



lädt ein zum

Gastvortrag von

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# Human Being, Nature and Dignity.

Donnerstag, 29. 05. 2008, 18.00 Uhr s.t., Madonnensaal, Karl Rahner Platz 3, 2. Stock

**Abstract:** The question whether certain reproductive genetic practices, such as cloning and genetic enhancement, are contrary to human dignity is a matter of ongoing ethical debate. But, in addition, there is grave concern about the prospect of these practices leading to the creation of a new biological species, that is, to a post- or trans-human future. This goes to the very essence of what we understand to be the nature of human being, and raises the discussion of human dignity to a metaphysical level. This paper suggests a certain perspective for such metaphysical reflection by looking at the triangular inter-relationship between human beings, technology and nature.

Part I looks at the relation between humans and technology in light of lessons that can be learned here and now from our experience with existing repro-genetic technologies. Part II considers the critique of human mastery of nature in the works of J. Habermas, L. Kass and M. Sandel, and then suggests an additional perspective, which looks at the ways in which repro-genetic technology controls and objectifies female procreative force, as an allegory for man's dominion over nature. Part III suggests in conclusion that the technological state of mind is a limited consciousness, which cannot appreciate those essential dimensions of human being that are not quantifiable or measurable but constitute human dignity. Human dignity may be understood as the responsive self-reflection of the autonomous actor, rather than the observed attributes of the other upon which he or she acts.

**Dr. Carmel Shalev** (MA Hebrew University; PhD Yale University) is a lawyer and ethicist, specialized in medicine, reproduction biotechnology, and human rights. She teaches at the Tel Aviv University Law Faculty, and works as consultant in the field of biomedicine and research ethics. Between 1998 and 2004 Dr. Shalev established and directed the Unit of Health Rights and Ethics at the Gertner Institute for Health Policy Research, Tel Hashomer. Previously she worked in health legislation at the Israel Ministry of Justice, and was chief legal advisor to the Israel Ministry of Health. Since 1997 she has been a member of the Scientific and Ethical Review Group (SERG), of the WHO Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction. She is now a consultant on research ethics to the European Commission and UNAIDS.