



Ohr Somayach Light Lines

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Light Insight

Imagine

“Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26)

How can man be “in Our image?” What possible comparison can there be between G-d and Man? G-d is the Painter and man is the painting. How can the work of art truly resemble the artist?

All the animals of creation view the world through their senses. They know only what they see, smell, hear, touch and taste. Their world is bounded by immediate perception. Man is different. The word for Man in Hebrew is *Adam*, which comes from “*dimion*,” meaning “imagination.”

The very essence of man, for that is his name, his defining quality, is his *imagination*. Man can fly above mere physical perception and travel to the ends of space and time — in his mind. Only Man can take what he perceives and compare, analyze and extrapolate.

This is the comparison between man and his Creator.

G-d said “*Let Us make Man...*” so that

Man will have the power of imagination to extend himself by thought into places where nothing previously existed.

Partners

“Let Us make Man...” (Genesis 1:26)

One of the reasons that the Torah speaks here in the plural “*Let Us make Man...*” is to teach us that every human being is obliged to be a partner in the ongoing work of creation — that he should make himself worthy to be the goal and purpose of Creation.

It is for this reason that Creation concludes specifically with Man — to indicate to him that he is the “end” of creation — its purpose.

Thus, it is only fitting that Man should not only perfect his actions, but also his body. The mitzvah of *Bris Milah* (circumcision) indicates that Man, by making himself a partner in his own physical and spiritual self-perfection, shares in the concomitant perfection of the world.

Good Vs. Very Good

“...G-d saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good.” (Genesis 1:31)

With each new creation, the Torah says, “and G-d saw it was good.”

With one exception.

The creation of Man. After Man’s creation, it doesn’t say that “G-d saw it was good.”

Why not?

The idea of G-d *seeing* something implies that the nature of that entity is fixed and immutable for eternity. However Man is not fixed. He has free will to choose either good or evil. Thus, concerning Man the Torah does not write “and G-d saw it was good.”

However, after the creation of Man, G-d took a second look at the Creation and deemed it “very good.” Because with Man’s creation there came into existence a being who had the ability to *choose* to do G-d’s Will, rather than to do it involuntarily like a flower or an animal or a star.

Thus, when Man fulfills G-d’s Will he elevates the entire Creation from “good” to “very good.”

ETHICS of our FATHERS

“If there is no learning of Torah there can be no proper dealing with people. If there is no proper dealing with people there can be no learning of Torah.”

If one fails to learn Torah his interactions with other people will not be proper, for he will not be aware of his responsibilities to them. The Sages point out that one who wishes to be a righteous person must study the Tractates of *Seder*

Nezikin which deal with man’s responsibility to his fellow man.

If, on the other hand, one does not interact properly with those around him, he will forget even what knowledge of the Torah he has acquired. This is his penalty for causing a desecration of G-d’s name, prompting others to say “How corrupt are the actions of this person who learns Torah.” But if he deals well with other people, everyone will develop a respect for Torah as they admiringly say: “How beautiful are the actions of one who studies and lives by the Torah.”

Response Line

Burt Falkenstein wrote:

Now that Succot is over what does one do with the etrog and lulav? I noticed in my synagogue that the lulav is placed on top of the Holy Ark. There’s also one member of our congregation who collects them to make some sort of pie, (I think). Could you kindly reply with an explanation? Thank you.

Dear Burt,

I’ve never heard of lulav pie! You probably mean etrog pie. I know people who make etrog jam and etrog liqueur. I have a jar of etrog jam in my fridge. (It’s an acquired taste.)

Since the lulav and etrog were used for a *mitzvah* they should be

treated with respect. Ideally, they should be used for another *mitzvah*. Many people save their lulav until Passover and then use it to burn the *chametz*. Some people stick cloves into their etrog and use it as the fragrant spice for the *havdallah* service on Saturday night.

Dov from 1000 Oaks, CA wrote:

Why is it that we are still saying “Shana Haba B’yerushalayim — Next Year in Jerusalem,” since any Jew can now go there and live there of his own free will? Thanks for your answer.

Dear Dov,

The story is told of a poor man, Shmelke, who lived in a small village. The town folks wanted to

support him, but without him feeling like he was accepting charity. So they came up with a plan: They hired him to sit at the city gates and wait for the Messiah.

One day, a traveler approached the city and asked Shmelke what he was doing. “This is my job,” Shmelke said. “My job is to wait here to greet the Messsiah.”

“Does it pay well?” asked the traveler.

“Not really,” said Shmelke, “but it’s steady work.”

When we say “Next year in Jerusalem” we mean that all Jews should actually be in Israel and in Jerusalem (not just as tourists!). We mean Jerusalem as it is ideally meant to be — with the Temple, the Sanhedrin and a Jewish Monarch. We’re still waiting. Even we here in Jerusalem say “Next year in Jerusalem!”