

# The Neshmat of the Breath of Lives: How humans differ from the lower animals

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whitefld@att.net

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**Neshmat** (נֶשְׁמַת) is a Hebrew word that has been missing in discussions of the origin and nature of הָאָדָם **humankind** as told in Genesis. (נֶשְׁמַת sounds like "nee-sh maat.") Understanding נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** is important because it first appears in the Bible in Gen. 2:7, a verse about the origin of mankind.

## Background

When Christianity started, Christians adopted the Septuagint as their Old Testament. The Septuagint was a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek dating from about 250 B.C. It used the Greek word **pneuma** (πνεῦμα) to translate the Hebrew word רוּחַ ruach meaning **spirit**, or wind. (**Pneuma** appears in the English word pneumatic.) In English Bibles רוּחַ ruach is translated **spirit** more than 200 times, but it is also translated **breath** up to 27 times.

The Septuagint used the Greek word **pnoee** (πνοή) to translate נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** (and its root word נֶשְׁמָה ne-sha-mah). In modern Greek πνοή sounds like "no-ee." נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** and נֶשְׁמָה ne-sha-mah appear in our Bible translated **breath** 17 times and **spirit** 2 times. The inconsistencies in translation noted above have impaired our understanding of:

- 1) How the Bible says הָאָדָם **humankind** differs from the lower animals.
- 2) How the Bible describes the human soul, and our understanding of Gen. 2:7.

The inconsistencies resulted from Augustine's interpretation of Gen. 7:22, as we will now discuss.

The Septuagint translation of Gen. 7:22 had translated נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** as **pnoee** (πνοή) and had **not** translated the following word רוּחַ **spirit**. The Latin translations, on which Augustine relied, followed the Septuagint and also omitted the word רוּחַ **spirit**. A more correct translation of Gen. 7:22 has long been known as shown by the ASV below. (I have italicized the word *land*, a word that is **not** in the Hebrew text.)

<sup>ASV</sup> **Gen. 7:22** All in whose nostrils was the נֶשְׁמַת **breath** of the רוּחַ **spirit** of חַיִּים life, (חַיִּים is a plural.) of all that was on the dry *land*, died.

In the above, נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** is translated **breath** and רוּחַ ruach is translated **spirit**. But many other English translations continue to omit "the רוּחַ **spirit** of" found in the Hebrew. And the plural חַיִּים "lives" continues to be translated life as in the <sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 7:22 shown below: (The KJV had italicized the word *land*.)

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 7:22 All in whose nostrils was the נֶשְׁמַת **breath** of life, of all that was in the dry *land*, died.

Augustine's analysis of Gen. 7:22 allowed him to assert two things: (1) That the נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** in Gen. 7:22 included animals and (2) That **pnoee** (πνοή) and **pneuma** (πνεῦμα) meant the same thing and both could be translated **breath**.

Augustine's assertion (2) depended on his assertion (1). It introduced a confusion not found in the Hebrew text. Assertion (2) then became central in Augustine's understanding of the human soul, and his assertion that the הָאָדָם **humankind** in Gen. 2:7 was the first human. That the הָאָדָם **humankind** in Gen. 2:7 was the first human was contested at the time he made that claim, and continues to be contested today - a controversy which this paper intends to resolve.

Augustine's assertion (1), that the Greek word pnoee translating נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** in Gen. 7:22 included animals, flounders because נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat**, and its root word נֶשְׁמָה ne-sha-mah, **are never used to refer to animals**. Victor P. Hamilton, in his commentary on Genesis, says: "*Unlike רוּחַ rûach, which is applied to God, man, animals, and even false gods, נֶשְׁמָה nêšamâ is applied only to Yahweh and to man.*"<sup>1</sup>

Hamilton used "נֶשְׁמָה nêšamâ" as a reference to all words formed from that Hebrew root word; נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** is a form of נֶשְׁמָה ne-sha-mah. In the verses we will consider, רוּחַ **ruach** is translated **breath** 2 times and **spirit** all the other times. Augustine knew that language confusion existed about the human soul, writing:

<sup>1</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis 1-17*, (Grand Rapids, MI, William B. Eerdmans Pub., 1995), 159.

" . . . The best words to designate it are "soul" or "life-**spirit**." I add the word "life" because the air is also usually called "**spirit**." However, men have called this same air "soul" (**anima**), so that it is impossible to find a word by which we can precisely distinguish this thing . . ." <sup>2</sup> But, Augustine seems unaware his equating of נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** and רוּחַ **spirit** added to the confusion.

About Augustine's third assertion which concerns the human soul, Augustine later writes in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*: <sup>3</sup> ". . . With regard to the soul, which God breathed into the face of man, I have no firm position except to say that it is from God in such a way that it is not the substance of God; that it is incorporeal, that is not a body but a spirit; . . ."

And subsequently: ". . . In view of the works finished, then, He (**God**) rests, and in view of the works begun He is working even until now. But if someone can find a better interpretation of these texts, I will not resist him, I will even support him . . ." We will find that the creation of **humankind** is a "work finished" in Gen 1:27-28, and that salvation is a "work begun."

And following that, he said: ". . . or if my way of investigation is not to his liking, he may see how I carried it on, and as a result I hope that if he can instruct me he will not refuse, and that if He cannot he will join me in searching for someone from whom both of us may learn . . ."

In the following study we will examine verses which show that the word נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** does not mean breath, i.e., inhaling and exhaling. From these verses we will determine that נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** is associated with judgment, understanding, discernment, and (by implication) moral awareness - attributes not well described by the word "breath" that appears in most English translations. We will find that נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** gives humans capabilities that distinguish them from the lower animals. נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** is not given to the lower animals.

## How we will proceed

1) First we will review four verses that use נְשָׁמָה **neshmat**. This will be done to establish the meaning of נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** before we consider Gen. 2:7. Genesis chapter two is an ancient document written after the Exodus. Genesis tells of the Hebrew's ancestral history from their earliest ancestors up to the time they entered Egypt. Our knowledge of the meaning of the words used in Genesis chapter two comes from analysis of how these same words are used in Hebrew writings written after the Exodus.

נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** shares some similarities with the Hebrew word רוּחַ **ruach**. רוּחַ **ruach**, commonly translated **spirit** or wind, refers to things that are real but unseen. Wind is known by its effects - the wind force which we feel - and other effects of wind that are seen. נְשָׁמָה **neshmat**, commonly translated **breath**, is also unseen but known by its effect on human behavior and other effects with which it is associated. Breath is present in living humans and absent in dead humans. Augustine added confusion when he asserted that **pnoee** (πνοή) and **pneuma** (πνεῦμα) meant the same thing.

2) Then we will consider Gen. 2:7 and the words used in that verse. This will lead to a revised translation of Gen. 2:7 where words found to be plural are written as plurals. Support for those changes will be given. This section will result in understanding why the Hebrew of Gen. 2:7 does not allow the הָאָדָם **humankind** in Gen. 2.7 to be the first human.

3) Then we will examine Augustine's The City of God, Book 13, Chapter 24, as preparation for an explanation of the interpretive consequences of Augustine equating נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** and רוּחַ **ruach** (**spirit**).

4) Then I will comment on the "**The Two Part or Three Part Human Soul Controversy**." A controversy which resulted from Augustine equating the meanings of the Greek words πνοή **pnoee** and πνεῦμα **pneuma**, a controversy continuing to the present time.

5) Then I will suggest how the continuing misunderstanding of the meaning of verses which use the Hebrew word נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** (commonly translated **breath**) can be resolved.

<sup>2</sup> John H. Taylor (Trans.), *St. Augustine, Vol. 2: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, (Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ, 1982) 22.

<sup>3</sup> John H. Taylor (Trans.), *St. Augustine, Vol. 2: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, (Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ, 1982) 31, section 43. of book 7.

## The meaning of נִשְׁמַת neshmat

We will now consider verses that show that נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** is associated with judgment, understanding, discernment, and (by implication) moral awareness. Following that preparation we will consider how that knowledge allows us to better understand Gen. 2:7.

In the study that follows, I will insert "נִשְׁמַת **neshmat**" to replace words translating **neshmat** or נִשְׁמָה neshamah. I will insert רוּחַ before the bolded English words translating רוּחַ **ruach**. When רוּחַ **ruach** is translated **breath** I will replace the word breath with **spirit** ~~breath~~ and bold other words translating ruach when referring to them in the verses. Other Hebrew words, words which I show in the verses, will be the actual Hebrew word. The first verse we will consider is Job 32:8, where Elihu responds to Job saying:

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 32:8** But there is רוּחַ a **spirit** in man:  
and the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

Job 32:8 informs us that נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** enables understanding, and (by implication) discernment. It also informs us that נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** and רוּחַ **ruach** differ. The Hebrew word רוּחַ **ruach** is commonly translated **spirit**, wind, or breath. רוּחַ **ruach** is present in all living animals, birds, and humans, but נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** is applied "only to *Yahweh and man*." <sup>4</sup> In Job 4:8-9, Job speaks about the judgment of the wicked, and says:

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 4:8** Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.  
<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 4:9** **By** the מְנִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of God they perish, (מְ is a prefix meaning "from" or "by.")  
and by the רוּחַ **spirit** ~~breath~~ of his **nostrils** are they consumed.

From Job 4:9 we learn that the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of God can act to impose judgment and the perishing of the wicked.<sup>5</sup> The Septuagint of Job 4:9 translated: "From the **command** of the Lord they perish . . . .", attributing the cause of the perishing to the **neshmat** of God. We find that **neshmat** is a sense of right and wrong given to humankind by God. From Job 4:9 we also learn that God's רוּחַ **ruach** was the agent that consumed the wicked. Modern English translations of Job 4:8-9 commonly translate נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** as breath and רוּחַ **ruach** as blast in phrases like "blast of his anger." The Hebrew word אָפוּ translated "of his **nostrils**" is more commonly translated anger (172 times), and translated nostrils (13 times). Prov. 20:27 tells us the **neshmat** of humans reveals their inward intents and motivations.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Prov. 20:27** The נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of man is the lamp of the LORD,  
searching all the innermost parts of his being.

The searching of "all the innermost parts" is not about anatomy. The NKJ translation expresses this as "all the inner depths of his heart"- where "heart" is the biblical term referring to intents and motivations.

<sup>NKV</sup> **Prov. 20:27** The נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of a man is the lamp of the LORD,  
Searching all the inner depths of his heart.

In Job 27:3-4, Job says:

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 27:3-4** All the while my נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** is in me, and the רוּחַ **spirit** ~~breath~~ of God is in my nostrils;  
My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

Job says his **neshmat** enables him to understand his inner motivations and, in accordance with his intent, to not speak wickedness or utter deceit. And (by implication) **neshmat** provides moral awareness. Having found that נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** is associated with judgment, understanding, discernment, and (by implication) moral awareness – we are now prepared to consider Gen. 2:7 in more detail.

In Gen.1:27 God created the הָאָדָם **humans** as male and female. And in Gen.1:28, God spoke to them, giving instructions to the male and female humans. Gen. 2:7 is the next appearance of הָאָדָם **humankind** in a story about a choice that leads to life, or to death. It is also part of the story of the redemption of mankind

<sup>4</sup> See endnote 1 and the associated comments on page 1 of this paper.

<sup>5</sup> In my opinion, it is our violation of our God given neshmat that leads many people to the self-condemnation which afflicts many. Neshmat, is more than that which we call conscience, it also includes understanding and discernment.

from death and sin to eternal life - which Paul in <sup>NET</sup> Eph. 3:9 calls ". . . God's secret plan – a secret that has been hidden for ages in God who has created all things. . . ."

We will now consider Gen. 2:7 which tells of the addition of נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** to humans.

## Gen. 2:7 and the meaning and plural nature of words therein

To explain the plural nature of the words in Gen. 2:7, we start with a modified rendering of Gen. 2:7 as shown below. To facilitate our discussion, הָאָדָם has been translated **humankind**, as it was translated by the New English Translation (NET) in Gen. 1:27, the NIV translated **mankind**.

### Gen. 2:7

(1) And the LORD God formed הָאָדָם **humankind** עָפָר dust of הָאֲדָמָה the ground, (הָ is a prefix meaning "the.")

(2) and breathed בָּאָפֶן into their nostrils the נִשְׁמַת breath of הַיִּים **lives**; (הַיִּים is a plural, i.e., "lives.")

(3) and הָאָדָם **humankind** became living לְנֶפֶשׁ **souls**. (לְ is a prefix meaning "to.")

*Below are three translations of Gen. 1:27 which illustrate that the plural meaning of הָאָדָם is well-known:*

<sup>NET</sup> Gen. 1:27 God created הָאָדָם **humankind** in his own image, in the image of God he created **them**, male and female he created them.

<sup>NIV</sup> Gen. 1:27 So God created הָאָדָם **mankind** in his own image, in the image of God he created **them**; male and female he created them.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 1:27 So God created הָאָדָם **man** in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

The Hebrew word הָאָדָם is plural, meaning **humankind** or **mankind** as translated by the NET and NIV. When the English word **man** is preceded by "the," as in "**the man**," "the man" indicates a specific individual human. In Hebrew, prefixing the name of a male ancestor by הָ "the" indicates a plural – as הָאָדָם has been translated in the above examples. <sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 5:21 illustrates the procedure, indicating plural categories of ancestry.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 5:21 And הָאֲמֹרִי the Amorites, and הַכְּנַעֲנִי the Canaanites, and the הַגִּרְגָּשִׁי Girgashites, and הַיְּבוּסִי the Jebusites. (The Hebrew letter הָ is the prefix meaning "the.")

The NET and NIV have correctly translated the pronoun *them* in the phrase ". . . in the image of God he created אֹתָם **them**." The KJV did not.<sup>6</sup>

In line (1) of Gen. 2:7, I have not included "~~of the~~" before the word "**dust**," words that the KJV added which can lead readers to think that Gen. 2:7 is about making mankind from dust.<sup>7</sup> The Hebrew word הָאָדָם **humankind** sounds like *ha-adam* and הָאֲדָמָה **the ground** sounds like *ha-ad-a-mah*. In my opinion, "dust of the ground" is best interpreted as a statement of mortality. עָפָר **dust** indicates the mortality of animals in Psalm 104:29, it indicates human mortality in Job 34:15, and in Genesis chapter 3 which continues the story in the Garden. The הָאָדָם **humankind** in line (1) consist of individual males and females which receive "the נִשְׁמַת breath of הַיִּים **lives**" breathed into their nostrils.

In line (2) the pronoun "**their**" comes from the pronominal ending ךֿ on the Hebrew word בָּאָפֶן "in his nostrils." In biblical Hebrew, a masculine, singular, pronominal ending is used for nouns referring to a group that includes male and female members. The ךֿ ending, a 3rd person masculine, singular, ending, is appropriate for referring to a plural number of male and female הָאָדָם **humankind**. Prior to Genesis 2:7, Genesis 1:27 used a 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine ending to refer to the male and female humankind that God created. The "his" found in line (2) in other translations indicates a presumption that Gen 2:7 is about the first human. The addition of the "נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of הַיִּים **lives**" to הָאָדָם **humankind** provides all **humankind**

<sup>6</sup> Biblical Hebrew uses a masculine singular ending to refer to words or phrases which include both male and female. In Gen. 1:27 the direct object marker אֹתָם, referring to the following "male and female," ends with the appropriate masculine singular ending ךֿ. The next direct object marker אֹתָם referring to the **Humankind**, composed of male and female persons, used a third person masculine plural ending. Both should be translated **them**.

<sup>7</sup> Hebrew has no word "of." The word עָפָר does not have the prefix הָ meaning "the." The Hebrew word "**the dust**" is הָעָפָר.



with capabilities suitable for the events which follow in Genesis chapters 2 and 3. These are the naming of animals, tilling the garden, understanding moral issues, and the ability to choose the good and not choose the evil. These capabilities are beyond that required to be נִפְשׁ "living creatures" – the air breathing creatures which appear in Genesis chapter 1. Genesis does not distinguish between the lower animals and humans on the basis of the word נִפְשׁ **nephesh**. The word נִשְׁפָּח translated **and breathed**, is not רוּחַ (**sprit**) or נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** – words which are also translated **breath**. נִשְׁפָּח is a more forceful term used for the blowing into a fire to melt metals, and used to describe a seething pot.<sup>8</sup>

In line 3, the customary word **a** has been omitted between the words "became" and "living." The plural אָדָם **humankind** **do not** become a singular. The correct translation of נִפְשׁ is **souls**. The word נִפְשׁ nephesh is most often a plural composed of individual **souls**, as illustrated by Gen. 46:26 shown below:

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 46:26 All נִפְשׁ **the-souls** that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all *the* נִפְשׁ souls were threescore and six; (i.e., 66 souls.)

In the first line I have hyphenated **the-souls** to indicate that ה, a prefix meaning "the," is prefixed to the Hebrew word נִפְשׁ nephesh. In the second line I have italicized *the*, a word added by the KJV. נִפְשׁ nephesh is plural without being prefixed by ה. The Hebrew is "all nephesh." Lam. 3:25 illustrates more about the word נִפְשׁ **to** nephesh, and I have again italicized *the*, a word added by the KJV.

<sup>KJV</sup> Lam. 3:25 The LORD is good unto **them** that wait for him, נִפְשׁ **to the** **soul** that seeketh him.

The word נִפְשׁ **to** nephesh is often used to refer to any individual נִפְשׁ person of a category specified in the verse. In Lam. 3:25 that category is a plural number of נִפְשׁ **souls**. The נִפְשׁ "that seeketh him" constitute the **them** that wait for him – a plural composed of individual human souls (i.e., persons).

Gen. 2:7, as presented above, now has three plural Hebrew words: אָדָם **humankind**, חַיִּים "lives," and נִפְשׁ nephesh which I have translated **souls**. (In Gen.2:7 the ה "to" is not necessary in English following the word "became.") The plural **humankind** become a plural of individual living human **souls**. That Gen. 2:7 speaks of the first human, a male, is **not found** in the Hebrew text of Gen. 2:7.

**Augustine: The City of God**, Book 13, Chapter 24, and the words **pnoee** (πνοή), and **pneuma** (πνεῦμα)

Augustine's interpretation of **pnoee** greatly influenced four other interpretations and understandings:

- 1) His interpretation of Gen. 2:7.
- 2) His understanding of how humans differ from the lower animals.
- 3) His understanding of, how the Bible describes the human soul.
- 4) His understanding of when humans first existed.

We will examine the effect of a missing word in the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew of Gen. 7:22, and then apply what we have learned to the interpretation of Gen. 2:7.

We begin with Augustine's **The City of God**, quoted from Dods' translation of Book 13, Chapter 24. Bracketed Latin and phonetic representations of Greek words will indicate some of the words being translated by Augustine. Bracketed inserts will identify verses being quoted. Augustine's interpretation of Gen. 2:7 was largely a result of a dispute which he described as:

" . . . Some have hastily supposed from the words, "God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath (**pnoee**) of life, and man became a living soul (**animam**)," that a soul was not then first given to man, but that the soul already given was quickened by the Holy Ghost. They are encouraged in this supposition by the fact that the Lord Jesus after His resurrection breathed on His disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy **Spirit**." From this they suppose that the same thing was effected in either case, as if the evangelist had gone on to say, And they became living souls. But if he had made this addition, we should only understand that the **Spirit** (**Spiritus Dei**) is in some way the life of souls, and that without Him (**Spiritus Dei**) reasonable souls (**animae rationales**) must be accounted dead, though their bodies seem to live before our eyes. . . ." <sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Job 41:20, Jeremiah 1:13

<sup>9</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, Marcus Dods, Translator (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, UK, 1913) Book 13 Chapter 24, 551.  
<https://ia902604.us.archive.org/25/items/cityofgodtransla01auguuoft/cityofgodtransla01auguuoft.pdf>

Augustine disputed his opponents' claim that the **pnoee** blown into the nostrils in Gen. 2:7 was the Holy **Spirit** (**pneuma**), and it was the breathing in of the Holy **Spirit** that gave humans a "rational soul." (Dods uses "rational soul" and "reasonable soul" as equivalents, terms that derive from Aristotle in about 340 B.C.) Augustine subsequently gave them his answer, writing.

"... as I said, that the Holy **Spirit** was common to the Father and to the Son; for they have not each a separate Spirit, but both one and the same. Now this **Spirit** is always spoken of in sacred Scripture by the Greek word **πνεῦμα** (**pneuma**), as the Lord, too, named Him in the place cited when He gave Him to His disciples, and intimated the gift by the breathing of His lips; and there does not occur to me any place in the whole Scriptures where He is otherwise named. But in this passage (Gen. 2:7) where it is said, "And the Lord formed man dust of the earth, and breathed, or inspired, into his face the breath of life;" the Greek has not **πνεῦμα** (**pneuma**), the usual word for the Holy Spirit, but **πνοή**, (**pnoee**) . . ."

(The Greek word **πνοή**, (**pnoee**) translates the Hebrew word **נִשְׁמַת** **neshmat**.)

Following the above, Augustine argued that **πνεῦμα** (**pneuma**) and **πνοή**, (**pnoee**) have the same meaning.

"... Without troubling themselves much, they might have found in a preceding page of this very book of Genesis the words, (Gen. 1:24) "Let the earth bring forth the living **נֶפֶשׁ** soul," when all the terrestrial animals were created. Then at a slight interval, but still in the same book, was it impossible for them to notice this verse, (Gen 7:22) "All in whose nostrils was the **נִשְׁמַת** breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died," by which it was signified that all the animals which lived on the earth had perished in the deluge? . . ."

And then, a few lines later:

"... Yet this creation was ordered that the human soul should live in an animal body, like those other animals of which the Scripture said, "Let the earth produce every living **נֶפֶשׁ** soul," and regarding which it again says (in Gen. 7:22) "All things which have the **נִשְׁמַת** breath (**pnoee**) of life," where the word **pnoee** and not **pneuma** is used in the Greek, and where certainly not the Holy Spirit, but their **spirit** (**spiritum**) is signified under that name." . . ."

In Gen.7:22, the Septuagint had **not** translated **רוּחַ** **spirit** (**pneuma**), the word following **נִשְׁמַת** **neshmat**.

<sup>ASV</sup> **Gen. 7:22** All in whose nostrils was the **נִשְׁמַת** **breath** of the **רוּחַ** **spirit** of **חַיִּים** life, of all that was on the dry *land*, died. (**חַיִּים** is a plural, i.e., "**lives**.")

This omission allowed Augustine's assertions: (1) That the **נִשְׁמַת** **neshmat** in Gen. 7:22 included animals and (2) That **pnoee** (**πνοή**) and **pneuma** (**πνεῦμα**) meant the same thing and **both** could be translated **breath**. That led to the loss of important differences between human **נֶפֶשׁ** **souls** and animal **נֶפֶשׁ** **souls**. The Old Testament uses **נֶפֶשׁ** **nephesh** to refer to humans more than 700 times and, infrequently, to refer to the animals. Humans and animals are not differentiated on the basis of the word **נֶפֶשׁ** **nephesh**.

## Consequences of Augustine equating **נִשְׁמַת** **neshmat** and **רוּחַ** **ruach**

The table below presents five verses important for the following discussion. The italicized words in the table identify those that have the properties listed following the italicized portion. Gen. 2:7 lists a property received, and Job 27:3 lists two properties that man has.

Verse	What or who received the properties listed	
Gen. 7:15	<i>All flesh which have</i> , . . . . . the <b>רוּחַ</b> <b>ruach</b> of <b>חַיִּים</b> <b>lives</b>	
Gen. 7:22	<i>All in whose nostrils</i> . . . the <b>נִשְׁמַת</b> <b>neshmat</b> of . . . . the <b>רוּחַ</b> <b>ruach</b> of <b>חַיִּים</b> <b>lives</b>	
Gen. 2:7	<i>Man receives</i> . . . . . the <b>נִשְׁמַת</b> <b>neshmat</b> of . . . . . <b>חַיִּים</b> <b>lives</b>	
Job 27:3	<i>Man has</i> . . . . . <b>נִשְׁמַת</b> <b>neshmat</b> and . . . . the <b>רוּחַ</b> <b>ruach</b> of God	
		Known from
Verses aligned for comparison	<i>Animals which have</i> . . . . . the <b>רוּחַ</b> <b>ruach</b> of <b>חַיִּים</b> <b>lives</b>	Gen. 7:15
	<i>Man with the</i> . . <b>נִשְׁמַת</b> <b>neshmat</b> of . . . . . <b>חַיִּים</b> <b>lives</b>	Gen. 2:7
	<i>Man with</i> . . . . <b>נִשְׁמַת</b> <b>neshmat</b> and <b>רוּחַ</b> <b>ruach</b> of God	Job 27:3

The first consequence of Augustine equating **נִשְׁמַת** **neshmat** and **רוּחַ** **ruach** (**spirit**) was to produce a misunderstanding of Gen. 7:21-22 and Gen. 7:15.

The issue is the interpretation of the words כָּל־בָּשָׂר **all flesh** in Gen. 7:22. Gen. 7:21-22 is shown below using the ASV:

<sup>ASV</sup> **Gen. 7:21**

- (1) And **all flesh** died הָרַמֵּשׁ that moved upon the earth, (In Hebrew, "And died" is the first word of the verse.)  
(2) both **birds**, and **cattle**, and יִבְחִיָּה **beasts**, and every **creeping** thing that **creepeth upon the earth**,  
(3) and every הָאָדָם **man** (i.e., **humankind**):

In the first line of Gen. 7:21, I have underlined "that moved." The word הָרַמֵּשׁ translated "that moved" is a verb that "... describes the locomotion of small animals, especially reptiles . . ." <sup>10</sup> In line (2) there are four categories of **flesh**: the flesh of **birds**, and the flesh of three categories of animals - **cattle**, and **beasts**, and every **creeping**. These are the animals created in Gen. 1:24 where the words identifying the animals are bracketed, before and after, by "after their kind."<sup>11</sup> Gen. 7:21 does the same, bracketing the four categories of **flesh**, before and after, by **upon the earth**." The "כָּל־בָּשָׂר **all flesh** הָרַמֵּשׁ that moved" refers to animal movement, and does not include הָאָדָם **humankind**. The "and every הָאָדָם **man**" of line (3) speaks separately about **humankind** as Gen. 1:26-27 did in the sixth creative time.

Line (3) affirms the death of all the **humankind** present in the region covered by the flood - the "every הָאָדָם **man**" of Gen. 7:21. Gen. 7:22, shown below, informs us that "the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of הַחַיִּים **lives**" of Gen. 2:7 is also "the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of the רוּחַ **spirit** of הַחַיִּים **lives**."

<sup>ASV</sup> **Gen. 7:22** All in whose nostrils was the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of the רוּחַ **spirit** (**pneuma**) of הַחַיִּים **life**,  
of all that was on the dry *land*, died. (הַחַיִּים is a plural - "**lives**.")

Augustine's assertion that the **pnoe** (נִשְׁמַת) of Gen. 7:22, applied to the animals of Gen. 7:21, is contradicted by 1Cor. 15:39 – which tells us man's flesh differs from animal flesh, and that **beasts**, **birds**, and fishes have different flesh. It also informs us that "all flesh" can include humankind when used appropriately. An appropriate use in Job 34:14-15 will be discussed on page 8 in the section "Another Consequence."

<sup>ASV</sup> **1Cor. 15:39** All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men  
and another flesh of **beasts**, and another flesh of **birds**, and another of fishes.

In addition, we have Gen. 7:15 which refers to pairs of animals that entered the Ark, informing us that the animals have the "רוּחַ **spirit** of הַחַיִּים **lives**." The ASV translates Gen. 7:15 as below:

<sup>ASV</sup> **Gen. 7:15** And they went in unto Noah into the ark, שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁנַיִם two and two מִכָּל־הַבָּשָׂר of all flesh,  
wherein is the רוּחַ **spirit** ~~breath~~ of הַחַיִּים **life**. (הַחַיִּים is a plural - "**lives**.")

The <sup>NIV</sup> **Gen. 7:15** translates "שְׁנַיִם וּשְׁנַיִם two and two מִכָּל־הַבָּשָׂר of all flesh" as "pairs of all **creatures**."  
(Passages supporting the NIV translation are found in end note 1 on page 14.)

1Cor. 15:39 provides an explanation for why we find the plural הַחַיִּים "lives" in Gen. 7:15 and Gen. 7:22. Mankind, beasts (animals), and birds are all נֶפֶשׁ nephesh, types of nephesh which have different body control requirements. They have blood, breath air, move, react to their external environment, and have flesh.

The spiritual components of animals and mankind differ, as listed in the table on page 6. All **individual** הָאָדָם **humankind** have been given the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of הַחַיִּים **lives**." They are "created in the image of God," which Job 27:3-4 describes as possessing his **neshmat** and having "God's **spirit** in his nostrils." (See page 3.)

<sup>10</sup> R. Laird Harris Ed., Theological Word Book of the Old Testament Vol. 2., (Chicago. IL. Moody Press, 1980), 850.  
#2177.0 רָמַשׁ (rāmaś) creep, walk on all fours.

<sup>11</sup> <sup>ASV</sup> **Gen. 1:24** And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures **after their kind**,  
**cattle**, and **creeping things**, and **beasts** of the earth **after their kind**: and it was so.

(In Gen. 1:24 the NIV and NET translate וְהַחַיָּוָה as "wild animals" instead of the "**beasts** of the earth" in the ASV. )

Hamilton's statement that ". . . *n<sup>e</sup>śamâ is applied only to Yahweh and to man* . . ." (see page 1), informs that Gen. 7:22 does **not** refer to any animals. This disallows Augustine's argument for equating of נִשְׁמַת neshmat and רוּחַ ruach (spirit), and using "breath" to translate both words.

## Another consequence

Gen. 2:7 tells of the event which gave הָאָדָם **humankind** the "נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of חַיִּים lives." Arguably, "the רוּחַ ruach of חַיִּים lives" of living creatures and "the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of the רוּחַ ruach of חַיִּים lives" of **mankind** have God as their source which leads to **mankind** having two spiritual components. Job. 27:3-4 indicates that Job has the "spirit of God" and "נִשְׁמַת **neshmat**, two spiritual components.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 27:3-4** All the while my נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;  
my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

Other verses also describe humans as having two spiritual components. <sup>NET</sup> Job 34:14-15, shown below with the word breath replaced by נִשְׁמַת **neshmat**, reveals Job's **neshmat** and God's spirit are both active and without both, **humankind** would perish.

<sup>NET</sup> **Job 34:14-15** If God were to set his heart on it, and gather in his spirit and his **neshmat**,  
all flesh יָגֹעַ would perish together and **human beings** would return to dust.

"All flesh" is appropriate because God is the source of "the spirit of חַיִּים lives" of living creatures. **Mankind** has the "spirit of God" and "the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of חַיִּים lives." For **mankind**, this **does not** interpret either spiritual component as the **Holy Spirit**. It interprets both as God-given invisible (spiritual) attributes. This disallows Augustine's model of the human as being composed of two parts - a body, and a soul. The "Two Part Three Part Human Soul Controversy" will be discussed more fully later.

Because he depended on the Greek Septuagint and old Latin translations, Augustine was not aware of the Hebrew "נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of the רוּחַ ruach of חַיִּים lives" in Gen. 7:22. Yet, Augustine knew he had not achieved an adequate understanding of the incorporeal soul, writing:

" . . . My way of putting it is this: whatever the soul is, it is not one of the four familiar elements, which are obviously bodies; and on the other hand, it is not identified with God. The best words to designate it are "soul" or "life-spirit." I add the word "life" because the air is also usually called "spirit." However, men have called this same air "soul" (anima), so that it is impossible to find a word by which we can precisely distinguish this thing which is not a body, nor God, nor life without sensation (which apparently exists in trees), nor life without a rational mind (such as is found in beasts), . . ." <sup>12</sup>

In our terms, Augustine's "bodies" would be a reference to something that is intrinsically physical. The word for soul in Latin is *anima* from which we get "animal." Many English translations describe animals as having חַיִּים נִפְשֵׁי "living souls. נִפְשֵׁי nephesh is the Hebrew word for soul. In Greek, the word for soul is ψυχή psyche, from which we get the word psychology.

Augustine's term "life-spirit" is reminiscent of the "נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of חַיִּים of **lives**" in Gen. 2:7.

Earlier we found נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** provided judgment, understanding, discernment, and (by implication) moral awareness – attributes of a "rational mind." Rom. 8:10-11 and Job 33:4, considered together, add evidence that נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** is what Augustine had in mind with his term "life-spirit." Rom. 8:10-11 is shown below.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Rom. 8:10-11**

*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

In the above, quicken is a KJV word meaning to make alive or to revive. About how we are renewed, Augustine wrote: ". . . It is in this way that we are renewed in respect of what Adam lost, that is, in the spirit

<sup>12</sup>John H. Taylor (Trans.), *St. Augustine, Vol. 2: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, (Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ, 1982) 22.



of our minds; . . . " <sup>13</sup> He later qualified this statement saying: "In Book 6 my statement that Adam by his sin lost the image of God in which he was made must not be taken to mean that no trace of the image remained in him. Rather it was so disfigured that it needed renewal. . . . " <sup>14</sup>

**Job 33:4** informs us that revival (i.e., renewal) is what נְשֻׁמָּה **neshmat** does.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 33:4** The רוּחַ **Spirit** of God hath made me,  
and the נְשֻׁמָּה **neshmat** of the Almighty תְּחַיֶּנִי **revives me** (or shall revive me).

Job 33:4 first tells us that God's רוּחַ **ruach** made Elihu alive. Then Job 33:4 indicates that "the נְשֻׁמָּה **neshmat** of the Almighty" can (or shall) revive his life or preserve his life. The translation "revive me" that I have inserted above is found in Psalms 138:7, 143:11, 85:6, and 80:18. In Job 33:4 the KJV translated the imperfect תְּחַיֶּנִי as a completed action "hath given me life." תְּחַיֶּנִי **revive** does give life, but not in the sense of the initial giving of life to a nephesh.

Another form of תְּחַיֶּנִי is found in Hosea 6:2 - a verse often considered a messianic reference to the resurrection. (A more complete analysis is given in the appendix on page 13-14.)

<sup>NAS</sup> Hosea 6:2 He תְּחַיֶּנִּנוּ **will revive us** after two days;  
He will raise us up on the third day.  
That we may live before Him.

**So, what is Gen. 2:7 about?** Gen. 2:7 is about adding נְשֻׁמָּה **neshmat** to all הָאָדָם **humankind**, thereby providing them with capabilities important for the events that follow in Genesis chapters 2 and 3. Earlier we translated Gen. 2:7 as:

**Gen. 2:7** (1) And the LORD God formed הָאָדָם **humankind** dust of הָאָדָמָה the ground,  
(2) and breathed into his nostrils the נְשֻׁמָּה breath of הַיִּים **lives**; (הַיִּים is a plural, i.e., "lives.")  
(3) and הָאָדָם **humankind** וַיְהִי became living לְנֶפֶשׁ **souls**.

The above tells us that **humankind** was given all the capabilities of **neshmat**.

But, in light of Job 33:4, Hosea 6:2, following events in Gen. 2-3, **and the resurrection of Jesus** - could the verb וַיְהִי be understood in another way? I think yes, as I will now explain. Line (2) tells of a completed action that gave all **humankind** the abilities conferred by נְשֻׁמָּה **neshmat** – "judgment, understanding, discernment, and (by implication) moral awareness." This leads us to see line (3) as foreshadowing and preparing us for following story of humankind's loss of access to eternal life that occurs in chapter 3 - and the later regaining of access to eternal life through the death and resurrection of Christ.

The verb וַיְהִי in line (3) affords two interpretations: וַיְהִי "became" as presently marked for the vowels, or as וַיְהִי - a form where the prefix וַיְ "waw" is a waw-conjunctive which simply means "and." That form, a form called an "imperfect," is used to refer to future events and to express purpose or a desired result. Examples that use וַיְהִי are shown below. In Ex. 9:22, וַיְהִי tells the purpose of the commanded action.

<sup>KJV</sup> Ex. 9:22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch forth thine hand toward heaven,  
וַיְהִי **that there may be** hail in all the land of Egypt, . . . .

In Gen. 9:26 וַיְהִי indicates a future outcome.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 9:26 And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan וַיְהִי **shall be** his servant.

In the above examples, interpreting the consonantal verb וַיְהִי as וַיְהִי is well accepted due to the presence of a command or an expressed wish. Translating וַיְהִי as expressing purpose is called a "modal" translation.

The *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament* says about this form: (My added bolding.)

" . . . A waw with the usual pointing (simple shewa) is used with the imperfect and called the waw conjunctive. The meaning of this form also is debatable. It does not seem usually to refer simply to the

<sup>13</sup> John H. Taylor (Trans.), *St. Augustine, Vol. 1: The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, (Paulist Press, Mahwah, NJ, 1982) 206.

<sup>14</sup> op.cit., Endnote 97, 270.

future-that would call for a waw consecutive with the perfect. **Rather it normally throws the verb into the subjunctive and expresses result, purpose, volition, etc. It often has a cohortative "a" attached. . . .**"<sup>15</sup>

Since that time (1980) considerable progress has been made in understanding the imperfect with the waw-conjunctive.<sup>16</sup> Jan Joosten's 2012 book, *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew*, concluded that the "Imperfect YIQTOL" verb form expresses modal meaning in all but one type of use. Line (3) of Gen. 2:7 is not of that one type of use, so a modal meaning for the verb וַיְהִי in line (3) can be considered. Marking and translating the verb וַיְהִי as it is translated in Ex. 9:22, and underlining the words translating that verb, Gen. 2:7 would translate as:

- (1) And the LORD God formed אָדָם **humankind** dust of אֲדָמָה the ground,
- (2) and breathed into his nostrils the נְשָׁמָה breath of חַיִּים lives; (חַיִּים is a plural, i.e., "lives.")
- (3) that אָדָם **humankind** וַיְהִי may be חַיִּים living לְנֶפֶשׁ **persons**.

How do we connect this with the resurrection? 1John 5:12, shown below with the Greek word ζῶν used for "life," offers assistance for connecting the modal translation of line (3) to the resurrection.

<sup>ASV</sup> 1John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath the ζῶν life;  
he that hath not the Son of God hath not the ζῶν life.

Thayer<sup>17</sup> says that the Greek word ζῶν is used by ". . . the Septuagint chiefly for חַיִּים life, . . ." (חַיִּים is the plural Hebrew word "lives" that appears above in line (2) of Gen. 2:7.)

Importantly, in line (3), "that אָדָם **humankind** וַיְהִי may be חַיִּים living לְנֶפֶשׁ **persons**," the word לְנֶפֶשׁ refers to **humankind** as individuals. That was shown earlier, on page 5, by the example of Lam. 3:25. The New Testament emphasizes that a believer's access to eternal life depends upon their individual faith. A number of passages in the Old Testament also state that "being right with God" is on an individual basis. As Gen. 2:7 line (3) is translated above, the individual basis is already found in Gen. 2:7.

When Augustine equated **pnoee** (i.e., נְשָׁמָה **neshmat**) and **pneuma** (i.e., רוּחַ **spirit**) there were cascading consequences:

- 1) Augustine could not identify נְשָׁמָה **neshmat** as a separate, distinguishable, **spiritual** component of mankind.
- 2) The "**spirit** (ruach) of חַיִּים lives," of animals was no longer separately identifiable as a component of the soul of mankind, which led to 3) below.
- 3) For Augustine, the human soul had two parts, a soul and a body - not three parts, **spirit**, soul, and body.

## The two-part or three-part human soul controversy

Augustine concluded man was composed of two parts - a body, and a soul that was an immaterial unity. But that conclusion, based on the assumed equivalence of **pneuma** and **pnoee**, has been disputed. A three-part view of man was known to Justin Martyr who died in about 167 A.D. Justin Martyr wrote:

" . . . For the **spirit** dies not; the soul is in the body, and without a soul it cannot live. The body, when the soul forsakes it, is not. For the body is the house of the soul; and the soul the house of the **spirit**. . . ." <sup>18</sup>

That man has two distinguishable spiritual components is found in Job 34:14-15, Isa. 57:16, and 1Thes. 5:23.

<sup>15</sup> Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, R. Laird Harris, Editor, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., Assoc. Editor, Bruce K. Waltke, Assoc. Editor. Moody Press. 1980, in computer searchable version in BibleWorks 9.

<sup>16</sup> Joosten, Jan. *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew. A New Synthesis Elaborated on the basis of Classical Prose*. Jerusalem Biblical Studies Vol. 10. Simor Ltd., Jerusalem, 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1996), #2222 page 273.

<sup>18</sup> Justin Martyr, *On the Resurrection, Fragments of the Lost Work of Justin on the Resurrection*, M. Dods trans., page 805. Available on line at: <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01> The Greek for the quote "οἷκος γὰρ σῶμα ψυχῆς πνεύματος δὲ ψυχὴ οἷκος ; and can be found in: J. B. Heard, *Tripartite Nature of Man*, (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, UK, Third Edition 1871) page 63.

If he (God) set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his רוּחַ **spirit** and his נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat**;  
All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

ASV Isa. 57:16 For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth (angry)  
for the רוּחַ **spirit** would faint before me, and the נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** that I have made.

KJV 1Thes. 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God  
your whole (πνεῦμα) **spirit** and (ψυχῇ) **soul** and (σῶμα) **body** be preserved blameless . . .

Now we are in a position to clarify the lingering effects of Augustine having equated **pnoee** and **pneuma**. One effect was that he concluded Gen. 2:7 was not the addition of a second spiritual component to an already-living human.

Augustine's position was ". . . when man is spoken of, we forget the ordinary and established usage of Scripture, . . ." This was in spite of his knowing of verses which said man had both **pneuma** and **pnoee** (i.e., God's רוּחַ **spirit** and God's נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat**). Augustine's abandonment of established usage was another consequence of his equating pnoee and pneuma. In "ordinary use and established usage," animals which have a "soul of sensation" are alive.

In Gen. 1:24 animals are called "רוּחַ living נֶפֶשׁ souls." In the Septuagint of Gen.1:24, נֶפֶשׁ is translated ψυχήν.<sup>19</sup> ψυχήν is a form of the Greek word ψυχή, the word from which we get the English word psyche. ψυχή is used for the soul of the boy Elijah revives in 1Ki. 17:21, and is commonly used by the Septuagint to translate נֶפֶשׁ nephesh (soul). Paul uses ψυχή for the young man revived in Acts 20:10. Thayer says that forms of psyche are ". . . also in those passages where, in accordance with the trichotomy or threefold division of human nature . . ." <sup>20</sup>

The body and soul view is now called the dichotomous theory. The alternative view, that humans are body, soul, and spirit, is called the trichotomous theory. The three-part theory existed before Augustine and exists today. Henry Thiessen's comment in *Lectures in Systematic Theology* suggests a path to resolving the issues. Thiessen wrote:

*" . . . It is probable that we are to think of man's immaterial nature as composed of a lower and a higher power. To the soul would belong man's imagination, memory, understanding; to the spirit, his powers of reason, conscience, and free will. This variation from the traditional trichotomous view makes it possible to conserve the arguments for the dichotomous view, and yet explain how some Christians are "carnal" and others "spiritual." It also coincides with the teaching that the present body is a natural or soul body and that the resurrection body will be a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44). In other words, man's immaterial nature is looked upon as one nature, but as composed of two parts. . . ."* <sup>21</sup>

In 1Thes. 5:23, Paul used ψυχή for soul, and in 1Cor. 2:14, 1Cor. 15:44, and 1Cor. 15:46 he used words derived from psyche - words the KJV translated "natural." Jude 1:19 uses ψυχικοί, another word derived from psyche:

KJV Jude 1:19 These be they who separate themselves, ψυχικοί **sensual**, having not the **Spirit** (pneuma).<sup>22</sup>

Thayer defines these derived words as, "of or belonging to the psyche; a. having the nature and characteristics of the psyche i. e. of the principle of animal life," which men have in common with the brutes . . ."

We have shown that נֶשְׁמַת **neshmat** provides the human with characteristics which closely match Augustine's "life-**spirit**." We need to reconsider the definition of the נֶפֶשׁ **souls** of humans and animals. And we must reevaluate Augustine's rejection of "the ordinary and established usage of Scripture, . . ." – a usage which "speaks of animated bodies" as being alive.

<sup>19</sup> Strong's pronunciation "psychēn."

<sup>20</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1996) #5590 page 677.

<sup>21</sup> Henry. C. Thiessen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, (William B Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979), 161.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1996), #5591 pages 677-678.

The interpretation of Genesis chapter 2 has become a subject of much discussion, a discussion reflected in the titles of books like *The Historical Adam*, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, and *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?* **Neshmat**, an identifiable, immaterial, spiritual component of man, should be part of that discussion. **Neshmat** informs how the Torah differentiates humans from the animals. Humans and animals are categorized as נִפְשֵׁשׁ nephesh (souls).

Without Augustine's incorrect equating of **pnoee** with **pneuma**:

- 1) Humans, male and female, would be created in Gen. 1:27.
- 2) A plural number of humans, male and female, would exist prior to the addition נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** in Gen. 2:7.
- 3) The addition of נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** gave **all humans** abilities beyond those of the lower animals and gave all humans the potential to gain access to eternal life. That conclusion contradicts the interpretation that there were no living humans prior the events of Gen. 2:7. But, it provides Hebrew textual support for N. T. Wright's proposal, provided that words "**early hominids**," (which I have shown bolded), are replaced by "**early humans**."

"... that just as God chose Israel from the rest of **humankind** for a special, strange, demanding vocation, so perhaps what Genesis is telling us is that God chose one pair from the rest of **early hominids** for a special, strange, demanding vocation. This pair (call them Adam and Eve if you like) were to be the representatives of the whole human race, the ones in whom God's purpose to make the whole world a place of delight and joy and order, eventually colonizing the whole creation, was to be taken forward. God the creator put into their hands the fragile task of being his image bearers. If they fail, they will bring the whole purpose for the wider creation, including all the nonchosen hominids, down with them. . . ." <sup>23</sup>

Wright said of the above proposal: "*But believe me, this theme will preach.*" <sup>24</sup>

- 4) Following the addition of the neshmat in Gen. 2:7, all humans would have two distinguishable spiritual components – prior to the putting of some (or all) humans in Eden as described in Gen. 2:8.

### The translation of נִשְׁמַת **neshmat**

Now we will consider how we should translate נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** into English to convey the meanings found in this study. We have found that נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** enables upright behavior, understanding, and (by implication) a perception of right and wrong – a combination difficult to clearly represent by any existing English word. As a consequence, I suggest that we adopt a new English word, **neshmat**, to translate the Hebrew word נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** and its root word נִשְׁמָה (ne-sha-mah) – a proposal similar to the adoption of baptism to represent the Greek word βάπτισμα (baptisma). We will first show Gen. 7:21-22 which we explained on page 7. There we found נִשְׁמַת neshmat did not refer to the animals in Gen. 7:21. That finding agreed with Hamilton's statement quoted on page one. As a consequence, Gen. 7:22 explains the final "and all הָאָדָם mankind" of Gen. 7:21. Psalm 150:6 shown following Gen. 7:21-22 is consistent with that conclusion.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Gen. 7:21** And all flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all הָאָדָם **mankind**;

<sup>NAS</sup> **Gen. 7:22** of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of the רוּחַ **spirit** of life, died.

And translating נִשְׁמָה as **neshmat** we find:

<sup>NIV</sup> **Psalm 150:6** Let everything that has **neshmat** praise the LORD. Praise the LORD.

We continue by illustrating the translation **neshmat** for a verse that uses נִשְׁמָה **ne-sha-mah**. The vision in Dan.10:17 is the example.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Dan. 10:17** For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there נִשְׁמָה **neshmat** left in me.

In this verse Daniel is talking, and therefore breathing, implicitly contradicting the later statement that he had "no **breath** left in me." The Hebrew is literally "נִשְׁמָה and **neshmat** לא **not**." If we translate "neither is

<sup>23</sup> N. T. Wright, *SURPRISED BY SCRIPTURE*, (New York, NY, Harper Collins Publishers, 2014), 37-38.

<sup>24</sup> N. T. Wright, *SURPRISED BY SCRIPTURE*, (New York, NY, Harper Collins Publishers, 2014), 37-38.



there נִשְׁמָה **neshmat** left in me," we remove the contradiction and change the understanding about what is missing. Daniel is saying that he has no understanding of how to reply or behave appropriately – he is overwhelmed.

## How to end the confusion

The confusion about the meaning of Genesis 2:7 has persisted for about 1,600 years. In this section I will explain and support my suggestion about how to begin to end the confusion. I propose that we adopt the word "neshmat" as the translation for all Old Testament verses that presently translate נִשְׁמָה **neshmat** as breath, spirt, or soul, blast, or inspiration. This proposal can be introduced gradually by:

- 1) First identifying the verses where נִשְׁמָה is translated breath, spirt, blast, or inspiration.
- 2) Then lining-out the words that translate נִשְׁמָה as breath, spirt, soul, blast, or inspiration.
- 3) And then writing "neshmat" above the lined-out word. (Examples are below.)

<sup>ASV</sup> **Isa. 57:16** For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth (angry)  
for the רוּחַ **spirit** would faint before me, and the <sup>neshmat</sup> ~~breath~~ that I have made.

<sup>NET</sup> **Job 33:4** The Spirit of God has made me, and the <sup>neshmat</sup> ~~breath~~ of the Almighty gives me life.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Psalms 104:29-30** Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their רוּחַ <sup>spirit</sup> ~~breath~~,  
they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth thy רוּחַ **spirit**,  
they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.

<sup>ASV</sup> **Job 34:14-15** If he set his heart upon himself, *If* he gather unto himself his spirit and his <sup>neshmat</sup> ~~breath~~;  
All flesh shall perish together, And man shall turn again unto dust.

This concludes our study of the meaning of **neshmat**. Because **neshmat** is used to describe several actions, an appendix at the end of this document has been included to help readers in their personal review of the context of each verse. The appendix presents twenty verses where **neshmat** has been entered to replace the English word that translated נִשְׁמָה **neshmat** or נִשְׁמָה (**ne-sha-mah**).

We have shown that נִשְׁמָה **neshmat** provides the human with characteristics which closely match Augustine's "life-**spirit**." How to define the נִשְׁמָה souls of humans and animals needs to be reconsidered.

The interpretation of Genesis chapter 2 has become a subject of much discussion, a discussion reflected in the titles of books like *The Historical Adam*, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, and *Did Adam and Eve Really Exist?* נִשְׁמָה **neshmat**, an identifiable, immaterial, **spiritual** component of man, should be part of that discussion. נִשְׁמָה **neshmat** informs about how the Torah differentiates humans from the animals. Humans and animals are categorized as נִפְשׁ nephesh (souls). Without Augustine's incorrect equating of **pnoee** with **pneuma**:

- 1) **Humankind**, male and female, would be created in Gen. 1:27.
- 2) A plural number of **humankind**, male and female, exist prior to the addition נִשְׁמָה **neshmat** to all **humankind** in Gen. 2:7.
- 3) Humans would have two distinguishable **spiritual** components.

This concludes: *The **Neshmat** of the Breath of Life: How humans differ from the lower animals.*

**End note 1 is on page 14. The Appendix is on pages 15-16.**

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## End note 1. All flesh of animals as used in verses:

### After the Flood

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 8:15 And God spake unto Noah, saying,

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 8:16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 8:17 ~~Bring forth with thee~~ **כל every הַחַיָּה living thing** that is with thee, **מִכָּל of all הַבְּשָׂר flesh,** both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

In the above, Noah and his family are treated separately from the animals. In Gen 8:17 the words " **Bring forth with thee**" are not in Hebrew text. "**כל every הַחַיָּה living thing**" first appears in appears in Gen.1:28. There it refers to land animals that humankind are to "have dominion over." In Gen 8:17 the list of the animals indicates that phrase "**כל every הַחַיָּה living thing**" does not refer to **humankind**. ( הַ is a prefix meaning "the.")

### Before the Flood

In the verses below Noah and his family continue to be considered separately from the " **מִכָּל of all הַבְּשָׂר flesh.**" They connect the "**of every הַחַיָּה living thing מִכָּל of all הַבְּשָׂר flesh,**" with the animals that Noah is to take with him by "**שְׁנַיִם two of every sort**" and "**שְׁנַיִם שְׁנַיִם two and two.**"

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 6:18 But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 6:19 And **מִכָּל of every הַחַיָּה living thing מִכָּל of all הַבְּשָׂר flesh,** שְׁנַיִם **two** of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them live with thee; they shall be male and female.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 6:20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, שְׁנַיִם שְׁנַיִם **two** of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 7:7 And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons' wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 7:8 Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen. 7:9 There went in שְׁנַיִם שְׁנַיִם **two and two** unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen 7:13 In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen 7:14 They, **וְכָל and every הַחַיָּה beast** after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.

<sup>KJV</sup> Gen 7:15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, שְׁנַיִם שְׁנַיִם **two and two** מִכָּל **of all הַבְּשָׂר flesh,** wherein is the <sup>spirit</sup> **רוּחַ breath of חַיִּים life.**  
( חַיִּים is a plural - "**lives**," not the singular life.)

The above verses support the NIV translation as referring to the animals. Gen. 7:15 is shown below:

<sup>NIV</sup> Gen. 7:15 שְׁנַיִם שְׁנַיִם **Pairs מִכָּל-הַבְּשָׂר of all creatures** that have the <sup>רוּחַ spirit</sup> **breath of חַיִּים life** in them came to Noah and entered the ark.

## Appendix One: About the translation of נִשְׁמַת neshmat and 23 verses with neshmat inserted.

**Gen. 2:7** (The first translation is the KJV modified by deleting "of the," and the verb וַיְהִי in line "became.")

**Gen. 2:7** (1) And the LORD God formed הָאָדָם **humankind** dust of הָאֲדָמָה the ground,  
(2) and breathed into his nostrils the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of חַיִּים **lives**; (חַיִּים is a plural, i.e., "**lives**."  
(3) and הָאָדָם **humankind** became living לְנֶפֶשׁ **soul(s)**.

Or as explained on page 10, the verb in line (3) is וַיְהִי **that there may be**.

**Gen. 2:7** (1) And the LORD God formed הָאָדָם **humankind** dust of הָאֲדָמָה the ground,  
(2) and breathed into his nostrils the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of חַיִּים **lives**; (חַיִּים is a plural, i.e., "**lives**."  
(3) **that** הָאָדָם **humankind** וַיְהִי **may be** חַיִּים living לְנֶפֶשׁ **persons**.

Verses supporting נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** as causing revival:

Job 33:4 The רוּחַ **Spirit** of God hath made me,  
and the נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** of the Almighty תְּחַיֶּנִּי revives me (or shall revive me.)

English translations of Job 33:4 could be interpreted to say **neshmat** also gives life – it does, but not in the sense of making a nephesh alive as in its first creation – **neshmat** gives life in the sense of reviving people or preserving life. Job 33:4 used two words, רוּחַ **ruach** and נִשְׁמַת **neshmat**, that the KJV commonly translated "breath." The KJV resolved the problem of using **breath** for both words by translating רוּחַ as **Spirit**, and then translating נִשְׁמַת **neshmat** as **breath**. (spirit is derived from a Latin word meaning breath) The final word תְּחַיֶּנִּי which they translated *hath given me life* is an imperfect verb, which translates "revives me," or "shall revive me." It is not an action completed in the past as the *hath given me life* indicates. The word תְּחַיֶּנִּי appears in Psalm 138:7 where the KJV and NAS translate it **revive me**, and the NIV translates it **preserve my life**. Both are requests for an action not yet completed. The KJV did recognize the future meaning of the imperfect verb in other verses.

תְּחַיֶּנִּי or תְּחַיֶּנִּי appear in Psalms in five verses. The table below lists the English translation of Hebrew words in four different translations. (Note: TNK is the Jewish Publication Society TNAKH 1985 version.)

The word "*again*" is shown where the verse translation includes the word *again*. תְּחַיֶּנִּי and תְּחַיֶּנִּי are piel imperfects indicating future action. תְּחַיֶּנִּי and תְּחַיֶּנִּי are piel perfects indicating completed action, and each appear 1 time. The piel can be used to refer to repeated actions.

verse	word	KJV	NAS	NIV	TNK
Psalm 138:7	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	revive me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me
Psalm 143:11	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me
Psalm 85:6	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	revive us <b>again</b>	revive us <b>again</b>	revive us	revive us
Psalm 80:18	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken us	revive us	revive us	revive us
Psalm 71:20	[תְּחַיֶּנִּי] (תְּחַיֶּנִּי)	quicken me <b>again</b>	revive me <b>again</b>	restore my life <b>again</b>	revive me <b>again</b>
Psalm 119:50	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revived me	preserves my life	preserved me
Psalm 119:93	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revived me	preserves my life	preserved my life

In Psalm 119, תְּחַיֶּנִּי a singular form of the same root word as תְּחַיֶּנִּי. appears nine times. Translations of this word are shown in the table below. תְּחַיֶּנִּי ; is a verb piel imperative form, i.e., "do this.")

Verse	word	KJV	NAS	NIV	TNK
Psalm 119:25	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	<b>revive me</b>
Psalm 119:37	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me
Psalm 119:40	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me
Psalm 119:88	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me
Psalm 119:107	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me
Psalm 119:149	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me
Psalm 119:154	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me
Psalm 119:156	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me
Psalm 119:159	תְּחַיֶּנִּי	quicken me	revive me	preserve my life	preserve me

Another form of this imperfect verb יְחַיֶּנִּי (also translated revive) appears in Hosea 6:2 expressed as a future action. Hosea 6:2 is a verse often considered a messianic reference to the resurrection.

<sup>NAS</sup> **Hosea 6:2** יְהוָה יִחְיֶינוּ **He will revive** us after two days;  
He will raise us up on the third day That we may live before Him.

**23 verses that use נִשְׁמַת neshmat or נִשְׁמָה nesama with both shown translated neshmat.**

<sup>KJV</sup> **Gen. 7:22** All in whose nostrils *was* the **neshmat** of the spirit of life, of all that *was* in the dry *land*, died.

<sup>KJV</sup> **2 Sam. 22:16** And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the LORD, from the **neshmat** of the spirit of his nostrils.

<sup>KJV</sup> **1 Kings 15:29** And it came to pass, when he reigned, *that* he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any with **neshmat**, until he had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite:

<sup>KJV</sup> **1 Kings 17:17** And it came to pass after these things, *that* the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no **neshmat** left in him.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 4:9** By the **neshmat** of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 26:4** To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose **neshmat** came from thee?

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 27:3** All the while my **neshmat** *is* in me, and the spirit of God *is* in my nostrils;

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 32:8** But *there is* a spirit in man: and the **neshmat** of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 34:14** If he set his heart upon man, *if* he gather unto himself his spirit and his **neshmat**;

<sup>KJV</sup> **Job 37:10** By the **neshmat** of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Psalm 18:15** Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O LORD, from the **neshmat** of the spirit of thy nostrils (or anger).

<sup>KJV</sup> **Psalm 150:6** Let everything that hath **neshmat** praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Proverbs 20:27** The **neshmat** of man *is* the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Isaiah 2:22** Cease ye from man, whose **neshmat** *is* in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

<sup>KJV</sup> **Isaiah 30:33** For Tophet *is* ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared; he hath made *it* deep *and* large: the pile thereof *is* fire and much wood; the **neshmat** of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Isaiah 42:5** Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth **neshmat** unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: (*The word הֹלֵךְ translated walk in Isaiah 42:5 most often refers to humans, but it has been applied to creeping things that walk on the אַרְצָה on four feet in Lev. 11:42. Isaiah 42:5 is consistent with lower animals having רִיחַ spirit.*)

<sup>KJV</sup> **Isaiah 57:16** For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the **neshmat** *which* I have made.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Daniel 5:23** But hast lifted up thyself against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee, and thou, and thy lords, thy wives, and thy concubines, have drunk wine in them; and thou hast praised the gods of silver, and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know: and the God in whose hand thy **neshmat** *is*, and whose *are* all thy ways, hast thou not glorified:

<sup>KJV</sup> **Daniel 10:17** For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there **neshmat** left in me.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Deu. 20:16-17** But of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee *for* an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing **with neshmat**:

<sup>KJV</sup> **Joshua 11:11** And they smote all the נַפְשֹׁת souls that *were* therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them*: there was not any left **with neshmat**: and he burnt Hazor with fire.

<sup>KJV</sup> **Joshua 11:14** And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every אִדְּמָן man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any **with neshmat**.