

“Walking in the Ways of Hashem”

Source 1: Devarim 28:2

ובאו עליך כל־הברכות האלה והשיגך כי תשמע בקול ה' אלהיך:

28:2 As long as you listen to God your Lord, all these blessings will come to bear on you.

28:9

יקימך ה' לו לעם קדוש כְּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע־לָךְ כִּי תִשְׁמַר אֶת־מִצְוֹת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכָּיו:

28:9 If only you keep the commandments of God your Lord and walk in His ways, God will establish you as His holy nation, as He promised you.

Source 2: Devarim Ch. 8:6

וּשְׁמַרְתָּ אֶת־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לִלְכֹת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְיִרְאָהוּ אֹתוֹ:

Therefore keep the commandments of the LORD your God: **walk in His ways** and revere Him.

Source 3: Devarim 11:22-23

כִּי אִם־שָׁמַר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת־כָּל־הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֹתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹתָהּ לְאַהֲבָהָ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם לִלְכֹת בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו וּלְדַבְּקָה־בּוֹ:

If, then, you faithfully keep all this Instruction that I command you, loving the LORD your God, **walking in all His ways, and holding fast to Him,**

וְהוֹרִישׁ יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה מִלִּפְנֵיכֶם וִירְשָׁתֶם גּוֹיִם גְּדֹלִים וְעַצְמִים מִכֶּם:

the LORD will dislodge before you all these nations: you will dispossess nations greater and more numerous than you.

Source 4: Shemot Ch. 3 – Hashem speaks at the Burning Bush

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תִּקְרַב הֵלֶם שֶׁל־נִעְלִיךָ מֵעַל רַגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עומד עָלָיו אֲדָמַת־קֹדֶשׁ הוּא:

And He said, “Do not come closer. **Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.**”

Source 5: Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn on Tefilat Ne'ilah (YUTorah.org)

At Neilah, it's time to motivate ourselves to change by breaking the shackles that are holding us back. I can still recall quite vividly the shade of the sky on what was a beautiful Los Angeles Erev Shabbat. I had just heard that a great mystic, the Kaliver Rebbe, was staying at the house next door. I went over with two of my friends an hour before Shabbat to get a beracha (blessing) from the rebbe. We waited patiently in the backyard, and, after several minutes, the Kaliver Rebbe emerged from the house. His white and gold bekeshes (regal cloak), special for Shabbat was in perfect contrast with the deep blue sky and thick white clouds that seemed to hover directly over his head. He looked into our eyes in complete silence for over five minutes, five minutes that I will never forget. That day the trees had been still and the wind deadly silent, but as he stared at us, a cool breeze picked up, becoming uncharacteristically vibrant.

Suddenly, the rebbe spoke: "Don't worry; you aren't stuck, you can move. God told Moshe at the Burning Bush, 'Shal naalecha me'al raglecha (Remove your shoes from your feet).' What was God telling Moshe? The root of the word 'naalecha (your shoes)' is naal, a verb that can also mean to lock. Remove the shackles weighing you down, and soar upwards. 'Ki hamakom asher atah omed alav admas kodesh hu (For the place upon which you are standing is holy ground).'

If you realize that wherever you stand, the ground is holy, nothing can restrain you. Your environment does not – cannot – restrict you." With this message, the Kaliver Rebbe wished us a "gut Shabbos" and went back into the house. Though he left, his message stayed with me: it was time to get moving.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rav Menachem Mendel Schneerson, interpreted the words "V'halachta bidrachav (And you shall walk in His ways)," beautifully:

The verse's simple meaning instructs us to mimic the attributes of God – "Just as He is merciful, so must you be merciful. Just as He is fair, so must you be fair."

The Lubavitcher Rebbe is bothered by the fact that the Rambam counts V'halachta bidrachav as one of the 613 mitzvot, since usually general, all-encompassing ideals such as “Kedoshim tihyu (You shall be holy),” are not counted. *What, then, is so special about V'halachta Bidrachav?*

Rav Schneerson answers as follows: **The mitzvah of V'halachta Bidrachav commands us to be “holchim, movers.” When we perform a mitzvah, we must not remain stagnant, but we must ensure that the mitzvah leaves its imprint on us. The guarantee of our survival is to constantly be in a state of motion. “V'halachta” tells us to get moving. “Bidrachav” tells us in what direction, in the way of God. Vehalachta Bedrachav is the requirement to constantly grow. Doing mitzvot and fulfilling our obligations is insufficient; we must also challenge ourselves to develop spiritually and mature. We may feel locked in place by the commitments we have made that were too difficult to keep. We may have bound ourselves to a past that is too heavy to bear. [Yom Kippur] bears the message of the Kaliver Rebbe: it is time to start moving. “Shal naalecha – Remove your old shoes.” Remove your shackles. It is no coincidence that the climax of the Yom Kippur service is Neilah, the root of which is naal, shoe. This is because, by the time Yom Kippur ends, we have thrown away our old shoes, our old shackles, and replaced them with new naalayim, shoes that will help us to soar skyward.**

Source 6: R. Joey Felsen, Lessons from the Altar — keep moving forward

...In order to climb steps, one must first reach their leg to at least the height of the next step. With a ramp, any incremental step upward can move someone forward. With steps, one can stop and stand still for a long time because each step is a flat surface. The same is not true with a ramp. If one stops to stand, their ankles will give out. They have to keep moving forward.

When it comes to one's spiritual growth, we try to emulate the messages of the ramp.

Keep moving forward, even in slight increments. If one tries to stop because they feel they have achieved their own personal spiritual goals, they should be warned that they are destined to slide backward.

Source 7: Sefer Yereim Ch. 408

Eliezer ben Samuel of Metz (died 1175) was a Tosafist and the author of the halachic work *Sefer Yereim* (Vilna 1892). An abridgment of this work was produced by Benjamin ben Abraham Anaw.

ללכת בדרכי המקום. צוה ה' את ישראל ללכת בדרכי המצות⁵
 דכתיב [דברים ח' ו'] ושמרת את מצוות ה' אלהיך והלכת בדרכיו
ואף על פי שעל כל מצוה ומצוה נאמר עשה במקומה הוסיף לד
הכתוב עשה אחר לקבל שכר ובסוטה [י"ד א'] דרשין מיניה להיות
 רחום לבקר חולים לנחם אבלים להלביש ערומים שהם דרכי יוצרנו
 וכבר פירשתיו לעיל בעמוד חמישי בחייבי עשה [סי' רי"ט ר"כ].

To go in God's ways. The Holy One, Blessed be He commanded Israel to go in the path of the mitzvot...[quotes verse in Devarim Ch. 8] ...**and even though there is a separate commandment for each mitzvah, the Torah added on an additional positive commandment in order to provide us with additional merit...**

Source 8: Siach Yitzchak – Drasha for Shabbat Teshuva

טו) וענין השלשלת הזה הוא התורה הקדושה אשר היא מחברת
 שמים וארץ ביחד, וכמ"ש "בראתי יצה"ר בראתי לו תורה תבלין",
 כי עיקר שליטת היצה"ר הא מצד ההבדל שנעשה בין אור לחושך,
 שבזה הטוב בשמים והרע בארץ. ולכן הוא יתברך הוריד התורה
 הקדושה אשר היא ממש אור לבושו יתברך, מדו כמדתו כביכול,
 שהם כלל כל המדות טובות ודרכיו יתב', כמ"ש "והלכת בדרכיו",
 ונתלבש התורה בלבוש גשמי בארץ, במעשה המצות בפועל, ובעסק
 האדם בתורתו יתברך, היא המקדשת ומטהרת אותו, שלכן נמשלה
 התורה למים שבהם מטהרת כל טנפת וכל טומאה, כמ"ש "במים
 יובא וטהר":

The Holy Torah connects Heaven and Earth, as it says, “I create the evil inclination, and have created Torah as an antidote for it”...God brought the Holy Torah down to us; it’s actually the light of His garment, and it encompasses all good midot (attributes) and His ways, as it says, “and you should walk in His ways...”The Torah took on a physical garb here on earth, in the form of the physical mitzvot and in one’s engagement in Torah. It sanctifies and purifies him, and that’s why the Torah is compared to water...

Source 9: Baal Shem Tov, Commentary on Parshat Noach

קלו. שמעתי ממורי שרוב ענוותנותו של האדם גורם שנתרחק מעבודת ה' יתברך, שמצד שפלותו אינו מאמין כי האדם גורם על ידי תפילתו ותורתו שפע אל כל העולמות, וגם המלאכים נזונים על ידי תורתו ותפילתו, שאילו היה מאמין זה, כמה היה עובד ה' בשמחה וביראה מרוב כל, והיה נזהר בכל אות ותנועה ומלה לאומרה כדקא יאות, וגם לתת לב אל מה שאמרקל) שלמה ע"ה

I heard from my teacher that the great humility of man causes man to distance himself from serving Hashem, because due to his lowliness, he doesn't believe that he can impact, through his tefilah and Torah, on all of the worlds, and that the angels are also nurtured by his Torah and tefilah. Because, if he did in fact believe this, how much would he serve Hashem with joy and reverence, and he would be cautious to recite each letter and syllable properly....

ואומר אך שלום יהיה לי, ובאמת זה אינו, כי האדם על ידי מעשיו הטובים הוא דבוק בו יתברך ממש וכמו שכתוב (דברים כ"ח, ט') והלכת בדרכיו, ועל ידי שהוא רחום מלמטה נתעורר קלב) מדה זו של רחום למעלה בכל העולמות, וכמו שכתבתי ביאור דע מה למעלה ממך (אבות ב', א') רצה לומר ממך תדע, איזה מדה שנתעורר בך שכך הוא למעלה: (תולדות יעקב יוסף פרשת עקב דף קפ"א סוף ע"ב וע"ג).

...and this is in fact not true, because a person, through their good deeds, actually cleaves to God, as it says, “and you should go in His ways” and through you being compassionate down here (on earth) this attribute is stirred up in all of the higher worlds, as I explained in my commentary on Pirkei Avot, where it says דע מה למעלה ממך – meaning to say: you should know that what goes on למעלה – above, is ממך – from you!

Source 10: Rambam's Sefer Hamitzvot #8

והמצוה השמינית היא שצונו להדמות בו יתעלה לפי יכולתנו והוא אמרו (תבוא כח) והלכת בדרכיו.

The eighth mitzvah is that He commanded us to become similar to Him in accordance with our abilities, as it says, “You should walk in his ways.”

...וכבר כפל צווי זה ואמר (עקב י ויא) ללכת בכל דרכיו ובא בפירוש זה מה הקדוש ברוך הוא נקרא רחום אף אתה היה רחום מה הקדוש ברוך הוא נקרא חנון אף אתה היה חנון מה הקדוש ברוך הוא נקרא צדיק אף אתה היה צדיק מה הקדוש ברוך הוא נקרא חסיד אף אתה היה חסיד וזה לשון ספרי (ס"פ עקב). וכבר נכפל הצווי הזה בלשון אחר ואמר (ראה יג) אחרי י"י אלהיכם תלכו ובא בפירוש גם כן (סוטה יד א) שענינו להדמות בפעולות הטובות והמדות החשובות שיתואר בהם האל יתעלה על צד המשל יתעלה על הכל עילוי רב:

This commandment was mentioned a second time in Ekev “to go in all of His ways...”. And the explanation is: “Just as G-d is called compassionate, so too, you should be compassionate; just as G-d is called merciful, so, too, should you be merciful; just as G-d is called righteous, so should you be righteous;...-and this commandment appears also in Re'eh, “After the Lord your G-d shall you go” and the explanation (Sotah 14a) is that we should be similar to him by our good actions and qualities by which G-d is described....”

Source 11: Rambam, Mishne Torah: Hilchot De'ot Ch. 1

הדרך הישרה היא מדה בינונית שבכל דעה ודעה מכל הדעות שיש לו לאדם, והיא הדעה שהיא רחוקה משתי הקצוות ריחוק שוה ואינה קרובה לא לזו ולא לזו, לפיכך צוו חכמים הראשונים שיהא אדם שם דעותיו תמיד ומשער אותם ומכוין אותם בדרך האמצעית כדי שיהא שלם בגופו, כיצד לא יהא בעל חמה נוח לכעוס ולא כמת שאינו מרגיש אלא בינוני, לא יכעוס אלא על דבר גדול שראוי לכעוס עליו כדי שלא יעשה

כיוצא בו פעם אחרת, וכן לא יתאוה אלא לדברים שהגוף צריך להן ואי אפשר להיות בזולתן כענין שנאמר צדיק אוכל לשובע נפשו

The straight path: This [involves discovering] the midpoint temperament of each and every trait that man possesses [within his personality.] This refers to the trait which is equidistant from either of the extremes, without being close to either of them. Therefore, the early Sages instructed a man to evaluate his traits, to calculate them and to direct them along the middle path, so that he will be sound {of body}. For example: he should not be wrathful, easily angered; nor be like the dead, without feeling, rather he should [adopt] an intermediate course; i.e., he should display anger only when the matter is serious enough to warrant it, in order to prevent the matter from recurring. Similarly, he should not desire anything other than that which the body needs and cannot exist without, as [Proverbs 13:25] states: "The righteous man eats to satisfy his soul."

Source 12a: Tehilim Ch. 89

(א) מִשְׁכִּיל לְאֵיתָן הָאֶזְרָחִי:

(ב) חֲסִדֵי ה' עוֹלָם אֲשִׁירָה לְדֹר וָדֹר אוֹדִיעַ אֲמוֹנָתְךָ בְּפִי:

(ג) כִּי־אִמַּרְתִּי עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה שָׁמַיִם תִּכְנֶן אֲמוֹנָתְךָ בָּהֶם:

1 Maschil of Ethan the Ezrahite.

2 I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever; to all generations will I make known Thy faithfulness with my mouth.

3 For I have said: 'Forever is mercy built; in the very heavens Thou dost establish Thy faithfulness.

12b: Commentary of the Malbim

(ג) כִּי אִמַּרְתִּי, וְהִנֵּה בַּעַת בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם נִתְּגַלּוּ שְׁתֵּי הַמִּדּוֹת כְּאַחַת, כִּי רִאשִׁית הַבְּרִיאָה הִיטָה מִצַּד הַחֶסֶד הַגָּמוּר, כִּי אַז לֹא הָיָה עוֹד שׁוּם נִמְצָא בַּמִּצִּיאוֹת שִׁיבְטִיחַ לוֹ הַקִּיּוֹם וְהַמִּצִּיאוֹת, וְחָקִי הַטֶּבַע נִתְּיָסְדוּ אַז בְּלֹא הַבְּטָחָה וְחִיּוֹב קוֹדֵם רַק בַּחֶסֶד גָּמוּר, וְז"ש כִּי אִמַּרְתִּי עוֹלָם חֶסֶד יִבְנֶה, שֶׁתַּחֲלִית בְּנִין הָעוֹלָם הִיָּה מִצַּד הַחֶסֶד לְבַד אֲבָל אַחֵר שֶׁ"י חֲסָדוֹ בָּרָא אֶת הָעוֹלָם וַיִּסַּד וְחָקֵק חָקִי הַטֶּבַע בְּשֶׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה, אַז נִתְּיָסְדָה מִדַּת אֲמוֹנָה, ר"ל שְׁקִיּוֹם הַנִּמְצָאִים אַחֵר שֶׁבְּרָאָם בַּחֲסָדוֹ, וְכֵן קִיּוֹם חָקִי הַטֶּבַע אַחֵר שֶׁחָקֵקָם

בחסדו הוא מצד האמונה ומדת האמת, שהוא כאלו הבטיח אז שיעמדו החקים והנבראים כל ימי עולם ולא יפחתו מיניהם ולא יגרעו חקיהם....

Source 13a: Talmud Rosh Hashana 17b

ויעבור ה' על פניו ויקרא (שם), אמר רבי יוחנן אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאומרו, מלמד שנתעטף בשליח ציבור והראה לו למשה סדר תפלה, אמר לו כל זמן שישראל חוטאין יעשו לפני כסדר הזה ואני מוחל להם. ה' ה', אני הוא קודם שיחטא, ואני הוא לאחר שיחטא האדם ויעשה תשובה. אל רחום וחנון, אמר רב יהודה ברית כרותה לשלש עשרה מדות שאינן חוזרות ריקם שנאמר הנה אנכי כורת ברית" רה יז:

And 'the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed [etc.]. R. Johanan said: Were it not written in the text, it would be impossible for us to say such a thing; this verse teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, drew his robe round Him like the reader of a congregation and showed Moses the order of prayer. He said to him: Whenever Israel sin, let them carry out this service before Me, and I will forgive them.

13b: Commentary of Etz Yosef on Eyn Ya'akov

עין יוסף

יב ואני אמוחל להם עונותיהם. רבים מקשים כי הרבה עשו כן בי"ג מדות ולא הצליחו. וכתב האלשי"ך בתהלים וז"ל **ושמעתי בשם לבנת הספיר** שעל כן לא אמר אמרו לפני כסדר הזה. אלא עשו לפני כסדר הזה. שכוון לאמר כי לא באמירה לבדה תליא מילתא אלא בעשיה. כי אותן המדות שזוכרין רחום וחנון ארך אפים כו' תעשו אותם כסדר ההוא. ועל ידי כן לא ישובו ריקם עכ"ל:

Many ask: A lot of people have recited the 13 attributes of mercy and did not succeed? (Rav Moshe) Alshich writes in his commentary on Tehilim that it's for this reason the Gemara does not say, "recited before Me", but rather, "do this." I.e success is not dependent on mere words, but on action!

Source 14: Micah Ch. 7 (also part of “Tashlich” on Rosh Hashana)

מִי־אֵל כְּמוֹךָ נִשְׂא עוֹן וְעֵבֶר עַל־פֶּשַׁע לְשֹׂאֲרֵית נִחְלָתוֹ לֹא־הִחְזִיק לְעַד אָפוּ כִּי־חָפֵץ חֶסֶד הוּא:

Who is a God like You, Forgiving iniquity And remitting transgression;
Who has not maintained His wrath forever Against the remnant of His
own people, Because He loves graciousness!

יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמֵּנוּ יִכַּבֵּשׁ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל־חַטֹּאוֹתָם:

He will take us back in love; He will cover up our iniquities, You will hurl
all our sins Into the depths of the sea.

Source 15: Talmud Rosh Hashana 17a

[אמר רבא]: כל המעביר על מדותיו מעבירין לו על כל פשעיו, שנאמר נשא עון ועבר על פשע, למי נושא עון - למי שעובר על פשע.

Raba said: He who forgoes his right [to exact punishment] is forgiven all his iniquities, as it says, Forgiving iniquity and passing by transgression. Who is forgiven iniquity? One who passes by transgression [against himself]

Source 16: Talmud Ta'anit 25b

תנו רבנן מעשה ברבי אליעזר שגזר שלש עשרה תעניות על הצבור ולא ירדו גשמים. באחרונה התחילו הצבור לצאת. אמר להם: תקנתם קברים לעצמכם? געו כל העם בבכיה, וירדו גשמים. שוב מעשה ברבי אליעזר שירד לפני התיבה ואמר עשרים וארבע ברכות ולא נענה. ירד רבי עקיבא אחריו, ואמר: אבינו מלכנו אין לנו מלך אלא אתה. אבינו מלכנו למענך רחם עלינו, וירדו גשמים. הווי מרנני רבנן. יצתה בת קול ואמרה: לא מפני שזה גדול מזה, אלא שזה מעביר על מידותיו, וזה אינו מעביר על מדותיו.

Our Rabbis have taught: It is related of R. Eliezer that he ordained thirteen fasts upon the community and no rain fell. In the end, as the people began to depart [from the synagogue], he exclaimed: Have you prepared graves for yourselves? Thereupon the people sobbed loudly and rain fell. It is further related of R. Eliezer that once he stepped down before the Ark and recited the twenty-four benedictions [for fast days] and his prayer was not answered. R. Akiba stepped down after him and exclaimed: Our Father, our King, we have no King but Thee; our Father, our King, for Thy sake have

mercy upon us; and rain fell. The Rabbis present suspected [R. Eliezer], whereupon a Heavenly Voice was heard proclaiming.[The prayer of] this man [R. Akiba] was answered not because he is greater than the other man, but because he is ever forbearing and the other is not.

Source 17: Maharal of Prague, Netivot Olam, Netiv Gemilut Hasadim

”ומה שעל ידי המידה הזאת בפרט אפשר להתדמות לבוראו, מפני שזאת המדה, היא מה שעושה האדם בעצמו, כי המשפט, לא שייך לאמר שהוא הולך בדרכי ה' יתברך, כי ההולך הוא הולך מצד עצמו, ועושה מעצמו מרצונו ומדעתו וזה נקרא שהוא הולך בדרכי ה' יתברך, כאשר עושה דבר מדעתו, ואילו המשפט הוא מחויב לעשות משפט ולא נקרא זה שהולך בדרכי הקב"ה, רק כאשר הוא עושה חסד לפניו משה"ד והוא עושה מדעתו ומרצונו בזה שייך שהולך בדרכי ה' יתברך. וכן הרחמים, כאשר יש עני ומרחם עליו ונותן צדקה, אין בכל זאת שיאמר שהולך בדרכי ה' יתברך, כי אם לא היה העני בצרה אפשר כי לא היה עושה. ולכך לא יאמר בזה שהולך בדרכי ה' יתברך רק כאשר עושה חסד, שהחסד הוא עושה מעצמו ואינו חייב בזה⁵ לפיכך על ידי המדה הזאת נאמר עליו שהולך בדרכי ה' והולך אחריו... לפיכך הגומל חסדים נקרא שהולך בדרכי השי"ת. כי מדה זאת היא מדת ה' יתברך, היא מדה עצמית, והאדם ג"כ מדה זאת אליו מצד עצמו ולכן שייך לאמר בזה שהולך אחר השי"ת.”

It is specifically through this attribute that one can be similar to God, because this attribute, a person develops on his own. Because one who is just, it's not appropriate to see him as one who goes 'in God's ways'- because one who is 'walking' is doing so of his own volition, and this is called, 'going in God's ways', whereas justice one is obligated to pursue by law, but doing hesed – beyond the letter of the law – is called walking in God's ways.

Source 18: Rav Shimon Shkop, Introduction to Shaarei Yosher

שערי ישר

הקדמת הרב המחבר
והלכת בדרכיו

הקדמת הרב המחבר

יתברך הבורא ויתעלה היוצר שבראנו בצלמו ובדמות תבניתו (בראשית א כז), וחיי עולם נטע בתוכנו שיהיה אדיר חפצנו, להיטיב עם זולתנו, ליחיד ולרבים בהוה ובעתיד בדמות הבורא כביכול (תומר דבורה לרמ"ק פ"א), שכל מה שברא ויצר היה רצונו יתברך רק להיטיב עם הנבראים, כן רצונו יתברך שנהלך בדרכיו כאמור 'והלכת בדרכיו' (דברים כח ט), היינו שנהיה אנחנו בחירי יצוריו, מגמתנו תמיד להקדיש כוחותינו הגופניים והרוחניים לטובת הרבים כפי ערכנו, ולדעתי כל ענין זה נכלל במצות ה' של 'קדושים תהיו' (ויקרא יט ב), דהנה במדרש (ויקרא פכ"ד פרשה

לכן נלענ"ד, שבמצוה זו כלול כל יסוד ושורש מגמת תכלית חיינו, שיהיו כל עבודתנו ועמלנו תמיד מוקדשים לטובת הכלל. שלא נשתמש בשום מעשה ותנועה, הנאה ותענוג שלא יהיה בזה איזה ענין לטובת זולתנו. וכמובן בכל הקדשות שהוא התיחדות למטרה נכבדה. והנה כשהאדם מישר הליכותיו ושואף שתמיד יהיו דרכי חיו מוקדשים להכלל, אז כל מה שעושה גם לעצמו, להבראת גופו ונפשו, הוא מתיחס גם כן אל מצות קדושה. שע"ז יטיב גם לרבים, שבטובתו לעצמו הוא מטיב עם הרבים הצריכים לו. אבל אם הוא נהנה הנאה מן סוג המותריות, שאינן דרושות להבראת גופו ונפשו, הנאה זו היא נגד הקדושה, שבזה הוא מטיב לעצמו לרגע לפי דמיונו, ולזולתו אין שום תועלת. ועפ"י דבר זה ענין מצוה של פרישות הוא תמצית מיסוד מצות קדושה, הנכרת בפועל בדרכי ההנהגה של האדם. אבל ברעיון ושאיפת הרוח מתרחבת מצוה זו גם על כל מפעליו ומעשיו של האדם גם בינו לבין המקום. וביחס זה, מתדמה ענין קדושה זו לקדושת הבורא יתברך באיזה דמיון קצת, שכמו שבמעשה של הקדוש ברוך הוא בהבריא כולה, וכן בכל רגע ורגע שהוא מקיים את העולם, כל מעשיו הם מוקדשים לטובת זולתו, כן רצונו יתברך שיהיו מעשינו תמיד מוקדשים לטובת הכלל ולא להנאת עצמו.

Source 19: Rav Chaim Navon, "The Image of God"

Rabbenu Sa'adya Gaon, in his translation of the Torah, renders "*be-tzalmo*" as "He created him as a ruler." Interestingly, Rabbenu Sa'adya's suggestion is supported by the verse itself, for after God says, "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness," He immediately continues: "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, etc." Thus, the image of God is associated with domination.

This idea was developed by Rabbi Soloveitchik, who saw the image of God in man in his creative powers. Dominion over the world, according to Rabbi Soloveitchik, is just one aspect of human creativity:

There is no doubt that the term "image of God" in the first account refers to man's inner charismatic endowment as a creative being. Man's likeness to God expresses itself in man's striving and ability to become a creator. Adam the first who was fashioned in the image of God was blessed with great drive for creative activity and immeasurable resources for the realization of this goal. (Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, p. 11)

Rabbi Soloveitchik sees in man's creative activity a fulfillment of *imitatio Dei*. The classic midrashim demand of us to imitate God by assuming His moral attributes. Rabbi Soloveitchik does not hesitate to broaden the canvas and demand that we imitate God in the creative sphere as well:

The Torah describes the creation at length in order to teach us a very important lesson – "to walk in all His ways" – and to instruct man to imitate his Creator and be himself a creator. A person should not shake his head saying that this demand of man is impossible, for he cannot imitate his Creator in creativity; at the very most, he can adopt some element of His other traits: lovingkindness, mercy, and the like. The Torah, nevertheless, demands of man and commands him to tirelessly exert himself to cling to the traits of the Holy One, blessed be He, and be a creator. (Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Yemei Zikaron*, p. 86)

Rabbi Soloveitchik speaks here also of physical creation – the construction of bridges and railroads, technological development – but primarily of spiritual creation - Torah study and moral perfection. He regards creativity and innovation as a supreme value, as the image of God in man. The creative enterprise contains a dimension of creation *ex nihilo*: the development of something that never existed before. In this context, Rabbi Soloveitchik speaks of God not having entirely completed the creation of the world, and of His leaving room for man to create and perfect.

Source 20: Rabbi Soloveitchik, The Lonely Man of Faith

JOSEPH B. SOLOVEITCHIK

The brute's existence is an undignified one because it is a helpless existence. Human existence is a dignified one because it is a glorious, majestic, powerful existence. Hence, dignity is unobtainable as long as man has not reclaimed himself from coexistence with nature and has not risen from a non-reflective, degradingly helpless instinctive life to an intelligent, planned, and majestic one. For the sake of clarification of the double equation $\text{humanity} = \text{dignity}$ and $\text{dignity} = \text{glory-majesty}$, it is necessary to add another thought. There is no dignity without responsibility, and one cannot assume responsibility as long as he is not capable of living up to his commitments. Only when man rises to the heights of freedom of action and creativity of mind does he begin to implement the mandate of dignified responsibility entrusted to him by his Maker. Dignity of man expressing itself in the awareness of being responsible and of being capable of discharging his responsibility cannot be realized as long as he has not gained mastery over

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his environment. For life in bondage to insensate elemental forces is a non-responsible and hence an undignified affair.*

Man of old who could not fight disease and succumbed in multitudes to yellow fever or any other plague with degrading helplessness could not lay claim to dignity. Only the man who builds hospitals, discovers therapeutic techniques, and saves lives is blessed with dignity. Man of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who needed several days to travel from Boston to New York was less dignified than modern man who attempts to conquer space, boards a plane at the New York airport at midnight and takes several hours later a leisurely walk along the streets of London.† The brute is helpless, and, therefore, not dignified. Civilized man has gained limited control of nature and has become, in certain respects, her master, and with his mastery he has attained dignity as well. His mastery has made it possible for him to act in accordance with his responsibility.

Hence, Adam the first is aggressive, bold, and victory-minded. His motto is success, triumph over the cosmic forces. He engages in creative work, trying to imitate his Maker (*imitatio Dei*). The most characteristic representative of Adam the first is the mathematical scientist who whisks us away from the array of tangible things, from color and sound, from heat, touch, and smell which are the only phenomena accessible to our senses, into a formal relational world of thought constructs, the product of his “arbitrary” postulating and spontaneous positing and deducing. This world, woven out of human thought processes, functions with amazing precision and runs parallel to the workings of the real multifarious world of our senses. The modern scientist does not try to explain nature. He only duplicates it. In his full resplendent glory as a creative agent of God, he constructs his own world and in mysterious fashion succeeds in controlling his environment through manipulating his own mathematical constructs and creations.

Source 21: Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, Faith and Doubt

Whatever the nature of man's misuse of his divine image, this much is certain—that the creative human act is an expression of the Image of the divine Creator. Technological creativity is surely one of the most effective means of “subduing” nature (the divine command to man: “fill the earth and subdue it” [Gen. 1:28]); Hirsch sees the human–divine cooperative participation in

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creativity in the words “which God created to do” (Gen. 2:3), that is, God created the world unfinished, charging man “to do” or to complete by exercising his creative **talents**. The Bible follows the story of Abel and Cain (who, as a “worker of the earth,” symbolized the investment of human talent and toil in the creative development of Nature, as opposed to Abel who passively guarded his flock³⁸) with a description of man's growing technological creativity: Cain himself “builded a city”; Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain contributed to the enhancement of man's creative propensities in husbandry, the arts, and the crafts (Gen. 4:17–22).

Human creativity is therefore an expression of man's Godlikeness. Certainly, one ought not to see in this capacity of humanity a challenge to divine creativity; this, indeed, was the error of the builders of the Tower of Babel. When primitive man rubbed two stones together and produced a spark, he was not displacing God's creation of light and fire; he was exercising his divinely ordained vocation of creativity for enhancing the material world by use of his **talents** and was thereby imitating God, who said, “Let there be light.” The invention of the scissors was a creative extension of the human hand, the automobile of the human foot, and the computer of the human brain. Man, in all of these, has creatively imitated his Maker. God is a *Rofe Holim*—He heals the sick. When humankind makes medical progress, it fulfills its divinely decreed mission; it

does not compete with the Lord. If, therefore, man should discover the secrets whereby living matter is produced from inanimate stuff, he will not be challenging God but, quite the contrary, fulfilling in an unparalleled manner his function of *imitatio Dei* in the assertion and exercise of his creative genius.

The mentality that sees in every new advance of science and technology a further challenge to God and the belief in a Creator reveals a remarkable anthropomorphic bias: as if God were an aloof, autocratic, and tyrannical deity, jealously guarding His own domain and His industrial secrets from any encroachment by man, whom He regards as His competitor for hegemony over this contested realm. Nothing is further from a mature theistic outlook than this kind of interpretation placed upon the imminent experimental production of life in the laboratory. A Norwegian scientist, A. E. Wilder Smith,