

## Meditation on Tzelem Elokim, the Likeness of God

By Calyah Chanah Isaacs

Wherever you are, whether sitting, standing or lying down, allow your weight to sink with gravity into the surface with which it makes contact. Relax into yourself. Feel the floor, seat, couch below you, accepting all of you. You are held. You can let go. Breathe.

Let your awareness rest on your chest, rising and falling with the breath. No effort. You are breathed by the Holy. Allow that awareness to include your heart, beating itself by that same Grace. The touch of *H'* living inside you. No effort, just existing, alive. The breath. The heartbeat.

Awareness spreading, emanating from your core and slowly moving outward, downward and upward, filling your whole body with your attention. Feel where it comes in contact with skin. Notice your skin everywhere, and especially where it comes in contact with air. Notice the feeling of air on skin.

Allow your focus to move beyond skin, into air. Let yourself fill the room in which your body rests. Softening further, your awareness includes the air beyond the walls. Melt into awareness of your town, your state, your country. You include the oceans, the lands everywhere. Feel the heartbeat of the earth.

Awareness of the atmosphere, the *rakia*. Beyond atmosphere. The Heavens, *haShamayim*.

The God-spark that breathes you, that pulses your heart, is within you and beyond you. You carry that shadow, that image, that *tzelem Elokim*. By virtue of being alive, you are *b'tzelem Elokim*, in G\_d's image.

Says R' Moshe Cordovero in *Tomer Devorah*, "it is proper for the human to emulate the Creator, to attain the secret of the Form on High in both image and likeness. But if only the physical reflects this and not the actions, one deceives that Form."

Our actions emulate the Creator when they are aligned with the Divine Attributes of Mercy. When we recognize that every person we encounter who is breathing, whose heart beats, is the same *tzelem Elokim* that we are.

We are entering the month of Elul, *aleph, lamed, vav, lamed*, which also stand for "*Ani l'dodi v'dodi li* I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine."

It is said *H'* walks in the fields with us during Elul. We are invited to experience our *tzelem Elokim* at close range. Rest again and feel your breath, your heart. Know that *H'* is close.

Allow yourself to increase your awareness of living *b'tzelem Elokim* during Elul. Let this awareness guide your *teshuvah*, your repair of your relationships and your *middot* in remembering that we are all *b'tzelem Elokim*.

Bring your focus gently back to your body. Your heartbeat. Your breath. Feel *H'* sustaining your life. Breathe. When you are ready, open your eyes, fully present.