

What is a bris or bris bat all about if it is not an entrance and enlistment into the covenant of God and Israel.?

And what do we mean when we say v'yikareh shemo/shemah b'Yisrael---I don't think we mean that it will be the kid's name in Medinat haYehudim. (Israel)

I think our intention is to induct them (albeit we haven't asked them) into the covenant between.....

And when someone is called to the Torah, why not say "Let Scott Smith" or Madonna O'Riley come forward for the third Aliyah. What's the business with a name in a foreign tongue unless it means something in the context of the relationship between God and the Jewish People.

And we have come to the point where the fact of Hebrew names by themselves don't do it-viz; the plethora of Hebrew names in Medinat Yisrael that are totally, covenant free.

And why use the Hebrew (Covenant name in a MiShebeirach) as first first option, if it has nothing to do with the the Jewish people's special relationship with KBH.

First; This has nothing at all to do with whatever Wolpe did or did not say.

Second; If we are not the Covenant people, who and what are we?

Third; Our Seminaries have taught us little about language and the dramatic use thereof.

One colleague responded; (I don't have his permission to quote him) I actually like the idea because it defines an extra level of spirituality to the name for the average Jew.

I quite agree. No one need agree, but I think the use of Covenant name adds something meaningful. It might take some getting used to. But we do use English in our liturgy like it or not. Holocaust is one English word we use. Shoah may be better, but for better or worse our folks understand Holocaust. And the question is, do we use language that conveys a message we wish to convey.

True, Covenant is English for B'rit, and if all our folks were native Hebrew speakers, we would be talking a different ball game. But if we communicate in English, Covenant is a crucial concept for us Jews. If we're not about being a covenant people, what is our whole enterprise about.

What is a b'rit or b'rit bat or a Bar or Bat Mitzvah all about if it is not an entrance and enlistment and commitment into the covenant of God and Israel??

And what do we mean when we say v'yikareh shemo/shemah b'Yisrael---I don't think we mean that it will be the kid's name in Medinat haYehudim.

I think our intention is to induct them (albeit we haven't asked them) into the covenant between God and Israel, and at Bar Mitzvah to note that they have sufficient beginning skills to participate in the covenant.

And when someone is called to the Torah, why not say "Let Scott Smith" or Madonna O'Riley come forward for the third Aliyah. What's the business with a name in a foreign tongue unless it means something in the context of the relationship between God, the Jewish People and the Torah (testimony to the covenant) that is being read.

And we have come to the point where the fact of Hebrew names by themselves don't do it-note the plethora of Hebrew names in Medinat Yisrael that are totally covenant free. viz; Oren, Paz, Gal , etc.

And why use the Covenant name in a MiShebeirach as first option, if it has nothing to do with the Jewish people's special relationship with KBH.

Once upon a time I was a Psychologist who had been a Rabbi. I divorced one to do the other. I couldn't imagine that the two could be coupled happily. Today I am a [Rabbi↔Psychologist] [Psychologist↔Rabbi] who brings both of these "selves" to working with couples.

Some basics we and the couples we work with need to know.

Each of us is not a Self. Each of us is a relationship between “selves”. For me that relationship is grounded in the two creation myths of Genesis; the first (Gen. 1:26-27) has humankind created in the “image” of God; the second (Gen. 2:7) has man given life by being infused with God’s breath. In Hebrew that is the [Tzelem↔Neshamah] relationship. In English that might be named the [Breathhtaking↔Image] relationship.¹

When the relationship between our inner “selves” is working, we are perceived to be a unified Self. When there is room in the couple relationship for those multiple “selves” to all be present, accounted for valued and blessed, we find ourselves becoming a WE. When those “selves” are wounded, hidden, rejected, despised, the WE disintegrates.

The [Breathhtaking↔Image] in each of us is **not** negotiable. It is a given, ever present. The [Breathhtaking↔Image] is **not** contingent on our thinking and feeling correctly, behaving one way or another, on accomplishment or the lack thereof, on perceived goodness or experienced badness. Each of us, do what we will or won't, cannot be rid of it. It is our original **essence**.

Often obscured in the fog of compromised living, the [Breathhtaking↔Image] is **always** waiting to be seen and heard, attended to and returned to. When we and/or others turn away from the [Breathhtaking↔Image] neglecting it in ourselves, ignoring and disregarding it in others, harm is done, commitments broken, intimacies violated, sexual violations happen, children are hurt, trusts betrayed, and great evil perpetrated. Blame and contempt, anger and condemnation, violence of all sorts directed towards our “selves” but even more dangerously at our partner’s wounded “selves” destroys the couple, increasing our individual sense of alienation and isolation, turning us ever more away from the [Breathhtaking↔Image] with which we are blessed, and blocking any chance of experiencing it in our partner(s).

Repairing the breach by returning to our [Breathhtaking↔Image] is a supremely important undertaking. It requires an inner dialog of mutual respect, leading to a loving, personal human (e) relationship between each and all of our “selves”; those we value and those we distance; the “positive” and the “negative”; the “acceptable” and “non acceptable”. To do this we must value and bless all “selves”, *and* bring each and all back, particularly those

¹ The brackets [] indicate the interrelated unity of these two elements. The double arrow ↔ signifies reciprocal relationship.

“*selves*” previously rejected, into relationship within the [Breathtaking↔Image], The same is true in the couple relationship where the charge is to search out, tune in to, stay focused on, respect, nourish, sustain and bless the [Breathtaking↔Image], first in all our “*selves*” and then in our partners.

When this happens, the [Breathtaking↔Image] flourishes and atypical couples become a loving We. And I can enjoy being a [Rabbi↔Psychologist] [Psychologist↔Rabbi].

cegh hnh hvhu
vba ,tnu ohgcrtu ohba gca
uhhj hba

Gen:47:28

And the days of Yaakov, the years of his life, **his two lives**. were seven years and a hundred and forty years. Now I know it appears other places--with Avraham and Sarah, not with Yitzchak--someone else will have to darshan that.

Gen: 25:7 ,tn hj rat ovrct hhj hba hnh vktu
ohba anju vba ohgcau vba

Now these are the days and years of of the life of Avraham, which he lived:
A hundred years and seventy years and five years, then he expired.

Gen:23:1

vba vtn vra hhj uhvhu
vra hhj hba ohba gcau vba

ohragu Now Sara's life was one hundred years and twenty years and seven years,

(thus) the years of Sara's life.

Gen: 35:28 vba ohbnau vba ,tn ejmh
hnh uhvhu

And the days of Yitzhak were a hundred years and eighty years, then Yitzhak expired.

Whatever--Jacob's had at least two lives--

So often in pairs--
Born twinned, clearly fraternal, not identical,
Lea and Rachel, loved and hated,
Zilpah and Bilha,
mahanayim
divine and human
in Fox's words both troubled and triumphant,
multi layered

What Yaakov presents to the world is often not what Yaakov experiences himself to be , pretends to be what he inwardly thinks he's not. Dresses up as if he was his brother Esav-shrewd trickster,deceitful and noble. covers his actions as something else, yet steadfastness, bargains with God..if you

when he steals away from Lavan and is confronted, self-righteous.

kfu ,u ohabt ogu ohvkt og ,hra
hf

For you have fought with God and men and have prevailed.

I think it not accidental that the great metaphor of Yaakov's life is about being wounded and blessed. His life is about his relationship with his wounded selves. the struggle between different aspects

Wrestles in the night It is in working out the relationship between the different parts of ourselves that our greatness comes. Neither victorious nor defeated, wounded and blessed.

How you're going to manage your at least two lives.
the victory is in the wrestling

We descendants of Yaakov, rabbis of Yisrael are each and all of us, both wounded and blessed

We all have at least two lives--

Has an independent existence-in us, most often not of us

our public face and our private being.

We love our congregants and resent them fiercely.

we Bless those who are with us and curse those who are not.

we are both grandiose, who else would take upon themselves to tell large gathered audiences how they should

lead their lives, and hopelessly impotent, wondering if we make any difference at all.

We are kind and understanding to many and detest the noodges who compliment our most incoherent teachings, our inane meanderings.

We affirm that all are created Tzelem-Neshamah and despise them when they

We try desperately to hide our OTHER lives. Relationship.

--All the parts of you Life is a both and world, not an either or world.

Purpose of our Jewish religious experience is not to get rid of unwanted parts. It is to put them into a loving relationship

kthbp ouenv oa cegh trehu

Maybe it was kt hbp

The tuv lurc ause is a relationship--

Many aspects some wounded.

HIT MAN

How to be in relationship and bless those parts.

That God is both singular and paradoxically plural is referred to many times in Jewish tradition viz;

God said to Moses: You want to know my name? I am known by what I do. I am called many things. When I judge humanity, I am Elohim. When I war on evildoers, I am Tzevaot. When I suspend judgement, I am El Shaddai. when I am merciful to My world I am Yahweh.-- (My name is) EHYEH ASHER EHYEH- I will be- there howsoever I will be-there. I am known by what I do.

Exodus Rabbah 3;6

Or noting God's prayer?!

May it be My will that my compassion overcome My anger and may My mercy prevail over My attributes [of justice and judgement]. May I deal with My children in accordance with My attribute of compassion. May I act towards them beyond the letter of the law.

Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 7A

That God is a [Both/And] personality is amply present in Rabbinic tradition; The twelve hour Divine day is said to include a variety of activities; God spends three hours studying Torah; three hours dispensing justice; three hours providing for the needs of the world's creatures and three hours playing with Leviathan

Babylonian Talmud; Avodah Zarah 3b

God is my hide and seek partner?

This past Shabbat I observed Yahrzeit for my father z'l.

As many of you may know I am a member of both the RA and the CCAR. This past Shabbat, Jim Prosnit, the Rabbi of Congregation B'nai Israel here in Bridgeport asked me to inaugurate something new at the B'nai Israel Shabbat morning service. He asked me to prepare something brief to be read/spoken at the end of the service, immediately preceding and perhaps leading into my kaddish.

What I said follows;

My Father Wanted Me To Be A Rabbi.

I was named Jacob Hirsch, for Dad's maternal grandfather, Yaakov Hirsch Cohn/Catz, whose tombstone records his having been a "Hacham", which was what rabbis were called in the Turkish empire, which at times dominated parts of Romania. That was an omen!

Youngest son of a youngest son, I was my father's unabashed and absolute favorite. His darling Jacob! He heaped mounds of nurturing love upon me-coming into my bed in the morning reading Black Beauty and Uncle Toms cabin to me. He was Domineering, and strong willed, never once touched me in anger One did what he wanted you to do. I only rebelled if I thought I might get away with it. So I would sneak hot dogs and hamburgers on the way home from Ramaz, if I were sure no one was watching.

Single minded, nothing was beyond his ken. A loyal Jew. A patriotic American- self educated he arrived in the US in 1914 19 years old, By the time I was aware, he had read Shakespeare, became a fan of classical music and sang operatic arias. He learned fluent Italian... to be able to speak to the largely Italian patrons of Bloom's Bargain Floor Covering, Go where the thrifty go to save. in West New York New Jersey

A Hitler Jew, he returned with a vengeance to religious observance as Adolph ascended to power in Germany

He wanted me to be a loyal American patriot.
He wanted me to be a cellist.
Mostly he wanted me to be a rabbi.

He heard of a Jewish Day School, that did not have school on Sunday. For him Sunday was family day and the day we crossed the Hudson for Cello lessons. So at age 8 in third grade He taught me to take the bus from our new home in Palisade NJ to the 125 ferry, cross the Hudson to Manhattan, take the subway down to 86th Street and the cross-town bus to recently founded Ramaz School. At age 8!

In 5th grade he sent me to Camp Massad, which a monomaniac had founded the year before and where everything took place in Hebrew. When I broke out crying, wondering if they played Baseball there, I was told that they had a dictionary that had Hebrew words for every baseball situation.

Dad would have preferred that I be Modern Orthodox. I partially fulfilled Dad's dream, becoming a rabbi, albeit a Conservative rabbi.

He could not have imagined that I would later be a rabbi in both the Conservative and Reform movements. And a shrink to boot.

I couldn't be the cellist my father wanted me to be.
I couldn't be the rabbi my father wanted me to be!

I have had to be the Jew I am!
I have had to be the rabbi I am!

**” God’s recalcitrant servant.
An Athletic Coach for Rabbis.”**

**On your Yahrzeit saying Kaddish, I Thank you Dad for nourishing the
growth of this Bloom.**

I was moved to tears up as I read the last line.

My God, keep my tongue from evil, my lips from lies. Help me ignore those who slander me. Open my heart to Your Torah, so that I may pursue Your mitzvot. Frustrate the designs of those who plot evil against me. Make nothing of their schemes...

A prayer from the heart, for the heart. From the soul, for the soul. The quintessential personal prayer. Here, the slanderers, the plotters of evil are not found among those who share our planet. They are "aliens", who subsequent to psychological and/or emotional pain, have taken up residence in us. Like bacteria or viruses, though we host them, they are not us. Our psychological immune system, impaired by psychic violence, though struggling valiantly, is unable to reject them. In moments of vulnerability, the "aliens", though not us, - denigrate, demean and alienate us. They tell us that we are not good enough, that we are frauds, that there is no room in the world for the likes of us, that we never do anything right, and on and on. Though masquerading in our voice, and mimicking our style they are not us. The evidence being that their attack leaves us diminished and alienated. Created in the image of God, nothing that is authentically us, would leave us demeaned, diminished, and alienated. So we pray for Torah, compassion, holiness, and Torah yet again; teaching and reminding us that we are created in The Image, and that the aliens are most assuredly not us. And that peace. be the sign of our healing.

***Pursuing Tzelem Elohim
How I Ended Up Where I Started
A Translator/Traitor’s Perilous Voyage***

Jack H Bloom PhD ♥ 2009

Italians say; “*Traduttore Traditore*” “Translators are traitors,” And I, a practitioner of this arcane art agree; the only question is degree. As a translator/ traitor who set himself the task of writing poems¹ for 3000 High Holyday cards sent to friends, colleagues and acquaintances for over twenty years, I wanted to include and sometimes end with a blessing that affirmed the ultimate worth of each recipient. There seemed nothing better than the prevalent English translation of ***Tzelem Elohim***, affirming that humankind was created in the “image” of God. Though I sensed early on that “image” was an inadequate even distorted translation of “***Tzelem***”, I all too often used “Image” language in those blessing poems.

In my first book, I also shamelessly translated ***Tzelem*** as “Image”² Working on “image” dovetailed with my struggle to take seriously and place in relationship the two very different creation myths of Genesis. As I developed my [Tzelem↔N’shamah]³ model of human relationship, I struggled with translating ***Tzelem*** into a more accurate English that was more Jewishly authentic in nuance and overtone.

The astute reader recognizes that there are two radically different myths. An editor in antiquity has retained what a predecessor had or inserted something else, sensing that both were useful.

¹

The poems appear in Jewish Relational Care A-Z; We Are Our Others Keeper; pp.401-433 and in Blessing For You From Head to Toe.

²

The Rabbi as Symbolic Exemplar; By the Power Vested in Me. Haworth Press 2002 p.157-167 et al.

³

The brackets [] indicate the interrelated unity of the two elements. The double-sided arrow ↔ signifies reciprocal relationship. This holds true wherever they appear in my work.

The first myth makes use of the root “***Tzelem***” three times in two verses. The second myth describes God infusing the first human with the breath of life, and omits any mention of “***tzelem***”. What was the “***tzelem***” which was not even alluded to in the second myth and how was it to be in relation with the *n’shamah* (the breathing corporeal human). My translation of the two myths follows.

I

God said: "Let us model humankind (b'tzalemenu) after us, according to our likeness'...God created humankind modeled (b'tzalmo) after Himself, in the model (Tzelem) of God He created it, male and female He created them⁴.

I chose “model” to translate the Hebrew root **Tzelem** and by that change, attempted to resolve the difficulties the King James translator created for us Jews by using “image” for the Hebrew **“Tzelem”**. The second myth seemed much simpler. There was no **Tzelem** to translate. The Hebrew “Vayitzer” had been translated “formed”, and I thought that molded, which after all is what people do when they work with clay, served just as well.

2

YHWH, God, molded the human of dust from the soil, He blew into his nostrils the breath of life; and the human became a living being.⁵

By the time I got to editing Jewish Relational Care A-Z' We Are Our Others Keeper,⁶ I had framed a “new” translation.⁷ It was commonplace for virtually every contributor to that book, somewhere in his or her segment to use “made in the image”. They were informed that the editor would not accept despite his own “sinful” past, any

⁴ Genesis. 1:26&27 The Five Books of Moses; A Translation with Commentary.W.W. Norton & Co New York, London 2004

⁵ Genesis 2; 5-7 *ibid*;

⁶ The Haworth Press, Binghamton NY 2006 *viz*; p. 4 and pp.10-17

⁷ *ibid*; p.10-11

“made/created in the image” language. Each graciously without a murmur acceded to my wishes.

My first attempt at a newly framed pithy way of focusing on the relationship between both myths and eliminating “*image*” was that humankind is;

“modeled after and molded by Divinity”.

I was quite pleased with myself. To me a model was;

“a system of postulates, data, and inferences presented as a mathematical description of an entity or state of affairs; also: a computer simulation based on such a system”

The dictionary definition met my test of incorporeality (about which more anon). You couldn't get much more disembodied.

And there was a bonus-modeled/molded provided pleasant alliteration.⁹

People soon let me know that to them a model was something both visible and/or tangible, i.e. a model airplane, or a fashion model, or a

late model car, rather than something without shape or form,
My translation was lacking. More work needed to be done.
As I returned to translating, I noticed that I had totally ignored
something essential to the verses, the Divine breath that sustains our
very human corporeality from beginning to end.
In the middle of one night, because breath seemed so crucial; I
substituted for “Molded”

⁸
Merriam-Webster’s 11th Collegiate Dictionary (2003) 12th
definition of “model”

⁹
The repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words or syllables
(as wild and woolly, threatening throngs) Merriam-Webster’s 11th Collegiate Dictionary 2003

[Breath-taking ⇔ Model of Divinity].¹⁰

Or without the hyphen;

[Breathtaking ⇔ Model of Divinity],

I was again quite pleased with this version because its double entendre
expressed the beauty of humanity’s creation.

I was still not satisfied with model as the translation of Tzelem.

A Thesaurus search for model came up with “paradigm”.

Merriam Webster’s 11th Collegiate Dictionary (2003) defines paradigm
as;

EXAMPLE, PATTERN; -: an outstandingly clear or typical
example or archetype: -: a philosophical or theoretical framework
of any kind.

So my current (2009) translation of [Tzelem, <=> N’shamah] in somewhat
awkward English is that each human is a

[Breath-taking ⇔ Paradigm of Divinity]

It was closer to the original meaning though not very poetic. It didn’t
ring as beautifully as the familiar “image” nor was it as alliterative as “modeled
after and molded by Divinity, but it seemed appropriate
enough for self-respecting use by Jews.

Both the informed and the uninformed reader may say; “what
difference does all this obsessing about the correct translation of
Tzelem Elohim make. So what if God is without Image and therefore

¹⁰
Crucial to my model of human relatedness is the creation of humanity as [Tzelem ⇔ N’shamah]
The Tzelem being our mindfulness or cognitive intelligence and the N’shamah-our breathing
corporeal part where input from the world around us is initially experienced. For further info; see

we can't be created in God's image? Created in the image of God, sounds so nice and is close to universally accepted." Habits of speech are powerful, especially when experienced as deep rooted, profound, and meaningful. They are especially hard to change when they are well-intentioned affirmations to which everyone vigorously nods agreement. English speaking Jews are heirs to a mistranslation of a Biblical Hebrew idiom. A mistranslation perhaps inadvertently grafted onto Jewish thought and theology by devout Christians. "Image" is a translation which makes a major difference. The pervasive Jewish understanding is that God is incorporeal, without body or image, without physical form or shape.¹¹ Most 21st century Jews don't believe that anyone has literally with one's eyes seen God, or heard God speak words in a specific language, especially one other than one's native tongue. We do not affirm that God articulated the divine will in Biblical Hebrew (what else?) with a decidedly Anglo-Saxon inflection. When we say God "sees", "listens", "feels" or is "seen" or "heard", we moderns understand that we are uttering a metaphor and have no better way of speaking about our God-experience. As our ancestors did we literally put words in God's mouth. What those words meant to our ancestors and mean to us is an important question. One of those words prominent in our creation myth is *Tzelem*.

When we proclaim creation in the "Image of God," ("*Tzelem Elohim*") as the definitive proof text of each person's ultimate worth, as well intentioned as we may be, we say this unaware that the nuance of our words affirm a meaning antithetical to normative Judaism. We use a phrase ("image") crucial to Christian theology, which affirms unequivocally the corporeality (which can be literally seen and heard) and simultaneous divinity of Christianity's founder and his relationship to God.¹² When we Jews ignore that overtone and use "image", in

¹¹ Article on Moses ben Maimon and the 13 principles of Jewish belief. In Encyclopedia Judaicand Edition, Ed. Michael Berenbaum. 2006

¹²

Viz; Jesus Through the Centuries; His Place in the History of Culture. Jaroslav Pelikan Yale University Press; New Haven and London 1999 Chapter 5; The Cosmic Christ a& Chapter Six; The Son of Man

Jewish terms we border on idolatry, Yet "Image of God" falls

trippingly, regularly and piously off our Anglicized Jewish tongues. Being in a covenant relationship with an incorporeal God any translation of **Tzelem**, which supports or even intimates corporeality or any physical dimension is not representative of what we Jews overwhelmingly hold. “Image of God” no matter how well intentioned is a distortion of our biblical and Jewish religious underpinnings. As Jewish participants in a Judeo-Christian tradition, we share many concepts with our Christian siblings, and we differ on many others. Where we agree and where we disagree makes a huge difference. Beyond violating the third commandment,¹³ using “Image” for our Hebrew *Tzelem* blurs a crucial theological boundary that demarcates us from our Christian neighbors. Translating our Hebrew Bible so that the nuances and overtones remain true to the original is not a new phenomenon. Rashi¹⁴, assuming the single authorship of the two creation myths asserts that both describe a single act of creation. Undertaking to translate **Tzelem** from Hebrew into Hebrew, Rashi offers that “Tzalmo” (his i.e. mankind’s **tzelem**, means “*bid’fuso* - in the mold made for him”-(note author’s translation anon), ... “in the die cast for him as in the French “coin”. Though Rashi’s Hebrew indicates something quite different, the English translators of Rashi’s work¹⁵ use the ubiquitous “image” for **tzelem**, Modern Jewish translators of Biblical text, follow suit by adopting without much questioning, this fashionable mistranslation and

¹³
Exodus 20; 4

¹⁴
Acronym for Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki. Rashi was the outstanding Biblical commentator of the middle Ages. He was born in Troyes, France, and lived from 1040 to 1105

¹⁵
M. Rosenbaum and A.M. Silberman, Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Prayers for Sabbath and Rashi's Commentary, Translated into English and Annotated (London: Shapiro, Vallentine and Co., 1946), vol. 1, pp. 2-3.

unintentionally join in distorting the religious meaning of “**Tzelem**”, a word in our mother tongue, home language,¹⁶ bedrock of our Judaism. The New JPS translations¹⁷, used by so many, those done under Orthodox imprimatur,¹⁸ and even the treasured superb works of Robert Alter¹⁹ and Everett Fox²⁰, all render **Tzelem** as “Image”. If scholarly well-intentioned Jewish translators cannot do it, getting ordinary Jews to change this usage seems insurmountably difficult. The authoritative dictionaries we turn to, experts about the derivation and meaning of English words, confound the issue further. Their

understanding of the source and meaning of the word "image" overwhelmingly fudge the boundary between Christian and Jewish belief. The excerpts which follow, though not exhilarating to plow through are imperative to a fuller understanding of what the fuss is all about. Those that are less problematic are also included.

The **Septuagint**²¹ was the first translation of our Hebrew Bible. In the Greek, **Tzelem** is eikon theou: the "eikon" of God.

"The exact translation in my Greek lexicon is:

An object shaped to resemble the form or appearance of something; likeness; portrait

That which has the same form as something else (not a crafted object as in 1 above); living image

¹⁶

Viz; William Cutter; A Language for Zionist Reciprocity; p.16 CCAR Journal A Reform Jewish Quarterly Spring 2007

¹⁷

The Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia PA. 1917 and its successor new translations, from 1962 onward.

¹⁸

Stone edition of the Tanach (The Artscroll Series published by Mesorah Publications, 1998) p.9.and

Davka, Judaic Classics Library Version 2.2, March 2001, Translation D. Mandel, and variations thereof.

¹⁹

The Five Books of Moses; A Translation with Commentary W.W. Norton & Co New York, London 2004

²⁰

The Five Books of Moses; A New Translation with Introductions, Commentary & Notes by Everett Fox Shoken Books Inc. Random House NY 1995

²¹

The Septuagint (sometimes abbreviated LXX) is the name given to the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures. The Septuagint has its origin in Alexandria, Egypt and was translated between 300-200 BCE

That which represents something else in terms of basic form and features; form; appearance²²."

The full **Merriam-Webster** offers that "image" is Latin, derived from the Greek eik*n, from eikenai -to resemble. And reports these meanings;

A usually pictorial representation: **IMAGE**

A sign (as a word or graphic symbol) whose form suggests its meaning

A graphic symbol on a computer display screen that usually suggests the type of object represented or the purpose of an available function.

The **American Heritage Dictionary** includes these among its

definitions of **Image** (im'ij) *n.*

A reproduction of the form of someone or something, esp. a sculptured likeness.

An optically formed duplicate, counterpart, or other representative reproduction of an object, esp. an optical reproduction of an object formed by a lens or mirror.

A close or exact resemblance to another; double: *He is the image of his uncle.*

The concept of someone or something that is held by the public. The character projected by someone or something to the public, esp. by the mass media.

A personification of something specified: *He is the image of health.*

A mental picture of something not real or present.²³

²²

From Tara Maguire Knopick, my friend and office administrator and Masters level student of Bible at Yale University.

²³

American Heritage Dictionary Houghton, Mifflin Co. 2 Park Street Boston Mass 02108 P.642

²⁴

One notes that Merriam-Webster explains the meaning from its English translation of *Tzelem* and the Hebrew meaning of the word

Merriam-Webster's 11th Collegiate Dictionary (2003) notes that image was used in the King James Bible of 1611 and is a Middle English word meaning:

“a reproduction or imitation of the form of a person or thing, especially: an imitation in solid form.” Or alternatively: “an exact likeness; Semblance as in God created man in His image.”²⁴

Certainly in modern usage “image” has a predominantly visual connotation. ***One visually perceives some thing.*** Whether solid or visual, “Image” does not mean what ***Tzelem*** meant, then or now. Though Jewish tradition clearly maintains that God’s words are spoken and heard in multiple ways,²⁵ and suggests and affirms a world of multiple truths, not all truths are consonant with our Jewish integrity. To maintain our religious authenticity we have to choose among them. ***Any*** translation of ***Tzelem***, that intimates or supports God’s corporeality or any physical dimension, is inappropriate for use by committed knowledgeable Jews.

In contradistinction to God’s incorporeality, we humans are definitely corporeal. And in a textually based Jewish theology humanity’s corporeality must be taken into account. Since it is we humans who know through our senses, conceive of and write about the reality we perceive around us, it is inevitable that we will project our own

thoughts and opinions onto the myths that detail our creation. Once we accept that, we must affirm that God and our understanding of divinity is created and shaped by us even when we borrow piecemeal or word for word from other sources.

Yet the recalcitrant translator/traitor in me had not yet given up the ghost nor raised the white flag of surrender.

25

Babylonian Talmud; Berachot 28B

In the middle of the night the persistent angel charged with hovering over translators, never satisfied with their work nor leaving things as they are, fine-tuning every word, one dark night interrupts my sleep with

[Molded Breathtaking ↔ Paradigm of Divinity]

As I awakened with a start, I thought I heard a tender disembodied ever so loving voice say firmly;

Enough already! “You’ve done more than your share!

Stop trying to translate what cannot be translated!”

“So what should I do?” I asked in the dark, a

translator/traitor suffused with loyalty for Jewish texts.

And the voice said more resonantly;

“Convince Jews to ***stop*** saying, writing, intoning

Created in the Image

In all its permutations

It won’t be easy, they’re hooked on it, but you can tell them to

Use Tzelem Elohim as if it were English!”

I realized almost immediately that if we say it often enough, in ever-wider contexts, “*tzelem*” will ***become*** English, and we will maintain our theological integrity without losing the overtones.

There is precedent for this, because all languages. English notably, change and grow. Common usage originally by Jews has resulted in the entry of “untranslatable” Hebrew words into the English lexicon.

Mitzvah, Torah, Yom Kippur, Shivah, Tzadik, Tzitzit, among others are Hebrew words that as a result of repeated use by Jews and ultimately others, have passed into common English parlance. They unashamedly appear in an English dictionary.²⁶ *Tikun Olam* seems on its way to this destiny, having become a common expression for English speaking Jews because it also loses its overtones when translated.

Rabbis especially, highly educated symbols of our tradition and its authenticity should immediately cease and desist from using “image”, in all its variegated forms, and should vigorously encourage those they serve and lead, to use *tzelem* instead.

All Jews, loyal to our great heritage, when finding themselves in respectful conversation with English speakers, should assert clearly and proudly that each and all of us; Jew and Gentile are created *b’Tzelem Elohim*. or more simply *b’tzelem*. Rooted in our religious mother-tongue, *Tzelem Elohim* has overtones that no translation can achieve. Initially, this may evoke in the non-Hebrew speaker a quizzical look. You may be politely questioned as to the English translation of *tzelem*. Feel free to offer that you once read a woefully inadequate translation that doesn’t really capture the essence of *tzelem*, but was the best the translator could do, and that was that each human being is created a

[Breath-taking ⇔ Paradigm of Divinity].

But be sure to add that *nowadays* more and more committed well-informed English speaking Jews use “*tzelem*”.

And you can look it up in the dictionary!

The puzzled look may not simply vanish, but as a knowledgeable insider you can add that you’ve heard that the translator, who claimed loyalty to Jewish tradition often came dangerously close to being a traitor. And many times in the middle of the night behaved like one.

²⁶

ibid. Merriam-Webster’s 11th Collegiate Dictionary (2003)

Up to from Jack H Bloom s writings Recovery in Relationship