

Biblical Perspectives on What Makes us Human Part IV

The second chapter of *Bereishit* tells us, "This is the story of the way heaven and earth gave birth to other things... *V'kol siach hasadeh terem yiyeh b'aretz* -And there was no vegetation yet growing out of the earth." The seeds were there but nothing appeared above ground. "*V'chol eisav hasadeh terem yitzmach*-And the grass did not grow yet. *Ki lo himter Hashem Elokim al ha'aretz* -For Hashem did not yet bring rain down on earth." Everything was there in potential but had not yet come to fruition. Originally the term for earth was *aretz*. The word *adamah* did not figure until Adam was introduced. Therefore, we can deduce that the word *adamah* is drawn from the word Adam and not the other way around, says Rav Hirsh. It may be that both conjectures are right. The human is caught between *adamah* l'elyon-compared to the One on High and "*Yesodo m'afar v'sofo l'afar*-You are but dust and will return to dust."

Hashem looks at the human He created and he sees, "*Ki lev ha'adam raah m'neurov* -The inclination of a man's heart seems evil from youth." *Raah* doesn't mean evil but rather to shatter and decompose. *Bayit ra'uah* means a house falling apart. It's much like little

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

children playing and breaking what other children are building. Rav Hirsh says it comes from the word *mitnaer* which means to shake loose and cut the umbilical cord. It's like a child wanting to show how independent he is when he learns at the age of two to say no. It's a state of disconnection from the One Above.

Man's sanctity comes from the fact that he has freedom of choice and according to Harav Soloveitchik, it is that struggle between the *adamah* and the *domeh*, between the physical desires and the rational thought, between the free volition and the will of man, and his desires and wishes, that makes him a hero. The Rambam and Rav Sadya Gaon believed that there can be harmony between physical desires and reason. A human being is distinguished by his intelligence and ability to reason and raised in a proper way given to understand that he is a *mentsch*, he can control himself. The educational view today is that children are beasts and at best we need to make sure that they don't cause too much damage to themselves. We will not preach restraint. A human is nothing more than a sophisticated monkey and we have very little trust in him. The materialistic view that has

prevailed and the experience of the twentieth century, whether it was Nazism, Communism, or even Capitalism, is that it's a doggy dog world. The idea is not to get caught. The human being is really rotten and the Christian view would confirm that he can't possibly redeem himself.

That wasn't the position of the Rambam and Rav Sadya Gaon. Children know what's negotiable and what's not. One can give a child an image of himself. In the words of Rabbi Abraham Twersky, his father would tell them, "*Es pasht nisht far azah tzadikil*-It doesn't befit a *tzadik* like you." But if you denigrate your child and tell him that he's nothing but a low life, then that's exactly what he'll be.

Man can conceive and even know his Creator and rise to the level of Moshe Rabbeinu. He can pave his way of life and make choices that are not predetermined. While he's limited by his physicality, suffering forces him to submit to a Higher Power. And while he's struggling, he can attain unimaginable levels that will ultimately prove he is *ha'adam*.

Introduction to the Book of Mishlei Part II

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 IV

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

The sixth day corresponds to *Yosef Hatzadik*. What is the connection? *Yom Shishi* is about taking all of creation and elevating it to make Hashem king. Yosef's strength was sanctifying physical reality. He said no to enticement and immorality. He remained righteous throughout all the difficult circumstances he encountered.

Friday tells us that in the future Hashem will become king via all of creation, whether righteous or wicked, because if the Creator created something, its purpose must be fulfilled. The question is how. The ideal is if we make the right choices like our forefathers did, and we bring spirituality into to the world by saying no to evil and yes to good. However free choice gives us the possibility to choose wrong. It could be very extreme such as denying the existence of Hashem or it could be a minor sin, which is in fact momentarily blocking out the existence of the Almighty. The nations who chose evil were eventually destroyed. Ancient Greece, Ashur, Aram... were all very powerful, and by the very fact that they are not here today, they sanctify the name of Hashem. Mark Twain makes this observation in his famous piece, "Concerning the Jews." Countless mighty nations have

come and gone but the Jews persist through it all. When *Mashiach* comes all the nations will be brought back to life for judgment. Those who served Hashem will be rewarded with eternal life and those who persecuted us will be resurrected in order to pay the price for their sins. When we will see the entire picture, when we will witness reward and punishment, the greatness of Hashem will be revealed.

What it is the message of the sixth day for us today? Rav Tzadok Hakohen notes that man is king of the earth. He is the only creature that walks upright on two legs with his head facing upward. This indicates that we were created to strive higher, to cleave to Hashem. We are superior to other creations, but our power lies within our soul, the spark of divinity inside us. It's not our accomplishment but rather the part of Hashem within us. This tells us that we are very special, that we have unbelievable potential. But it's not about us. We can only open up the doors so that Hashem can dwell inside us. Our spiritual strength comes from above. We must feel proud of the mission given to us. We are meant to connect to Hashem and this should give us tremendous appreciation of our potential.

Chazal tell us, "*B'shivili nivra ha'olom* -The whole world was created for me." But the conclusion should be - "It's because of the soul in me that I have the right to use creation as a means to make Hashem king." This is also what Chazal meant when they said, "*Mi shetarach berev Shabbat yochal b'Shabbat*-He who works on the eve of *Shabbat* will eat on *Shabbat*." Creation happened in two stages, first the six days of creation and then *Shabbat*. *Shabbat* is "*Me'ein olam habah*-A taste of the World to Come." Originally everything was given to man. He wasn't created to deal with the physical on a practical level but rather on a spiritual level. After the sin, reality needed to change because we changed. But Hashem left us a taste of the Next World with the *Shabbat*. When we are at rest we are in harmony, not pulled in opposite directions. *Shabbat* enables us to experience this otherworldly peace. We work and then we have *Shabbat*. This is a metaphor for this world, vis a vis the world after *Mashiach* comes. Whatever man does in this world, says Rav Tzadok, he must remember the end goal- Hashem is giving him the ability to accomplish, *metzad malchuto*, so that he can make Him king over everything.