

**WHAT IS THE “IMAGE OF GOD” IN MAN?
REFLECTION ON THE BEGINNING OF THE BOOK
OF GENESIS IN LIGHT OF THE DOCUMENT OF
THE PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION,
*WHAT IS MAN? A JOURNEY THROUGH BIBLICAL
ANTHROPOLOGY***

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Summary: Much has been written on the subject of the image of God in man in biblical-theological terms. However, more attention should be paid to the proper understanding of Gen 1:26, which explains that the Lord God created man not so much “in His own image and likeness”, but literally: “in His image according to His likeness”. A careful translation of these words raises questions about what in man is the image of God, what proves his uniqueness in relation to other created entities, and finally – what is his vocation in relation to the Creator. A proper understanding of biblical anthropology will also be made on the basis of the document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission entitled: *What is Man? A Journey through Biblical Anthropology*.

Key words: Book of Genesis, image and likeness, biblical anthropology.

One of the most frequently discussed topics in biblical and theological literature is the image of God in man. Much has been written on this subject, both in commentaries and separate studies¹. The starting point for these considerations is the text

¹ Literature on the subject is abundant, both in Poland and abroad. The doctrine of *imago Dei* is a relevant topic, so much so that one exegete stated that it “elicited the greatest interest in the history of exegesis”; H. Wildberger, עֲלֵפָּ, [in:] E. Jenni, C. Westermann (ed.), *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (hereafter: TLOT), trans. M.E. Biddle, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 1997, vol. III, p. 1082. See the section *Antropologia* [in:] P. Ostański, *Bibliografia Bibliistyki Polskiej*, vol. 6-7: 2014-2017, Series Bibliographica 4, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza – Wydział Teologiczny, Poznań 2019, pp. 509-513; idem, *Bibliografia Bibliistyki Polskiej*, vol. 5: 2010–2013/2014, Series Bibliographica 3, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza – Wydział Teologiczny, Poznań 2015, pp. 416-419, idem, *Bibliografia Bibliistyki Polskiej*, vol. 3-4: 2000-2009, Series Bibliographica 2, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza – Wydział Teologiczny, Poznań 2010, pp. 734-739; idem,

of the Book of Genesis 1:26–27²: “God said, ‘Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground.’ God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them”³.

In biblical and theological reflection, the phrase that God created man in “his own image and likeness” often appears, and this phrase is commonly used⁴. However, more attention should be paid to the proper understanding of Gen 1:26, which explains that God created man not so much “in His own image and likeness”, but literally: “in His image according to His likeness”. Is this just a play on words, or does this translation carry a specific message? An accurate translation of these words raises questions such as, what in man is the image of God and what is his likeness? Are there differences between the two, or is one word synonymous with the other? What proves the uniqueness of man in relation to other created entities, and ultimately – what is his vocation in relation to the Creator and the world. A proper understanding of these issues of biblical anthropology will also be made on the basis of the document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (hereafter: PBC) entitled: *What is Man? A Journey through Biblical Anthropology*⁵.

Bibliografia Biblijstki Polskiej, vol. 1-2: 1945-1999, Series Bibliographica 1, Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza – Wydział Teologiczny, Poznań 2002, pp. 799-805. The passage of Genesis 1:26–27 has always attracted the attention of scholars from various fields (biblical scholars, theologians, philosophers, anthropologists, cultural scholars and others). The history of its biblical interpretations up to 1982 is presented by G.A. Jónsson, *The Image of God. Genesis 1:26-28 in a Century of Old Testament Research*, Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament series 26, Almqvist & Wiksell, Stockholm 1988; M. Majewski, *Pięcioksiąg odczytany na nowo. Przesłanie autora kapłańskiego (P) i jego wpływ na powstanie Pięcioksięgu*, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II w Krakowie, Kraków 2018, p. 128.

- 2 All biblical terms, the names of biblical books and their abbreviations, as well as punctuation and the general style of biblical writing will be cited after: B.J. Collins, B. Buller, J.F. Kutsko, *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Biblical Studies and Related Disciplines*, 2nd ed., SBL Press, Atlanta, GA 2014, which is the definitive style manual on writing and publishing in the field of biblical studies.
- 3 Unless otherwise stated, biblical quotations will be quoted after: *The New Jerusalem Bible*, ed. H. Wansbrough, Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd, London 1990.
- 4 Just by way of example, the following texts are worth mentioning: K. Ware, “*In the Image and Likeness*”: *The Uniqueness of the Human Person*, [in:] Ch. Chalamet et al. (ed.), *Theological Anthropology, 500 Years after Martin Luther. Orthodox and Protestant Perspectives, Studies in Systematic Theology* 25, Leiden, Brill 2021, p. 48-64; B. Ebeid, *L'uomo creato ad immagine e somiglianza di Dio secondo la teologia Cristiana e Musulmana*, “Teologia i człowiek” 2016, no. 34/2, p. 169-190; W. Pikor, *Pytanie o „obraz i podobieństwo”*, [in:] K. Krzeźmiński, K. Olszewska, R. Beszterda (ed.), *Człowiek – ciało i duch*, vol. 2. Ujęcie teologiczne, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2015, p. 31-45; K. Kamiński, *Stworzenie człowieka na obraz i podobieństwo Boga u Orygenesza: przyczynek do nadziei na apokatastazę*, “Łódzkie Studia Teologiczne” 2009, no. 18, p. 99-114; M. Gołębiowski, *Człowiek obrazem i podobieństwem Boga*, “Ateneum Kapłańskie” 1987, no. 79, vol. 109, fasc. 2(471), p. 264-278.
- 5 Original title: Pontificia Commissione Biblica, “*Che cosa è l'uomo?*” (*Sal 8,5*). *Un itinerario di antropologia biblica*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 2019 (hereafter: “*Che cosa è l'uomo?*” (*Sal 8,5*)); English translation: Pontifical Biblical Commission, *What Is Man? A Journey through Biblical Anthropology*, trans. F. O’Fearghail, A. Graffy, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 2021. As the English translation was unavailable to the author of this article, citations will follow the original Italian text.

Every biblical interpretation should begin with a terminological analysis. In the Hebrew Bible (hereafter: HB)⁶, the words in question (Gen 1:26–27) read as follows: *wayyō‘mer ’elōhim na ‘ašê ‘ādām b’ešalmēnū kidmūtēnū*, that can be translated as follows: “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to the likeness of ourselves’” (1:26)⁷. The next verse even more strongly emphasizes God’s image in man: *wayyibrā’ ’elōhim ’et-hā ‘ādām b’ešalmō b’ešelem ’elōhim bārā’ ’ōtō zākār ûn‘qēbā bārā’ ’ōtām*, which means: “And God created the man in his image; in the image of God he created him, a male and a female he created them”⁸. The main Hebrew phrase to be analyzed is *b’ešalmēnū kidmūtēnū* (“in our image, according to the likeness of ourselves”), around which many exegetical discussions and questions have arisen.

Some questions

As G.J. Wenham⁹ claims, in the vast amount of literature that has emerged on this Hebrew statement, the discussion has focused on three main points:

1. Why does God, in creating man, speak in the plural? (us/our)?
2. What is the force of the Hebrew prepositions *bē* (“in”) (i.e., in *b’ešalmēnū*) and *kē* (“according to”) (i.e., in *kidmūtēnū*) in this verse?
3. What is meant by the Hebrew nouns *šelem* (“image”) and *dēmūt* (“likeness”)? Is there any difference between these terms?

We shall review these issues in turn.

Why does God speak here in the plural (us/our)?

At the outset, it is worth briefly addressing the Hebrew verb *na ‘ašê* (“let us make”) from Gen 1:26, the plural of the verb *šh*, which means “to make, to attach” or “to create,” when it refers to the action of God¹⁰. The next verse, though, presents the act of creation of man in singular: *wayyibrā’ ’elōhim ’et-hā ‘ādām b’ešalmō*, “And God created the man in his image”¹¹. Here the verb *bārā’*, from which *wayyibrā’* is

6 Original texts and ancient translations will be quoted according to critical editions; the Hebrew Bible after: *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, 5th ed., K. Elliger, W. Rudolph (ed.), *Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft*, Stuttgart 1997; the Greek text of the Septuagint (hereafter: LXX) after: *Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graecae iuxta LXX interpretes edidit Alfred Rahlfs. Editio altera, quam recognovit et emendavit Robert Hanhart. Duo volumina in uno*, ed. A. Rahlfs, *Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft*, Stuttgart 2006; Latin translation: *Nova Vulgata. Bibliorum sacrorum editio*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1998.

7 Own translation. When the same book of the Bible is referred to, or the same verses are analyzed, the name of the book will be omitted.

8 Own translation.

9 G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary 1, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI 1987, p. 27.

10 *נָשָׂא*, [in:] L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (hereafter: HALOT), Brill, Leiden 2000, vol. II, p. 889-890.

11 Own translation.

derived, is used in singular, and the meaning is similar: “create, make”¹². However, this word is strictly connected to God’s action. The scope of the use of this verb is limited, and it is used exclusively to denote divine creation. “As a special theological term, *bara’* is used to express clearly the incomparability of the creative work of God in contrast to all secondary products and likenesses made from already existing material by man”¹³. Strictly divine usage of this verb is also attested in other languages at that time¹⁴. It thus describes the result of God’s creative act by both plural and singular pronouns: the plural possessive “in our image” (Heb. *bēšalmēnū*), and “in the likeness of ourselves” (Heb. *kiḏmūtēnū*) in 1:26 and the singular pronoun “his (i.e. God’s) image” (Heb. *bēšalmō*) in 1:27. The use of the verb *bārā’* in the singular confirms that God acted independently and alone, which testifies to His singularity. Although God’s name the name *’ēlōhim* in 1:1–2:3 which is in plural, it occurs with the verb in the singular, even though in 1:26 the author one time has used the plural (*na’āšē*; “let us make”).

The act of creation is preceded by the call: “Let us make man in our image”. What prompts God to speak here in the plural? G.J. Wenham presents 6 proposals, based on previous investigations¹⁵. Of many explanations, the one that treats it as the plural of thought (lat. *pluralis deliberationis*) seems the most likely¹⁶. Even though such

12 T.E. McComiskey, (*bārā’*), [in:] R.L. Harris, G.L. Archer Jr., B.K. Waltke (ed.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (hereafter: TWOT), The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL 1980, vol. I, p. 127.

13 K.-H. Bernhardt, *bārā’*, III. Meaning, [in:] G.J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren, H.-J. Fabry (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (hereafter: TDOT), Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI: 2004, vol. II, p. 246.

14 The association of this verb with strictly divine usage can be seen not only in Hebrew, but also in Egyptian terminology. The two common Egyptian verbs for creation are *iry* and *kmḥ*, which are usually translated “to make” or “to create” are often performed by gods. The verb *iry* covers the entire range of meaning from “manufacture, produce” to a divine “creation”; the verb *kmḥ* can denote the creation itself and is also used synonymously with *iry*; J. Bergman, *bārā’*, I. In the Ancient Near East; 1. *Egypt*, TDOT, vol. II, p. 242. Similar meaning can be observed in Mesopotamia, where the common Akkadian word for “create” is *banū*, which means “to build, to set up, make, to beget”. It is used with gods as subject in various cosmogonic contexts in the sense of “create”; H. Ringgren, *bārā’*, I. In the Ancient Near East; 2. *Mesopotamia*, TDOT, vol. II, p. 244.

15 (a) God is addressing his heavenly court, i.e., the angels (cf. Isa 6:8);
 (b) the plural is a reference to Christ, and this verse adumbrates the Trinity but it is now almost universally admitted that this was not what the plural meant to the original author of Gen;
 (c) the plural might reflect the polytheistic account. However, Gen 1 is antimythological in its tone, explicitly rejecting ancient Near Eastern views of creation. Therefore, modern commentators agree that Gen 1:26 could never have been used a polytheistic sense;
 (d) this is an example of a plural of majesty, as is the English royal “we”. However, “we” as a plural of majesty is not used with verbs in the HB, therefore this interpretation should be rejected.
 (e) this is a plural of self-deliberation or self-encouragement (as in Gen 11:7; Ps 2:3).
 (f) the plural is used because of plurality within the Godhead. God is addressing his Spirit who was present and active at the beginning of creation (Gen 1:2). G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, op. cit., p. 27–28; all the proposals were taken directly from this book.

16 Z. Pawłowski, *Opowiadanie, Bóg i początek. Teologia narracyjna Rdz 1-3*, Rozprawy i Studia Biblijne 13, Vocatio, Warszawa 2003, p. 334, with references; J. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju. Rozdziały 1–11. Wstęp, przekład z oryginału, komentarz*, Nowy Komentarz Biblijny, vol. I/1, Edycja Świętego Pawła, Częstochowa 2013, p. 165.

use of the plural is extremely rare in the HB, from the point of view of narrative exegesis, *pluralis deliberationis* can be considered an example of internal monologue¹⁷. It is a technique of directly presenting someone's thoughts, reflection preceding a decision, or even discussion with oneself, used not only by modern literature, but also, though in only a few cases, in antiquity¹⁸.

K.A. Mathews aptly emphasizes that we are dealing here with the unity and plurality of God. The plural form indicates in this passage "an intradivine conversation, a plurality in the Godhead, between God and his Spirit"¹⁹, but without crossing out its unity and singularity. The idea here, therefore, is to emphasize the inner richness of God's life.

The *pluralis deliberationis* means here a plural of reverie, reflection (as, for example, in 2 Sam 24:15). God is pondering, stopping in thoughtfulness before a key creation. Other forms used to describe this activity are, for example, *pluralis plenitudinis* – expressing the fullness of the Deity, or *pluralis cohortativum* – a command expressed to oneself. Anyway, the creation of man is preceded by a special turn "inward" on the part of the creating God. This verse indicates the inner richness in God (*pluralis compositionis*), the bizarre multiplicity in unity, and for Christians, a grain of truth about the Trinity. The emphasis on the plural ("let us make, in our image, according to the likeness of ourselves") seems to point to the divine "We" of the one Creator, showing the incomprehensible inner richness of God. Of course, the Old Testament (hereafter: OT) places a very strong emphasis on the singularity of God and does not know the truth of the Trinity²⁰. Therefore, one can only regard this verse as a vague foreshadowing of the truth that will be fully expressed by the New Testament (e.g., Matt 28:19 or John 1)²¹.

It is worth mentioning the specific terminology used to describe the man who was called *'ādām* in Gen 1:26. It could be translated not only as "man" but also as "mankind"; "human" (as an adjective), "someone" (indefinite); or "Adam" (the

17 Z. Pawłowski, op. cit., p. 334. W. Pikor, *Pytanie o „obraz i podobieństwo”*, op. cit., p. 34.

18 Z. Pawłowski, op. cit., p. 334, with references.

19 K.A. Mathews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, vol. 1A, [in:] E.R. Clendenen (ed.), *The New American Commentary. Old Testament*, B&H Publishing Group, Nashville, TN 1996, p. 163, with references.

20 A Christological understanding of Gen 1:26 is attested in early Christian tradition, as indicated by the Exposition of the Faith set forth at Sirmium in Latin, and afterwards translated into Greek: "If any one should affirm that the Father said not to the Son, «Let us make man,» but that God spoke to himself, let him be anathema"; P. Schaff, H. Wace (ed.), *Socrates & Sozomenius: Ecclesiastical Histories, vol. II of A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series*. Accordance electronic edition, Christian Literature Publishing, New York 1890. Three councils were held at Sirmium: one in 351, one in 357 and one in 359. It was at the latter council that the Creed, which was recited at Ariminum, was developed; ibidem, note 97. See also: W. Chrostowski, *Kim jest człowiek? U podstaw antropologii biblijnej*, "Studia Elbląskie" 2021, no. 22, p. 261-279 (264).

21 M. Majewski, *Pięcioksiąg. Ku odkrywaniu zagubionego przesłania Tory*. Skrypt do wykładów z Pięcioksięgu wersja 2, online: https://www.academia.edu/69407949/PIĘCIOKSIĄG_ku_odkrywaniu_zagubionego_przesłania_Tory [10.07.2024], (no pagination).

first man or as a proper name; Gen 5:1–5)²². It should be distinguished from other Hebrew words used to designate a man: *’iš* (in the sense of man as opposite of woman, or as man distinguished in his manliness), *’enôš* (man as weak and vulnerable), *geber* (man as mighty and noble), and *m’îm* (males, men). The word *’ādām* occurs exclusively in the singular absolute 562 times in the HB²³. Such indefiniteness of reference may be deliberate; *’ādām* is “mankind, humanity” as opposed to God or the animals (such as *’iš* is man as opposed to woman). Adam, the first man created and named, is therefore representative of humanity²⁴, an icon of God himself²⁵.

What is the force of the Hebrew prepositions *b^e* (“in”) and *k^e* (“according to”) in Gen 1:26?

Gen 1:26 presents both nouns: *šelem* (“image”) and *d^emût* (“likeness”) with the prepositions *b^e* (“in”) and *k^e* (“according to”) respectively. However, 1:27 has *šelem* with *b^e* (x2), and in 5:1,3 *d^emût* is used with *b^e*, while in 5:3 *šelem* is used with *k^e*. This shows that the combination of these prepositions with these nouns does not create a specific meaning, other than when combined with other nouns. According to H.D. Preuss, this dovetailing of the prepositions opposes too strong a differentiation between *b^e* and *k^e*, as well as between *šelem* and *d^emût* and “opposes an overemphasis on the use of the words with prepositions in contrast to their use alone. Instead, the juxtaposition of the two words in Gen 1:26 suggests that the writer is making a statement about the dignity of man, which he intensifies by combining similar concepts”²⁶. Although those prepositions are not exact synonyms, their semantic fields do overlap²⁷, so one can observe the interchangeable use of them²⁸. The early translators and most modern commentators agree that *b^e* is virtually equivalent to *k^e*, so they are synonymous and interchangeable²⁹, therefore they are “semantically

22 In Gen 5 *’ādām* is used without the article as a personal name “Adam,” but from 4:1 and 4:25 it is clear that even with the article *hā’*, the proper name “Adam” may be the better translation, just as *’ēlōhîm* may well be translated “God” (Gen 22:1). This fluidity between the definite and indefinite form makes it sometimes difficult to know when the personal name “Adam” is first mentioned; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, op. cit., p. 32, where he cites U. Cassuto, *Biblical and Oriental Studies*, Magnes Press, Jerusalem 1973, vol. I, p. 166-167.

23 L.J. Coppes, *דָּמָה (’dm)*, I. TWOT, vol. I, p. 10; F. Maas, *דָּמָה ’ādhām*, TDOT, vol. I, p. 79.

24 G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, op. cit., p. 32.

25 W. Chrostowski, *Kim jest człowiek?*, op. cit., p. 265.

26 H.D. Preuss, *בְּכַדְכָּדָה* TDOT, vol. III, p. 259.

27 G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, op. cit., p. 28.

28 V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI 1990, p. 136-137.

29 The interchangeable use of the analyzed particles in 1:26–27 and 5:1,3 provides an argument for rejecting any attempt to attribute separate meanings to them; Z. Pawłowski, *Opowiadanie*, op. cit., p. 335, where he refers to C. Westermann, *Genesis 1–11. A Commentary*, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London 1984, p. 145f.

indistinguishable and are to be understood in the sense of *b^e essentiae*³⁰. The second phrase “according to the likeness of ourselves”³¹ appears to be an explanatory gloss indicating the precise sense of the previous statement “in our image”³².

The PCB document aptly points out at this point that in Gen 1:26 it is not said that God creates the human being “in his image *and* likeness”, as is customarily expressed, but literally: “in the image *according* to the likeness”, which could be rendered, with a dynamic translation, “in the image reminiscent of”. To speak of the same event, in 1:27 only the term “image” (Heb. *šelem*) is used with regard to God, while in 5:1 only “likeness” (*d^emûṭ*) of Him³³.

What is meant by the Hebrew *šelem* (“image”) and *d^emûṭ* (“likeness”)?

Although much has been written on this topic³⁴, it is worth sorting out some issues. The momentous element of Gen 1:26–27 is the creation of man “in our image (*b^ešalmēnū*) according our likeness (*kiḏmûṭēnū*)”. This leads to the very significant question: what meaning is conveyed by these two nouns, which occur in parallelism in this verse (and in 5:3 but in reverse order), and what is their relationship to each other? Out of forty-four occurrences of *šelem* in the OT, the phrase “the image of God” is found only four times: Gen 1:26,27 (x2); 9:6. Related to these passages is 5:3: Adam fathered a son “after his image”.

The noun *šelem* (“image”) is derived from a root *šlm*, which is not attested in Hebrew itself, though it occurs in other ancient languages, as Jewish Aramaic, Palmyrene,

30 F.J. Stendebach, *זֶלֶם*, TDOT, vol. XII, p. 394, with note. The phrase *b^e essentiae* means, that although this preposition most often means “in”, its use in contexts such as this one changes and means “as”; W.C. Kaiser, Jr., *name*, [in:] M.C. Tenney, M. Silva (ed.), *The Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI 2009, vol. IV, p. 396-407 (405); in other words, it is “the preposition *b^e* when used to state identity of subject and predicate”; M. Dahood, *Psalms II 51-100*, The Anchor Yale Bible, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT 1974, p. x.

31 “According to the likeness” is the best translation of the word *kiḏmûṭ*; *תְּכִימֹתָי*; HALOT, vol. I, p. 226.

32 G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, op. cit., p. 28-29. This is in line with the statement of D.J.A. Clines, who argue that man was not created as an imitation of the divine image but to *b^e* the divine image: “Man is created not *in* God’s image, since God has no image of His own, but *as* God’s image, or rather *to be* God’s image, that is to deputize in the created world for the transcendent God who remains outside the world order. That man is God’s image means that he is the visible corporeal representative of the invisible, bodiless God; he is representative rather than representation, since the idea of portrayal is secondary in the significance of the image. However, the term ‘likeness’ is an assurance that man is an adequate and faithful representative of God on earth. The whole man is the image of God, without distinction of spirit and body. All mankind, without distinction, are the image of God”; D.J.A. Clines, *The Image of God in Man*, “Tyndale Bulletin” 1968, no. 19, p. 53-103 (101). This also provides an explanation for the meaning of *b^e essentiae*, which uses the preposition *b^e*, translated in the sense of “as”.

33 “*Che cosa è l’uomo?*” (Sal 8,5), no. 46.

34 Extensive bibliographic lists on this subject is included in C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, op. cit., p. 147n.; G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, op. cit., p. 26-27, cf. Z. Pawłowski, *Opowiadanie*, op. cit., p. 332.

and Syriac with the meaning “add images”, as well as Arabic (*ṣalama*), where means “to chop off, hew, cut, carve”³⁵. Since this noun refers to an image reproduced on a painting or figure (1 Sam 6:5.11; Ezek 23:14), it is generally used to denote objects whose function is to make visible what is absent or even invisible (cf. Wis 14:15.17)³⁶.

This noun has a generally negative connotation, because it predominantly means an actual plastic work, a duplicate, sometimes an idol or an idolatrous image that has to be destroyed (Num 33:52; 2 Kgs 11:18, par. 2 Chron 23:17; Ezek 7:20; 16:17; 23:14 [a painting]; Amos 5:26). Only sometimes it means a duplicate in the diminished sense of a semblance when compared with the original (Ps 39:6)³⁷. As PBC writes, it was therefore an object that does not hear, does not speak, cannot act (Ps 115:5–7), being something “dead” (Wis 13:18; 15:5)³⁸. Outside Gen, the only passage where *ṣelem* designates the representation of something else, without also suggesting that such representation is taboo or illicit is 1 Sam 6:5 (x2), 11³⁹. This highlights, by contrast, the quality of the human being, who, according to Gen 1:26, is called to “represent” being the “image” (Heb. *ṣelem*) or the “icon” (Gk. *eikōn*) of the living God precisely because he is living and capable of relationship with other spiritual subjects⁴⁰. This leads to the more general observation that the image of God is not only an “equipment” of man as the representant of God from the moment of creation, but it is the *essence* of his existence, being a sign of love and an invitation to relationship.

On the contrary, the noun *dēmūt* is a verbal abstraction and means predominantly something abstract: “appearance similarity, analogy” (Ezek 1:5, 10, 26, 28). It occurs 25 times in the OT, mostly in Ezek (e.g., 1:5), where it could be rendered as “something like, likeness”⁴¹. It has an ending typical of an abstract noun and is derived from the verb *dmh*, which means “to be like, resemble”, therefore the noun *dēmūt* can be used to denote a model or plan (2 Kgs 16:10⁴²). It defines not so much sameness as similarity between the original and its image⁴³. “The word in and of itself refers to total comparability and not to a perceptibly lesser degree of mere similarity, but that the need to refer to comparability exists only if similarity is not self-evident”⁴⁴.

As PBC writes, this noun clearly defines “the relationship of similarity between two realities, as happens between a certain object and its pictorial reproductions or

35 F.J. Stendebach, *ܘܫܠܡܐ*, op. cit., p. 387; *ܘܫܠܡܐ*, HALOT, vol. III, p. 1028.

36 “*Che cosa è l'uomo?*” (*Sal 8,5*), no. 46.

37 G. von Rad, *Genesis. A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library 1, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia PA 1972, p. 57-58.

38 “*Che cosa è l'uomo?*” (*Sal 8,5*), no. 46.

39 Here the Israelite priests instruct the Philistines, before they return the ark to the Israelites, to make *ṣalmē*: “images” or “models” of the tumors and the mice that the Lord had sent upon them; V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, op. cit., p. 135.

40 Cf. “*Che cosa è l'uomo?*” (*Sal 8,5*), no. 46.

41 *דמוּת*, HALOT, vol. I, p. 226.

42 G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, op. cit., p. 29. However, he makes a minor inaccuracy: instead of 2 Kgs 16:10, he gives the reference 1 Kgs 16:10, which does not contain this noun. H.D. Preuss assumes that this is the earliest example of this noun in the OT, meaning the “image” or “copy, reproduction”; H.D. Preuss, *דמוּת*, op. cit., p. 257.

43 W. Pikor, *Pytanie o „obraz i podobieństwo”*, op. cit., p. 35.

44 E. Jenni, *דמוּת*, TLOT, vol. I, p. 340.

clay figures (Ezek 23:15). When people received from God the privilege of sensory perception of superhuman beings or events, the biblical authors were compelled to say that what they saw was «similar» to the earthly reality (Ezek 1:5,26; 10:21-22; Dan 10:16). God is certainly «incomparable», nothing can be compared to Him (2 Sam 7:22; Isa 40:18; Jer 10:6-7; Ps 86:8). However – Scripture says – man bears within himself the traits of the divine⁴⁵.

The terms *selem* (“image”) and *dēmūt* (“likeness”) are practically synonymous, not meaning something significantly different⁴⁶. The word *selem* is a more concrete term, used simply in the OT to denote some model or idol, with the vague idea of physical similarity; *dēmūt*, on the other hand, is more abstract⁴⁷. Their parallel use in Gen 1:26 (and in 5:3) does not allow us to make too sharp a distinction between them. They are used to indicate the unique status of man the order of creation. Both words express a view of man’s dignity, reinforced by the use of two similar concepts⁴⁸.

Where does the translation “in the image *and* likeness” come from?

Should they be interpreted together or separately?

The two terms are combined in the Greek Bible (LXX), which uses the conjunct *kai* (“and”) between the two nouns⁴⁹, and in the Latin translation, i.e., the Vulgate, which translates this verse as “ad imaginem et similitudinem”. Based on this, later patristic exegesis distinguished between the meanings of these expressions, considering *selem* to be man’s spiritual likeness to God through the possession of reason and will, and *dēmūt* to be a supernatural likeness through grace⁵⁰. Therefore, the Greek tradition of the Church Fathers attributed an ontic meaning to “image” and moral to “likeness”⁵¹. At the level of biblical exegesis, however, treating them as

45 “*Che cosa è l’uomo?*” (*Sal* 8,5), no. 46, own translation.

46 Therefore, only the “image” of God is described in this article, bearing in mind the idea that the two words under analysis are practically synonymous.

47 A. Bonora, *Człowiek obrazem Boga w Starym Testamencie*, trans. J. Warzecha, “*Communio*” 1982, no. 2, p. 3-15 (4).

48 Z. Pawłowski, *Opowiadanie*, op. cit., p. 335.

49 The LXX renders the phrase in question *b^salmēnū kiqmūtēnū* by: *kat’ eikona hēmeteran kai kath’ homoiōsin*, which means: “according to our image and according to the likeness”.

50 R. Krawczyk, *Starotestamentalna idea „obrazu Bożego” w człowieku*, “*Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne*” 1984, no. 31/1, p. 19-30 (21), note 9; S. Kunka, *Obraz Boży w człowieku*, “*Kieleckie Studia Teologiczne*” 2012, no. 11, p. 113-131 (118-119).

51 For St. Basil the Great, the representant of the Christian East, “image” meant human nature in the sense that it has reason and free will. “Likeness”, on the other hand, he sees in man’s concern for moral perfection. On the other hand, St. Ambrose of Milan, representant of the West, emphasizes that the image of God is not the body but the soul, which it is a copy of the image painted by God. Although the two Fathers represent two different backgrounds, similarities can be found between them, if only because Ambrose benefited (as some scholars of his writings emphasize) from the works of Basil; B. Czyżewski, „*Uczyńmy człowieka na nasz obraz, podobnego nam*” (*Rdz* 1:26) *w interpretacji Bazylego Wielkiego i Ambrożego z Mediolanu*, “*Наукові записки УКУ: Богослов’я*” 2020, no. 7, p. 319-332 (319).

separate anthropological categories is unjustified⁵². It is necessary to see them as one reality in such a way that they only jointly express revealed thought⁵³. H.D. Preuss rightly observes that “this interlacing and substitution suggest that very little distinction can be made between the two words”⁵⁴.

As. M. Gołębiewski points out, if the two Hebrew words were juxtaposed in asyndetic form, i.e., without a connecting participle, then it follows that the second word is a more accurate term of the first, to precise it. In such a case, the author would be speaking not of the “image” as such, but of the “likening image”⁵⁵. In fact – since *šelem* is too strong an expression, with a concrete and malleable meaning – a certain interpretation was needed. Therefore, the special value of the word *d^emūt* was suitable to remove the danger of interpreting too realistic, external and material word “image”⁵⁶. For the expression *šelem³elōhim* was often used to describe an idol⁵⁷.

In what does the “image” and “likeness” consist?

The main solutions, presented by G.J. Wenham⁵⁸, are as follows:

- a) “Image” and “likeness” are different and should be interpreted separately, because traditional Christian exegesis presented them as separate aspects of man’s nature. As it was pointed out before, in the patristic exegesis “image” referred to man’s natural qualities that make him God-like (such as reason, will and personality) and “likeness” referred to supernatural graces (such as ethical qualities that make man God-like). However, this interpretation is not in line with the original meaning of the Hebrew text and the most significant (from the theological point of view) occurrences of *šelem*, which are in the primeval history (Gen 1:26–27; 5:3; 9:6)⁵⁹, where “image” and “likeness” are somehow interchangeable and synonymous (cf. esp. 5:3)⁶⁰.

52 Pace A. Makówka, who writes that man’s likeness to God is expressed in the spiritual character of the human person; A. Makówka, *Pedagogia ewangeliczna Jana Pawła II. Jana Pawła II teoria i praktyka wychowania ewangelicznego w odniesieniu do młodzieży*, “Calvarianum”, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska 2003, p. 67.

53 S. Kunka, *Obraz Boży w człowieku*, op. cit., p. 129-130.

54 H.D. Preuss, *תמונת האדם*, op. cit., p. 259.

55 M. Gołębiewski, *Człowiek obrazem i podobieństwem Boga*, op. cit., p. 273. This is in line with the previously cited interpretation of the PCB regarding the dynamic translation of the phrase “image and likeness”; “*Che cosa è l’uomo?*” (*Sal 8,5*), no. 46.

56 Thus, the word was used to diminish the physical meaning of the previous one, avoiding understanding this phrase exclusively in this sense; R. Krawczyk, *Starotestamentalna idea „obrazu Bożego” w człowieku*, op. cit., p. 21, note 9.

57 M. Gołębiewski, *Człowiek obrazem i podobieństwem Boga*, op. cit., p. 273; cf. R. Krawczyk, *Starotestamentalna idea „obrazu Bożego” w człowieku*, op. cit., p. 21.

58 G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, op. cit., p. 29-31; all the proposals were taken directly from this book.

59 F.J. Stendebach, *שְׁלֵם*, op. cit., p. 391.

60 Also A. Angerstorfer is skeptical of this semantic differentiation between *šelem* and *d^emūt*; idem, *Gedanken zur Analyse der Inschrift(en) der Beterstatue vom Tel Fecherīye*, “Biblische Notizien” 1984, no. 24, p. 7-11 (9-10). Both terms refer to the statue of the supplicant and are interchangeable; idem, *Hebräisch d^emw(t) und aramäisch d^emw(t): Ein Sprachproblem der Imago-Dei-Lehre*, ibidem, p. 30-43 (33-35). Both references quoted by: F.J. Stendebach, *שְׁלֵם*, op. cit., p. 393.

- b) The image refers to the mental and spiritual faculties that man shares with God. According to this proposal, the image of God resides in man's reason, personality, free-will, self-consciousness, or his intelligence⁶¹. However, due to the small number of references to the divine image in the OT, it is impossible to prove these suggestions. The interpretations that focus on the human "spirit" or "soul" and its attendant powers of intellect and free will as exemplifications of the divine image in man run contrary to the anthropology of the HB, which has no concept of a "spiritual nature" in this sense⁶².
- c) The image consists of a physical resemblance, i.e., man looks like God. In favor of this interpretation is the fact that physical image is the most frequent meaning of *šelem*. In Gen 5:3 Adam is said to have fathered Seth "after his image", which naturally referred to the similar appearance of father and son⁶³. Such an interpretation can be problematic, however, because the OT emphasizes God's incorporeality and invisibility (cf. Deut 4:15–16). What is more, the image of God must characterize the whole being of man, not just his mind, soul or only the body⁶⁴: "the whole man is created in God's image"⁶⁵. Exegetes who focus on the corporeal form of man also sense the shortcomings associated with this view and cannot completely exclude the spiritual side⁶⁶, so one must read man as a physical-psychic-spiritual unity, even though the HB do not sharply distinguish these divisions. The ancient world realized that, physiologically, man had much in common with animals, so the image of God had to be something that definitely distinguished man from them. Both Hebrew expressions (*šelem* and *d'mût*) indicate that man is a living image representing God on earth, not that he is identical with God in a morphological, corporeal sense⁶⁷.
- d) The image makes man God's representative on earth as his vice-regent. That man is made in the divine image and is thus God's representative on earth was a common oriental view of the king. For example, Egyptian and Assyrian texts describe the king as the living image of God. Man is bidden to rule and subdue the rest of creation, which is obviously a royal task (cf. 1 Kgs 5:4). The allusions to such functions are also clear in Ps 8. Another argument suggesting that man is God's representative on earth stems from the very idea of an image. Images of gods or kings were seen as representatives of the deity or king. The divine spirit was often thought to inhabit the idol, thus creating a close internal unity between the god and his image. However, while Egyptian writers often referred to kings as God-likenesses, they never referred to other people in

61 This is how the "image of God" in man was understood by the Church Fathers.

62 F.J. Stendebach, *שְׁלֵמ*, op. cit., p. 391.

63 Seth is described there as *šelem* ("image") of his father; *שְׁלֵמ*, HALOT, vol. III, p. 1029.

64 The ancient Israelites understood man integrally, so transferring the later, dichotomous division between soul and body, which originated in Greek philosophy, to the Semitic mentality, is not legitimate. The whole human being, including corporeality, is the creation of God; W. Chrostowski, *Kim jest człowiek?*, op. cit., p. 265.

65 G. von Rad, *Genesis*, op. cit., p. 58.

66 F.J. Stendebach, *שְׁלֵמ*, op. cit., p. 391.

67 J. Lemański, *Księga Rodzaju*, op. cit., p. 167.

this way⁶⁸. In God’s eyes, all of mankind is royal. All of humanity is related to God, not just the king. In this sense, Gen 1:26-27 democratizes the royal and exclusivist concepts of the nations surrounding Israel⁶⁹, affirming that not only the king, but every man and woman bear the image of God and are his representatives on earth. The idea of kingship in 1:26–27 must have something to do with God’s established order of creation, reflecting His own power and authority, which is expressed in the ability to make divisions⁷⁰. From the context of this verse, the word *šelem* (“image”) denotes man as the visible image of God, i.e., “God’s viceroy, representative or witness among the creatures”⁷¹. Therefore, his life is sacred and every assault on man is an affront to the Creator and merits the ultimate penalty (9:5–6). To be the image of God is an important feature distinguishing man from all other creatures and belonging exclusively to him. In fact, no creature other than man has been described as God’s image. Based on the idea of the image of God, the biblical texts clearly emphasize a certain separation between man and the rest of creation⁷².

- e) Image is the ability to have a relationship with God. The divine image in man means that God can enter into personal relations with him, talk to him and enter into covenants with him. A special kind of creative activity is involved in the creation of man, which puts man in a unique relationship with his Creator, so that he is able to respond to Him. “God’s image” is not just part of the human constitution, but a description of the process of creation that made man different⁷³.

Of these proposals, points (d) and (e) appear to be the most reliably attested to in terms of text and context of Gen. This is also confirmed by the PCB document, which states that not a few commentators have suggested that the term “likeness” was intended to soften the value given to the noun “image”, specifying that the copy (man) certainly cannot be considered identical to the original (God)⁷⁴. It seems more likely⁷⁵, however, that by this term the author of Gen 1 intended to emphasize the privileged similarity between the human being and the Creator, which constitutes the original foundation of the historical dialogue between the two subjects. As PBC writes, “that God intended to make *’ādām* in his image would indicate, in other

68 Although the Egyptian and Mesopotamian parallels indeed contain the phrase “image of God”, it does not refer to the creation of all human beings in the image of God; F.J. Stendebach, *זִּרְיָ*, op. cit., p. 392, where he cites C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, op. cit., p. 153-154.

69 V.P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, op. cit., p. 135.

70 Z. Pawłowski, *Opowiadanie*, op. cit., p. 335-336.

71 *זִּרְיָ*, HALOT, vol. III, p. 1029.

72 B. Adamczyk, *Model pedagogii Jezusa w przekazie biblijnym*, Myśl Pedagogiczna, WAM, Kraków 2008, p. 68.

73 G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, op. cit., p. 31.

74 The second word, *d’mūt* (“likeness”) in Gen. 1:26, rather than adding something new, can only correct a too direct understanding of *šelem* (“image”), which has a strongly concrete and plastic reference; W. Pikor, *Pytanie o „obraz i podobieństwo”*, op. cit., p. 35.

75 Given the previous research, there is no need to contrast the two points of view, as PCB does. Rather, it can be said that the next proposal is equally true or clarifies the previous idea.

words, that he intended to enter into a personal covenant relationship with him (Sir 17:12; 49:16; cf. also Ps 100:3)⁷⁶.

The corporeal aspect of God's image in man

As it was already observed, the image of God concerns not only the spiritual element of the human person (reason, free will, responsibility), as it was described in antiquity, but also his corporeality. The relationship with God, expressed in the formula of the image, refers to the man in his spiritual-bodily totality⁷⁷. The whole man, in his psychophysical structure, is created in the image of God⁷⁸. Since the whole human being is the image and representation of the incorporeal God, this also applies to his bodily side and sexual differentiation. As the existence of both sexes is an integral part of God's creative plan, the image of God in man therefore is also the rich and mysterious dynamism of sexuality, the fruit of which is love⁷⁹. The sexual differentiation in 1:27 shows that being created in God's image is not meant in the sense of a physical replica of the Creator, since God transcends the sexual polarity that characterizes the created world⁸⁰. Only in the polarity of male and female are human beings created in the image of God⁸¹.

The PBC addresses an issue fundamental to understanding the image of God in man in relation to the sexual act, stating that human begetting cannot be described simply as the fruit of carnal intercourse, "since it is capable of expressing a «divine» quality when it takes place according to the way God gives life to every person, that is, in gratuitous benevolence"⁸², because fatherhood and motherhood in the biblical sense do not exhaust themselves in the physical transmission of life, but are some kind of participation in God's creative power⁸³. This is one of the unique examples of understanding the image of God in man⁸⁴. Since, by God's command in 1:28, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth", humans have been obligated to consciously participate in the transmission of the gift of life, they have also been called and enabled to partner with God in this dimension⁸⁵. God's image in the human being is thus also realized in the relationship toward the opposite sex and the inherent transmission of life.

76 "Che cosa è l'uomo?" (Sal 8,5), no. 46, own translation.

77 A. Bonora, *Człowiek obrazem Boga*, op. cit., p. 7-8.

78 B. Adamczyk, *Model pedagogii Jezusa w przekazie biblijnym*, op. cit., p. 68.

79 W. Chrostowski, *Kim jest człowiek?*, op. cit., p. 275.

80 G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, trans. D.M.G. Stalker, Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh-London 1962, vol. I, p. 146-147, cited by: F.J. Stendebach, *złż*, op. cit., p. 394.

81 G. von Rad, *Genesis*, op. cit., p. 60, C. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11*, op. cit., p. 160, cited by: F.J. Stendebach, *złż*, op. cit., p. 394.

82 "Che cosa è l'uomo?" (Sal 8,5), no. 48, own translation.

83 M. Czajkowski, *Biblia dziś odczytana*, Instytut Prasy i Wydawnictw NOVUM, Warszawa 1988, p. 26; see also: M. Chrostowski, *The woman's womb as a place of God's action and creation*, "The Biblical Annals" 2023, no. 1, p. 83-102.

84 Pace G. von Rad, who writes, that "man's procreative ability is not here understood as an emanation or manifestation of his creation in God's image; G. von Rad, *Genesis*, op. cit., p. 60.

85 W. Chrostowski, *Kim jest człowiek?*, op. cit., p. 268.

In 1:27 the expression “God created *’ādām* in his own image”, could suggest that the object of the divine work is the human being without distinction of gender, lineage or culture⁸⁶. “However, the author adds to it a clarification, very important in this context: «male and female he created them», introducing here the aspect of plurality with the clarification of diversified sexual identity. Therefore, each person is the image of God in a specific bodily way (with all that that entails) and in relationship with others different from themselves”⁸⁷. An important aspect of man’s existence – existence in the image of God – will therefore also be realized in the birth of new life and in reference to the relationship from which it arises⁸⁸. Reference to the opposite sex will therefore be an important factor in strengthening the “image of God” in man⁸⁹. “For if man is similar to animals because like them, he is made «male and female», nevertheless he is also similar to God because he is capable of giving life in love and out of love”⁹⁰.

M. Majewski points out that in Mesopotamia or Egypt, the title of “image of god” was essentially given to the ruler and made him God’s representative on earth, therefore the image in the ancient East functioned to make the referent present. “Where there was a statue, there was a deity”⁹¹. In fact, numerous ancient texts (including biblical ones) testify that the image of the idol was identified with the idol itself, and the reflection embodied the presence of the prototype within it⁹². While the ruler himself was not god, he embodied his real presence. Quoting S.L. Herring⁹³, he makes a critique of an interpretation that views the relationship between God and His image as purely metaphorical. The cultic image of God – which is man – is His physical, living representation and remains real, although it is conveyed by in the Bible through analogies. God elevates man to the dignity of a divine image through which He extends His real presence to the world. The image becomes therefore an icon – while pointing to something else, at the same time it is itself a means of the original’s presence⁹⁴.

86 In fact, the PBC document states that. The conjectural mode was added by the author of this article; “*Che cosa è l’uomo?*” (Sal 8,5), no. 48.

87 “*Che cosa è l’uomo?*” (Sal 8,5), no. 48, own translation.

88 Since man is the image and representation of God, this also applies to his bodily side. Just as it was expressed in the PSB document, man and woman are two “ways” of being human and the image of God, which are equal to each other in terms of dignity. Sex differentiation points to the significance and inalienability of corporeality, in which sexuality is realized no less than in the sphere of the spirit; W. Chrostowski, *Kim jest człowiek?*, op. cit., p. 266.

89 In this sense, human fertility, realized parallel to God’s creative action, becomes a sign of the Creator. Humanity, in turn, through masculinity/fatherhood and femininity/maternity, realizes the image of God within itself; S. Kunka, *Mężczyzna i kobieta obrazem Boga. Pleć a obraz Boży w człowieku*, “Teologia w Polsce” 2013, no. 7,2, p. 101-113 (113).

90 “*Che cosa è l’uomo?*” (Sal 8,5), no. 48, own translation.

91 M. Majewski, *Pięćoksiąg odczytany na nowo*, op. cit., p. 129-130.

92 M. Gołębiowski, *Człowiek obrazem i podobieństwem Boga*, op. cit., p. 272.

93 S.L. Herring, *Divine Substitution. Humanity as the Manifestation of Deity in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East*, Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 247, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2013, p. 87-126.

94 M. Majewski, *Pięćoksiąg odczytany na nowo*, op. cit., p. 130-131.

As. I. Nowell emphasizes, “Gen 1:26–27 portrays human beings – both man and woman – as living images of God, representatives of and witnesses to God’s power and love toward all creation”⁹⁵. The image of God in man is thus realized in a whole range of relationships, both with God and with the other, especially the opposite sex. God’s image is in them not only as separate individuals but also in their mutual relationship⁹⁶. Only in relationship does man become the image of God on earth. S. Kunka aptly emphasizes that the reality of God’s image “takes place” in the space of mutual interaction between man and woman. The image of God is in relationship, and “out of relationship”⁹⁷.

Since the whole human being, with its spiritual and corporeal sides, is the image of God, this leads logically to the mystery of the Incarnation. The creation of man and the incarnation of the Son of God are inextricably linked⁹⁸. Since God created man “in His image”, it is a natural consequence that God became man, also so that man would realize the great dignity he was endowed with on the day of creation.

What does being created in the image of God consist of?

Two answers emerge to the question regarding the image of God in man, serving at the same time as two basic models for interpreting Gen 1:26–27. The first model views human beings God’s representative on earth, commissioned with dominion over the nonhuman part of creation. According to the second view, human is God’s counterpart, so that a dialogical relationship between God and human beings becomes possible⁹⁹. Although they are presented as separate responses, they can equally be viewed as interrelated and mutually conditional, where one may be a consequence of the other. Although 1:26 and 1:28 link the concept of God’s image in man to dominion over the non-human part of creation, 5:3 and 9:6 do not do so, and thus “dominion” alone does not fully answer the question of what God’s image in man consists of. The interpretation of the image of God in man must do justice to both 1:26-27 and 5:3 and 9:6, i.e., in the primeval history of man, where *dēmūt* is used with *šelem*. Therefore, “dominion over other creatures can only be a result or purpose of being made in the image of God”¹⁰⁰.

95 I. Nowell, *Women in the Old Testament*, Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MI 1997, p. 133.

96 W. Chrostowski, *Kim jest człowiek?*, op. cit., p. 267; idem, *Ludzka cielesność jako obraz Boga*, [in:] idem, *Asyryjska diaspora Izraelitów i inne studia*, Rozprawy i Studia Biblijne 10, Warszawa, Vocatio 2003, p. 209-224.

97 S. Kunka, *Mężczyzna i kobieta obrazem Boga*, op. cit., p. 104.

98 W. Chrostowski, *Kim jest człowiek?*, op. cit., p. 267.

99 F.J. Stendebach, *שָׁמַיִם*, op. cit., p. 392-393.

100 Ibidem, p. 394. G. von Rad even says that this text “speaks less of the nature of God’s image than of its purpose”; idem, *Genesis*, op. cit., p. 59.

The concept of man as the “image of God” realized in relationship¹⁰¹ and dialogue with the Creator can be reinforced by comparing 1:22 and 1:28. The blessing over the waters and birds in 1:22 is introduced by the Heb. infinitive *lē'mōr* (“saying”¹⁰²) which is translated as an adverb in the sense of “thus, as follows”. By contrast, 1:28 introduces the blessing over human beings with the full phrase *wayyō'mer lāhem*, “he spoke to them”, indicating that human beings, created by God in the image of Him (1:27), are to function as His partners in dialogue¹⁰³. Unlike other created entities, they are persons, just like their Creator. “The presupposition for God addressing human beings in this way is that [they] are created as God’s counterpart, expressed in the assertion that they were created in the image of God”¹⁰⁴. This interpretation is also consistent with 5:3, where Adam begat his son as his counterpart, so “the relationship between God and human beings is continued in the relationship between father and son”¹⁰⁵.

As W. Pikor aptly notes, “to exist” in light of the entire description of creation in Gen 1 means “to be in relationship”, and the ability to enter into relationships is a testimony to being in the image of God. The principle of creation is diversity, which is framed by God in mutual relations that constitute the unity and harmony of the cosmos, which as a whole was “very good” in God’s eyes (1:31)¹⁰⁶. This is especially true of God’s image in man, which is fulfilled precisely in the relationship.

Conclusions: God’s image in man as an invitation to relationship

Although all of creation is in relationship to God, only man is given the position of partner to the Creator that results from creation “in the image, according to the likeness of God”. This position is unique and distinguishes man from other creatures who were not created in this way. In narrative analysis, similarity is sought in the truth of the relationality of creation and the unity of entities in their diversity. In the likeness of God, man is to differentiate the world through the word, building unity among created entities through the relations¹⁰⁷. Therefore, the image of God in man is the foundation of the relationship with the Creator and other people. The pinnacle of the relationship between man and woman is the begetting of offspring. The image is therefore an invitation to an interpersonal relationship that occurs only between persons.

101 As A. Bonora rightly notes, the relationship (of distinction, superiority, dominion, care and transformation) with creatures is contained in the very concept of “image”; A. Bonora, *Człowiek obrazem Boga*, op. cit., p. 12.

102 נא, HALOT, vol. I, p. 65.

103 F.J. Stendebach, זלז, op. cit., p. 394-395.

104 J. Ebach, *Die Erschaffungdes Menschen als Bild Gottes*, “Pastoraltheologie: Wissenschaft und Praxis” 1977, no. 66, p. 198-214 (208), cited by: F.J. Stendebach, זלז, op. cit., p. 395.

105 J. Ebach, *Die Erschaffung*, op. cit., p. 210, cited by: F.J. Stendebach, זלז, op. cit., p. 395.

106 W. Pikor, *Pytanie o „obraz i podobieństwo”*, op. cit., p. 38.

107 Ibidem, p. 41, 44.

God-likeness obliges man to imitate Him, i.e., to become holy in His image¹⁰⁸, which involves entering into relationships. For ancient people, the bond between the original and its image was much closer than for modern people. In a modern sense, the image is associated primarily with an external resemblance to the original, while for the ancient people, among which the biblical authors were, it involved a deep internal bond. The image of God in man therefore shows the unique dignity of man, against the background of the entire created world. It involves the ability to enter into deep personal relationships, because God creates people as capable of dialogue with Him and called to partnership¹⁰⁹.

Humanity is created for dialogic relationship with God, which is made possible by endowing man with the Creator's "image according to likeness". Humans are created by God, who makes them like Himself. To be an image means that a human being bears God's creative will inscribed in his existence, which is a call to dialogue. To be human is to be the image of God: it is also a relationship in the corporeality of existence. Humanity, created "in the image of God" has this purpose: dialogic relationship with the Creator, since man is the only creature that God willed for Himself¹¹⁰.

The purpose of this dialogue is not only to establish a relationship, but in the ultimate sense – to save a person. The concept of "image of God" therefore expresses both the intrinsic quality of each human person and God's universal salvific will for each person. God's creative will (1:26) is therefore a salvific will. It follows that the whole person, in psychophysical unity, is created for dialogue with God, which brings immortal life¹¹¹. God's image is therefore a gift (undeserved) and the task of building a dialogue with God and the surrounding creation, which is inherent in the concept of God's "image" and its fulfillment¹¹².

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108 T.M. Dąbek, „*Bądźcie więc naśladowcami Boga, jako dzieci umiłowane*” (Ef 5, 1). *Naśladowanie Boga i Chrystusa w Piśmie Świętym*, Biblijne Wezwania do Rozwijania Kultury 6, Uniwersytet Papieski Jana Pawła II. Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Kraków 2015, p. 10.

109 Ibidem, p. 11, with notes.

110 A. Bonora, *Człowiek obrazem Boga*, op. cit., p. 13.

111 Ibidem, p. 15.

112 Just as the word of God is not only information, but also a call for the people, so the reality of God's image not only reveals something, but also commits to something; A. Dunajski, *Człowiek – „Boga żywego obraz”*, "Studia Norwidiana" 1983, no. 1, p. 81-88 (83).

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**CZYM JEST „OBRAZ BOŻY” W CZŁOWIEKU? REFLEKSJA NAD POCZĄTKIEM KSIĘGI RODZAJU W ŚWIETLE DOKUMENTU PAPIESKIEJ KOMISJI BIBLIJNEJ, CZYM JEST CZŁOWIEK?
ZARYS ANTROPOLOGII BIBLIJNEJ**

Streszczenie: Na temat obrazu Boga w człowieku w ujęciu biblijno-teologicznym napisano już wiele. Więcej uwagi należałoby jednak poświęcić właściwemu zrozumieniu Rdz 1,26, który ukazuje, że Pan Bóg stworzył człowieka nie tyle „na swój obraz i podobieństwo”, ale dosłownie: „na swój obraz według swego podobieństwa”. Uważne tłumaczenie tych słów rodzi pytania o to, co w człowieku jest obrazem Boga, co świadczy o jego wyjątkowości w stosunku do innych bytów stworzonych, wreszcie – jakie jest jego powołanie w relacji do Stwórcy. Właściwe rozumienie antropologii biblijnej zostanie przeprowadzone także na podstawie dokumentu Papieskiej Komisji Biblijnej zatytułowanego: *Czym jest człowiek? Zarys antropologii biblijnej*.

Słowa kluczowe: Księga Rodzaju, obraz i podobieństwo, antropologia biblijna.