

## Genesis 2:6-7

The shedder of human blood (dam hoadam) shall by humans (boadam) have his blood shed, for in the mold (tselem) of the L-rd (Elo-im) He made humanity.  
You, be fruitful and multiply – swarm on the earth and multiply in it.

The above verses are part of the second blessing of humanity, following the exit from the Ark.

### Questions:

- 1) Note that the murderer is never described as human. If we assume with most commentators that the verse nonetheless refers to human murderers, is the implication that they have abandoned their humanity and are no longer made in “the mold of the L-rd”?
- 2) The “blessing” begins (verse 2) and ends with an exhortation to procreation. Why is the repetition necessary?
- 3) Is there a tight connection between the discussion of murder and the encouragement to multiply?

### Commentaries

- 1) Midrash Halakhah – “dam hoadam boadam” can also be translated as “the blood of a human inside another human”, and is intended to prohibit abortion. This may well be a response to question 3 above.
- 2) Midrash Aggadah – Those who deliberately fail to procreate are viewed as having diminished the “demut” (likeness?) of Hashem. Note the use of “demut” rather than “tselem” even though this is clearly a comment on the juxtaposition of the end of 6 and beginning of 7. Note also that this is cited from the famously unmarried R. Shimon ben Azzai, who is chided: “You preach better than you practice”.
- 3) Ohr HaChayyim – G-d’s commitment (immediately before the blessing) not to destroy the world is dependent on a parallel human commitment to preserving ourselves as a species. In other words, G-d does not commit to preventing us from destroying ourselves.
- 4) Chizkuni – do not assume that strict justice will accelerate the cycle of violence and lead to the destruction of humanity – rather, it will enable you to multiply. (Okay, the translation is very contemporary, but he really does say this.)
- 5) Bekhor Shor (possible extended by me)– Elo-im can mean judge, and the phrase “tzelem elo-im” cuts both ways. The verse emphasizes the magnitude of the crime by describing the victim as having been made in the mold of the L-rd, and the responsibility of the rest of society by describing all humans as having been made to judge.

### My comments

- 1) Note that the connection between “He made humanity” and “be fruitful and multiply” also makes procreation an act of imitatio dei.
- 2) The commandment to procreate is repeated because, in the aftermath of catastrophe, there is a Kohelletistic sense that the impermanence of life makes its continuation and propagation meaningless. Possibly its formulation as a command (and many commentaries take the shift from encouragement to mandate as the point of the repetition) should cause us to revisit the claim of the penultimate verse of Kohellet that duty provides meaning even when the meaning is not comprehensible.

Shabbat Shalom  
RK