

"In our image"

God says, "Let us make man in our image," for man shall include within himself all of the ten *sefirot* (divine attributes), and each *sefirah* will impart something to him.³⁶ -ZOHAR

"From my flesh I perceive God" (Job 19:26). By contemplating the workings of his own body and its faculties, man can understand, by way of metaphor, the manner in which God acts through creation. -BECHAYEI

The image of the soul of man is engraved in the mind of God, like a father who carries the image of his child in his mind at all times, also when his child is in a faraway place. The difference is that for God past and future are one, so the image of man was etched in the divine mind even before God created him.

-R. DOV BER OF MEZERITCH

"In our image, after our likeness"

Man is the image of the divine in the sense that as God is sovereign in the heavens, humanity rules the earth. -SAADIA GAON

The "divine image" in man is the intellect: the means by which man can distinguish between truth and falsehood; the means by which man can know and comprehend the intangible, so that he comes to resemble the angels who are pure form without substance. -MAIMONIDES

Man is the only being who, like God, acts by choice. -SFORNO

Man's likeness to God expresses itself in the human striving and ability to become a creator.³⁷ -R. JOSEPH B. SOLOVEITCHIK

"In our image, after our likeness"

Man is fashioned in the divine "image," and woman in God's "likeness."³⁸ -ZOHAR
-ALSHICH

The *tzadik* (perfectly righteous person) personifies the divine image. The *baal teshuvah* ("returnee" or penitent) actualizes the divine "likeness." -R. MENACHEM AZARIAH DA FANO

"In our image" refers to the soul; "after our likeness" refers to the body. For also regarding

the human body it is said, "From my flesh I perceive God."³⁹ -SHALOH

It is not enough for man to reflect God in his "image" or inner makeup; he must also exhibit a divine "likeness" in his behavior and actions. -SEFATH EMETH

"And they shall dominate..."

The entire world was created to serve me, and I was created to serve my creator.

-R. SHIMON BEN ELAZAR IN TALMUD

The word "they shall dominate" (יָרְדוּ ~ yirdu) can also be read as "they shall descend into" (יִרְדּוּ ~ yeirdu). When man is worthy, he rules over the other creations; when man is not worthy, he falls lower than them and they rule over him. -RASHI

When the human being is not mindful of his greatness and profanes his divine image by becoming as the animals and acting as them, then he literally "descends into" an animal, bird or fish, to be reincarnated in its form after his death. -CHAREIDIM

That man was given sovereignty over all living creatures also means that, within man himself, that which is uniquely human has sovereignty over those aspects of himself which he shares with other creatures. Namely, that the intellect has the power to rule the feelings and desires. -R. YITZCHAK HUTNER

1:27**"God created the man"**

Why did God create mankind as a single human being?

To teach us that whoever destroys a single life, it is as if he destroyed the entire world; and whoever sustains a single life, it is as if he sustained the entire world.

So that no person can say to his fellow, "My ancestor is greater than yours."

So that the heretics would not say, "There are numerous authorities in Heaven."

To demonstrate the greatness of the Creator: when a human being stamps many coins with a single die, they are all identical; yet God stamped every person with the template of the first man, and not one is identical to his fellow.

And to teach us that every person is obligated to say: "For my sake was the world created." -TALMUD

NOTES

AND IN ALL THE EARTH (וּבְכָל הָאָרֶץ ~ uve'chol haaretz) • man will subjugate the earth itself, digging into it for copper and iron -*Nachmanides*

1:28

CONQUER IT (וְכִבַּשְׁתָּהּ ~ ve'chivshuha)

• the pronunciation implies the second person plural, but the "deficient" spelling means it can also be read as the second person singular; hence the two opinions in the Talmud if this command is directed to both the man and the woman, or only to the man—see commentaries to this verse

"Male and female he created them"

The simple meaning of the verse is that here the Torah is telling us that Adam and Eve were both created on the sixth day, without elaborating on the details of how they were formed, which it does in the next chapter.

According to the midrash, God initially created man as a two-faced body—a male and a female joined back to back—and then separated them.⁴⁰ -RASHI

1:28**"Be fruitful and multiply"**

Of the core ideas of this mitzvah is the principle that God desires that the world be populated. In the words of the prophet Isaiah, "He did not create it that it be desolate; he created it to be settled." Indeed, this is the mitzvah that enables the fulfillment of all the other mitzvot, since the mitzvot were not commanded to the angels but to human beings. -CHINUCH

A person fulfills the obligation to "be fruitful and multiply" upon begetting at least one son and one daughter. But also after one has fulfilled the basic obligation, it is a mitzvah to have as many children as one is able.⁴¹

-TALMUD; SHULCHAN ARUCH

There is another dimension to this mitzvah as well: to study the Torah, so that the divine wisdom enters one's mind and germinates there, giving birth to new insights. -ZOHAR

The first mitzvah in the Torah is that one Jew should make another Jew (i.e., have a positive influence on a fellow Jew's service of God).

-R. SHALOM DOVBER OF LUBAVITCH

³⁶ The *Zohar* speaks of ten *sefirot* or "attributes" which God assumes to define his relationship with creation. Each creation derives from one of the ten *sefirot*; but the human soul is unique in that it incorporates all ten, being modeled after the whole of the divine "persona" they describe. See *The Ten Sefirot* on pages 11-12.

³⁷ See also commentary from *The Rebbe* to 2:19.

³⁸ See *The Residue and the Line* on page 8.

³⁹ See *The Physical Reality* on page 12.

⁴⁰ See commentaries to 2:7 and 2:18-23.

⁴¹ See commentaries to 9:1, 9:7 and 25:1.