Everything that was created during the six days of creation has a partner. Light was given darkness and together the two of them share the important task of waking up the sun and the moon. Likewise the sun was given the moon as its partner and they trade places in the sky dictating when we sleep and when we work. For its part sky was given stars to float in its vast expanse providing direction for the traveller, but without sky as its partner, stars would have no place to hang. Land and sea were both very ambitious, so they were made each other's partner, each serving as a barrier to the other, preventing their inherent desires to encroach upon the other's space. The plants were given animals as their partner, and together they both give purpose to land and sea, helping to make the works of creation beautiful and meaningful. When the sixth day of creation was drawing to a close, God created human beings, realizing that everthing else had a partner the human beings looked around, much like the last player chosen in a school yard game and asked, "Who will be our partner?". God turned to them and said, "I shall be your partner, I created you in my image and you will help me finish the work of creation. To this, the human being responded, "But God, creation is complete. What else needs to be done?" God explained that the world was created out of chaos, and it would return to chaos unless it had someone to rule over it, to subdue it, to maintain order. God said, "I have done that for the first six days and now you will do it in all the day to come, you will prevent chaos from re-appearing. Hearing this, human beings began to argue amongst themselves.

The first line, in the first chapter in the first book of the Torah tells us that when God created the universe, God created it out of tohu v'vohu, utter and complete chaos. Nothing worked, there was no law of nature, no moral law, no sense of order. But

through the miracle of creation God established order; step-by-step, day-by-day. God took the cluttered, jumbled mess of the world and made sense out of it. Take a moment and contemplate our environment, the vast detail and complexity that is involved in making it work even for just one day. When we think about it we realize that within the natural world, among plants and animals, rivers and mountains, sky and stars there is almost no remnant of the disorder, or chaos, that existed before. The act of creation was so complete, so well planned-out that almost everything works. And when it breaks down, when choas returns it is not found in nature, *El Nino* to the contrary, but rather it is found in human beings, in our inability to peacfully coexist, in the chaos created by our own hands. We who were created to to subdue chaos, to prevent war and violence, to protect the environment, to make order out of disarray, we are to often the very source of what ever chaos still remains in the world. What is our problem? we can't seem to get along. We go to war with each other, we starve each other, we destroy not only the works of our own hands, but God's creations as well. Sadly, we who were created in the image of God, as God's partner in creation, are not the symbol of all that is right with the world, but rather the cause of much of the world's problems.

Gunther Plaut whose Torah commentary sits in the book rest infornt of you explains, that "The role of humans was to assist the Creator in perfecting the world, in this way we become God's co-worker, and complete the act of creation God had begun."[1]

But we have not been so God-like in our role as partner in creation. God gave us one specific instruction on the day of our creation: we were commanded to get along, to

1 Plautt Commentary

never view our fellow as being anything more or less than we ourselves are. That is why, the Mishnah tells us, we were created from one single set of parents, so that we could never say to a fellow human being, "My father was greater than yours."[2] But too often we do just the opposite, we fail to work out our own differences. In fact, we have failed to see anything *but* our differences -- of color, race, religion, or creed. We have allowed a person's ***outward*** appearance to dictate how we treat the ***inner*** soul; and our ***inner soul*** is the one thing that we all share in common, the one thing that binds us eternally and divinely to each other, because inside each of us is the divine spark, the image of God.

A Midrash explains that on the sixth day, when God began to create human beings in God's own image the angels who had been ministering to God through all of the previous creations complained amongst themselves. They said one to another, "Should mere mortals be so gifted as to be endowed with the Divine image?" "No," they said, "This is not right. We should hide the divine image from humans." One of the angels suggested hiding it in the sea, reasoning that the sea was so deep surely humans would never find it there. Still another suggested hiding it at the top of the highest mountain, close to heaven where the angels could keep an eye on it. But the shrewdest angel dismissed their plans. "The human being", the angel said, "is ambitious, and will search high and low to find such a treasure. Let us hide it within the soul of every human being. It is the *last* place in the world a human would think to look."[3]

2 Leibowitz

3 Shulweis, For Those Who Can't Believe

The chaos that persists in the world, persists not because we don't see each other as human, but because we have failed to see that in our humanity God the divine spark is also present. But how can we find the divine image of God that the angels hid from us? How can we see past our outward appearance, and find that divine spark that lies within? We can start by looking in the mirror. Recognizing in our own reflection not our physical attributes, the fact that our hair is brown, or blonde, our eyes, blue or green. But the fact that we have eyes and we have hair, that we have arms, and legs, fingers and toes. These are not things that make us different, but rather affirm that in so many ways we are all similar. When we look in the mirror and marvel not at the fact that we are tall or short, large or skinny, but instead marvel simply at the fact that we are, that we exist, that all of the complex systems in our body were created so we could stand here at this moment and see past own reflection, and recognize the divine image in whose likeness we were created. It is when we do this, when we see ourselves as God see each of us, as a blessing and a divine gift, as a true miracle of creation, it is then that we find the treasure the angels hid from us. And once we recognize it in ourselves, then our task is to search for that image of God, that treasure in others; this is true even when the people we interact with, act in ways that are far less than God like, far less than divine. It is not easy to see a criminal as a symbol of God, it is not easy to see God's image in the person who cut you off on the freeway, or the politician who wants to do away with your civil liberties. But they too are God's creation, they too possess deep inside of them the very essence of God, our task, is to help them find it, and we do that best when we ourselves act in Godly ways, when we oursleves strive to embody the blessing of our creation.

In Pirkei Avoth, the Teachings of the great Rabbis of the Mishah and Talmud we read, "Beloved is the person for he was created in the image of God. Still greater was God's love in that God gave people the knowledge of having been so created."[4] From this idea, that all human beings were created in the divine image of God, can flow all of our actions and interactions with one another. The responsibility that comes with being created *B'etzelem Elohim*, in the image of God, is that we symbolize God, we are God's role-model in the world and because of that reality we are responsible for what happens. We are not only our brother's keeper in answer to Cain's question, but we are keepers of all the works of creation; and as the Torah commands, we must be holy in our dealings with one another.

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"You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy."

As Jews, we share a collective history and story that could not be written, for good or for bad without Chaos in the world. We who have been victims of the chaos human beings inflict upon each other no better than many the price human discord can extract. Who better then to be an *Or L'goyim* a light unto the nations of the world as we lead the charge to restore order and compassion in the world, to bring peace and understanding between each other.

The story of creation gives one in our blue print for creating such a caring and peaceful world. In this story we are reminded not only that we were created in the divine image, <u>but so was everybody else</u>. When we fail to see that, when we fail to recognize and preserve the likeness of God in ourselves, and when we fail to prevent its distortion in others, we cease being God's partner, and become the very chaos we were instructed to subdue. Let us go home and look in the mirror, let us struggle to see there not only our reflection, but the divine image of God looking back at us. Then let us turn outward to the people we interact with everyday and finish the work of creation by

4 Pirkei Avoth 3:18

eliminating that very last remnant of chaos in the world, the chaos that exists between each of us; and in doing so may we find the image of God hidden inside every soul.