

The Rev. "The Lonely Man of Faith"

(1)

102

New York Times "The Jeremy Lin Problem," David Brooks

The odds are that Lin will never figure it out because the two moral universes are not reconcilable. Our best teacher on these matters is Joseph Soloveitchik, the great Jewish theologian. In his essays "The Lonely Man of Faith" and "Majesty and Humility" he argues that people have two natures. First, there is "Adam the First," the part of us that creates, discovers, competes and is involved in building the world. Then, there is "Adam the Second," the spiritual individual who is awed and humbled by the universe as a spectator and a worshipper.

Majesty and Humility

3

The basic dialectic of man and his morality was beautifully captured in two midrashic homilies quoted by Rashi. In his comment to the verse "וייצר ה' א' את האדם עפר מן האדמה," — "And God created man dust of the earth,"³ Rashi says:

צבר עפרו מכל האדמה מארבע רוחות וכו'.

God gathered the dust [from which man was fashioned] from the entire earth — from its four corners.

ד"א: נטל עפרו ממקום שנאמר בו: מזבח אדמה תעשה לו

He took the dust [from which man was made] from that spot which was designated by the Almighty, at the very dawn of creation, as the future site of the altar. As it is written: "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me."

G. A. Schiller

"Adam I"

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ
 בְּדַגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-
 הַרְמֵשׁ הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וַיְבָרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם
 בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:
 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ
 אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְכִבְשׁוּהָ וּרְדוּ בְּדַגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וּבְכָל-חַיַּת הָרְמֵשׂוֹת עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה
 נַתַּתִּי לָכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב וְזֶרַע זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-
 הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת-כָּל-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ פְרִי-עֵץ זֶרַע זֶרַע לָכֶם
 יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ: וְלִכְל-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וְלִכְל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
 וְלִכְל-רֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ נִפְשׁ חַיָּה אֶת-כָּל-פֶּרֶךְ
 עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ וְהָיָה-כֵן: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה
 וַהֲוֶה-טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי-עֶרְב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי:

26 And God said, "Let us make Man in Our image, after Our likeness. They shall rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and over the animal, the whole earth, and every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." 27 So God created Man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
 28 God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea, the bird of the sky, and every living thing that moves on the earth."



"Adam I"

ב א-ב וַיִּכְלַד הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם: וַיְבָרֵךְ אֱלֹהִים בְּיוֹם
 הַשְּׁבִיעִי מֵלֵאמֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבַּח בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
 מִכָּל-מְלֵאכֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם
 הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל-מְלֵאכֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר-
 בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:
 ו אֵלֹהִים תּוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהַבְרָאָם בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת
 הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אָרֶץ וּשְׁמַיִם: וְכָל וְשֵׁם הַשָּׁמַיִם טָרָם יִהְיֶה
 בְּאָרֶץ וְכָל-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יִצְמַח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם אִין לְעֵבֶד אֶת-הָאֲדָמָה:
 ו וְאָדָם יַעֲלֶה מִן-הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת-כָּל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה:
 ו וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֶפְרָל מִן-הָאֲדָמָה
 וַיַּפֵּחַ בְּאַפִּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְגִפְשׁ חַיָּה: וַיִּשַׁע
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גֵּן בְּעֵדֶן מִקְדָּם וַיִּשֶׂם שֵׁם אֶת-הָאָדָם

א אֲשֶׁר יִצְרֶה: וַיַּצְמַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן-הָאֲדָמָה כֶּלֶעַץ
 וְחִמְדָּה לְמִרְאֵה וְטוֹב לְמֵאֲכָל וְעֵץ הַחַיַּיִם בְּתוֹךְ הַגֵּן וְעֵץ
 הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע: וַיְהִי וַיִּצְרֶה יִצְא מֵעֵדֶן לְהִשְׁקוֹת אֶת-הַגֵּן
 יא וּמִשָּׁם יִפְרֹד וְהָיָה לְאֶרֶץ בְּעֵה נְאֻשִׁים: שֵׁם הָאֲדָמָה פִּישׁוֹן
 הוּא הַסּוּבָב אֶת כָּל-אָרֶץ הַחִוִּילָה אֲשֶׁר-שָׁם הַחֵבֶן:
 יב וְהָיָה הָאָרֶץ הַהִיא טוֹב שֵׁם הַקָּדְלָח וְאִבְנֵי הַשָּׂהֶם: וְשֵׁם-
 יד הַקָּדְלָח הַשְּׁנַיִם וַיְחַוֵּן הוּא הַסּוּבָב אֶת כָּל-אָרֶץ בּוֹשֵׁת וְשֵׁם
 טו הַקָּדְלָח הַשְּׁלִישִׁי חִקְלָה הוּא הַקָּדְלָח קִרְמַת אֲשֶׁר וְהַקָּדְלָח
 טז הַרְבִּיעִי הוּא פְרָת: וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם
 טז וַיַּנְחֵהוּ בְּגֵן-עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ: וַיִּצַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים
 יז עַל-הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל עֵץ-הַגֵּן אָכַל תֹּאכַל: וּמֵעֵץ
 הַדַּעַת טוֹב נָרַע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אָכַלְתָּ מִמֶּנּוּ
 טח מוֹת תָּמוּת: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא-טוֹב הָיִיתָ הָאָדָם
 טט לְבַדּוֹ אֲעֲשֶׂה-לּוֹ עֹזֵר כְּגִבּוֹדוֹ: וַיִּצְרֶה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן-
 הָאֲדָמָה כָּל-חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֶת כָּל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא
 אֶל-הָאָדָם לְרֵאוֹת מַה-יִּקְרָא-לּוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא-
 כ לּוֹ הָאָדָם נִפְשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ: וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שְׁמוֹת

שליש

The discrepancies:

- (1) Regarding Adam I, the Torah states that he was created "in the image of God" but mentions nothing about the creation of his body, while regarding Adam II, the Torah says that he was fashioned from dust and then God breathed life into him.
- (2) Adam I is told to "Fill the earth and subdue it," while Adam II is charged to cultivate the garden.
- (3) In the first account, male and female are created concurrently, while in the second account, Adam is created alone and Eve appears later.
- (4) The first account refers to God only by the name "Elokim," while the second account also uses the Tetragrammaton (the *Shem ha-Meforash*, the four-letter sacred name).

ב / א-ח

פרשת בראשית

10 / ספר בראשית

ב א-ב וַיִּכְלֹה הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם: וַיִּכְלֹ אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבַּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּו שְׁבַת מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת: אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם בַּיּוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם: וְכָל שֵׁם הַשְּׁוֹדָה טָרֵם יְהוָה בְּאָרֶץ וְכָל-עֵשֶׂב הַשְּׁוֹדָה טָרֵם וַצִּמַּח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם אֵין לַעֲבֹד אֶת-הָאָדָמָה: וְאָדָם יַעֲלֶה מִן-הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֹת-כָּל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה: וַיִּיצֵר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֹפֵר מִן-הָאָדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשִׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה: וַיִּשְׁע יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גֹּן בְּעֵדֶן מִקְדָּם וַיִּשֶׂם שֵׁם אֶת-הָאָדָם

א-ב וַיִּכְלֹה הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם: וַיִּכְלֹ אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבַּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּו שְׁבַת מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת: אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם בַּיּוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם: וְכָל שֵׁם הַשְּׁוֹדָה טָרֵם יְהוָה בְּאָרֶץ וְכָל-עֵשֶׂב הַשְּׁוֹדָה טָרֵם וַצִּמַּח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם אֵין לַעֲבֹד אֶת-הָאָדָמָה: וְאָדָם יַעֲלֶה מִן-הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֹת-כָּל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה: וַיִּיצֵר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֹפֵר מִן-הָאָדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשִׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה: וַיִּשְׁע יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גֹּן בְּעֵדֶן מִקְדָּם וַיִּשֶׂם שֵׁם אֶת-הָאָדָם



The Midrash presents an alternative exposition of the verse in Deuteronomy, which relates to Jacob:

R' Berechyah said in the name of R' Simone: It is written, *There is none like God.* — But who is like God? *Jeshurun* is — יִשְׂרָאֵל

— "Jeshurun" referring to Israel the Elder, i.e., Jacob. קוה הקדוש ברוך הוא כתוב בו, "וַיִּשְׁגַּב ה' לְבָדוֹ", אף יַעֲקֹב וַיִּזְחַר יַעֲקֹב לְבָדוֹ — Just as it states regarding the Holy One, blessed is He, *And HASHEM "alone" will be exalted on that day (Isaiah 2:11)*, too, regarding Jacob it states here, *Jacob was left "alone."*

So he departed thence, and found Elisha, the son of Shafat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him and he with the twelfth; and Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "let me I pray thee kiss my father and my mother and then I will follow thee," and he said unto him, "go back again for what have I done to thee." And he returned back from him and took a yoke of oxen and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen and gave unto the people and they did eat. Then he arose and went after Elijah and ministered unto him. (I Kings, 19:19-21)

ELISHA WAS A typical representative of the majestic community. He was the son of a prosperous farmer, a man of property, whose interests were centered around this-worldly, material goods such as crops, livestock, and market prices. His objective was economic success, his aspiration—material wealth. The Bible por-

104

JOSEPH B. SOLOVEITCHIK

trays him as efficient, capable, and practical, remindful of a modern business executive. When Elijah met him, we are told, he was supervising the work done by the slaves. He was with the twelfth yoke in order not to lose sight of the slave-laborers. What did this man of majesty have in common with Elijah, the solitary covenantal prophet, the champion of God, the adversary of kings, who walked as a stranger through the bustling cities of Shomron, past royal pomp and grandeur, negating the worth of all goods to which his contemporaries were committed, reproaching the sinners, preaching the law of God and portending His wrath? What bond could exist between a complacent farmer who enjoyed his homestead and the man in the hairy dress who came from nowhere and who finally disappeared under a veil of mystery? Yet unexpectedly, the call came through to this unimaginative, self-centered farmer. Suddenly the mantle of Elijah was cast upon him. While he was engaged in the most ordinary, everyday activity, in tilling the soil, he encountered God and felt the transforming touch of God's hand. The strangest metamorphosis occurred. Within seconds, the old Elisha disappeared and a new Elisha emerged. Majestic man was replaced by covenantal man. He was initiated into a new spiritual universe in which clumsy social-class distinctions had little meaning, wealth played no role, and a serene, illuminated, universal "we" consciousness

supplanted the small, limited, and selfish "I" consciousness. Old concerns changed, past commitments vanished, cherished hopes faded, and a new vision of a redemptive-covenantal reality incommensurate with the old vision of an enjoyable-majestic reality beckoned to him. No more did the "farmer" care for the oxen, the means of making the soil yield its abundance, which were so precious to him a while ago. No more was he concerned with anything which was so dear to him before. He slew the oxen and fed the meat to the slaves who, half-starved, tilled the soil for him and whom he, until that meeting with Elijah, had treated with contempt. Moreover, covenantal man renounced his family relationships. He bade farewell to father and mother and departed from their home for good. Like his master, he became homeless. Like his ancestor Jacob he became a "straying Aramean" who took defeat and humiliation with charity and gratitude. However, Elisha's withdrawal from majesty was not final. He followed the dialectical course of all our prophets. Later, when he achieved the pinnacle of faith and arrived at the outer boundaries of human commitment, he came back to society as a participant in state affairs, as an adviser of kings and a teacher of the majestic community. God ordered him to return to the people, to offer them a share in the covenantal drama and to involve them in the great and solemn colloquy. He was God's messenger carrying,

like Moses, two tablets of stone containing the covenantal *kerygma*. Many a time he felt disenchanting and frustrated because his words were scornfully rejected. However, Elisha never despaired or resigned. Despair and resignation were unknown to the man of the covenant who found triumph in defeat, hope in failure, and who could not conceal God's Word that was, to paraphrase Jeremiah, deeply implanted in his bones and burning in his heart like an all-consuming fire. Elisha was indeed lonely, but in his loneliness he met the Lonely One and discovered the singular covenantal confrontation of solitary man and God who abides in the recesses of transcendental solitude.

Is modern man of faith entitled to a more privileged position and a less exacting and sacrificial role?