A little girl asked her mother, "How did the human race appear?" The mother answered, "God made Adam and Eve and they had children and so was all humankind made."

Two days later the girl asked her father the same question. The father answered, "Many years ago there were monkeys from which the human race evolved."

The confused girl returned to her mother and said, "Mom, how is it possible that you told me the human race was created by God, and Dad said they developed from monkeys?"

The mother answered, "Well, dear, it is very simple: I told you about my side of the family and your father told you about his."

Our Torah also has two accounts of how humankind began. We find diametrically opposed versions of how we began in Genesis 1 and 2. As liberal Jews, we ascribe these differences to different versions of ancient legends being included in the Torah – but Orthodox Jews do not accept higher biblical criticism.

In 1965, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, the head of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary at Yeshiva University in New York City, wrote a book entitled “Lonely Man of Faith.”

As a devout Orthodox Jew, Rabbi Soloveitchik, felt that seeming contradictions in the Torah were not explained by higher biblical criticism. He felt that by deeply studying the text we could understand seeming anomalies. He notes that the two accounts of creation in Genesis represent the two opposing sides of our nature, which he called Adam I and Adam II.

I use the terms Adam I and Adam II only as metaphors. For those who know me well, sexism is not a part of my soul. I’m using the masculine terms only for consistency with Soloveitchik’s writings.

Adam 1 is introduced to us in the first chapter of Genesis. On the sixth day God said, “Let Us make Man . . . They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth.” So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female. God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it.”

Adam II – In Genesis 2 we see an entirely different account of the origin of humankind:

“…and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the eternal God planted a garden eastward in Eden.… And the eternal God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to serve it and to keep it.”

I recently read a book titled “The Road to Character” by David Brooks. He bases his volume on “Lonely Man of Faith.” Brooks begins where Soloveitchik’s work ends. His book, “The Road To Character,” expands on Soloveitchik’s views of Adam I and Adam II.

He applies the Adam I and Adam II metaphors to how we lead our lives today.

Brooks says, “The differences between Adam I and Adam II can be thought of by comparing the two resumes each of us have, résumé virtues and the eulogy virtues. The résumé virtues are the ones you list on your résumé, the skills that you bring to the job market and that contribute to external success.

The eulogy virtues are deeper. They’re the virtues that get talked about at your funeral, the ones that exist at the core of your being— whether you are kind, brave, honest or faithful; what kind of relationships you formed.”

Most of us would say that the eulogy virtues are more important than the résumé virtues, but I would guess that many spend the majority of our lives working much harder on our resume virtues than our eulogy virtues. Our society is certainly oriented around the résumé virtues more than the eulogy ones.

Public conversation is, too — the self-help tips in magazines, the nonfiction bestsellers. Most of us have clearer strategies for how to achieve career success than we do for how to develop a profound character.

Adam I is the resume Adam - career-oriented, ambitious side of our nature. Adam I wants to build, create, produce, and discover things. He wants to have high status and win victories.

Adam II is the eulogy Adam – the internal Adam. Adam II wants to embody certain moral qualities. Adam II wants to have a serene inner character, a quiet but solid sense of right and wrong— not only to do good, but to be good. Adam II wants to love intimately, to sacrifice self in the service of others, to live in obedience to some transcendent truth, to have a cohesive inner soul that honors creation and one’s own possibilities.

Soloveitchik argued that we live in the contradiction between these two Adams. The outer, majestic Adam and the inner, humble Adam are not fully reconcilable. We are forever caught in self-confrontation. We are called to fulfill both personae, and must master the art of living forever within the tension between these two natures.

We all know Adam II’s. The radiate an inner light. These people can be in any walk of life. They seem deeply good. They listen well. They make us feel funny and valued. You often catch them looking after other people and as they do so their laugh is musical and their manner is infused with gratitude. They are not thinking about what wonderful work they are doing. They are not thinking about themselves at all.

When we meet such a person they brighten our whole day.

On this Holy Day, we are required to ask ourselves how we are doing. Are we more devoted to being Adam I’s or Adam II’s? While our daily life mostly requires an Adam I existence, I would suggest that during these Yamim Noraim, these Days of Awe, we reflect on our Adam II qualities. I suggest that two character traits by which we lead our lives can take us closer

to becoming an Adam II. These traits are true humility and the ability to recognize that we are not alone and that creating a successful eulogy resume requires us to ask for help from others.

Our prophet Micah says,

He has shown you what is good.
And what does Adonai require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

Unfortunately, humility has become a forgotten virtue in our society.

Over the last few years we have seen a broad shift from a culture of humility to the culture of what you might call the Big Me, from a culture that encouraged people to think humbly of themselves to a culture that encouraged people to see themselves as the center of the universe.

The median narcissism score has risen 30 percent in the last two decades. Ninety-three percent of young people score higher than the middle score just twenty years ago.

The largest gains have been in the number of people who agree with the statements “I am an extraordinary person” and “I like to look at my body.

In our society, we find the same messages everywhere: You are special. Trust yourself. Be true to yourself.

Movies from Pixar and Disney are constantly telling children how wonderful they are. Commencement speeches are loaded with the same clichés: Follow your passion. Don’t accept limits. Chart your own course. You have a responsibility to do great things because you are so great. This is the gospel of self-trust.

Joel Osteen, one of the most popular megachurch leaders today, writes from Houston, “God didn’t create you to be average,” Osteen says in his book Become a Better You. “You were made to excel. You were made to leave a mark on this generation…. Start [believing] ‘I’ve been chosen, set apart, destined to live in victory.

And of course, all of this bombastic self-aggrandizing is summed up in a single word that I hate to even say: Trump.

Let’s compare our society’s view with the Jewish tradition, which says that humility is among the greatest of the virtues.

Moses, the greatest of biblical leasers, is described as the most humble: "Now Moses was very meek, above all the men that were on the face of the earth." When God tells Moses to lead the people out of Egypt, he responds, “Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither

recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

The patriarch Abraham protests to God: "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am I but dust and ashes."

A Hasidic tale tells of a man who came to the Zaddik with a complaint. "All my life," he said, "I have tried to follow the advice of the rabbis that one who runs away from fame will find that fame pursues him, and yet while I run away from fame, fame never seems to pursue me." The Zaddik replied: "The trouble is that while you do run away from fame you are always looking over your shoulder to see if fame is chasing after you."

On a deeper level, the notion is found that humility is not the mere absence of pride.

The people we think are wise have, to some degree, overcome the biases and overconfident tendencies that are infused in our nature. In its most complete meaning, intellectual humility is accurate self-awareness from a distance.

Humility is moving over the course of one’s life from the adolescent’s close-up view of yourself, in which you fill the whole canvas, to a landscape view in which you see, from a wider perspective, your strengths and weaknesses, your connections and dependencies, and the role you play in a larger story.

Today, many of us see our life through the metaphor of a journey— a journey through the external world and up the ladder of success. When we think about making a difference or leading a life with purpose, we often think of achieving something external— performing some service that will have an impact on the world, creating a successful company, or doing something for the community.

Truly humble people also use that journey metaphor to describe their own lives. But they also use, alongside that, a different metaphor, which has more to do with the internal life. This is the metaphor of self-confrontation.

They are more likely to assume that we are all deeply divided selves, both splendidly endowed and deeply flawed— that we each have certain talents but also certain weaknesses.

And if we habitually fall for those temptations and do not struggle against the weaknesses in ourselves, then we will gradually spoil some core piece of ourselves. We will not be as good, internally, as we want to be. We will fail in some profound way.

I have said several times that God endows each of us at birth with one unit of worth. No one has more than that, and no one has less.

True humility means that one spends an entire life realizing that no one is better than I am and no one is less than me. Each of us is a precious child of God. On the road to character, toward becoming Adam II, humility is the first step.

If we are truly humble, we recognize that we live in an interdependent world. Pride, the opposite of humility, tells us that we can do it alone. Adam II recognizes that she needs to recognize her limitations.

A cliché states that we wandered in the desert for 40 years because Moses was unwilling to stop and ask for directions.

The truly humble person recognizes that he or she cannot do it alone. Adam II's understand that this is not a world of stubborn independence. The truly secure person accepts the need to ask others for help when needed. People on the road to character understand that no person can achieve self-mastery on his or her own. Individual will, reason and compassion are not strong enough to consistently defeat selfishness, pride and self-deception. We all need redemptive assistance from outside.

A crucial flaw in Adam I's is the belief that we can be the driver of our own journeys. So long as we believe that we are the leaders of our own lives, we will be drifting farther and farther from the truth. The mind is such a vast, unknown cosmos we can never even know ourselves completely. The powers of self-deception are so profound we are rarely fully honest with ourselves.

Furthermore, the world is so complex, and fate so uncertain, that we can never really control other people or the environment effectively enough to be master of our own destinies. If we really did have that kind of power, then New Year's resolutions would work. Diets would work. The bookstores wouldn't be full of self-help books. There would only be one self-help book and that would do the trick.

We'd follow its advice, solve the problems of living, and the rest of the genre would become obsolete. The existence of more and more self-help books is proof that they rarely work. The problem is that if we think we can organize our own salvation we are magnifying the very obstacle that keeps us from it.

But new research verifies the old adage, "Ask and you shall receive." A series of studies reveals that people tend to grossly underestimate how likely others are to agree to requests for assistance.

"Our research should encourage people to ask for help and not assume that others are disinclined to comply," says Frank Flynn, associate professor of organizational behavior at Stanford GSB. "People are more willing to help than you think, and that can be important to know when you're trying to get the resources you need to get a job done, when you're trying to solicit funds, or what have you."

Martha Beck writes a blog to help herself and others achieve their goals.

She says, I used to be one of those people who spurned assistance—from other people, from God, from chemicals. Not anymore! These days—whether I'm begging for divine intervention, enlisting a fellow coach to help me overcome my aversion to e-mail, or refilling the awesome prescription that helps me sleep no matter how disruptive my schedule—I pretty much walk around hollering, "Help wanted!"

Are my helpers crutches? You betcha. Mama needs crutches, and she doesn't worry one little bit about using them. If you worry about needing what you need—a shoulder to cry on, a standing date with a shrink, whatever the shrink prescribes—come to Mama, and she'll smack you upside the head with her crutches until that worry flies right out of your mind.

But if help is so important to us, why are we so hesitant to ask for help?

John Wooden, former coach of UCLA basketball says, "*"We're all imperfect and we all have needs. The weak usually do not ask for help, so they stay weak. If we recognize that we are* imperfect*, we will ask for help and we will pray for the guidance necessary to bring positive results to whatever we are doing."*

For there is a tendency to think that we "should" be able to cope alone, to manage without help, or that "life shouldn't be this way".

This is a tendency to see the world as it "should be" according to very unrealistic standards, as opposed to seeing the world as it actually "is" – wanting something to be, or something not to be.

This isn't healthy thinking in the long-term and it is important to identify what we really want out of life when we feel that we must live through it unaided by others. Quite often this can be enforced by peer pressure or family views.

Secondly, our world creates another fiction - that a hero will gain the highest glory if he or she faces "impossible" problems and magically overcomes them on his or her own.

Even historical events have been rewritten to accommodate this unrealistic view of the amazing prowess of leaders throughout time.

The problem with this viewpoint is that most heroes and leaders have a lot of helpers and supporters unacknowledged in the wings.

These "helpers" may not be obvious but they are there, and a good hero or leader will be benefiting greatly from the assistance, advice and input of others.

As such, comparing ourselves with such unrealistic portrayals of heroes or leaders will only bring us unhappiness.

When I consider some of the greatest leaders of our time--Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Oprah and the Dalai Lama--to name a few, they all have something in common. They inspired people through sharing their failures and admitting they didn't have all the answers. These leaders were also openly grateful for the love and support of their circle and thus, attracted more of the same. They knew and understood they had a "village" supporting them on their journey.

Leaders who are aware, conscious, continuously growing personally and professionally, and who courageously ask for and openly receive support are stronger.

Being an Adam II requires us to realize that we are not alone, that our world is one of kindness, and that others are willing to help us. Adam II's abandon our false pride and accept that this is a world of interdependence.

The temporary Religious school teacher was struggling to open a combination lock on the supply cabinet. She had been told the combination, but couldn't quite remember it.

Finally she went to the rabbi's study and asked for help. The rabbi came into the room and began to turn the dial.

After the first two numbers he paused and stared blankly for a moment.
Finally he looked serenely heavenward and his lips moved silently.
Then he looked back at the lock, and quickly turned to the final number, and opened the lock. The teacher was amazed. "I'm in awe at your faith, rabbi," she said.

"It's really nothing," he answered. "I remembered that the number is on a piece of tape on the ceiling."

Faith can be simple, but we liberal Jews of the twenty-first century associate faith with fundamentalist Christianity. We ask why pray at all? Why ask anything of God?

Prayer is not easy. We cannot know if anyone is listening. Is prayer truly a dialogue, or only a monologue? Any response in our lives to prayer is erratic at best. We realize that prayers do not appear to be answered in this world, that far too much is faithfully asked for and not given. If what we ask for is not granted, can we still maintain there is "response"?

Only inside can we feel if there is any reply. Everyone who prays struggles with the deep fear that this time, the only answer will be absence, silence.

In prayer, when immediate rewards are often not apparent, it is particularly demanding. The true obstacle to prayer is not its regularity but its depth. In the Talmud we are told that God requires the heart. To offer a heart in prayer is to open oneself, peeling off the rugged armor with which we shield our souls in a hostile world.

It means abandoning our need for certainty in interaction: and allowing ourselves to be swept up in a dialogue as ancient as it is powerful. Learning, in short, how to speak with God

requires us to acknowledge that there is a force greater than ourselves that can help our lives. Becoming Adam II requires us to acknowledge that we are not alone. It does require us to have a leap of faith best exemplified by the first sentence of the Twenty third psalm – Adonai is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Enhancing our Eulogy virtues is not easy – but nothing in life worth achieving comes without effort. As we begin these Yamim Noraim, these days of awe, let's spend time reflecting on humility and abandoning our pride - becoming willing to ask for help from those here on earth and from our higher power above.