

The Divine Poet Rabbi Shimon Lavi Praises Rashb"y": "Let us create man' was uttered on your account"

Lag Ba'Omer--the festive celebration of the departure of the divine Tanna Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai from this world--approaches auspiciously. It is fitting, therefore, that we delight in the words of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Shimon Lavi, zy"a, written about Rashb"y. In the fourth paragraph of his famous piyut Bar Yochai—sung lovingly and enthusiastically in all Jewish homes and communities—he states: **בר יוחאי ולשדה תפוחים, עלית ללקוט בו מרקחים, סוד תורה כציצים ופרחים, נעשה אדם נאמר בעבורך—Bar Yochai, you ascended to the Field of Apples, to gather there confections—the mystery of Torah with blossoms and flowers; "let us create man" was uttered on your account.**

The commentaries have diligently provided their own respective explanations as to the meaning and source of this statement. Concerning the creation of man, the passuk reads (Bereishis 1, 26): **וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֵׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדֹמוֹתֵינוּ—and G-d said, "Let us make man in our image, as our likeness."** The passuk does not mention Rashb"y. So, I, too, would like to propose an explanation based on what the gaon Chida, zy"a, writes in Shem HaGedolim (332) in the name of our teacher, the Arizal. He teaches us that Rashb"y is alluded to in the passuk (Tehillim 68, 19): **עֲלִיתָ לְמָרוֹם שְׁבִית שְׁבִי לְקַחַת מַתָּנוֹת בָּאָדָם—you ascended to the heavens; you took a captive; you procured gifts on behalf of mankind.** The word **שב"י**, meaning captive is an acronym for **ש'מעון ב'ן י'וחאי—Shimon ben Yochai.**

Both the Gemara (Shabbas 89a) and the Midrash (S.R. 28a) elucidate this passuk as a reference to Moshe Rabeinu's confrontation with the malachim. When Moshe ascended to the heavenly heights to receive the Torah on behalf of Yisrael, the angels presented the following argument (Tehillim 8, 5): **מַה מַּה—what is the frail human that You should remember him?** Additionally, they beseeched Hashem (ibid. 2): **תְּנֵה הוֹדֵךְ עַל הַשָּׁמַיִם—place Your majesty in the heavens—the Torah belongs with us in the heavens, not with mere, lowly, human beings down on earth.**

Notwithstanding, HKB"H commanded Moshe to grab hold of the Kisei HaKavod and to rebut the malachim's argument. He defeated them convincingly by proving that the Torah deservedly belongs to Yisrael and not to them. Concerning these events, the passuk states: **"You ascended to the heavens"**—to receive the Torah; **"you took a captive"**—you freed the Torah from captivity in the hands of the malachim. So, what is the connection with Rashb"y? Why is his name alluded to by the word **שב"י** in this passuk?

The Magnificent Explanation of the Semichas Chachamim

Let us begin our journey of enlightenment with a magnificent explanation found in the writings of the Semichas Chachamim, authored by the divine mekubal Rabbi Naftali Cohen Tzedek, zy"a, in his famous introduction. He cites a teaching from the kabbalists that when Moshe ascended to the heavens to receive the Torah, he took along with him the neshamah of Rashb"y. This explains the allusion in the passuk: **שב"י** is an acronym for **ש'מעון ב'ן י'וחאי (Rashb"y).**

He proceeds to explain why Moshe required the assistance of Rashb"y in order to fend off and defeat the malachim. When the Gemara and Midrash state that Moshe ascended to the heavens they employ the word "marom." Moshe ascended higher and higher until arriving at the domain referred to as "marom." That is where the luchos were concealed—away from the malachim, who were not allowed to enter that domain. As it is written (Iyov 28, 20): **וְהַחֲכֵמָה מֵאֵינן תְּבוּאָה וְאֵי זֶה מְקוֹם בִּינָה, וְנִעְלָמָה מֵעֵינֵי כָל חַי וּמְעוֹף—wisdom, from where does it come? Which is the place of understanding? It is hidden from the eyes of all living things and is concealed from the birds of the heavens.** According to the Midrash's elucidation of this passuk (D.R. 8, 2), this passuk refers to the ministering angels, who are referred to

as “birds of the heavens”; they desired the Torah and it escaped them.

Now, on Moshe’s journey to “marom” to acquire the luchos, he encountered the ministering angels. They were baffled, prompting them to ask HKB”H (Shabbas 88a): “What is the offspring of a woman doing amongst us?” Seeing as we, the heavenly malachim, are not permitted to enter the domain of “marom,” how is it possible that a mere human being is permitted to enter? Thus, Moshe proved to them that Yisrael are in fact greater than the malachim—as explained in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 93a): “גדולים צדיקים יותר ממלאכי השרת”—tzaddikim are greater than the ministering angels.

In this manner, the Semichas Chachamim proceeds to weave his intricate and wonderful idea. The question as to who is greater—a Jew or a ministering angel—depends on a dispute between the Tannaim, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (Rashb”y) and Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel (Rashbag). For, we have learned in the Gemara (Yevamos 61a): “רבי שמעון בן יוחאי אומר, קברי עובדי כוכבים אינן מטמאין באהל, שנאמר (יחזקאל לד-לא) ואתן צאני צאן מרעיתי אדם אתם, אתם רבי שמעון בן יוחאי אדם ואין העובדי כוכבים קרויין אדם”—according to Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai, only members of Yisrael epitomize mankind and are, therefore, referred to as “adam”; idol-worshippers, non-Jews, are not referred to as “adam.”

Tosafos (ibid.) write that the halachah does not follow the opinion of Rashb”y, because it is disputed by Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel. In his opinion, even non-Jews are referred to as “adam.” For, it is a well-established principle (B.K. 69a) that the halachah agrees with Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel whenever his opinion appears in the Mishnah.

The Semichas Chachamim explains that the root of their disagreement relates to the two distinct aspects of the term “adam”—which HKB”H used to refer to mankind. In Rashbag’s opinion, the term “adam” stems from the word “adamah,” meaning earth—from which man was created. As the passuk states (Bereishis 2, 7): “וַיִּצַר ה' אֱלֹקִים אֶת הָאָדָם עֹפֵר מִן הָאֲדָמָה”—and Hashem, G-d, formed the man of soil from the earth. According to this point of view, the malachei ha’shares are greater; for, they are spiritual creatures as opposed to human beings, who are physical.

On the other hand, Rashb”y opines that the name “adam” suggests that mankind yearns to emulate the Almighty—“adameh l’elyon.” Since every member of Yisrael possesses a neshamah that is a portion of G-d from above, it behooves him to

act, as it were, like HKB”H—to emulate His midos. The Gemara expresses this notion as follows (Shabbas 133b): “אבא שאול אומר, (שמות טו-ב) ואנוהו, הוי דומה לו, מה הוא חנון ורחום, אף אתה היה חנון ורחום”—Abba Shaul says: the word “v’anveihu” implies that one should be like him; just as He is gracious and compassionate, you also should be gracious and compassionate. According to this point of view, a Jew is greater than a malach for malachim are not capable of these sorts of aspirations.

HKB”H Introduced Rashb”y’s Neshamah into Moshe

Now, as we have learned, Rashbag disagrees with Rashb”y and believes that the name “adam” stems from the word “adamah,” meaning earth; and, according to his opinion, the ministering angels are on a higher level than human beings. Seeing as the halachah accords with Rashbag, it would not have been possible for Moshe Rabeinu to ascend to the domain of “marom” to receive the luchos. For, if the malachim are not permitted to enter that domain, all the more so, human beings would not be permitted to enter.

Yet, HKB”H intended for Moshe to ascend to the domain of “marom” to receive the luchos. Therefore, the Semichas Chachamim posits the following:

“מה עשה הקב”ה, התעבר בו נשמת רבי שמעון בן יוחאי, שנשמתו הוחצב מזה המקום לדרוש ישראל קרויין אדם ולא האומות, ואם כן היה יכול משה להתעלות HKB”H attached Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai’s neshamah to Moshe Rabeinu on a temporary basis as an “ibur.” For, he is the one who taught that only Yisrael are referred to as “adam,” but not so the other nations. This enabled Moshe to rise above all the heavenly malachim.

He goes on to elucidate the words of the passuk cited above as follows: ‘עלית’—you ascended and rose above all the heavenly malachim; proof of this is ‘למרום’—that you were allowed to enter the chamber known as “marom”—a chamber that a malach may not enter; only HKB”H enters that chamber. In what merit were you able to enter that chamber? ‘שבית שב’—you held captive the neshamah of Rashb”y, the first letters of whose name spells “שב,” that had been attached to you.

For this reason, ‘לקחת מתנות’—you were presented gifts by all of the malachim. The final word of the passuk, ‘באדם’, explains the relevance of these gifts to the neshamah of Rashb”y. The letter “beis” which appears here as a prefix to the word “adam,” conveys the meaning: on account of. On account of his elucidation of the word

“adam,” you required the assistance of the neshamah of Rashb”y. He taught that the term “adam” applies exclusively to Yisrael.

In the Heavenly Realms the Halachah Accords with Rashb”y

Like a servant holding onto his master’s coattails, I would like to add a small embellishment to the esteemed words of the Semichas Chachamim. The Seder HaDoros brings in the name of the kabbalists—the source being the Vayakhel Moshe, authored by the divine kabbalist Rabbi Moshe of Prague, ztz”l, one of the Arizal’s pupils: **לפי הרוב אין הלכה כרשב”י בגמרא, לפי שאין העולם ראוי לכך בזמן הזה, אבל לעתיד יהיה הלכה כרשב”י, ויכולין לגלות הדינים אלו בסוד רזי דאורייתא**—in general, the halachah does not accord with the view of Rashb”y in the Gemara, because the world is not yet worthy; yet, in the future, the halachah will follow the opinion of Rashb”y.

It appears that we can find compelling proof that not only in the future, but even now in the heavenly realms—which are totally removed from matters of this world--the halachah accords with Rashb”y. In the sefer Shemuos Tovos, a wonderful explanation is presented in the name of Rabbi Baruch of Mezhibezh, zy”a, as to why Lag Ba’Omer is known as the festival of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. As stated, as a general rule, the halachah does not accord with the opinion of Rashb”y; however, in the upper spheres, the halachah does accord with the authors of the Kabbalah—Rashb”y and his colleagues. Thus, on Lag Ba’Omer, the day Rashb”y departed to the upper world, the halachah accorded with his opinion. Hence, it is referred to as the festival of Rashb”y, because it is his joyous day—the day his Torah was received and accepted.

Now, while it is true that the halachah accords with Rashbag in this world—for the goyim are also referred to as “adam,” deriving from the word “adamah”—nevertheless, in the upper realm, which resembles “olam haba,” the halachah follows the opinion of Rashb”y. Therefore, when Moshe ascended to the heavens, he came equipped with the neshamah of Rashb”y, because up there, in the upper realm, the halachah accords with Rashb”y. According to Rashb”y, only Yisrael are referred to as “adam,” reflecting the fact that they aspire to be like HKB”H—“adameh l’elyon.” This enabled Moshe to enter the realm of “marom” to receive the luchos—even though malachim are not allowed entrance to that realm. After all, tzaddikim are even greater than “malachei ha’shares.”

At this point, let us examine what Rashb”y himself elucidated in the Zohar hakadosh (Introduction 2a) concerning HKB”H’s declaration: **נעשה אדם - דהוה עתיד למקדם עשיה לשמיעה, דכתיב** “נעשה אדם—**הכא נעשה אדם, וכתיב התם (שמות כד-ז) נעשה ונשמע**”—when HKB”H declared **“let us make man”**—**“na’aseh adam”**--He was alluding to the fact that man was destined to accept the Torah with the proclamation **“na’aseh v’nishma”**—first “we will do” and then “we will hear”; and in that merit alone, HKB”H created man.

Based on this understanding, we can suggest that this is why HKB”H chose to create man with the two-word declaration: **נעשה** “**let us make man**.” The first word of the declaration—**“na’aseh”**—alludes to the fact that man was created in the merit of Yisrael’s future declaration of “na’aseh” prior to “nishma.” Nonetheless, this still would not have gained Moshe access to the chamber known as “marom.” Therefore, HKB”H added the second word—**“adam”**—to His declaration. This second word alludes to the fact that Moshe would successfully ascend to the realm of “marom” to receive the Torah on behalf of Yisrael in the merit of Rashb”y’s elucidation: **“אתם קרויים אדם”**—only you, Yisrael, qualify to be called “adam.”

With joy and enlightenment, we now understand the divine poet’s words: **“נעשה אדם נאמר בעבורך”**—**“let us create man” was uttered on your account**. When HKB”H declared His intention to create man with the words **“na’aseh adam,”** He did so in the merit of Yisrael’s future declaration of “na’aseh v’nishma.” Yet, Yisrael were only able to receive the Torah in the merit of Rashb”y. As we have learned, when Moshe ascended to the chamber of “marom,” he gained access due to the presence of the neshamah of Rashb”y; for, in the heavenly realms, the halachah accords with Rashb”y, who determined: **“אתם קרויים אדם”**—that only Yisrael qualify to be called “adam.”

Rashb”y’s Opinion: Arrogance Is Tantamount to Avodah Zarah

It is the nature of the Torah that it can be elucidated in seventy distinct ways. Hence, I would like to propose my own interpretation of the divine Rabbi Shimon Lavi’s poetic words: **“נעשה אדם נאמר בעבורך”**—**“let us create man” was uttered on your account**. We have learned in the Gemara (Sotah 4b): **“אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי, כל אדם שיש בו גסות הרוח כאילו עובד עבודת כוכבים—Rabbi Yochanan stated in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: Any person who displays haughtiness is regarded as if he worshipped idols**. Clearly, arrogance is

despicable. Nevertheless, it seems extreme to equate it with “avodah zarah”—one of the most severe aveirot in the Torah.

Let us present a well-known “drush” from the Parshas Derachim (16), which also appears in Chanukas HaTorah (Bereishis 3) in the name of Rabbi Heschel of Krakow, zy”a, which is based on Rashi’s commentary (Bereishis 1, 26):

“נעשה אדם. אף על פי שלא סייעוהו ביצירתו, ויש מקום למינים לרדות, לא נמנע הכתוב מללמד דרך ארץ ומדת ענוה, שיהא הגדול נמלך ונוטל רשות מן הקטן, ואם כתב אעשה אדם לא למדנו שהיה מדבר עם בית דינו אלא עם עצמו, ותשובתו כתובה בצדו (שם א-כז) ויברא את האדם, ולא כתיב ויבראו.”

When the Almighty declares His intent to create man, He employs the word “na’aseh”—meaning “let us make.” This opens the door for heretics to insinuate that HKB”H did not function alone as a sole force, but received outside assistance. Even though, it is clear that HKB”H alone created man, He employed the term “na’aseh” to teach us a lesson in “derech erez” and humility—a great and important person should consider the opinions of those lesser than him and accord them a proper degree of respect. In fact, the Torah itself makes it clear that HKB”H created man by Himself (Bereishis 1, 27): “**ויברא את האדם**”—it states explicitly that **“He created man”** and not **“they created.”**

Consequently, a person who is haughty and lacks humility illustrates that he does not concur with the elucidation above—that HKB”H employed the term “na’aseh” to teach us a lesson in humility. Perforce, we must conclude that he is a blasphemer and believes that there is more than one force at work in the universe. Such a belief constitutes “avodah zarah”—the belief in more than one god. Hence, Rashb”y’s point is well-taken: **“Any person who displays haughtiness is regarded as if he worshipped idols.”**

The Mistaken Belief of Enosh’s Generation

Let us expand on this amazing concept and explain theoretically why arrogance is so egregious and is tantamount to “avodah zarah.” The generation of Enosh were guilty of “avodah zarah,” because they mistakenly believed that HKB”H had abandoned this world and had transferred its management to the heavenly bodies. Concerning their misguided philosophy, the Rambam writes (Hilchos Avodas Kochavim 1, 1):

“בימי אנוש טעו בני האדם טעות גדול... אמרו הואיל והאלקים ברא כוכבים אלו וגלגלים להנהיג את העולם, ונתנם במרום וחלק להם כבוד והם שמיים המשמשים לפניו, ראויין הם לשבחם ולפארם ולחלוק להם כבוד... כמו שהמלך רוצה לכבד

העומדים לפניו, וזהו כבודו של מלך. כיון שעלה דבר זה על לבם, התחילו לבנות לכוכבים היכלות, ולהקריב להן קרבנות ולשבחם ולפארם בדברים ולהשתחוות למולם, כדי להשיג רצון הבורא בדעתם הרעה, וזה היה עיקר עבודת כוכבים.”

In the times of Enosh, a huge mistake was made . . . They concluded that since G-d created the stars and the constellations to manage the universe, and placed them in the heavens giving them a place of honor, they were his personal representatives. As such, it was appropriate to praise them and glorify them and show them respect . . . just as any king would wish the people to respect his attendants; this constituted a form of respect for the king. After conceiving this idea, they began building shrines for the stars, offering them sacrifices, praising them and bowing down to them—in order to gain G-d’s favor through their misguided belief. This is the essence of idolatry.

Additionally, let us introduce what we have learned in the Gemara (Sotah 5a): **“כל אדם שיש בו גסות הרוח, אמר הקב”ה אין אני —concerning any person who displays haughtiness, HKB”H said: I and he cannot dwell together in the world.** According to this statement, we can conclude that an arrogant person does not feel or recognize Hashem’s presence. On the contrary, he believes that HKB”H does not oversee or control his actions. The Gemara describes this situation as follows (Megillah 3a): **“אף על גב דאינהו לא חזו מזלייהו חזו”**—in other words, he is so entrenched in his material, earthly existence that he fails to perceive Hashem’s presence; nonetheless, his neshamah, his heavenly representative, does recognize a divine presence. Consequently, he can easily fall prey to “avodah zarah”—the mistaken belief that HKB”H is no longer present in this world; instead he believes that the world is controlled by the laws of nature, the stars and the constellations, chas v’shalom. Accordingly, we can appreciate Rashb”y’s statement: **“Any person who displays haughtiness is regarded as if he worshipped idols.”**

Anyone Who Wishes to Misinterpret It Is Free to Do So

It occurred to me that based on what we have just discussed, we can shed some light on a fascinating statement in the Midrash (B.R. 8, 8):

“בשעה שהיה משה כותב את התורה, היה כותב מעשה כל יום ויום, כיון שהגיע לפסוק הזה שנאמר ויאמר אלקים נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו, אמר לפניו רבון העולם מה אתה נותן פתחון פה למינים אתמהא, אמר לו כתוב והרוצה לטעות טעה.”

As Moshe was recording the Torah, he paused upon reaching the words: **“And G-d said, ‘Let us make man in our image, as our likeness.’ He questioned the Almighty as to why He was providing the heretics with an opportunity to blaspheme. He replied: “Write it down as is; and anyone who wishes to misinterpret these words is free to do so.”**

This is definitely perplexing. After all, HKB”H is infinitely merciful and wants man to successfully correct his flaws, as it is written (Yechezkel 18, 32): **“כי לא אחפוץ במות המת”—for I do not desire the death of the one who should die.** If this is so then why did He reply to Moshe: **“Write it down as is; and anyone who wishes to misinterpret these words is free to do so”?** Additionally, why did HKB”H choose to teach us a lesson in humility specifically from the declaration: **“Let us make man”**—employing the plural form, leading to the possible misinterpretation that there is more than one operative force in the universe? Surely, HKB”H could have taught us a lesson in humility in many other ways, without taking the risk that a person might mistakenly fall prey to “avodah zarah.”

Yet, based on our discussion above, we can suggest that this was HKB”H’s intention from the very beginning. He wanted to stress the tremendous importance of humility. We have seen that someone who is arrogant and has failed to develop a sense of humility is compared to a person who has worshipped idols. For, one who lacks humility can very easily entertain sacrilegious thoughts and beliefs.

Now, let us take note. Who is credited with the statement in the Gemara disparaging haughtiness? It is none other than the divine Tanna Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: **“Rabbi Yochanan stated in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: Any person who displays haughtiness is regarded as if he worshipped idols.”** As explained, this tragic flaw results from the mere misinterpretation of the declaration: **“Let us make man”**—which was uttered in the plural form.

So, once again, let us revisit the words of the divine poet: **“נעשה”**—**“אדם נאמר בעבורך—the declaration “na’aseh adam” was uttered on your account.** In other words, HKB”H uttered this declaration in the plural form to convey the importance of humility—even though doing so carried the risk of misleading those inclined to entertain sacrilegious thoughts (into considering that there are multiple domains, chas v’shalom—more than one single operative force in the universe). This declaration was uttered on account of Rashb”y, who taught us that a person who is arrogant

is viewed as if he worshipped “avodah zarah.” Therefore, HKB”H intentionally chose from the very beginning to teach us the importance of humility with the declaration: **“na’aseh adam.”** He intended to convey the message that without appropriate humility, a person can very easily fall into the practice of “avodah zarah.”

The Association between Humility and the Title “Adam”

Now, we can add a pleasant tidbit explaining why HKB”H chose to teach us humility with the declaration: **“na’aseh adam.”** We find in the Zohar hakadosh (Yisro 86a) an explanation from Rashb”y himself as to why he holds that only Yisrael are referred to as “adam.” He refers to the passuk (Devarim 4, 4): **“ואתם הדבקים בה’ אלקיכם חיים כולכם היום”—but you who cling to Hashem, your G-d, you are all alive today.** To explain Rashb”y’s statement let us refer to the commentary Toras Chaim on Rabeinu Bachayei (Korach). There we find a wonderful allusion regarding Rashb”y’s elucidation: **“אדם אתם”**—**“אתם קרויין אדם, ואין העובדי כוכבים קרויין אדם”**—the term “adam” refers exclusively to Yisrael and not to idol-worshippers. This allusion is founded on the Gemara (Chullin 89a) which expounds on the passuk (Devarim 7, 7):

“לא מרובכם מכל העמים חשק ה’ בכם ויבחר בכם כי אתם המעט מכל העמים – אמר להם הקב”ה לישראל, חושקני בכם שאפילו בשעה שאני משפיע לכם גדולה אתם ממעטין עצמכם לפני, נתתי גדולה לאברהם אמר לפני ואנכי עפר ואפר, למשה ואהרן אמר ונחנו מה, לדוד אמר ואנכי תולעת ולא איש. אבל עובדי כוכבים אינן כן, נתתי גדולה לנמרוד אמר הבה נבנה לנו עיר, לפרעה אמר מי ה’ [אשר אשמע בקולו], לסנחריב אמר מי בכל אלהי הארצות וגו’, לנבוכדנצר אמר אעלה על במתי עב.”

We learn from this passage that HKB”H loves Yisrael and chose them as His people because of their humility. Even in their moments of greatness, they belittle themselves and downplay their accomplishments. As examples, the Gemara cites Avraham, Moshe and Aharon, and David. In direct contrast, stand the idolators Nimrod, Pharaoh, Sancheriv and Nevuchadnetzar.

Now, behold this fantastic allusion: the title **“אדם”**—representing the epitome of mankind—is an abbreviation for **“אברהם דוד משה”—Avraham, David, Moshe.** The Gemara presents these three as examples of humility. Avraham referred to himself as **“אפר”**—ashes; David referred to himself as **“תולעת”**—a worm; Moshe and Aharon referred to themselves as **“מה”**—nothingness (**“what are we?”**). The first letters of these three descriptions—**אפר תולעת—מה**—form the word **“אתם”**—the plural form of you. This then is

the allusion concealed in the words of Rashb"y: "אדם אתם"—in other words, you who humble yourselves with the descriptions that form the word א"ת—ashes, worm, nothingness—only you are worthy of the title א"ד—represented by Avraham, David and Moshe. Idolators, on the other hand, who do not demean themselves and fail to demonstrate this form of humility, are not worthy of the title "adam."

Avraham Moshe and David Are the First Middle and Last of the Seven Shepherds

Hashem has granted me the vision to comprehend why these three specifically—Avraham, Moshe and David—were the ones to demonstrate the trait of humility for us. The Zohar hakadosh (Part I 261a) teaches us that the people of Yisrael are guided and protected by seven shepherds: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef and David. These are the seven guests who visit our succahs during the seven days of the festival of Succot. Additionally, the Gemara (Shabbas 55a) states: "חורתמו של הקב"ה אמת"—HKB"Y's seal is אמת (Emes). Rashi explains that the letters which spell "emet" are the first, middle and last letters of the aleph-beis. Thus, they encompass all of reality, from beginning to end.

How nicely this explains why HKB"Y arranged that these three, specifically—Avraham, Moshe and David—would demonstrate for us the attribute of humility. For, Avraham is the first shepherd; Moshe Rabeinu is the fourth shepherd, the middle shepherd; lastly, David HaMelech is the seventh shepherd. Once again, these three are the first, middle and last of the seven shepherds; thus, they encompass all seven shepherds and their attributes. This teaches us that all seven exemplified the characteristic of humility. Thus, we, their holy flock, should

realize that it is incumbent upon us to follow in the footsteps of our seven shepherds by adopting a demeanor of humility.

So, we can suggest that this is the meaning of Rashb"y's statement in the Zohar hakadosh quoted above: "מאי טעמא קרא לון אדם, משום דכתיב ואתם הדבקים בה' אלקיכם, אתם ולא שאר עמין"—why are you referred to as "adam"? Because it is written: "But you who cling to Hashem, your G-d, you are all alive today"—you and not the other nations. Yisrael's close attachment and relationship with Hashem stems from their extreme humility. As the Gemara above states: "חושקני בכם שאפילו בשעה שאני משביע לכם"—I desire you, because even when I bestow greatness upon you, you humble yourselves before me. We can suggest the following allusion in the passuk: "ואתם אפר תולעת מ'ה"—ashes, a worm, and nothingness. Thus, the passuk states that in the merit of these three levels of humility, you will be able to cling and remain attached to Hashem, your G-d.

Finally, we can suggest that it is precisely for this reason that HKB"Y chose to teach us the importance of humility with the declaration: "na'aseh adam." For, the title "אדם"—"adam"—which refers to Yisrael exclusively, alludes to Yisrael's three shepherds—אברהם יצחק וישראל—who demonstrated to the world the three levels of humility. They clung to Hashem to learn from Him the trait of humility reflected by the declaration: "na'aseh adam." We, their descendants, are obligated to follow in their footsteps.



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