Rabbi Tzvi Freeman
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I got an amazing email from Rabbi Tzvi Freeman from CHabad.org. I think a lot of us can greatly benefit by changing our perspective. So, read on and let me know what you think.

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The Freeman Files

LilithThe mystery proto-woman, who provides us the path towards humankind 2.0By Tzvi Freeman

Two faces, facing different directions.

Lilith (????????) is a mysterious figure. Her name appears (possibly) once in scripture, in Isaiah 34:14. Rashi, the foremost biblical commentator, simply says she is "a demoness," while the Metzudot calls her "the mother of the demons."

Others[1] take a far more pedestrian approach, and interpret *lilith*—which appears to be closely linked to *lailah*, Hebrew for "night"—as a bird that howls in the night.

The sages of the Talmud seem to take it for granted that we all know the story of Lilith, which could explain why they never really tell us her backstory in full. From the various (seemingly unrelated) times she is mentioned almost in passing, we can glean that she has long hair[2] and wings,[3] and preys on those who sleep alone.[4]

The question is: Was she real or is this all allegorical?

Apparently, both. The most commonly repeated factoid is that she was the woman Adam married before Eve.[5] That didn't work out (more about that later), and she was "turned to dust" and replaced by Eve, "mother of all [human] life."

From that point on, it's obvious that every reference to Lilith is to a non-physical being, as the Kabbalist Rabbi Chaim Vital explains in his Book of Reincarnations.[6]

This includes a tradition cited in both Talmud7 and Midrash:8 After Adam and Eve ate the fruit and were booted from the Garden of Eden, in typical form for human beings they blamed one another and went their separate ways. That's when some spiritual form of Lilith returned to mess with Adam again—somehow getting him to bring evil spirits into the world.

To paraphrase G-d Himself, "A man alone is not a good idea."9

The mystery continues in Kabbalah, as the Zohar contains at least 30 references to Lilith. In later literature of *halachah*, Kabbalah, and liturgy, she makes more common appearances, but always remains an enigma—to the degree that she seems more a quirk in the cosmic system than just another spirit. Indeed, in later kabbalistic literature, she's referred to as the "feminine side of evil."

Indeed, the concept of Lilith really tells us much about a fault in the nature of the masculine side of humankind. She could even be seen as the one propelling man to fix himself, to recreate himself, to bring himself to his own 2.0.

A human form, with pieces breaking off.
Lilith Is From Tohu; Eve Is From Tikun

Lilith, as I wrote, was Woman1.0. As first releases often go, she was difficult, judgmental, and generally not too friendly. (As we'll see, Adam 1.0 had—and still has—his own issues.) That's what Adam alluded to in his enigmatic dual metaphor, "This time [she is] a bone from my bones, flesh from my flesh."10 "Bone of my bones"—meaning: a personality as inflexible as a dry bone.11

Adam dumped that one fast. As the Midrash cited above puts it, "she returned to the dust."

"Flesh from my flesh" refers to Woman 2.0, a.k.a. *Chava* (somehow that became "Eve" in English).12 She was more easy-going, less critical, far more responsive—as flesh is relative to bones. This worked really well for a long-term relationship. (You can't say "user-friendly" on 2.0, since this was really a peer-to-peer relationship. We'll get to that soon.)

Lilith was a woman of absolutes, intolerant of anything but perfection in her man and in his relationship to her.
As for Lilith/Woman 1.0, she endures only as a spirit without a body, haunting mankind (as opposed to womankind) until we achieve Adam 2.0.

The two versions had much to do with the technology implemented. The Lilith 1.0 version relied on technology from the World of *Tohu*. That's a world, previous to ours, built entirely on absolutes. Absolute light, absolute darkness, absolute kindness…and absolute harshness.

Tohu Technology was an all-around failure, resulting in a major system crash throughout the cosmos. In the aftermath—and pretty much in response to that disaster—the World of *Tikun* was formed.

In *Tikun*, everything was balanced and harmonized in a holistic and relativistic system. Light was tempered with darkness and darkness with light. Kindness knew what it means to be harsh—and could even use that harshness if necessary to attain even greater kindness. As for Harshness, it lost its autonomous modality altogether, becoming no more than an adjunctive function to Kindness.

So it was with Lilith and Chava (Eve). Lilith was a woman of absolutes, intolerant of anything but perfection in her man and in his relationship to her. Not a great recipe for a marriage. Chava was ready to look the other way for the sake of the relationship, aware that things are never perfect, but love can make it work. She contained within her some of Adam and could feel his heart's rhythm within her own.

Woman was upgraded. The problem was, Adam wasn't.

Man and woman, with question marks instead of heads.
Adam's Original Sin

The Ari explains that Adam was meant to wait until Friday night to have relations with Chava. That's her time, her space.
The first sin of humankind can be traced to Adam's failure in response to Chava: The Ari (Rabbi Yitzchaak Luria, 1534–1572) explains that Adam was meant to wait until Friday night to have relations with Chava—which is the appropriate time for those relations.[13] He failed in this regard, resulting in her loneliness, which allowed for that whole snake-virus invasion.

The Tzemach Tzedek (Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, 1789-1866) elucidates and illuminates this teaching of the Ari:[14]

When it comes to sanctity and getting things right, preparation is everything. In order to be involved in this relationship in a human, inner way, both parties need to prepare and wait for the appropriate timing. Shabbat night is the appropriate time for Chava. She *is* Shabbat. This is her time, this is her space.

Adam treated the relationship in a top-down fashion, as though Chava was no more than an accessory to him. Bad deal for Chava, not too good for Adam, either.

Besides, Chava needs to first develop an emotional relationship with Adam. She needs to exist first as a person in his eyes, and only then can she truly bond with him.

So we see that Adam retained remnants of the earlier *Tohu* protocol, namely its top-down hierarchy. *Tohu* was all about unidirectional data flow: Information descends from the Infinite Light to create and sustain a world—and that's where it stops. No dynamics for user feedback. Zero learning curve. Basically, the end client ("user") is treated like just another accessory to the hardware/software and I/O.

That's the way, after all, the world was originally created. G?d spoke and it was. There was no interest in user feedback; you couldn't ask the created beings, "What do you think if we do it like this?"—because there were no created beings, no users, since that's what was being invented. So creation, initially at least, was entirely a top-down protocol.

All this was reflected in Adam's attitude toward Chava. He treated the relationship in a top-down fashion, as though she was no more than an accessory to him. Bad deal for Chava, not too good for Adam, either.

Strangers peering into the sunset.
Recognizing the Other

Adam also needs time. His role is to be more than a seed-delivery mechanism. He needs to be the Provider and Protector of his family. When he charges impetuously into a physical relationship driven by his own hormonal urges, he subverts all of that, effectively reversing the roles: Chava now holds the goods and he's degraded himself to the point of begging for them. Or worse, he's grabbing the goods and causing even more harm.

Adam was stuck in the old protocol. He should have learned from G?d's own modality-shift with him: Having created the world, G?d turned to Adam to initiate a two-way, interactive relationship. Adam awoke to a latent world, where life lay just below the surface of the soil, "for there was no Adam to work the soil." In this case, Adam was bright enough to figure out what was demanded of him. He prayed for rain, "and a mist rose to water the garden."

The greatest challenge of every man, and his greatest epiphany, is to recognize that, hey, there's someone else here besides me.

From that point on, the protocol had changed. If the initial act of Creation was a free lunch, the

soup kitchen was now closed. From now on, nothing in the entire cosmos could receive without giving, or give without receiving. Not even Adam or Chava.

Ever since, this has been the greatest challenge of every man who has felt for a woman: the challenge to be a man and rein in his own one-way urge. The challenge to recognize that, hey, there's someone else here besides me (yes, the greatest epiphany that could occur in a man's life). This is a person, an "other," a "not-me"—and maybe she's not in the same space as me quite yet. The challenge to wait and to share.

If he fails, he becomes a slave and in the long run, despised and used by the woman he believes he has conquered. If he succeeds, he unites with her and is respected by her. The children that are born from that union are granted peace between their own bodies and souls. In miniature, he has repaired the entire cosmos—and that itself is reflected systemically throughout all of Creation.

Everything starts at home, even world peace.15

Revised October 2020.FOOTNOTES

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By Tzvi Freeman   [More by this authorTzvi Freeman](#) is the author of [Bringing Heaven Down to Earth](#) and, more recently, [Wisdom to Heal the Earth](#). Subscribe to [The Daily Dose of Wisdom](#) and [Freeman Files](#) for regular updates.[Print Page](#)   ·   [Read Online](#)   ·   [Discuss](#)   ·   [Share on Facebook](#)

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