

## PART 4

## THE CREATION OF MAN

BEREISHIS 1:26-2:3

## Day Six (continued)

## Adam HaRishon

Hashem announced that He was making man. He made him in His spiritual image, with intelligence and an immortal *neshamah*, and He gave him rulership over all terrestrial creatures. Hashem initially created a single human, Adam. Later, He took part of Adam and made a female human.

1:26-27

כּו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וַיְרִדוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־הַרְמֹשׁ הַרְמֹשׁ עַל־הָאָרֶץ: כּו וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:

<sup>26</sup> **God said** to the angels, “**Let us make** the species of **man** (male and female) **with our mold** that has been prepared for him in the higher realms, and he shall be **like our likeness** (with understanding and intelligence), **and they**, male and female, **will rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens, over the** domestic and wild **animals, and over all** the vegetation and raw materials in and on **the earth, and also over every remes** (small crawling creature) **that crawls on the earth.**” <sup>27</sup> **God created** the first man with his mold (i.e., the mold that was prepared for him); **in God’s image He created him** from the mold, **male and female He created them.**

## Physical and Spiritual

In recognition of man’s greatness and to honor him and show that everything was created for his sake, Hashem created man last out of all the creations. As we will see, Hashem made him the ruler over the world (*Radak*; see *Sanhedrin* 38a).<sup>1</sup>

As explained in detail below (on 2:6-7), Hashem made man with two parts: a physical body made from the earth and a spiritual *neshamah* from the upper realms. The *neshamah* gives man the ability to think and

*Why did Hashem call the first human Adam?*

1. *Abarbanel* notes that throughout Creation, more perfected beings were made later on. Since man is the most perfect of all creations, he was the final being to be made (see note 147).

speak, making him superior to animals.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, Hashem called the first human, as well as the species of mankind as a whole, אָדָם, “Adam” (1:26) (*Ramban* 5:2), since his body came from the ground, *adamah* (אֲדָמָה) (*Ber. Rabbah* 17:4).<sup>3</sup>

Of course, Hashem also made animals from the ground, but there was no reason to name them after it since it is well-known that both their body and *nefesh* originate from there. On the other hand, man has a *neshamah* that comes from the upper realms. Therefore, to distinguish him from forms of life from the upper realms that have no physical side (such as *malachim*), Hashem called him Adam; unlike those entities, he has a body that was formed from the earth, and it is there, on the earth, that he lives (*Radak*).

**How is man superior to animals?**

### A Closer Look: Man’s Superiority Over Animals

Hashem did not make man together with the animals; rather, He created him with a separate utterance because man has a different nature and is on a much higher level than the animals (*Ramban* 1:26). Nevertheless, despite his greatness, Hashem made man on the same day as the animals, not on his own day. Animals were formed on a different day than birds and fish because they are clearly physically superior beings that can walk on the ground [and bear live offspring (*Ralbag* 1:20)]. Man, on the other hand, is not physically superior to animals, but rather intellectually superior. However, this is only true if he uses his intellect appropriately; if he uses it to pursue that which is forbidden, it confers on him no advantage, and he is considered even lower than the animals (*Ran* 1:31).

### “Let Us Make Man!”

**Why did Hashem use the plural form, “Let us”?**

Hashem created the plants through a command to the earth, the aquatic creatures by a command to the water, and the land creatures by another command to the earth. But with man, Hashem declared, “Let us make man!” (1:26) since He would be the One making him, as we will see (*Ohr HaChaim*; see *Ibn Ezra*). As for Hashem’s use of the plural, used here for the first time, there are several approaches to explain this:

2. The Torah states that Hashem “created” (1:27) man, a term that has not been used since *pesukim* 1:1 and 1:21, to convey that He created something entirely new: an intelligent *neshamah* (*Abarbanel*; see also *Abarbanel* in note 136). According to *Ramban* (1:21), the Torah uses this term here to express that despite man’s exalted level and unique intelligence, he was created from nothing, like everything else in Creation (see note 138).

3. According to the Midrash (*ibid.*), it was Adam who gave himself this name. In this context, a woman is also called “man” (or “human”), for when Hashem said, “Let us make man” (1:26), He was referring to both males and females. Hence, the *pasuk* continues in the plural, stating, “they will rule (וַיִּרְדּוּ) — both male and female — over the fish of the sea, etc.” (*ibid.*). The Torah states this explicitly later: “He called *them* man (*Adam*) on the day *they* were created” (5:2) (*Radak* 5:2; see below, “Man’s Kingship”).

1. *A royal proclamation.* Hashem spoke in the plural, as is the way of kings and important people (*R' Saadia Gaon*).<sup>4</sup> A king uses the plural to express that he is not speaking as an individual, promulgating decrees merely for his own benefit, but as the people's representative, pronouncing decrees for the general good. Here, too, Hashem announced that He was going to create man for the general good of creation. In particular, He declared that man would rule over all terrestrial creatures because that was necessary for him to achieve his exalted purpose (*R' Hirsch*; see *R' Chaim Paltiel*).

2. *Placating the malachim.* *Rashi* (citing *Chazal*)<sup>5</sup> explains that Hashem said, “**Let us make man!**” to the *malachim*. He did not, of course, need their help or permission. Nevertheless, since He was about to make man in their likeness, with intelligence and understanding, they might have been jealous of him [and sought to harm him (*Levush*)].<sup>6</sup> He therefore consulted with them first to gain their consent. He explained, “Since there are *malachim* in My likeness in the upper realm (with intelligence resembling, somewhat, the Divine intellect), if there are no creations in My likeness in the lower realm, there will be jealousy [and contention] between the two realms” [since the creations in the lower realm will not be equal to those in the upper realm (*Gur Aryeh*)] (*Rashi*). Now that Hashem had consulted with the *malachim*, they would have no basis to seek to harm man (*Levush*).<sup>7</sup>

**Why did Hashem appease the malachim?**

From here we learn of Hashem's humility (*Rashi*, citing *Ber. Rabbah* 8:8). He did not need to consult with the *malachim* before making man; although they would have been jealous, He simply would have prevented them from harming him. Nonetheless, Hashem showed great humility by consulting with them first so they would have no basis to be jealous (*Levush*).

#### A Closer Look: An Opening for Heretics

The Midrash relates that when Moshe Rabbeinu was writing down the Torah and reached the words “Let us make man,” he declared, “Master of the Universe! Why do You give heretics an opening [by

**What do we learn from here about Hashem's humility?**

4. *Emunos V'Dei'os* 2:6, cited in *Ibn Ezra* and *R' Bachya*.

5. *Sanhedrin* 38b and *Ber. Rabbah* 8:8. This is also the opinion of *Ibn Ezra* and *Rashbam*.

6. Although the Gemara states that there is no jealousy among the *malachim* (*Shabbos* 89a), this only means they are not jealous of each other (*Sifsei Chachomim*; but see *Be'er BaSadeh*).

7. According to the Gemara, Hashem consults with His heavenly host before doing anything (*Sanhedrin* 38b). *Rashi* understands that this only refers to important matters, such as here (*Divrei David*; see *Gur Aryeh*). On the other hand, *Rambam* explains that Hashem does not literally consult with His heavenly host; rather, whenever He does something in this world, He does it through the intermediary world of *malachim* since, he explains, “every force is a *malach*” (*Moreh Nevuchim* II:6; see also *Ramban* 28:12). Accordingly, *Rambam* also understands that the plural מַלְאָכִים comes to include the *malachim*, but only because it was through them that Hashem made man.

using the word ‘us’?]” [Now they can claim that You are not all-powerful but needed help to create man.] Hashem replied, “Write! If someone wants to err, let him err!” (*Ber. Rabbah* 8:8)

Despite the risk of misinterpretation, Hashem wanted the Torah to contain these words in order to teach by example an important principle in proper conduct and humility: Just as He consulted with the *malachim* before making man, so a superior should consult with his junior [in matters that concern the latter (*Nachalas Yaakov*)] and receive his consent. As for the heretics, the very next *pasuk* clearly refutes their claim, stating in the singular: “**God created the man**” (1:27) – without assistance from the *malachim* (*Rashi*, citing *Ber. Rabbah* 8:8–9).<sup>8</sup>

3. *Speaking to the works of Creation.* According to *Ramban*, the words “Let us make man” come to include the earth, the subject of Hashem’s previous utterance (in 1:24). He declared that the earth would make the man’s body, just as it made the animals’ bodies, while Hashem would give the man his *neshamah* (see 2:7).

Alternatively, the *Gra* understands that Hashem spoke to all His creations, telling them, so to speak, to give their character traits to man. For example, Hashem had given the attribute of might to the lion, the attribute of swiftness to the deer, the attribute of cleverness to the fox, and so on. Hashem now gave all these attributes to man. In addition, He gave man the ability to grow and develop (an attribute found in the *nefesh* of plants), the ability to move and feel (an attribute found in the *nefesh* of animals), and a *neshamah* from the upper realms. Thus, man contains attributes and elements from all of creation (*Aderes Eliyahu*).

### “In God’s Image”

How is man in “God’s image?”

Before making man, Hashem declared that he would be *בְּצַלְמֵנוּ*, “in our image, like our likeness” (1:26). Hashem then created him *בְּצַלְמֵנוּ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים*, “in His image; in God’s image (*b’tzelem Elokim*)” (1:27). This indicates that man is in some way like Hashem.<sup>9</sup> It does not, of course, mean that man is like Him physically. While some people, based on these words, have ascribed to Hashem a physical form similar to man’s, *Rambam* argues strongly against this approach. He proves that the Torah warns against ascribing any physical form to

8. Still, the Gemara relates that when the Greek ruler King Telmi ordered the Jewish elders to translate the Torah into Greek, they rendered the word *נַעֲשֶׂה*, “Let us make,” in the singular: “I will make.” This occurred during the time of the Second Beis HaMikdash when the Greeks ruled over Eretz Yisrael. The king ordered seventy-two Jewish elders to translate the Torah and put each one in a different room [to ensure they would translate accurately and truthfully]. Nevertheless, Hashem inspired them to make thirteen identical changes, including this one (*Megillah* 9a).

9. Other opinions understand that since Hashem was, according to them, speaking to the *malachim*, He was comparing man to the *malachim* rather than to Himself (*Rashbam*; *Chizkuni*; *R’ Chaim Paltiel*; see *Radak* and note 32).

Hashem when it states: “Be very careful with yourselves [and do not forget] that you saw *no image* [of God] on the day Hashem spoke to you at [Mount] Chorev (Sinai) from amidst the fire” (*Devarim* 4:15) (*Moreh Nevuchim* 1:1). Rather, Hashem made man like Him in the following ways:

1. *In God’s spiritual likeness.* According to *Rashi* (1:26–27), Hashem prepared a special mold in the upper realms from which He formed man. It was to this mold (literally, **צֶלֶם**, “image”) that He was referring when, as *Rashi* understands, He consulted with the *malachim* (see above) and said to them, “**Let us make man בְּצַלְמֵנוּ, with our specially prepared mold**” (1:26). He then said that this mold would form man **בְּצֶלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים, “in God’s image”** (1:27). [This does not, as noted, refer to a physical image (*Mizrachi*),] but means that man would somehow be in Hashem’s spiritual likeness [having attributes that correspond to His (*Divrei David*)].<sup>10</sup>

Hashem made man from a mold to differentiate him from the rest of Creation. Whereas other creations came into being merely with Hashem’s *words* (such as when He commanded the earth to bring forth animals), man was made with Hashem’s own *hands*, so to speak, using the abovementioned mold, similar to how a coin maker uses a cast to make coins (*Rashi* 1:27 and *Levush*). Hashem made man personally to show that he is much closer to Him than any other creation (*Gur Aryeh*).

In addition, Hashem told the *malachim* that man would be **בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ, “like our likeness”** (1:26), having intelligence and understanding [like the *malachim*, whose intellect resembles somewhat the Divine intellect] (*Rashi* 1:26).<sup>11</sup> As noted earlier, this ability was derived from his unique *neshamah*.

2. *Immortal.* *Ibn Ezra* explains that man is like Hashem because he is immortal: Just as Hashem has no body and is eternal, so man has a *neshamah* that is not physical and continues to exist even after his physical life ends.<sup>12</sup>

**Why did Hashem create man in a unique manner?**

10. *Targum Yonasan* (1:27) writes that Hashem made man with 248 limbs and 365 sinews [corresponding to the number of positive and negative mitzvos in the Torah, respectively, 613 in all – see *Zohar* I:170b]. He then covered him with skin and filled him with flesh and blood. The *Shelah* explains that man’s 613 limbs and sinews correspond to a similar number of hidden spiritual limbs and sinews in his *neshamah*. Since the *neshamah* is a “part” of God (חֵלֶק מִמַּעַל), these spiritual limbs and sinews correspond to a similar number of hidden illuminations in Hashem (*Toldos Adam, Beis Chochmah* 2:30; see also *Be’er BaSadeh* on *Rashi*).

11. Since *malachim* do not have a body, man cannot be physically like them; rather, he is like them in his ability to think (*Be’er Heteiv*). *Rambam* notes that their intellect resembles the Divine intellect to some degree (*Moreh Nevuchim* 1:1).

12. *Ibn Ezra* adds that man’s body is like a “small world” (עוֹלָם קָטָן); just as Hashem’s Presence [fills the entire world (*Berachos* 10a)], so man’s *neshamah* fills his entire body. The Gemara (*ibid.*) lists further similarities between the *neshamah* and Hashem: Just as Hashem sees but is not seen, so the *neshamah* sees but is not seen; just as Hashem sustains the entire world, so the *neshamah* sustains the body; just as Hashem is pure, so the *neshamah* is pure; and just as Hashem resides in hidden chambers, so the *neshamah* resides in hidden chambers.

3. *A ruler.* Alternatively, man is like Hashem because, as the *pasuk* goes on to detail, he rules over the earth, similar to how Hashem rules over creation (*R' Saadia Gaon; Chizkuni; see Nefesh HaChaim 1:3*).

4. *With free will.* According to *Seforno*, man is like Hashem, to a degree, owing to his ability to act according to his intellect *and* with free will. [In this respect, man is unique. Animals do not have free choice, being compelled to act by their physical natures and instincts, and even] *malachim* have no free will, being bound to perform Hashem's will. However, while Hashem always does what is truly good, man has the free will to do evil.

**Why does the Torah attribute a physical form to Hashem?**

#### A Closer Look: Anthropomorphism in the Torah

As noted above, *Rambam* argues strongly against the idea that Hashem has a physical form. He explains that whenever the Torah attributes a physical form to Hashem — such as in *Shiras HaYam*, the song sung at the Yam Suf (Red Sea) (*Shemos 15:1–21*), and in the vision seen at Mount Sinai (*ibid. 24:10*) — it is a metaphor. The Torah refers to Hashem's “hands” and other body parts merely so we can better understand His interactions with this world and comprehend concepts that would otherwise remain abstract (*Hil. Yesodei HaTorah 1:8–9; Berachos 31b; see R' Bachya 1:26 at length and Rashi, Devarim 91:91*).

### Man's Kingship

Hashem declared that man would rule over every creature on earth — the animals, birds, fish, and crawling creatures — demonstrating that they had all been made for his sake. He was to be their king and rule over them with his unique intellect (*Radak; see Midrash Aggadah 1:26*).<sup>13</sup> He was permitted to make use of them to obtain all his needs. For example, he could make animals work for him in the fields, shear wool from sheep and goats, drink milk, pluck feathers, and eat eggs (*Radak*). Hashem did not, however, permit man to kill any living creature and eat its meat at this time, as will be explained below (on 1:29–30).

Hashem stated that man would be master of not only “**the fish...the birds...and the domestic and wild animals**” but also have dominion over “**all the earth**” (1:26). He could uproot [vegetation], break apart the ground, and mine from it metals, such as copper and iron [according to his needs] (*Ramban; Ibn Ezra*).<sup>14</sup>

13. *Ramban* explains that man was to “**rule**” in a strong, powerful manner, like a master over a slave. As explained (in note 188), according to *Rav Saadia Gaon (Emunos V'Dei'os 2:9)*, man's ability to rule over the earth and the animal world makes him **בְּצִלְמֵם אֱלֹהִים**. According to *Ohr HaChaim*, the two terms **בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ בְּצִלְמֵנוּ** allude that man, like Hashem, has both attributes of compassion and strict justice. These traits make him a fitting ruler since he can be compassionate or exercise strict justice as necessary.

14. Others explain that “**animals**” refers to domestic animals, while “**over all the earth**” refers to wild animals that live off the land (*Radak, Gra*). See also *Chizkuni*.