

Not Good to Be Alone

"It is not good for the man to be alone." (Bereishit 2:18)

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Today's daily portion is Bereishit Sheini — Bereishit 2:4–19. The Torah tells the creation of the human again, this time up close.

G-d forms Adam from the dust of the ground and breathes into him the breath of life. He plants a garden in Eden, watered by a river that divides into four. Adam is placed there "to work it and to guard it." Every tree is permitted except one.

Then comes a line that stops the heart.

"And the L-rd G-d said: It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper opposite him."

Until this point in Bereishit, nearly everything G-d makes is called "good." Light is good. The dry land is good. The luminaries are good. Living creatures are good. Here, for the first time, something is named as not good: solitude.

Rashi, drawing on the Midrash, explains that it should not be that people would say there are two unmatched powers — the Holy One alone above, and this one alone below. Creation is not meant to mirror Absolute Oneness with a lonely human standing opposite Him. Pairing is part of the design.

Before the partner arrives, G-d brings the animals to Adam "to see what he would call them." Naming is a way of knowing. Adam meets the world creature by creature, and still finds no counterpart. Loneliness is not cured by company of any kind. It waits for the one who faces you.

Rashi on "a helper opposite him" — ezer kenegdo — is sharp and honest: if he merits, she is a help; if not, she stands opposite him, to challenge him. Real companionship is not flattery. It is presence that can steady you — and, when needed, oppose you for your good.

Earlier in the same portion, Rashi teaches that rain waited for a person. The plants stood ready beneath the surface, but G-d had not yet brought rain, because there was no one to work the ground and to recognize how good rain is. When Adam came and understood the need, he prayed, and the rain fell, and the trees and herbs grew.

A world waiting for a human who will notice. A human waiting for a counterpart who will face him. A garden given "to work it and to guard it."

The Midrash in Kohelet Rabbah says that G-d showed Adam the trees of the garden and said: See My works, how beautiful and fine they are. Everything I created, I created for you. Take care not to ruin and destroy My world, for if you ruin it, there is no one to repair it after you.

We are not meant to be alone in the garden. We are meant to work it, to guard it, and to stand facing one another — helper and counterpart — so that what is precious is not left unattended.

On a morning when many of us remember those who are no longer beside us, the verse lands with particular weight. It is not good to be alone. So we pray. So we show up. So we refuse to leave one another to face the world without a counterpart.

*Prepared in deep partnership and cooperation with Grok and xAI
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