hashem as king upon us. Man can make a choice. He can make knowledge, money, beauty, or power a deity over him. Or he can crown Hashem king. Our true purpose is to recognize the One who created it all. This is a lifetime mission and there are endless levels to it. That is why we have *Rosh Hashana* every year. The new year heralds a fresh opportunity to once again make Hashem king over us, as we aspire to greater heights.

When man was created, not only was there now a being who could recognize Hashem as king, but he could unite all of creation to serve the Creator. If we have a fruit in our hand and we make a blessing over it, we've elevated it to something higher. Money can be transformed as a vehicle to help others such as giving charity and doing good deeds. The *Midrash* tells us that right after man was created, he stood on his feet and being that

he was created in the image of Hashem and he was not diminished yet, he appeared divine. All the other creatures felt awed by him, seeing something transcendental within him, beyond other creatures. They bowed down to him and wanted to accept his authority. Adam then told them, "Let us together crown the one who created us as king. Let us recognize His strength and power and accept His yoke upon us."

This is the song of the sixth day. Man was the one to unite all of creation as one to serve Hashem and make Him king. When he does this, it is as if they are all singing in harmony. "*Lechu neranana l'Hashem* -Let us sing a song to Hashem. When there's *shleimut* (wholeness), when there's no conflict or struggle, then there's true happiness. That is man's mission and that is what transpired on the sixth day of creation. We can now understand what it means, *Gemar melach*-to-He completed His work. As long as man had not been created, the rest of creation was fragmented and unable to achieve their

mission. Beings without free choice cannot accomplish anything. The moment man came into the picture, he was able to unite all of creation to attain their purpose.

Two things were created on the sixth day, animals and man. After the creation of animals, the Torah tells us, "*Vayar Elokim ki tov*-And Hashem saw it was good." After the creation of man, we find something different, "*Vayar Elokim et kol asher asah v'hinei tov moed*-and Hashem saw all that he had created and it was very good." The Ramban explains the difference. When Hashem said *ki tov* He meant to say, "It's exactly the way I wanted it to be." There was a process of creation and now the moment was over and Hashem gave it continuity. It's not written so regarding man because the creation of man was not complete. He alone would decide what he would do with his life. And his mission would be completed when he passed away from this world. Then Hashem would judge if he had accomplished what he was meant to do.