

Human Anatomy a la Scripture

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I thank you because I am awesomely made, wonderfully; your works are wonders—I know this very well.

“So God created humankind in his own image; in the image of God he created him: male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27 CJB. Or, as Jeff Benner translates the Hebrew, *“and the powers fattened the man with his image, with the image of the powers he fattened him, male and female he fattened them.”*¹

The Hebrew language is remarkable for many reasons, among them:

- God gave His instructions to mankind, His creation, in the Hebrew language. The entire Tanach² was originated in Hebrew.
- Jewish tradition asserts that Hebrew is the language "with which the world was created." This means that Hebrew does not merely describe reality - it is the source of reality. Rather than being a vehicle to express meaning, the Hebrew language is the source of meaning. Hebrew is then, not an etymological system³ but a spiritual path. Implicit in the Hebrew language itself are all of the basic principles of Jewish spirituality waiting to be unpacked by the sensitive ear of the spiritual seeker. (After Jerusalem Rabbi Mordecai Gafni)
- The Hebrew language (and thought) views the world through the senses (concrete thought)⁴. Concrete thought is the expression of concepts and ideas in ways that can be seen, touched, smelled, tasted or heard. All five of the senses are used when speaking, hearing, writing and reading the Hebrew language. For example, *“They are like trees planted by streams—they bear their fruit in season, their*

1. Yes, this is most probably a strange translation to you. Jeff Benner has dug deeply into the Hebrew language of the Bible, discovered previously unknown facts (at least to this generation), and developed translations of the Hebrew words there into English in a more logical manner than any previous translator. His “Mechanical Translation” provides a consistent translation where each Hebrew word, prefix and suffix are translated exactly the same way every time. This provides the student of the Bible with a very Hebraic look at the Bible without knowing Hebrew. I refer you to his website at <http://www.ancient-hebrew.org> where he explains his work in depth.

2. Often improperly called the Old Testament.

3. Followers of Yeshua are spiritual “Jews.” He was a Torah-observant Jew, a Rabbi. Paul wrote to Gentile followers that, “. . . *some of the branches were broken off, and you – a wild olive – were grafted in among them and have become equal sharers in the rich root of the olive tree,*” making us part of the Hebrew nation, commonly referred to as Jews.

4. Abstract thought, in contrast, expresses concepts and ideas that cannot be seen, touched, smelled, tasted or heard. For example, *“ADONAI is merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in grace.”* (Psalm 103:8) The words compassion, grace, mercy and anger are abstract words, ideas that cannot be experienced by the senses. Why do we find these abstract English words in a passage of concrete thinking Hebrews? Actually, these are abstract English words used to translate the original Hebrew concrete words. Translators translate this way because the original Hebrew makes no sense when literally translated into English.

As an example of translation from a concrete Hebrew word to an abstract English word, consider the word anger. Anger, an abstract word, is actually the Hebrew word אַף which literally means nose, a concrete word. When a man is very angry, he begins to breathe hard and the nostrils begin to flare. A Hebrew sees anger as the flaring of the nose. If the translator literally translated Psalm 103:8 above as “slow to nose,” the English reader would not understand.

leaves never wither, everything they do succeeds.” (Psalm 1:3) Here the author expresses his thoughts in concrete terms of tree, streams of water, fruit, leaves. In doing so, he paints a picture of success. What better image of success than a thriving, bearing fruit tree? Yum, yum.

- The Hebrew alphabet of twenty-two letters consists entirely of consonants.
- The language is written from right to left, without vowels.

When God created man, he created concrete objects, the components of the human body. Because they are concrete objects, they serve the Hebrew language very well to describe abstract thought as well, as we see in footnote 4 concerning anger and the nose. Many other anatomical parts (concrete objects) provide the background for abstract concepts and ideas also. Let’s look at a few.

Knee

The Hebrew word for knee is בִּרְךְ, berek. The associated verb, formed by simply changing the vowels of the noun, is בָּרַךְ, barak, meaning to bend the knee or kneel. We English speakers have little problem moving from the noun “knee” to bending it, to the verb kneeling. Notice that in doing so we are moving from a concrete object, the knee, to a non-concrete, or abstract, idea of kneeling. Continuing further, Hebrews associate the action “to bless” with kneeling, and we English speakers should have no problem with the concept of kneeling to bless a person. The concrete concept behind a blessing is to come to another with gifts on bended knee. The associated noun בְּרָכָה, berakah, is usually translated as a “blessing.” Yet a further extension is the word בָּרוּךְ, baruch, or the adjective “blessed.”

So the concrete object knee is extended to the abstract associations of kneel, bless and blessed. Let’s look at a few scriptures that use, in Hebrew, some form of “knee.” Further study will be enhanced by referencing Strong’s Concordance numbers 1290, 1288 and 1263.

☞ Two associated forms of the Hebrew word for knee are in 2 Chronicles 6:13-14, here highlighted: “ . . . and kneeled down upon his knees . . . ” וַיִּבְרַךְ עַל-בְּרָכָיו . . .

“Now Solomon had made a bronze platform, five cubits long, five cubits wide and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands toward heaven. He said, O LORD, the God of Israel, there is no god like You in heaven or on earth, keeping covenant and showing lovingkindness to Your servants who walk before You with all their heart;” Note the (abstract) blessing or praising of God extending from the (concrete) bowing or kneeling.

☞ God’s covenant with Abraham included the Genesis 12:3 statement, “I will **ble**ss those who **ble**ss you, but I will curse anyone who curses you; and by you all the families of the earth will be **ble**ssed,” in Hebrew (with associated forms of knee highlighted):

וְאַבְרָמָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אֶאֱרָ וְנִבְרָכוּ בְּךָ כָּל מְשִׁפְחוֹת הָאָדָמָה:

Paraphrasing leads us to think, “I (God) will **kn**eel before those who **kn**eel before you (Abraham and your seed), . . . and by you will the nations (Gentiles) of the earth be **kn**elt before [in blessing].”

☞ The traditional Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:24) is:

The LORD bless you, and keep you;
The LORD make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you;
The LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.

5. Note that the Hebrew letter כ changes to the form ך when it is the final letter in a word. Five Hebrew letters also change form at the end of a word.

The first line, in Hebrew, with the associated form of knee highlighted is:

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ:

Jeff Benner translates the blessing as:

“He who exists will kneel before you presenting gifts and will guard you with a hedge of protection; He who exists will illuminate the wholeness of his being toward you bringing order and he will beautify you; He who exists will lift up his wholeness of being and look upon you and he will set in place all you need to be whole and complete.”

I suggest that you read this translation of the Aaronic blessing slowly, deliberately, and let it sink in. Can you fathom God kneeling before you, presenting gifts to you? Further, can you imagine Him guarding you with a hedge of protection? Bringing order to your life by shining His entire being on you? Setting in place all you need, to be whole and complete? Wow!

Heart

The Hebrew word for heart is לֵב, lev. Literally לֵב means heart, the organ that pumps blood, but is also seen in scripture as the seat of thought and emotion, the inner man, mind or will, especially when in the form לֵבָב⁶.

☞ Contrasting with emotion as we often think of the heart, Job told us he had understanding, or thoughts, גַּם־לִי לֵבָב, “*But I too have a brain, as much as you, In no way am I inferior to you.*” (12:3 CJB)

☞ Specific reference to the mind occurs in Deuteronomy 8:5 CJB, “Think deeply about it: *ADONAI* was disciplining you, just as a man disciplines his child.” . . . וַיְדַעַתְךָ עִם־לֵבָבְךָ.

Soul

The Hebrew word for soul is נֶפֶשׁ, nephesh, derived from the verb נָפַשׁ, meaning “to refresh.” Soul, self, life, creature, person, appetite, mind, living being, desire, emotion and passion are other English words used by translators of נֶפֶשׁ. “The mammoth steamer [Titanic] was proceeding on her maiden voyage from Southampton to New York with 2340 souls on board,” described the situation before her sinking.

☞ Do animals have a soul? Gen 1:21 and Gen 2:7 both having “nephesh chayah,” a living soul.

Genesis 2:7 Then *ADONAI*, God, formed a person (Hebrew: *adam*) from the dust of the ground (Hebrew: *adamah*) and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that he became a living being.

וַיִּצְרָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם עָפָר מִן־הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נְשָׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה:

Genesis 1:21 God said, “Let the water swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open dome of the sky.”

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַתַּיִמִּים הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֶת כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה הַרְמֵשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר שָׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם לְמִינֵיהֶם וְאֶת כָּל־עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינָהּ וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב:

Spirit

The Hebrew word for spirit is רוּחַ, ru’ach. Its base, concrete meaning is wind. The Hebrew nomads were very familiar with the wind patterns as they followed a prescribed path indicating the

6. The additional ם is a suffix, meaning “in.”

7. The final ך is a suffix meaning your.

coming season. From this word comes the idea of breath of life as it is the wind of man which follows a prescribed path of inhaling and exhaling. “So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life (רוח חיים).” (Genesis 7:15)

☞ רוח can also be thought of as the command (word) of God, as in Psalm 33:6, “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth (וברוח פיו) all their host.”

☞ When David wrote in Psalm 31:6, “Into your hand I commit my spirit (בידך אפקיד רוחי); you will redeem me, ADONAI, God of truth,” he is committing his existence, life, and path to God. The Spirit/Wind/Breath (רוח, ruach) of God is his existence. Just as the wind cannot be seen but its presence can be sensed through the movement of trees and the sound of its leaves rustling, so is God. We cannot see Him but we can sense his presence. When we commit our ruach to him, he gives us a new ruach, His ruach. With His ruach in us, our “prescribed path” through life is now accomplished by Him.

☞ “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit (. . . ונתתי לכם לב חדש ורוח חדשה) inside you; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put my Spirit (ואת־רוחי) inside you and cause you to live by my laws, respect my rulings and obey them.”

Intestines, Gut

The Hebrew word for intestines is מֵעָה, me’eh, as we know from its use in 2 Samuel 20:10: “Amasa took no notice of the sword in Yo’av’s hand, so Yo’av stabbed him in the groin. His insides (מֵעָיו) poured out on the ground, and he died without being stabbed a second time.”

וּעֲמָשָׂא לֹא־נִשְׁמַר בַּחֶרֶב אֲשֶׁר בִּיד־יוֹאָב וַיַּכֶּהוּ בָּהּ אֶל־הַחֹמֶשׁ וַיִּשְׁפֹּךְ מֵעָיו אֶרְצָה וְלֹא־שָׁנָה לוֹ וַיָּמָת

In addition to the gut, the internal organs of the lower torso, it also identifies the seat of the unconscious mind, where one’s instinct resides. Therefrom comes the saying, “I have a gut feeling that . . .”

☞ “My eyes are worn out from weeping, everything in me is churning; I am empty of *emotion* because . . .” Lamentations 2:11. . . . כָּלוּ בַדְּמָעוֹת עֵינַי חֲמַרְמָרוּ מֵעֵי נִשְׁפָּךְ

☞ A second Hebrew word is used for bowels but more slanted toward the womb, as in Jeremiah 1:5, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee,” . . . בָּטַרְם אֶצְרָךְ בְּבֶטֶן יִדְעֵתִיךָ וּבְטַרְם תִּצָּא מִרְחֹם

☞ Probably because action in the womb is the result of love and brings forth love, the word רָחַם also means compassion or mercy, as in Exodus 33:19, “. . . I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion,” . . . וַחֲנַנְתִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲחֹן וְרַחַמְתִּי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲרַחֵם
אַרְחָם:

כ"ח בטבת, תשס"ו