

"And Hashem said, 'Let us make man.'" (1:26)

Shlomo Ha'Melech teaches us in *Koheles 12:13*, "When all is said and done, fear Hashem,... for that is the sum of man." This is a remarkable statement! One who does not fear Heaven is an animal! Is the fear of G-d the true determining factor in one's humanness? Perhaps it is a component in his physical makeup, but is it not bold to say that this is the primary, the sole factor, in his characterization as a human being?

Horav Elchanan Wasserman, zl, claims that, indeed, one's humanness is in direct proportion to his fear of G-d. The more devout one is, the greater a man he is. One who is devoid of Heavenly fear, one who has the arrogance and gall to assert that he has no fear of G-d, is nothing more than an animal! He cites the *Zohar Ha'Kadosh* to support his position.

The *Zohar* teaches us a fascinating thought, one that offers a new perspective towards understanding the human condition. Hashem invited all of creation to participate in the creation of man. Each animal contributed an element of his own personality to man's overall constitution. In this manner man became a composite of all of the animals' characteristics. He had within him the personality of the snake, the lion, the ox, the mule, etc. Within man exists the power of intelligence and speech, coupled with all of the destructive forces of each animal. Thus, man has the potential to become the most dangerous animal in the world! Have we not witnessed man's capacity for destruction, man's evil, his lack of compassion, his propensity toward treachery? A single trait restrains man from reverting to his primitive and base instinct -- *Yiraas Shomayim*, his fear of Hashem. It is neither his intelligence or emotion, only his fear of G-d limits his animalistic tendencies and maintains his humanness. Indeed, man's fear of G-d restrains him from destroying himself, as well as the world in which he lives.