

NLS

**AGEING
AND ONWARDS**

Study pack



GKW 6.v.22

WHY IS HUMAN FRAILTY A THING? ONE NARRATIVE

Genesis Rabbah (Albeck edition) 8

Rabbi Hoshaya said:

When the Holy One created Adam, the first man, the angels got confused and tried to bless him as if he were God!

To what can this be compared? To a king and his minister who were travelling together in a chariot. The people wanted to pay homage to the king, but they were not sure which was which. What did the king do? He pushed the minister out of the chariot, and then everybody knew which was king.

Likewise, when God created Adam, the first man, and the angels made their mistake, what did God do? Well, the Holy One caused sleep to fall upon Adam, and then everybody knew which one was human.

אמר ר' הושעיה בשעה שברא
הקב"ה את אדם הראשון טעו בו
מלאכי השרת ובקשו לומר לפניו
קידוש, למה הדבר דומה למלך
ואפרכוס שהיו נתונים בקרוכין
והיו בני המדינה מבקשים לומר
למלך דומיני ולא היו יודעין אי
זהו, מה עשה המלך דחפו
והשליכו מן הקרוכין וידעו את
המלך, כך בשעה שברא הקב"ה
אדם הראשון טעו בו מלאכים,
מה עשה הקב"ה הפיל עליו
שינה וידעו הכל כי הוא אדם.

WHY IS HUMAN FRAILITY A THING? AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

Genesis Rabbah (Albeck edition) 97

Rabbi Yehudah ben-Rabbi Simon said:

Abraham demanded that God introduce ageing. He said before the Creator: "When father and son travel together, nobody knows which one to honour! But if you crown the father by ageing him, people will know which one to honour."

The Holy One replied to him: "My word, that is a good idea! I will introduce ageing straight away."

This is why, from the beginning of the Book of Genesis up until Abraham, ageing was never mentioned, but after our father Abraham made his demand, ageing was introduced, as it is written: *Abraham was old, advanced in days* (Genesis 24:1).

אמ' ר' יודה ביר' סימון אברהם
תבע זיקנה, אמ' לפניו רבון
העולמים אב ובנו נכנסים
למקום ואין אדם יודע למי
יכבד, ומתוך שאת מעטרו לאב
בזיקנה אדם יודע למי יכבד,
אמ' לו הקב"ה חייך דבר טוב
תבעתה וממך אני מתחיל,
מתחילת הספר ועד כאן אין כת'
זקנה, וכיון שעמד אבינו אברהם
ניתן לו זיקנה ואברהם זקן בא
בימים (בראשית כד, א).

AGEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

y.Moed Katan 3:1, 81d

Rabbi Ya'akov bar-Abaye said, in the name of Rabbi Aha:

An elderly person who has forgotten their Torah learning through natural processes, they are to be treated with the sanctity of the Torah itself.

רבי יעקב בר אביי בשם רבי
אחא זקן ששכח תלמודו
מחמת אונסו נוהגין בו
כקדושת ארון

AGEING AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

Tur, Orach Chaim 591

One who leads prayers does so on behalf of all who are present in synagogue, and hear the entire service themselves, and even on behalf of those who are, through reasons beyond their control, unable to come to synagogue, such as agricultural workers, the elderly and the sick.

ש"צ מוציא לכל מי שהוא בב"ה
ושמעו ממנו התפלה מראש ועד
סוף אפי' ... מי שהוא אנוס ואינו
יכול לבא לבית הכנסת כגון עם
שבשדות וזקן וחולה.

LONELINESS AND BEREAVEMENT

Rabbi Sheila Shulman z"l, quoted in the Reform movement's funeral book

We recognize that each of us is not so much a person as a world, or rather, the bearer, in her or his self, of a world – a unique, irreplaceable, populated world, linked by a myriad threads to other such worlds. When someone dies who has been a part of our life, there is a rent in the universe, like a star vanishing, but like a star vanishing, that world leaves ineradicable traces in us as a star does in space.