

LET US MAKE MAN

by Rabbi Daniel Travis

The Almighty said, "Let us make adam (man) in our image and our likeness." (Bereshith 1:26)

Why did God say, "Let us make man"? To whom did He make this statement, and why? In His infinite humility, God consulted His Heavenly Court before creating man.¹ What advice could they possibly have offered to God?

The attribute of Kindness voted that God should create man, because man would perform acts of kindness. The attribute of Charity concurred that man should be created, because he would give charity. The attributes of Truth and Peace, however, advised God not to create man, for he would ultimately misuse his faculty of speech by lying and arguing.² Since the "vote" resulted in a tie, why did God decide to create man? God grabbed Truth and hurled it to the earth, as the verse states, "And He shall cast truth to the ground."³ This left the majority in favor of creating man.

Could God have eliminated the vote of Peace, leaving a majority ruling against Truth, in favor of man's creation? Even if He had eliminated the vote of Peace, the vote of Truth bears such powerful influence that it still would have overruled the combined votes of Kindness and Charity. Even had the entire Heavenly Court voted against Truth, Truth would outweigh all other votes. For if the world lacked Truth, every attribute would be based on falsehood and would have no genuine value.⁴

Truth is not only great in its own right; it heralds kindness as well: "Kindness and truth have met together," declared King Dovid.⁵ God usually responds to man measure for measure. However, when the Jewish People speak truth, God reciprocates with Kindness⁶ even though kindness and truth are generally opposing characteristics. In order to bestow kindness, God must disregard the not-so-pleasant truth about our actions.

Why is kindness an appropriate reward for truth? God's sole intention in creation was to bestow kindness upon His creation,⁷ but a precondition for this is the world's continuity according to the guidelines He set up. Since truth is one of the three principal foundations which the world rests upon, a person who maintains an absolute commitment to speaking the truth is paving the way for God to bestow His kindness upon man. He is thus rewarded with abundant kindness.⁸

1. *Rashi on Bereshith 1:26.*

2. Bereshith Rabbah 8:5.

3. Daniel 8:12.
4. The Kotzker Rebbe-Ohel Torah page 16.
5. Tehillim 85:11.
6. Metzudath Dovid on Tehillim 85:11.
7. See introductory chapters of Da'ath Tevunoth of the Ramchal.
8. Pirke Avoth 1:18.

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