א ביסל תורה!

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כ״ח תשרי תשפ״ז · **בראשית**

‘Let *us* Make Man’?

By Allison Pultman ’28

In בראשית א:כו it says, “וַיֹּאמֶר אֱ-לֹקִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ” “And Hashem said let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.”

The word “נַעֲשֶׂה” “we shall make” is written in the plural, which raises the question: who is Hashem speaking to? If Hashem created the entire world himself, why does He say “let “Us make man” instead of “I will make man”? רש״י explains that Hashem was really talking to the angels. Before creating man, He consulted with them, even though He did not need their help. Hashem did this to teach us דרך ארץ and humbleness, showing that even someone who is great should still consult with someone lesser than them. However, this explanation raises another question: why would the תורה use language that could make it seem like Hashem had partners in creation? Why does the תורה not just say “אעשה אדם”, meaning “I will make man”?

רש״י explains that the תורה uses this wording on purpose, to teach us the above lesson. At the same time, the next פסוק makes it clear that Hashem created man: “וַיִּבְרָא אֱ-לֹקִים אֶת־הָאָדָם” “And Hashem created man” (בראשית א:כ״ז). The word “ויברא” “and he created” is singular, showing that Hashem alone created man.

The רמב״ן brings a different explanation of the word “נעשה”. He explains that Hashem was speaking about the creation of man as a combination of two parts: the physical body which comes from the earth, and the soul which comes from Hashem. This connects to בראשית ב:ז, which describes Hashem forming man from the “עָפָר מִן הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים” “dust of the earth and breathing into him the breath of life.” According to the רמב״ן, the plural of “נעשה” reflects these two parts of man's creation. This is different from רש״י's explanation, which focuses on Hashem consulting the angels.

The difference between רש״י and the רמב״ן shows how one word in the תורה can lead to multiple explanations. While רש״י focuses on Hashem consulting the angels, the רמב״ן looks at the two parts of man's creation. Both are trying to understand why the תורה uses the

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plural "נעשה", even though the next פסוק clearly states that Hashem created man.

Why Did Hashem Create Man?

By Ezra Levine '27

This week's פרשה is פרשת בראשית. At the beginning of the פרשה it talks about how ה' creates everything in six days, and on the seventh He declares the day a rest day and sanctifies it, makes it שבת. On the sixth day of creation, ה' creates all land animals and humans. Why would ה' create the humans if he is omnipotent, omniscient and doesn't need anything?

The משנה in קידושין (ד' י"ד) is that אדם was created to serve ה'. Yet still, if ה' doesn't need anything, then why would he create people to serve him? Rabbi Chaim Vital in Etz Chaim writes that ה' in making man wished to reveal the complete perfection of His powers. But, why does ה' need to show all of his powers and everything he can do? Another reason, provided by the Zohar, is that we get to know ה'. Here too, why does He want us to know him? He doesn't need anything, because he is everything. One approach to this question is to not think about ה' as the benefactor, rather thinking about how ה' wants to benefit us.

ה' created man, letting them do his commandments, and in turn letting mankind have a divine experience. The original reasons could be read through this lens. The first reason that man was created to serve ה' is not because He needs us to serve Him. Rather it is because we benefit by serving Him. The second reason is that ה' wished to reveal the complete array and perfection of His powers, and that by looking at ה's powers we benefit by appreciating his natural world and seeing a divine presence in everything. The third and final reason is that so that we may know Him, and it benefits us by letting us get closer to the divine. Thus ה' created man to benefit man not Himself as an expression of ה's kindness.

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