

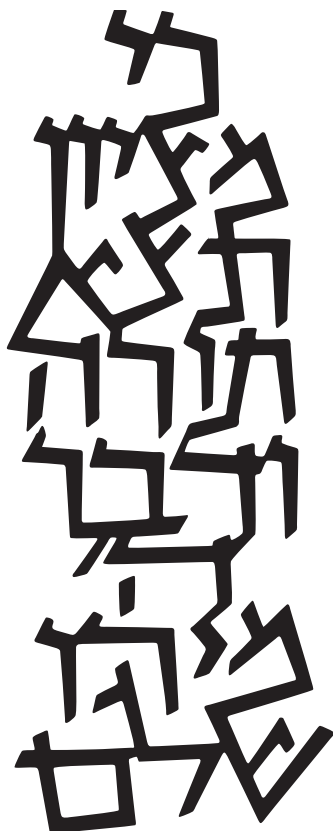
חומש קורן שלם עם רש"י ואונקלוס
THE KOREN SHALEM HUMASH WITH RASHI AND ONKELOS
TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS



THE CONRAD MORRIS EDITION

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KOREN PUBLISHERS JERUSALEM

The Koren Shalem Humash with Rashi and Onkelos
Translation and commentary by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks
The Conrad Morris Edition
First Minhag Anglia Edition

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”ואברך ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה”

In loving memory of

Conrad Morris

שמואל משה בן ישראל וביילה ע”ה

*Who was always ready to share his blessings and his advice
with family, friends and all who came knocking at his door.*

*His deep love for Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael
inspired him to work tirelessly on behalf of his people,
both in Israel and in England.*

Dedicated by his family

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INTRODUCTION BY
CHIEF RABBI SIR EPHRAIM MIRVIS

“Vayelekh Moshe... Moshe departed and spoke these words to all Israel” (Deut. 31:1).

The Noam Megadim (Rabbi Eliezer HaLevi Horowitz, nineteenth century, Lviv) explains: Moshe departed from this world, and even beyond his physical life he continues to speak the words of Torah to the Jewish people.

So too, with my illustrious predecessor, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks *zt”l*. After his untimely passing, his words of Torah continue to educate, guide, and inspire numerous people around the globe. His extraordinary legacy will be made all the more impactful by the publication of this monumental *Koren Humash* with Rabbi Sacks’ translation and commentary. On these pages, he presents our Torah heritage in all its immeasurable beauty, conveyed with his inimitable profundity and incisive clarity.

Rabbi Sacks’ Hebrew name was Yaakov. Just as his biblical namesake is remembered for his distinctive voice – *hakol kol Yaakov*, “the voice is the voice of Yaakov” (Gen. 27:22) – so too, as is evident in this significant publication, the distinctive voice of Rabbi Sacks – a voice of faith, hope, and love – will continue to be powerfully heard for generations to come.

This is perhaps best illustrated by the fascinating way the Torah describes the descendants of Noah. *“Eleh toledot Noah”* – these are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God.” Only afterwards are the names of his children enumerated, “Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Yefet”

(Gen. 6:9–10). Rashi offers two possible explanations for the chosen order. The first is “the memory of a righteous person is for a blessing.” When mentioning the name of an upright individual, we extol the virtues of his or her character. Having mentioned Noah’s name, the Torah does justice to his memory by recalling his greatness.

In his second explanation, Rashi states that the primary “generations” of a person are the good deeds that he or she has performed. In the same way that one can give birth to physical generations, so, too, it is within the grasp of every single individual to produce “generations” through the hearts we touch and the minds we mould. Thus, in addition to the physical descendants Noah bore, he immortalised himself through his impactful legacy, which continues to inspire our world to this day.

The voice of Rabbi Sacks will continue to live on in the generations to come. And these countless *“toledot”* will live lives of greater meaning and fulfilment because of the inspirational teachings imparted on these pages.

I applaud Matthew Miller and Koren Publishers Jerusalem, for yet another monumental work of the great scholarship and expertise with which Koren has become synonymous.

May this *Humash* inspire generations *lehagdil Torah u’lehaadirah* – to magnify Torah and bring glory to its name.

Chief Rabbi Sir Ephraim Mirvis KBE
London, Elul 5785

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

THE KOREN H̄UMASH

The publication of the new *Koren H̄umash* with commentary by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks is a time of celebration, but one that is bittersweet. Its publication close to his fifth *yahrzeit* is a reminder that his living presence is no longer with us, but also that his Torah lives on and continues to grow in influence. Rabbi Sacks' enthusiasm, joyful scholarship, erudition, and penetrating insight permeated all his writings, conveying to us and to future generations that our Torah is a limitless source of wisdom, faith, and moral clarity. We were well into this ambitious endeavor when he went into hospital, from which he fully expected to return.

I cannot write a preface for him; no one can. But his many books on *H̄umash* – the *Covenant & Conversation* series, and those exploring leadership, ethics, spirituality, life-changing ideas, and belief – speak for themselves. These works, alongside his astonishing range of books, articles, and lectures – all of which have marshalled to complete Rabbi Sacks' commentary – reveal the depth, breadth, and relevance of the Torah's messages for the current age. The Torah is, as the Rabbis teach, “betrothed” to the Jewish people; yet it also contains the blueprint for a healthy and holy society that has universal relevance. Rabbi Sacks was our guide through the bewildering thickets of modernity, our guide to a fresh and refreshing engagement with Torah, and we gratefully follow the path he has charted for us.

✎ In the best of circumstances, the creation of this *H̄umash* would be a collaboration of many. It is my privilege to thank them.

The Minhag Anglia Edition of *The Koren Humash* has been sponsored by the family of the late Conrad Morris, himself a visionary and leader of the community. We thank Mrs. Ruth Morris, Liz Pushett, Sara Jo Ben Zvi, and David Morris of London and Jerusalem for their partnership and friendship. With continual encouragement, they shared the vision that animated both Rabbi Sacks and *Koren*, and enabled us to create this work you hold in your hands. For my colleagues at *Koren*, we thank you; for the many future generations who will read and use this *H̄umash* weekly, we are forever in your debt.

We thank the family of Rabbi Sacks, Lady Elaine Sacks and her children Joshua, Dina, and Gila, for their encouragement and commitment, particularly after his passing. The leadership of The Rabbi Sacks Legacy, its chief executive, and my friends, Joanna Benarroch and Alan Sacks, provided encouragement during the awful days of 2020 and 2021, when we felt leaderless, and they continue to be valued and cherished partners.

Jessica Sacks' scholarship and erudition is not simply hereditary but unique to her, and she engaged with her uncle's writings with compassion and dedication. Rabbi Reuven Ziegler oversaw the entire project, and Dayan Ivan Binstock of the London Beth Din reviewed the *H̄umash*.

Management of the editorial side was led by Gila Chitiz and Ashirah Firszt, and the production and design side was led by Rabbi Avishai Magence and Caryn Meltz; the typography was designed by Esther Be'er and Tomi Mager. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Joel B. Wolowelsky for the initial commentary drafts, Rabbi Julian Sinclair, Yaffa Aranoff, Dr. Yoel Finkelman, and Tani Bednarsh for their review and comments, Debbie Ismailoff and Ita Olesker for copyediting, Rabbi Yedidya Naveh for authoring and translating the haftara commentary, Rabbi Yinon Chen, Tali Simon, Doron Chitiz, Ruth Pepperman, and Avichai Gamdani for proofreading, Eliyahu Misgav for cover design, and Gila Chitiz, Tani Bednarsh, and Elchanan Spitz for creating a database of books, essays, articles, and broadcasts of Rabbi Sacks.

✎ Rabbi Sacks taught: “In Judaism we not only learn to live; we live to learn. In study, we make Torah real in the mind so that we can make it actual in the world.” We pray that this masterful commentary on the Torah will allow countless people to ascend to ever greater heights in *living* and *learning*, to internalise the Torah's relevance to the individual and to society, and to help heal our fractured world.

Matthew Miller, Publisher
Jerusalem, H̄eshvan 5786 (November 2025)

PREFACE TO THE MINHAG ANGLIA EDITION

Nearly a century ago, the then Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, Dr J. H. Hertz, published the first volume of his commentary on the Ḥumash. It was to become the staple text for English-speaking communities around the world. As well as providing a clear exposition of the text, Hertz determined “not to lose sight of the allegorical teaching and larger meaning of the Scriptural narrative; of its application to the everyday problems of human existence; as well as of its eternal power in the life of Israel and humanity” (preface to the first edition, May 1929).

The late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks had similar aspirations in penning his masterly essays in his *Covenant and Conversation* series. He had planned a new edition of Ḥumash. Following his fresh translation, he had intended to produce new commentary, but sadly, his premature death deprived us of that treasure. We are deeply indebted to Matthew Miller and the team at Koren Publishers Jerusalem for skillfully drawing out the essence of Rabbi Sacks’ words from his many writings in constructing a commentary around the Torah text. The inclusion of source references at the end of the volume allows the interested reader to follow up a more complete treatment of the topics in Rabbi Sacks’ original essays.

It is fitting that the United Kingdom has its own edition of this Ḥumash following the tradition of the Hertz Ḥumash. We are deeply grateful to David and Karine Morris for sponsoring this publication, thereby facilitating the preservation of the customs of the Anglo-Jewish community.

There are three areas in which this Minhag Anglia edition differs from its American counterpart: some aliyah breaks, the use of *taam elyon* in the *Aseret HaDibrot*, and some *haftarot*.

Prior to 1568, printed Ḥumashim didn’t contain any indications for the seven *hafsakot*, or breaks, in a *parasha*. Subsequent editions start to include breaks but there is much disparity between them. From 1602, there is more convergence, but differences still remain. (See the detailed treatment of this topic in I. Katzenelenbogen, *Sinai* vol. 119, p. 224, 1997.)

The edition of Wolf Heidenheim (Rodelheim, 1818–1821) became the standard for many Ashkenazic communities. Although other Ḥumashim with different breaks were in use in England in the nineteenth century, after Nathan Adler became Chief Rabbi in 1845 he gave his approbation to an edition of the Rodelheim Ḥumash with English translation. When Chief Rabbi Hertz produced his Ḥumash, starting in 1929, he followed the breaks in the Heidenheim-Adler Ḥumash. This Minhag Anglia edition of the Koren Ḥumash includes the same breaks. It should be stressed that the differences are very minor and occur mainly in the first chapter of *Bereshit*.

It is well known that there are two sets of *taamim* for the *Aseret HaDibrot*, both for Parashat Yitro and for Parashat Vaethanan. Prof Mordechai Breuer has shown that these emanate from two masoretic schools. The Babylonian Masorites enumerated the *Dibrot* into twelve verses with *taam taḥton*. The Tiberian Masorites grouped the passage into ten units with *taam elyon*. (See “Dividing the Decalogue into Verses or Commandments,” in *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition*, B. Z. Segal ed., Jerusalem, 1990, pp. 291–330.) Early manuscripts and printed bibles put both sets of *taamim* on the words, making it difficult for the *baal korei* to know precisely the correct *taam*. Modern Ḥumashim have made it easier by putting just one set of *taamim* on the words.

Customs differ across communities. Many use *taam taḥton* on the Shabbatot of Yitro and Vaethanan and reserve *taam elyon* for Shavuot. The custom in the United Synagogue, in consonance with other Ashkenazic communities, is to use *taam elyon* for all public readings (S. Geiger, *Divrei Kehilot*, p. 112; second view in *Biur Halakha* 494). Thus, this edition of the Koren Ḥumash has *taam elyon* in the main body of the text, with *taam taḥton* printed at the back.

Whilst the Talmud lists specific *haftarot* for festival days (Megilla 31a), the choice of a prophetic reading for a regular Shabbat was originally left to the decision of the reader (*Kesef Mishneh*, *Hilkhot Tefilla Unesiat Kapa-yim* 12:12). Natan Fried in his comprehensive article in

◀ *Encyclopaedia*

Encyclopaedia Talmudit (vol. 10) tabulates the different customs that have arisen across communities. The custom in the United Synagogue is in line with most other Ashkenazic communities, with a few exceptions.

The *haftara* for Vayishlah is listed in the first and second editions of the Hertz Humash for Ashkenazim as being from Hosea (11:7–12:12 – *Ve’ami teluim*) and for Sepharadim from Obadiah. Printings of the Hertz Humash since 1987 list Hosea for “Some Ashkenazi Congregations” and then Obadiah without further qualification, suggesting that this is also an option for Ashkenazim. Some Ashkenazic communities read Hosea, e.g., the Golders Green Beth Hamedrash. A recent article (E. Duker, The Seforim Blog, November 2021) demonstrates that the original universal practice for Haftarat Vayishlah was Obadiah, across all communities. The option of Hosea was introduced because of a printing error in the Venice Humash of 1517. Nevertheless, it has become established, and in the new Koren Humash it is listed as the custom of the United Synagogue, together with Obadiah as an option.

On Shabbat Hagadol, the *haftara* for Shabbat Hagadol is read. In leap years, When Aḥarei Mot and Kedoshim are read separately, and Kedoshim either coincides with Shabbat Rosh Hodesh, or is Erev Rosh Hodesh, the usual *haftara* for Kedoshim, Amos 9 (*Halo khivnei Kushiyyim*), is instead read on Aḥarei Mot.

On the much rarer occasion when Aḥarei Mot is read separately and does not fall under one of the above scenarios, the Koren Humash, like the Hertz Humash, designates Ezekiel 22 as its *haftara*. This will only occur four more times in the twenty-first century (2041, 2068, 2071, and 2095).

The *haftara* for Shabbat Shuva is from Hosea 12, with additions from Micah and Joel. In the first edition of Hertz, the additional reading alternated between Vayelekh and Haazinu, with Micah being prescribed for Vayelekh and Joel being prescribed for Haazinu. The one-volume edition of Hertz removed these options and instead presented both passages as the addition to Shabbat Shuva whenever it occurred. Indeed, this is the prevailing custom in a number of communities. It should be noted that the passages should be read in the order in which they appear in *Trei Asar*, namely: Hosea, Joel, and then Micah.

Rabbi Sacks describes Moshe as “the man who burned but was not consumed.” This Koren edition of the Humash enables the enduring flame of Rabbi Sacks’ words to kindle the hearts and minds of this generation, and, *im yirtze Hashem*, will inspire many generations to come.

Dayan Ivan Binstock
London, Tishrei 5786

EDITOR'S NOTE

Rabbi Sacks intended that this *Humash* be his flagship project, one in which he could incorporate many of his timeless messages and ideas. “Traditional commentaries,” he wrote of the Haggada, “are usually close readings of individual words and phrases rather than reflections on the meaning of the whole. That is a classic Jewish response, and I have not hesitated to do likewise.... But it is the great themes, the overarching principles, that are often neglected or taken for granted.” These great themes – freedom and responsibility, love and justice, the meaning of the covenant between God and humanity and God and Israel – were for Rabbi Sacks the lifeblood of Judaism, and their text is the Torah as we read it week by week.

After translating the *Humash* for *The Koren Tanakh*, Rabbi Sacks began writing his commentary, beginning with the book of Exodus. Regretfully, he was unable to see it to completion. The *Humash* editorial team at Koren, led by Rabbi Sacks’ niece Jessica Sacks, compiled the rest of the *Humash* commentary from his vast array of books, articles, commentaries, and lectures. The work was always done with Rabbi Sacks’ intention for the *Humash* commentary as our guiding light, mission statement, and purpose. Great care was taken to present his invaluable ideas and messages in his own words, only adapting and reshaping them to preserve his style in the new format. We pray that we have managed to bring Rabbi Sacks’ words alive through the Torah and his dream project to fruition. May this work allow his beautiful Torah to enlighten and inspire all of us for generations to come.

Targum Onkelos

The text of the Targum, including its vocalisation and punctuation, is reprinted with permission of the Shetilei Zeitim Institute through the generosity and assistance of its publisher, Rabbi Yosef Iraqi Hacohen, and Adam Bin Nun. This highly accurate version of the text reflects the ancient tradition of reading the Targum publicly, as is still practiced today in Yemenite communities.

It is appropriate to mention that the punctuation according to this tradition is at times at odds with the

punctuation typically dictated by the cantillation marks. According to the Yemenite tradition, there is a pause after the *tevir* cantillation mark as opposed to the more common custom of pausing after the *tipeḥa* cantillation mark which follows the *tevir*. We have chosen to follow this recognised Yemenite tradition for punctuation.

The Targum is presented in the Koren Siddur typeface, to distinguish it from the Hebrew text of the Torah. We have marked in grey instances where the Targum’s translation is not literal but explicatory. Of course, any translation is itself a form of commentary, and sometimes the boundary between literal and allegorical translation can be blurry. We have attempted a conservative approach, marking only words whose content cannot be said to be denoted by any parallel word or phrase in the original Hebrew.

Rashi

Rashi’s commentary on the Torah is one of the most important and widely published works of Jewish scholarship in existence. For the past thousand years, Jews around the world have studied and taught the Torah to their students with the close help of Rashi’s comments. Because of the numerous manuscripts and printed editions of the commentary in circulation over the centuries, and because of the habit of later students to emend and add to Rashi’s original text, there has never been any universally accepted, authoritative version of the commentary’s text. In this edition, we have attempted to present Rashi’s commentary with all later additions and textual corruptions removed.

In placing before the readers our new edition of Rashi’s text, we have not presumed to reach the pinnacle of critical and philological accuracy. But we have worked hard to provide a text that is as clear and precise as possible. We worked with three types of textual witnesses: (1) manuscripts of Rashi’s commentary, such as the Weimar, Vienna, and Munich codices; (2) early printed versions of the commentary, such as the Rome, Reggio di Calabria, Guadalajara, and Venice editions, all from the fifteenth century; and (3) influential printed editions published over the centuries, such as that of Avraham Berliner from

◀ the nineteenth

the nineteenth century, and the Ariel Humash and Bar-Ilan University's "Keter" edition, both published recently. But our chief source was the Leipzig Manuscript (MS Leipzig 1) from the thirteenth century. Experts have long considered this manuscript to be the most authoritative version of Rashi's commentary on the Torah, and with God's help, we have succeeded in many instances in learning from it the most correct version of the text. For this we are indebted to the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the National Library of Israel.

Alongside the effort to arrive at the most correct version of the text, we invested great effort in vocalising and punctuating Rashi's commentary, providing a finished product that is considerably more accessible to the modern reader than past editions. We owe a special thanks for this to our stellar team of copyeditors, Rabbi Karmiel Cohen and Rabbi Yinon Chen. In places where Rashi cites a given midrashic story but quotes it only in part, we have provided the complete quote ourselves, in the same font but without vocalisation. See for example Rashi on Leviticus 10:2.

Rashi's commentary is presented in the modern typeface "Koren Rashi," which was designed by the late Eliyahu Koren himself before his death. Design for this typeface

placed emphasis on beauty, legibility, and closeness in form to standard Hebrew "square" lettering. "Koren Rashi" is unique in that it occasionally features multiple glyphs for the same letter to help readers' eyes to flow (see for example the letter ת in the phrase תלתל כתיב). The typeface is based on the style of calligraphy characteristic of Sephardic manuscripts from the fifteenth century.

It is our hope that the Targum Onkelos and Rashi texts presented here, incorporating both historical accuracy and modern readability, will enhance both the study and appreciation of these works.

Haftarot

Following the Humash section we have printed the haftarot according to the various customs of the Ashkenazim, Sepharadim, and Yemenites. We included a short commentary for each haftara, originally written in Hebrew by Rabbi David Nativ (for Koren's Humash Yisrael) and translated by Rabbi Yedidya Naveh. The commentary for the special haftarot was composed especially for this volume by Rabbi Yedidya Naveh. We hope that these commentaries provide the reader with the context to appreciate the significance of the words of the prophets and their depth and timeless teachings.

TORAH READINGS FOR SPECIAL DAYS
MINHAG ANGLIA

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Ninth of Av	Shaḥarit: Deuteronomy 4:25–40, p. 1251 Minḥa: See Fast Days, above
Ḥanukka – Day 1	Ashkenazim: Numbers 7:1–17, p. 981 Sepharadim: Numbers 6:22–7:17, p. 979
Ḥanukka – Days 2–7	Read the offering for the respective day, Numbers 7:18–53, p. 985 On Rosh Hodesh, read the Rosh Hodesh reading from the first Torah scroll, and the Ḥanukka reading from the second Torah scroll.
Ḥanukka – Day 8	Numbers 7:54–8:4, p. 989
Purim	Exodus 17:8–16, p. 509
Purim on Shabbat (in Walled Cities)	Exodus 17:8–16, p. 509 <i>Haftara</i> : Same as Shabbat Zakhor

TORAH READINGS FOR FESTIVALS
MINHAG ANGLIA

Pesaḥ – Day 1	Exodus 12:21–51, p. 465 On Shabbat, Sepharadim read Exodus 12:14–51, p. 463 <i>Maftir</i> : Numbers 28:16–25, p. 1159
Day 2	Leviticus 22:26–23:44, p. 871 In Israel: <i>Revi'i</i> (second Torah scroll): Numbers 28:19–25, p. 1159 In the Diaspora: <i>Maftir</i> : Same as Day 1
Day 3	Exodus 13:1–16, p. 473 <i>Revi'i</i> (second Torah scroll): Numbers 28:19–25, p. 1159
Day 4	Exodus 22:24–23:19, p. 557 (If it falls on a Sunday, Sepharadim read the passage for Day 3.) <i>Revi'i</i> (second Torah scroll): Numbers 28:19–25, p. 1159

Day 5	Exodus 34:1–26, p. 651 (If it falls on a Monday, Sepharadim read the passage for Day 4.) <i>Revi'i</i> (second Torah scroll): Numbers 28:19–25, p. 1159
Day 6	Numbers 9:1–14, p. 1003 <i>Revi'i</i> (second Torah scroll): Numbers 28:19–25, p. 1159
Shabbat Hol HaMoed Pesah	Exodus 33:12–34:26, p. 649 <i>Maftir</i> : Numbers 28:19–25, p. 1159
Day 7	Exodus 13:17–15:26, p. 479 <i>Maftir</i> : Numbers 28:19–25, p. 1159
Day 8 (Diaspora)	Deuteronomy 15:19–16:17, p. 1341 On Shabbat: Deuteronomy 14:22–16:17, p. 1331 <i>Maftir</i> : Numbers 28:19–25, p. 1159
Shavuot – Day 1	Exodus 19:1–20:23, p. 521 <i>Maftir</i> : Numbers 28:26–31, p. 1159
Day 2 (Diaspora)	Deuteronomy 15:19–16:17, p. 1341 On Shabbat: Deuteronomy 14:22–16:17, p. 1331 <i>Maftir</i> : Same as Day 1
Rosh HaShana – Day 1	Genesis 21:1–34, p. 133 <i>Maftir</i> : Numbers 29:1–6, p. 1161
Day 2	Genesis 22:1–24, p. 139 <i>Maftir</i> : Same as Day 1
Yom Kippur – Shaḥarit	Leviticus 16:1–34, p. 819 <i>Maftir</i> : Numbers 29:7–11, p. 1163
Minḥa	Leviticus 18:1–30, p. 833
Sukkot – Day 1	Leviticus 22:26–23:44, p. 871 <i>Maftir</i> : Numbers 29:12–16, p. 1163
Day 2	Israel: Numbers 29:17–19, p. 1165 Diaspora: Same as Day 1
Day 3	Israel: Numbers 29:20–22, p. 1165 Diaspora: Numbers 29:17–25, p. 1165
Day 4	Israel: Numbers 29:23–25, p. 1165 Diaspora: Numbers 29:20–28, p. 1165
Day 5	Israel: Numbers 29:26–28, p. 1165 Diaspora: Numbers 29:23–31, p. 1165

Day 6	Israel: Numbers 29:29–31, p. 1165 Diaspora: Numbers 29:26–34, p. 1165
Hoshana Rabba	Israel: Numbers 29:32–34, p. 1165 Diaspora: Numbers 29:26–34, p. 1165
Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed Sukkot	Exodus 33:12–34:26, p. 649 <i>Maftir</i> : Read the offering for the respective day (in the Diaspora adding the offering for the previous day).
Shemini Atzeret (Diaspora)	Deuteronomy 15:19–16:17, p. 1341 On Shabbat: Deuteronomy 14:22–16:17, p. 1331 <i>Maftir</i> : Numbers 29:35–30:1, p. 1167
Simḥat Torah (Israel and Diaspora)	First Torah scroll: Deuteronomy 33:1–34:12, p. 1485 Second Torah scroll: Genesis 1:1–2:3, p. 3 Third Torah scroll (<i>Maftir</i>): Numbers 29:35–30:1, p. 1167

ADDITIONAL HAFTAROT
MINHAG ANGLIA

Fast Day Minhā	Isaiah 55:6–56:8, 3
Ninth of Av – Shaḥarīt	Ashkenazim & Sepharadim: Jeremiah 8:13–9:23, 5 Yemenites: Jeremiah 6:16–17, 9, and 8:13–9:23, 5
Ninth of Av – Minḥa	Ashkenazim: Isaiah 55:6–56:8, 3 Sepharadim: Hosea 14:2–10, 1 Yemenites: Hosea 14:2–10, 1, and Micah 7:18–20, 7
Pesaḥ Day 1	(Some begin with Joshua 3:5–7,) Joshua 5:2–6:1, , and 6:27,
Pesaḥ Day 2 (Diaspora)	Ashkenazim & Sepharadim: II Kings 23:1–9, and 21–25, Yemenites: II Kings 22:1–7, and 23:21–25,

Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed Pesah	Ashkenazim & Sepharadim:	Ezekiel 37:1–14, 5
	Yemenites:	Ezekiel 36:37–37:14, 5
Pesah Day 7		II Samuel 22:1–51,
Pesah Day 8 (Diaspora)		Isaiah 10:32–12:6,
Shavuot Day 1	Ashkenazim & Sepharadim:	Ezekiel 1:1–28, 3 and 3:12, 7
	Yemenites:	Ezekiel 1:1–2:2, 3 and 3:12, 7
Shavuot Day 2 (Diaspora)		Habakkuk 2:20–3:19, 5
Rosh HaShana Day 1		I Samuel 1:1–2:10,
Rosh HaShana Day 2		Jeremiah 31:1–19, 7
Yom Kippur – Shaḥarit		Isaiah 57:14–58:14, 5 (Yemenites add 59:20–21, 9)
Yom Kippur – Minḥa		The Book of Jonah, 3 and Micah 7:18–20, 7
Sukkot Day 1	Ashkenazim & Sepharadim:	Zechariah 14:1–21, 3
	Yemenites:	Zechariah 13:9–14:21, 3
Sukkot Day 2 (Diaspora)	Ashkenazim & Sepharadim:	I Kings 8:2–21,
	Yemenites:	I Kings 7:51–8:21,
Shabbat Ḥol HaMoed Sukkot	Ashkenazim & Sepharadim:	Ezekiel 38:18–39:16, 9
	Yemenites:	Ezekiel 38:1–23, 9

Shemini Atzeret (Diaspora)	Ashkenazim:	1 Kings 8:54–9:1,
	Sepharadim, Yemenites, & Minhag Anglia:	1 Kings 8:54–66,
Simḥat Torah	Ashkenazim:	Joshua 1:1–18,
	Sepharadim & Yemenites:	Joshua 1:1–9, (Yemenites add 6:27,)

BLESSINGS BEFORE AND AFTER READING THE TORAH (ASHKENAZI CUSTOM)

Before reading the Torah, the Oleh says:

בָּרַכּוּ Bless the LORD, the blessed One.

Cong: **בָּרוּךְ** Bless the LORD, the blessed One, for ever and all time.

Oleh: **בָּרוּךְ** Bless the LORD, the blessed One, for ever and all time.

Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has chosen us from all peoples and has given us His Torah.
Blessed are You, LORD, Giver of the Torah.

After the reading, the oleh recites:

Oleh: **בָּרוּךְ** Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has given us the Torah of truth, and everlasting life He has planted in our midst.
Blessed are You, LORD, Giver of the Torah.

BLESSINGS BEFORE AND AFTER READING THE HAFTARA

Before reading the Haftara, the person called up for Maftir recites:

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, who chose good prophets and was pleased with their words, spoken in truth. Blessed are You, LORD, who chooses the Torah, His servant Moses, His people Israel, and the prophets of truth and righteousness.

After the Haftara, the person called up for Maftir recites the following blessings:

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God King of the Universe, Rock of all worlds, righteous for all generations, the faithful God who says and does, speaks and fulfills, all of whose words are truth and righteousness. You are faithful, LORD our God, and faithful are Your words, not one of which returns unfulfilled, for You, God, are a faithful (and compassionate) King. Blessed are You, LORD, faithful in all His words.

יְיָ Have compassion on Zion for it is the source of our life, and save the one grieved in spirit swiftly in our days. Blessed are You, LORD, who makes Zion rejoice in her children.

שְׂמַחְנוּ Grant us joy, LORD our God, through Elijah the prophet Your servant, and through the kingdom of the house of David Your anointed – may he soon come and gladden our hearts. May no stranger sit on his throne, and may others no longer inherit his glory, for You took an oath to him by Your holy name that his light would never be extinguished. Blessed are You, LORD, Shield of David.

עַל הַתּוֹרָה For the Torah, for divine worship, for the prophets, and for this Sabbath day which You, LORD our God, have given us for holiness and rest, honour and glory – for all these we thank and bless You, LORD our God, and may Your name be blessed by the mouth of all that lives, continually, for ever and all time. Blessed are You, LORD, who sanctifies the Sabbath.

ברכות התורה (מנהג אשכנזים)

Before עולה, the קריאת התורה says:

עולה: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ הַמְּבָרֵךְ.

קהל: בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הוֹדוּ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

עולה: בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הוֹדוּ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

After עולה, the קריאת התורה says:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

ברכות ההפטרה

Before reading the הפטרה, the person called up for מפטיר says:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנַבְיָאִים טוֹבִים, וְרָצָה בְּדִבְרֵיהֶם הַנְּאֻמִּים בְּאֵמֶת.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, הַבּוֹחֵר בַּתּוֹרָה וּבְמִשְׁחָה עֲבָדוֹ וּבִישְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹ וּבְנַבְיָאֵי הָאֱמֶת וְצֶדֶק.

After the הפטרה, the person called up for מפטיר says the following blessings:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, צוּר כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים, צִדִּיק בְּכָל הַדּוֹרוֹת, הָאֵל הַנְּאֻמָּן, הָאוֹמֵר וְעוֹשֶׂה,
הַמְּדַבֵּר וּמַקְיֵם, שְׂפָל דְּבָרָיו אֱמֶת וְצֶדֶק. נֶאֱמַן אַתָּה הוּא יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנֶאֱמַנִים דְּבָרֶיךָ, וְדַבֵּר אֶחָד מִדְּבָרֶיךָ אַחֲרָיו
לֹא יִשׁוּב רִיקָם, כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ נֶאֱמָן (וְרוֹחֵמָן) אַתָּה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, הָאֵל הַנְּאֻמָּן בְּכָל דְּבָרָיו.

רַחֵם עַל צִיּוֹן כִּי הִיא בֵּית חַיֵּינוּ, וְלַעֲלוּבֵת נַפְשׁ תּוֹשִׁיעַ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, מְשַׁמֵּחַ צִיּוֹן בְּבִנְיָה.
שְׂמַחְנוּ יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַלְיָהוּ הַנְּבִיא עֲבָדְךָ, וּבְמַלְכוּת בֵּית דָּוִד מְשִׁיחֲךָ, בְּמַהֲרָה יָבוֹא וְיַגִּיל לָבָנוּ. עַל כִּסְאוֹ לֹא
יֵשֵׁב זֶר, וְלֹא יִנְחִלוּ עוֹד אֲחֵרִים אֶת כְּבוֹדוֹ, כִּי בִשְׁם קֹדֶשְׁךָ נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לֹא שְׁלֵא יִכְבֶּה נֵירוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְיָ הוֹדוּ, מֶגֶן דָּוִד.

עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה וְעַל הַנְּבִיאִים וְעַל יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה, שֶׁנָּתַתָּ לָנוּ יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְקֹדֶשׁ וּלְמִנוּחָה, לְכָבוֹד
וְלִתְפָאֳרָה. עַל הַכֹּל יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים לָךְ וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ, יִתְבָּרֵךְ שְׁמֲךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, מְקַדֵּשׁ הַשַּׁבָּת.

BLESSINGS BEFORE AND AFTER READING THE TORAH (SEPHARDIC CUSTOM)

Before reading the Torah, the Oleh says:

Oleh: The LORD is with you *Cong:* May the LORD bless you

Oleh: בָּרוּךְ Bless the LORD, the blessed One.

Cong: בָּרוּךְ Bless the LORD, the blessed One, for ever and all time.

Oleh: בָּרוּךְ Bless the LORD, the blessed One, for ever and all time.

Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has chosen us from all peoples and has given us His Torah.
Blessed are You, LORD, Giver of the Torah.

After the reading, the oleh recites:

Oleh: Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has given us His Torah, the Torah of truth, and everlasting life He has planted in our midst.
Blessed are You, LORD, Giver of the Torah.

BLESSINGS BEFORE AND AFTER READING THE HAFTARA

Before reading the Haftara, the person called up for Maftir recites:

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, who chose good prophets and was pleased with their words, spoken in truth. Blessed are You, LORD, who chose the Torah, His servant Moses, His people Israel, and the prophets of truth and righteousness.

After reading the Haftara, he recites:

גֹּאֲלֵנוּ Our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts is His name, Holy One of Israel

Isaiah 47

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, Rock of all worlds, righteous for all generations, the faithful God who says and does, speaks and fulfills, all of whose words are truth and righteousness. You are faithful, LORD our God, and faithful are Your words, not one of which returns unfulfilled, for You, God, are a faithful (and compassionate) King. Blessed are You, LORD, faithful in all His words.

רַחֵם Have compassion on Zion for it is the source of our life, and save the one grieved in spirit swiftly in our days. Blessed are You, LORD, who makes Zion rejoice in her children.

שְׂמַחֲנוּ Grant us joy, LORD our God, through Elijah the prophet Your servant, and through the kingdom of the house of David Your anointed – may he soon come and gladden our hearts. May no stranger sit on his throne, and may others no longer inherit his glory, for You took an oath to him by Your holy name that his light would never be extinguished. Blessed are You, LORD, Shield of David.

עַל הַתּוֹרָה For the Torah, for divine worship, for the prophets, and for this Sabbath day which You, LORD our God, have given us for holiness and rest, honour and glory – for all these we thank and bless You, LORD our God, and may Your name be blessed by the mouth of all that lives, continually, for ever and all time. Blessed are You, LORD, who sanctifies the Sabbath.

ברכות התורה (מנהג ספרדים)

Before reading the התורה, the עולה says:

עולה יהוה עמכם קהל יברכה יהוה

עולה (רפנן) ברכו את יהוה המברך.

קהל ברוך יהוה המברך לעולם ועד.

עולה ברוך יהוה המברך לעולם ועד.

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים, ונתן לנו את תורתו.
ברוך אתה יהוה, נותן התורה.

After the reading, the עולה recites:

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר נתן לנו (את) תורתו תורת אמת, וחיי עולם נטע בתוכנו.
ברוך אתה יהוה, נותן התורה.

ברכות ההפטרה

Before reading the הפטרה, the person called up for מפטיר recites:

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם אשר בחר בנביאים טובים, ורצה בדבריהם הנאמרים באמת.
ברוך אתה יהוה, הבוחר בתורה ובמשה עבדו ובישראל עמו ובנביאי האמת והצדק.

After reading the הפטרה, he recites:

גאלנו יהוה צבאות שמו, קדוש ישראל:

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, צור כל העולמים, צדיק בכל הדורות, האל הנאמן, האומר ועושה,
מדבר ומקים, כי כל דבריו אמת וצדק. נאמן אתה הוא יהוה אלהינו ונאמנים דבריך, ודבר אחד מדבריך
אחור לא ישוב ריקם, כי אל מלך נאמן (ורחמן) אתה. ברוך אתה יהוה, האל הנאמן בכל דבריו.

רחם על ציון כי היא בית חיינו, ולעלוּבת נפש תושיע במהרה בימינו. ברוך אתה יהוה, משמח ציון בבניה.
שמחנו יהוה אלהינו באלהיו הנביא עבדך, ובמלכות בית דוד משיחך, במהרה יבוא ויגל לבנו. על
פסאֹו לא ישוב זר, ולא ינחלו עוד אחרים את כבודו, כי בשם קדשך נשבעת לו שלא יכבה נרו לעולם
ועד. ברוך אתה יהוה, מגן דוד.

על התורה ועל העבודה ועל הנביאים ועל יום השבת הזה, שנתת לנו יהוה אלהינו לקדשה ולמנוחה,
לכבוד ולתפארת. על הכל יהוה אלהינו אנחנו מודים לך ומברכים אותך, יתברך שמך בפני כל חי תמיד
לעולם ועד. ברוך אתה יהוה, מקדש השבת. אמן.

בראשית

GENESIS

THE BOOK OF GENESIS

Genesis, the book of Bereshit, is as its name suggests, about beginnings: the birth of the universe, the origins of humanity, and the first chapters in the story of the people that would be known as Israel. It tells of how this people began, first as an individual, Avraham, who heard a call to leave his home and begin a journey, then as a family; it closes as the extended family stands on the threshold of becoming a nation. The journey turns out to be unexpectedly complicated and fraught with setbacks. In a sense, it continues till today. This is part of what makes Genesis so vivid. We can relate to its characters and their dilemmas. We are part of their world, as they are of ours. This is our story; this is where we came from; this is our journey.

But this is not all Genesis is. Rambam makes the fundamental point that *reshit* does not mean “beginning” in the sense of “first of a chronological sequence.” For that, Biblical Hebrew has other words. *Reshit* implies the most significant element, the part that stands for the whole, the foundation, the principle. Genesis is Judaism’s foundational work, a philosophy of the human condition under the sovereignty of God.

This is a difficult point to understand, because there is no other book quite like it. It is not myth. It is not history in the conventional sense, a mere recording of events. Nor is it theology: Genesis is less about God than about human beings and their relationship with God. The theology is almost always implicit rather than explicit. What Genesis is, in fact, is *philosophy written in a deliberately non-philosophical way*. It deals with all the central questions of philosophy: what exists (ontology), what can we know

(epistemology), are we free (philosophical psychology), and how we should behave (ethics). But it does so in a way quite unlike the philosophical classics from Plato to Wittgenstein. To put it at its simplest: Philosophy is *truth as system*. Genesis is *truth as story*. It is a unique work, philosophy in the narrative mode.

So we learn about what exists by way of a story about creation. We learn about knowledge through a tangled tale of the first man, the first woman, a serpent, and a tree. We begin to understand human freedom and its abuse through the story of Kayin. We learn how to behave through the lives of Avraham and Sara and their children. It is this that has helped to make Tanakh the most widely read and influential book in the history of civilization. Only the gifted few can fully understand a philosophical classic, but everyone can relate to a story.

Everyone can understand Genesis, yet not understand at the same level; that is another feature of the book. Each of its stories has layer upon layer of meaning and significance, which we only grasp after repeated readings. Our understanding of the book grows as we grow. Each age adds insights, commentaries, and interpretations of its own. The book’s literary style allows it to be read afresh in each generation. Only stories have this depth, this ambiguity, this principled multiplicity of meanings.

Torah is God’s book of humanity, and each of us is a chapter in its unfinished story. Its words form our covenant with Heaven. And as we listen and respond, we add our voice to the unbroken conversation between the Jewish people and its destiny.

PARASHAT BERESHIT

1 ¹/₂ When God began creating heaven and earth, the earth was void and desolate,

רש"י

וְדוּמָה לוֹ: "תְּחִלַּת דְּבַר ה' בְּהוֹשֶׁעַ", כְּלוֹמֵר תְּחִלַּת דְּבוּרוֹ שֶׁל הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּהוֹשֶׁעַ, "וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵל הוֹשֶׁעַ" וְגו' (הוֹשֶׁעַ ח, ב.). וְאִם תִּיאַמַר לְהוֹדוֹת בָּא שֶׁאֵלֵינוּ תְּחִלָּה נִבְרָא, וַיְבָרֵא: "בְּרֵאשִׁית הַכֹּל בְּרָא חָלוֹ, וַיֵּשׁ לָךְ מִקִּרְחָאוֹת שְׂמִיקָנִים לְשׁוֹנִם וּמִמְעַטִּים תִּבְּה חֲחַת, כְּמוֹ: "כִּי לֹא סָגַר דְּלִתִּי בְטֵנִי" (חִיבֹב ג, י) וְלֹא פָּרַשׁ מִי הַסּוּגָה, וְכָמוֹ: "יֵשׁא אֶת חֵיל דְּמִשְׁקָךְ" (ישעיה ת, ד) וְלֹא פָּרַשׁ מִי יֵשׁאֵנִי, וְכָמוֹ: "אִם יִחְדֹּשׁ בְּבִקְרִים" (עמוס ג, יב) וְלֹא פָּרַשׁ אִם יִחְדֹּשׁ אֶדֶם בְּבִקְרִים, וְכָמוֹ: "מַגִּיד מִרְחִשִּׁית חֲחִרִית" (ישעיה מו, י) וְלֹא פָּרַשׁ 'מַגִּיד מִרְחִשִּׁית דְּבַר חֲחִרִית דְּבַר' – אִם כֵּן תִּמָּה עַל עֲנִיָּה שֶׁהִי הַמִּים קָדְמוֹ, שֶׁהִי פְתִיבָה: "וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי הַמִּים" (לֵהלֵךְ פְּסוּק ב, א) וְעֵדִין לֹא אֵלֶּה הַמִּקְרָא בְּרִית הַמִּים מִתִּי הִתֵּה, לְמַדָּת שְׁקִדְמוֹ לְחֶרֶךְ, וְעוֹד שֶׁהַשָּׁמַיִם מֵאֵשׁ וּמִמִּים נִבְרָאוּ, עַל פְּרָחֶךְ לֹא לְמַד הַמִּקְרָא בְּסִדֵּר הַמִּקְרָאִים וְהַמִּתְחַלְלִים כְּלוֹם: בְּרֵאשִׁית אֱלֹהִים. וְלֹא חָמַר 'בְּרָא ה'', שֶׁתְּחִלָּה עָלָה בְּמִחְשָׁבָה לְבָרָאֶת בְּמַדָּת הַדִּין, וְרָחָה שְׂחִין מִתְקַנֵּס, וְהַקְדִּים מַדָּת רַחֲמִים וְשִׁתְפָּה לְמַדָּת הַדִּין, וְהִינוּ דְּכִתְיָב: "בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת ה' אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם" (לֵהלֵךְ ב, ד).

ב) תָּהוּ וְבָהוּ. תָּהוּ לְשׁוֹן תִּמָּה וְשָׁמַמּוֹן, שֶׁאֵדֶם תּוֹקָה וּמִשְׁתַּתְּנוֹם עַל

א) בְּרֵאשִׁית. חָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: לֹא הָיָה צְרִיךְ לְהִתְחִיל אֶת הַתּוֹקָה אֶלָּא מִ"הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לְכֶסֶם" (שְׁמוֹת יב, ב) שֶׁהָיָה מִצְוָה רַחֲשׁוּנָה שְׁנִיטָאוּ וְשִׁחַל. וְיָמָה שׁוֹעֵם פִּתְחָה בְּ"בְרֵאשִׁית" – מִשְׁוֹם "כִּי מִעַשְׂיוֹ הִגִּיד לְעַמּוֹ לָתֵת לָהֶם נַחֲלֵת גּוֹיִם" (תְּהִלִּים קי"א, א) שֶׁאִם יִחְמְרוּ אֲמוֹת הָעוֹלָם לִישְׁחָל: לְסֻטִּים אֲתָם שֶׁבְּשָׂתֶם אֲרָצוֹת שְׂבָעָה גּוֹיִם, הֵם אֲמוֹתֵינוּ לָהֶם: כֹּל הָאֶרֶץ שֶׁל הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא הִיא, הוּא בְּרָחָה וְנִתְּנָה לְאִשְׁרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּרָצוֹנוֹ נִתְּנָה לָהֶם, וּבְרָצוֹנוֹ נִטְלָה מֵהֶם וְנִתְּנָה לָנוּ: בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵא. חֵין הַמִּקְרָא הַזֶּה חָמַר אֶלָּא דְּרִשְׁנִי, כְּמוֹ שֶׁדְּרִשְׁוִהוּ רַבִּינֵינוּ ז"ל: בְּשִׁבְלֵי הַתּוֹקָה שְׂמִיקָנִים "רֵאשִׁית דְּרִכּוֹ" (מִשְׁלֵי ת, כב), וּבְשִׁבְלֵי וְשִׁחַל שְׂמִיקָאוֹ "רֵאשִׁית תְּבוּאָתָה" (ירמיה ב, ג). וְאִם בָּחַת לְפָרֵשׁוֹ כְּפִשְׁטוֹן, כֵּן פָּרַשְׁהוּ: בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרִית שְׁמִים וְאֶרֶץ, וְהָאֶרֶץ הִיְתָה תָהוּ וְבָהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ, וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר. וְלֹא בָּא הַמִּקְרָא לְהוֹדוֹת סִדֵּר הַבְּרִיאָה לִמְדָּה שֶׁאֵלֵינוּ קָדְמוֹ, שֶׁאִם בָּא לְהוֹדוֹת כֵּךְ, הָיָה לוֹ לְכַתֵּב: בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְגו', שְׂחִין לָךְ 'רֵאשִׁית' בְּמִקְרָא שְׂחִינוּ דְּבוּק לְתִבְּהָה שֶׁל חֲחִרִיו, כְּמוֹ: "בְּרֵאשִׁית מִמְלַכֶּת יְהוּיָקִים" (ס"ב, ח), "רֵאשִׁית מִמְלַכֶּתִּי" (בְּרֵאשִׁית י, י), "רֵאשִׁית דְּגִגְךָ" (דְּבָרִים י"ז, ד). חָךְ בָּחן חֲתָה חוֹמֶר: "בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים" וְגו' כְּמוֹ: 'בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא',

as He is called merciful, so you be merciful. The prophets described the Almighty by all the various attributes: long-suffering, abounding in kindness... powerful, and so on – to teach us that these qualities are good and righteous and that a human being should cultivate them, and thus imitate God as far as we can. (*Hilkhot Deot* 1:11)

Implicit in the first chapter of Genesis is a momentous challenge: Just as God is creative, so you be creative. What is more, it tells us how to be creative – namely, in three stages. The first is the stage of saying, “Let there be.” What is truly creative is not science or technology per se, but the word. Because we can speak, we can think and therefore imagine a world different from the one that currently exists.

Creation begins with the creative word, the idea, the vision, the dream. The first stage in creation is imagination.

The second stage is for us the most difficult. “And there was...” It is one thing to conceive an idea, another to execute it. Between the intention and the fact, the dream and the reality, lies struggle, opposition, and the fallibility of the human will. It is all too easy, having tried and failed, to conclude that nothing ultimately can be achieved, that the world is as it is, and that all human endeavour is destined to end in failure. Yet Judaism holds the opposite, that though creation is difficult, laborious, and fraught with setbacks, we are summoned to it as our essential human vocation: “It is not for you to complete the work,” said R. Tarfon, “but neither are you free to desist from it” (*Avot* 2:16). There is a

פרשת בראשית

א בִּרְאִשִּׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תֵהוֹ א

אונקלוס

א בְּקֶדְמִין בָּרָא יי יְת שְׁמַיָא וְיְת אֶרְעָא: ב וְאֶרְעָא, הָיְתָה צְדִיָא

BERESHIT

The Book of Books starts with the beginning of beginnings: the creation of the universe and life. The story is told from two different perspectives, first as cosmology (the origins of matter), then as anthropology (the birth of humanity).

The first narrative (Gen. 1:1–2:3) emphasises harmony and order. God creates the universe in six days and dedicates the seventh as a day of holiness and rest. The second (2:4–3:24) focusses on humanity, not as a biological species but as persons-in-relation. God fashions man, sees that “it is not good for man to be alone” (2:18), and then fashions the woman. The serpent tempts them; they sin and are banished from the garden.

From then on, the human drama unfolds as tragedy. Kayin murders his brother. By the end of the *parasha*, God sees “how great man’s wickedness was upon the earth” (6:5) and “regretted that He had made man on earth” (6:6). God creates order; man creates chaos. The question that remains to challenge us is: which will prevail?

1:1 בִּרְאִשִּׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים *When God began creating* – Rashi begins his commentary: “Rabbi Yitzhak said: The Torah should have begun with the verse ‘This month shall be to you the beginning of months’ (Ex. 12:2), which was the first mitzva given to Israel.” To understand a book, one needs to know to which genre it belongs. What Rashi is succinctly saying in his enigmatic question is that the Torah is not a book of history, even though it includes history. It is not a book of science, even though the first chapter of Genesis is the necessary prelude to science, representing as it does the first time people saw the universe as the product of a single creative will, and

therefore as intelligible rather than capricious and mysterious. The Torah is, first and last, a book about how to live.

Rashi gives one answer to his question. I would suggest an additional one. Jewish ethics is not confined to law. It includes virtues of character, general principles, and role models. It is conveyed not only by commandments but also by stories. And so the book of how to live opens with the most fundamental question of all. As the psalm (8:4) puts it: “What are mortals, that You should be mindful of them?”

1:1 אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ *Heaven and earth* – The Torah begins with the universal, and only later, in chapter 12, Parashat Lekh Lekha, does it narrow in on the particular. As far as Plato was concerned, knowledge starts with the particular – this tree, this person; looking at these you begin to realise that what is interesting is not this tree but tree-ness, not this person, but the universal things that make a person a person. Following Plato, Western thought has not been interested in the particular or parochial. It considers truth to be universal and eternal or not truth at all. Judaism is structurally unique – it is the only world religion ever to believe in a universal God, the God of all peoples, times, and places, and at the same time to believe in a particular way of life that not all people have to follow, because there is more than one way to find God. The structure we see in Genesis – first universal, then particular – recurs repeatedly in our prayers and our thought. It is a basic form of the Jewish mind.

LET THERE BE ...

Just as God is called gracious, so you be gracious. Just

there was darkness on the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved over
 3 the waters. God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. God saw the
 4 light: it was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. And God
 5 called the light “day,” and the darkness He called “night.” There was evening,
 and there was morning – one day.
 6 Then God said, “Let an expanse stretch through the water; let it separate water
 7 from water.” So God made the expanse, and it separated the water beneath the

רש"י

יום שני. כך מפגש בבראשית רבה (ג, ח):

וְהָיָה רְקִיעַ. יַחֲזֹק הָרָקִיעַ, שֶׁאֵין עַל פִּי שֶׁנִּבְרָא שְׁמִים בְּיוֹם רִאשׁוֹן, עֲדֵין לֹא חִים הָיוּ, וְהָרָשׁוּ בָשָׂר מַגְעֵרַת הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּאִמְרוֹ: “הִי רָקִיעַ”, וְזֶהוּ שֶׁכְּתוּב: “עֲמֹדֵי שְׁמִים יְדוּפְפוּ” (חובב ב, יח) כֹּל יוֹם רִאשׁוֹן, וּבָשָׂר – “וַיִּתְּמֵהוּ מַגְעֵרָתוֹ” (סס), כִּדְרֹס שְׁמֵשׁוֹנִים וְעוֹמֵד מַגְעֵרַת הַמַּיִם עָלָיו: בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם. בְּאִמְרָת הַמַּיִם, שֶׁגַּשׁ הַפָּרָשׁ בֵּין מַיִם הַעֲלִיּוֹנִים לָרָקִיעַ כְּמוֹ בֵּין הָרָקִיעַ לַמַּיִם שֶׁעַל הָרָקִיעַ. הָאֵל לִמְדָּתָ שֶׁהֵם תְּלוּיִים בְּמִחְמָרוֹ שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ:

וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָרָקִיעַ. תִּקְנֵן עַל עֲמֻדוֹ וְהִיא עֲנִיָּתוֹ, כְּמוֹ: “וַעֲשֵׂתָה חֵטְ עֲפָרְנִיָּה” (דברים כח, יב):

כֹּהוּ שֶׁכָּה: תִּהְיֶה. חִסְטוֹרְדִישׁוֹן בְּלָעוּ: בָּהוּ. לָשׁוֹן רִיקוּת וְנָדוּ: עַל פְּנֵי תִהְיוּ. עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם שֶׁעַל הָרָקִיעַ: וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת. כִּסְחַ הַכְּבוֹד עוֹמֵד בְּאִוִּיר וּמִרְחֶף עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם בְּרוּחַ פִּיו שֶׁל הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְמִחְמָרוֹ, כִּינֹה הַמְרַחֶפֶת עַל הָקוֹן, חֲקוּבִיטוֹר בְּלָעוּ:

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֹר בִּי טוֹב וַיְבָרֶךְ. חֵף בָּהוּ חֲנוּ עֲרִיכִים לְדַבְּרֵי חֲגָה, רָחֵהוּ שֶׁחֵין כְּדֹחַ לְהַשְׁמֵשׁ בּוֹ הָשָׁעִים וְהַבְּדִילוֹ לְעִדִּיקִים לְעֵתֵי לְבָא. וְלִפִּי פִשְׁטוֹן, כִּךְ פִּרְשֵׁהוּ: רָחֵהוּ כִי טוֹב וְחֵין נָחָה לוֹ וְלִחֲשֹךְ שִׁיחֵיו מִשְׁתַּמְשָׁס בְּעֶרְבּוֹבִיָּה, וְקָבַע לָהּ תַּחֲוֹמוֹ בְּיוֹם וְלָהּ תַּחֲוֹמוֹ בַּלַּיְלָה:

יוֹם אֶחָד. לִפִּי סִדֵּר לָשׁוֹן הַפָּרָשָׁה הִיָּה לוֹ לְכַתֵּב: יוֹם רִאשׁוֹן, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב בְּשִׁחֵר הַיָּמִים: שֶׁנֶּ, שְׁלִישִׁי, רְבִיעִי. לִמָּה כְּתַב “אֶחָד”? עַל שֶׁס שֶׁהִיָּה הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יַחֲדִיד בְּעוֹלָמּוֹ, שֶׁלֹּא נִבְרָא הַמַּלְאָכִים עַד

comes not from God but from an independent force: Satan, the Devil, Lucifer, the Prince of Darkness, and the many other names given to the force that is not God but is opposed to Him and those who worship Him. This idea, which has surfaced in sectarian forms in each of the Abrahamic monotheisms, as well as in secular totalitarianisms, is one of the most dangerous in all of history. It divides humanity into the unshakably good and the irredeemably evil, giving rise to a long history of bloodshed and barbarism of the kind we see being enacted today in many parts of the world in the name of holy war against the greater and lesser Satan. Dualism is not monotheism, and the Sages, who called it *shetei reshuyot*, “two powers” or “two domains” (Berakhot 33b), were right to reject it utterly. In the words of historian Jeffrey Russel, dualism “denied the unity and omnipotence of God in order to preserve His perfect goodness.” Further, it allows people to commit “altruistic evil”: evil committed in a sacred cause,

in the name of high ideals. Dualism resolves complexity. But monotheism requires the ability to handle complexity. God who creates light brings back the darkness also. “There was evening, and there was morning – one day.”

1:6 וְהָיָה מַבְדִּיל *Let it separate* – The narrative of creation is tightly structured. For three days, God creates domains – light and dark, sea and sky, sea and dry land. Order is a matter of distinction and separation; the verb *lehavdil*, to separate and divide, appears five times in Genesis 1. For the next three days, He populates those domains with their appropriate contents: the sun, moon, and stars; fish and birds; land animals and man. The seventh day, the Sabbath, is the apotheosis of creation: an enduring symbol of the world at peace with itself and its maker, the first thing in the Torah to be called holy.

וַיִּבְהוּ וַחֲשֹׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר
 אֱלֹהִים יְהי-אֹר וַיְהי-אֹר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאֹר כִּי-טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל
 אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאֹר יוֹם וּלַחֹשֶׁךְ
 קֶרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהי-עֶרֶב וַיְהי-בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי רְקיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לַמַּיִם:
 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַרְקיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לַרְקיעַ

אונקלוס

יִמְמָא, וְלַחֲשׂוּכָא קָרָא לַיְלָא, וְהוּהוּ רַמְשׁ וְהוּהוּ צִפְר יוֹם חָד:
 וַיֹּאמֶר יי, יְהי רְקיעָא בְּמַצְיַעוֹת מַיָא, וַיְהי מַפְרִישׁ, בֵּין מַיָא
 לַמַיָא: וַעֲבַד יי יֵת רְקיעָא, וְאַפְרִישׁ, בֵּין מַיָא דְּמַלְרַע לְרְקיעָא.

וְיִקְנֵינָא, וְחֲשׂוּכָא עַל אִפִּי תְהוֹמָא, וְרוּחָא מִן קָדָם יי, מְנַשְׁבָּא
 עַל אִפִּי מַיָא: וַיֹּאמֶר יי יְהי נְהוּרָא, וְהוּהוּ נְהוּרָא: וַיִּחְוָא יי, יֵת נְהוּרָא
 אֲרִי טַב, וְאַפְרִישׁ יי, בֵּין נְהוּרָא וּבֵין חֲשׂוּכָא: וַיִּקְרָא יי לְנְהוּרָא

lovely rabbinic phrase: *Maḥashava tova HaKadosh barukh Hu metzarefa lemaaseh* (Tosefta, Pe'ah 1:4). This is usually translated as “God considers a good intention as if it were the deed.” I translate it differently: “When a human being has a good intention, God joins in helping it become a deed,” meaning, He gives us the strength, if not now, then eventually, to turn it into achievement. If the first stage in creation is imagination, the second is will.

Finally: “God saw...it was good.” This is the hardest of the three stages of creation to understand. But Genesis makes clear that to see that someone is good and to say so is a creative act. There may be some few individuals who are inescapably evil, but they are few. Within almost all of us is something positive and unique but which is all too easily injured, and which grows only when exposed to the sunlight of someone else’s recognition and praise. To see the good in others and let them see themselves in the mirror of our regard is to help someone grow to become the best they can be. “Greater,” says the Talmud, “is one who causes others to do good than one who does good himself” (Bava Batra 9a). To help others become what they can be is to give birth to creativity in someone else’s soul. This is done not by criticism but by searching out the good in others, and helping them see it, own it, and live it.

“God saw...it was good” – this too is part of the work of

creation, the subtlest and most beautiful of all. When we recognize the goodness in someone, we do more than create it; we help it become creative. This is what God does for us, and what He calls us to do for others.

1:4 *כִּי-טוֹב* *It was good* – *Tov*, “good,” is a moral word. The Torah in Genesis 1 is telling us something radical. The reality to which Torah is a guide (the word “Torah” itself means “guide,” “instruction,” or “law”) is *moral* and *ethical*. The question Genesis seeks to answer is not “How did the universe come into being?” but “How then shall we live?” This is the Torah’s most significant paradigm shift. The universe that God made and that we inhabit is not about power or dominance but about *tov* and *ra*, good and evil. For the first time, here, religion is ethicized. God, we are told, cares about justice, compassion, faithfulness, loving-kindness, the dignity of the individual, and the sanctity of life.

1:4 *וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ* *God separated the light from the darkness* – “I am the LORD; there is no other, forming light, creating darkness, making peace, creating evil” (Is. 45:7). The first act of creation inspired the single most emphatic rejection of dualism in the Bible. Dualism is the view that there is not one force operative in the universe but two: a force of good and a force of evil. Evil, in this worldview,

8 expanse from the water above. And so it was. God called the expanse “heavens.”

There was evening, and there was morning – a second day.

9 Then God said, “Let the water beneath the heavens be gathered to one place,

10 and let dry ground appear.” And so it was. God called the dry ground “earth,”

11 and the gathered waters He called “seas.” And God saw: it was good. Then

God said, “Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees of

12 all the kinds on earth that grow seed-bearing fruit.” And so it was. The earth

produced vegetation: plants bearing seeds, each of its kind, and trees bearing

13 fruit containing seeds, each of its kind. And God saw: it was good. There was

evening, and there was morning – a third day.

14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the heavens’ expanse to separate day ^{SHENI}

15 from night and to serve for signs and seasons, days and years. They shall be

רש"י

היא על עונה ונתקללה: אשר זרעו בו. הן גרעיני כל פרי שמהן
החילן צומח פשטענין חותן:

יב וְיִצְאָה הָאָרֶץ וְגו'. חף על פי שלא נאמר 'למינהו' בדשאין
פנויההן, שמעו שנגטו החילנות על כך ונשאז קל ונמר בענמן,
כמפדש פאגדה פשחיתת חילן (חולין ס ע"א):

יד יהי מאורת וגו'. מיום ראשון נברא, וברביעי צה עליהם להתלות
ברקיע, וכן כל תולדות שמים וחרץ נברא מיום ראשון וכל אחד
ואחד נקבע ביום שנגזר עליו, הוא שכתוב (לעיל פסוק ח): "אחת השמים" –
לרבות תולדותיהם, "ואחת החרץ" – לרבות תולדותיה: יהי מאורת.
חסר ויו' פתב, על שהוא יום מארה לפל חספרה פתענוקות, הוא

ששעני: ברביעי היו מתענים על חספרה שלא תפל פתענוקות (תענית
ס ע"ב): להבדיל בין היום ובין הלילה. משיגו האור הראשון, חבל
פסדעת ימי בראשית שמשו האור והחשך הראשונים זה ביום וזה
פלילה: והיו לאותות. פשהמאורות לוקין סימן רע הוא לעולם,
שנאמר: "ומחתית השמים אל תחתו" (ירמיה י ב), פגעשזתכם רעון
הקדוש ברוך הוא חין חתם גריכיס לראש מן הפדענות: ולמועדים.
על שם העתיד, שעתידים ישראל להטוות על המועדות, והם
נמנים למוולד הלבנה: ולימים. שמוש החמה חצי יום ושמוש הלבנה
חצי, הכי יום שלם: ושמים. לסוף שלש מאות וששים וחמשה ימים
יגמרו מהלכתן בשנים עשר מזלות המסדרתם אותם, והיא שנה:

טו והיו למאורות. עוד זאת ושמשו, שיאירו לעולם:

מעל לרקיע. על הרקיע' לא נאמר חלף "מעל", לפי שהן תלויין
באור. ומפני מה לא נאמר 'פי טוב' בשני? לפי שלא נגמרה מלאכת
המים עד יום שלישי והרי התחיל בה בשני, ודבר שלא נגמר חינו
במלואו וטובו, ובשלישי שנגמרה מלאכת המים והתחיל ונמר
מלאכה אחרת, כפל בו 'פי טוב' שני פעמים (להלן פסוקים י יב): אחת
לגמר מלאכת השני ואחת לגמר מלאכת היום:

ח ויקרא אלהים לרקיע שמים. שא מים, שם מים, חש ומים שערבן
זה בזה ונעשה מהם שמים:

ט יקוו המים. שהיו שטוחים על פני כל החרץ, והקום באוקינוס,
הוא הים הגדול שכלל הימים:

י קרא ימים. והלא ים אחד הוא? חלף חינו דומה טעם דג העולה
מן הים בעבו לטעם דג העולה מן הים באספמיה:

יא תדשא הארץ דשא עשב. לא דשא לשון עשב ולא עשב לשון
דשא, ולא היה לשון המקרא לומר: תעשיב החרץ, שמיני דשאין
מחרקין, כל אחד לעצמו נקרא עשב פלוני, ואין לשון למדבר
לומר דשא פלוני, שלשון דשא הוא לבשת החרץ פשהיא מתמלאת
בדשאים: תדשא. תתמלא ותתפסה לבוש עשבים. בלשון לעו נקרא
דשא חירבדיין, כלן בערבוביא, וכל דש לעצמו נקרא עשב: מזריע
זרע, שיגדל בו זרעו לזרע ממונו במקום אחד: עץ פרי. שיהא טעם
העץ פטעם הפרי. והוא לא עשהה כן, חלף ויתוצא החרץ ען עשה
פרי, ולא העץ פרי, לפיכך פשנתקלל חכם על עונו נפקדה גם

science, both as human wisdom and as an insight into the
divine wisdom evident in the cosmos. The Babylonian

Talmud sees the study of astronomy, for those who are
capable of it, as a religious duty. There is a blessing to be

וַיְבַיֵּן הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאָרֶץ שָׁמַיִם
וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְווּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד וַתֵּרָאֵה
הַיַּבְשָׁה וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיַּבְשָׁה אֲדָמָה וּלְמָקוֹהָ הַמַּיִם קָדָה
יָמִים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תִּדְשָׂא הָאָדָמָה דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב
מִזֶּרַע זֶרַע עֵץ פֶּרִי עֵשָׂה פֶּרִי לְמִינֹהוּ אֲשֶׁר זֶרַע־בּוֹ עַל־הָאָדָמָה וַיְהִי־
כֵן: וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָדָמָה דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזֶּרַע זֶרַע לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֵשָׂה פֶּרִי
אֲשֶׁר זֶרַע־בּוֹ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר
יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי:
וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹדֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין
הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וַלַּיִמִּים וּשְׁנָיִם: וַהֲיוּ לְמֹאֲדוֹת בְּרָקִיעַ

אונקלוס

לְזִמְנָה, דְּבַר זֶרְעִיָּה בִּיהַ עַל אֲרֻעָא, וְהָוָה כֵּן: וַיִּפְּקֵת אֲרֻעָא, דְּתִנְיָה,
עֲסָבָא דְּבַר זֶרְעִיָּה מִזֶּרַע לְזִמְנָה, וְאִילָן עֲבִיד פִּירִין, דְּבַר זֶרְעִיָּה בִּיהַ
לְזִמְנָה, וְחֻזָּא "אֲרִי טָב:" וְהָוָה רַמַּשׁ וְהָוָה צֶפֶר יוֹם תְּלִיתִי: וַיֹּאמֶר יי,
יְהוֹן נְהוֹרִין בְּרָקִיעָא דְּשָׁמַיָא, לְאַפְרָשָׂא, בֵּין יִמְמָא וּבֵין לַיְלָא, וַיְהוֹן
לְאֹתִין וּלְזִמְנִין, וּלְמִמְנִי בְּהוֹן יוֹמִין וּשְׁנָיִן: וַיְהוֹן לְנְהוֹרִין בְּרָקִיעָא

וּבֵין מַיָּא, דְּמַעַל לָאָרֶץ, וְהָוָה כֵּן: וַיִּקְרָא יי, לָאָרֶץ שָׁמַיָא, וְהָוָה
רַמַּשׁ וְהָוָה צֶפֶר יוֹם תְּנִין: וַיֹּאמֶר יי, יִתְכַנְשׁוּן מַיָּא, מִתַּחַת שָׁמַיָא
לְאֶתֶר חַד, וְתִתְחַזִּי יַבְשָׁתָא, וְהָוָה כֵּן: וַיִּקְרָא יי לַיַּבְשָׁתָא אֲרֻעָא,
וּלְבֵית בְּנִישָׁת מַיָּא קָדָה יִמְמָא, וְחֻזָּא "אֲרִי טָב:" וַיֹּאמֶר יי, תִּדְשָׂא
אֲרֻעָא דְּתִנְיָה, עֲסָבָא דְּבַר זֶרְעִיָּה מִזֶּרַע, אִילָן פִּירִין, עֲבִיד פִּירִין

1:12 *Each of its kind* – The key recurring word is *leminehem, lemino, lemina*. God creates plants, animals, birds, fish *leminehem*, according to their different kinds. The essence of Genesis 1 is ordered diversity. This is the priestly way of seeing the world, one which we will see expressed most clearly in the book of Leviticus. For the priest, the moral life is something we learn by honouring the distinctions God has taught us to see in the structure of reality. There is milk, a sign of life, and meat, a sign of death. There is plant life and there is animal life. There are brothers and others. Each has its boundaries that must be respected. That is sacred ontology and it creates an ethic of holiness. Its theoretical foundations lie here in Genesis 1.

1:14 *To serve for signs and seasons* – Nature is something we can observe and learn from. "He who knows how to calculate the cycles and planetary courses, but does not, of him Scripture says, '[They] feast... never once turning to look at the LORD's workings, never once noticing the work of His hands' (Is. 5:12). How do we know that it is one's duty to calculate the cycles and planetary courses? Because it is written, 'For this will be your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the peoples' (Deut. 4:6). What wisdom and understanding is in the sight of the peoples? Say, that is the science of cycles and planets" (Shabbat 75a).

The Sages attached religious dignity and integrity to

- 16 lights in the heavens’ expanse, shining upon the earth.” And so it was. God made the two great lights – the greater light to rule by day and the lesser light to rule by night – and the stars. God set them in the heavens’ expanse to shine upon the earth, to rule by day and by night and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. There was evening, and there was morning – a fourth day.
- 20 Then God said, “Let the water teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly over the earth across the heavens’ expanse.” So God created the great sea serpents, and all the kinds of crawling, living things that swarm in the water, and all the kinds of winged, flying creatures. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying: “Be fertile and multiply and fill the waters of the seas, and let flying creatures multiply on earth.” There was evening, and there was morning – a fifth day.

רש"י

כא | הַתַּנִּינִים. דְּגִים גְּדוֹלִים שָׂבִים. וּבְדִבְרֵי אֲדָה: הוּא לוֹיִתָּן וְכָן זִוְגוּ, שֶׁבְּרָאָם זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה וְהִרְגִּ אֶת הַנְּקֵבָה וּמָלְאָהּ לַצִּדִּיקִים לְעֵתִיד לָבֹא, שֶׁאִם יִפְרוּ וְיִרְבּוּ לֹא יִתְקַיֵּם הָעוֹלָם בְּפִנֵּיהֶם: נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה. נֶפֶשׁ שְׂיֵשׁ בָּהּ חַיּוּת:

כב | וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם. לְפִי שֶׁמַּחֲסְדִּים אֲוִתָם וְעֵדִין מֵהֵן וְחוֹכְלִין אֲוִתָם, הִצְרָכָם לְבִרְכָּהּ. וְאִךְ הַחַיּוּת הִצְרָכָם לְבִרְכָּהּ, אֲלֹא מִפְּנֵי הַנֶּחֱשׁ הָעֵתִיד לְקַלְלָהּ, לְכַךְ לֹא בִרְכָּהּ, שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה הוּא בִּפְלֹל: פְּרוּ. לְשׁוֹן פְּרוּ, כְּלוּמָר עָשׂוּ פְרוּת:

טז | הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים. שְׁוִים נִבְרָאוּ, וְנִתְמַעְטָה הַלְבֵנָה עַל שְׁקֻטָּהּ וְאִמְרָה: הִיא אֲפֶשֶׁר לִשְׁנֵי מַלְכִּים שִׁישְׁתַּמְשׁוּ בְּכִתְרָא אֶחָד: וְאֵת הַבּוֹכָבִים. עַל יְדֵי שֶׁמַּעֲט אֶת הַלְבֵנָה, הִרְבָּה עֲבָחֶיהָ לְהַפִּיס דְּעֵתָה:

כ | נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה. שִׁיחָא בָּהּ חַיּוּת: שְׂרִץ. כָּל דְּבַר חַי שֶׁאִינוּ גְבוּהָ מִן הָאָדָם קְרוּי שְׂרִץ, בְּעוֹף – בְּגוֹן זְבוּבִים, בְּשָׂקִיצִים – בְּגוֹן נְמָלִים וְחַפְזִיּוֹת וְתוֹלְעִים, וּבְבִרְיוֹת – בְּגוֹן חֹלֵד וְעַכְבָּר וְחִמְט וְכוּיָא צָהָם, וְכָל הַדְּגִים:

humanity with His image. Thus, science and monotheism come hand in hand. We need science to understand the universe, and we need religion to guide our way within it, from the world as it is to the world as it ought to be.

1:21 כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׁת *All the kinds of crawling, living things* – God delights in diversity. The Rabbis sensed it when they said, “Even those creatures you hold superfluous in the world, such as the flies and fleas and gnats, they too are part of the creation of the world. Through all does the Holy One, blessed be He, make manifest His mission, even through the serpent, even through the gnat, even through the frog” (Bereshit Rabba 10:8). Biodiversity is a source of wonder to

the psalmist: “How many are Your works, LORD. You made them all in wisdom; the earth is full of Your creations” (Ps. 104:24)

1:22 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים *God blessed them* – God’s first blessings are not addressed to Adam, but to animals. Rambam warns us against an anthropocentric view of reality. “The universe does not exist for man’s sake, but each being exists for its own sake and not because of some other thing” (*Guide for the Perplexed* III:13). To be sure, humanity with its unique capacity for moral choice is the focus of the Torah’s concerns, but Genesis sets forth a view of nature which is not man-centred – but God-centred.

טז הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאֵיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹדֹת
 הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת־הַמְּאֹד הַגָּדֹל לַמַּמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־הַמְּאֹד הַקָּטָן
 יז לַמַּמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים: וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בְּרִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם
 יח לְהָאֵיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: וְלַמָּשָׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין
 יט הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם רִבְעִי:
 כ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שָׂרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יְעוּפֹף עַל־הָאָרֶץ
 כא עַל־פְּנֵי רִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַתַּנִּינִם הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֶת
 כב כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה וְהַרְמֵשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר שָׂרְצוּ הַמַּיִם לְמִינֵהֶם וְאֶת כָּל־עוֹף
 כג כָּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ
 כד וּרְבוּ וּמְלֹאוּ אֶת־הַמַּיִם בַּיָּמִים וְהָעוֹף יֵרֵב בָּאָרֶץ: וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־
 בֹקֶר יוֹם חֲמִישִׁי:

אונקלוס

כ ואמר יי, ירחשון מיא, רחיש נפשא חיתא, ועופא יפרח על ארעא,
 על אפי רקיע שמיא: כא וברא יי, ית תניניא רברביא, וית כל נפשא
 חיתא דרחשא, דארחישו מיא לזניהון, וית כל עופא דפרח לזניהו,
 וחזא יי ארי טב: כב וברך יתהון, יי למימר, פושו וסגו, ומלו ית מיא
 בימימיא, ועופא יסגי בארעא: כג והוה רמש והוה צפר יום חמישי:

ד שמיא, לאנהרא על ארעא, והוה כן: טז ועבד יי, ית תרין נהוריא
 רברביא, ית נהורא רבא למשלט ביממא, וית נהורא זעירא למשלט
 בליילא, וית כוכביא: יז ויהב יתהון, יי ברקיעא דשמיא, לאנהרא
 על ארעא: יח ולמשלט ביממא ובליליא, ולאפרשא, בין נהורא
 ובין חשוכא, וחזא יי ארי טב: יט והוה רמש והוה צפר יום רביעי:

recited on seeing “one of the sages of the nations of the world.” For the Sages to institute a blessing – a religious act of thanksgiving – over Greek and Roman scholars showed a remarkable open-mindedness to wisdom, whatever its source. The heavenly bodies are intended not just to exist, but also as “signs” to be studied, to help us navigate in time and space. Rambam sees science as a way to the love and awe of God.

1:21 **אֶת הַתַּנִּינִם הַגְּדֹלִים** *The great sea serpents* – In Ugaritic mythology, the god of the sky does battle with the god of the

sea, a “great sea serpent,” and out of his victory establishes dry land, usually over the dead body of his victim. But in Genesis there is no myth. God speaks and the universe comes into being. Genesis 1 is the beginning of the end of the mythic imagination. No longer is the universe seen as unpredictable. It is the work of a single, rational creative will. This is what will make science possible: science was born when people stopped telling stories about nature and instead observed it. Nor is the God of Genesis – as were the gods of myth – at best indifferent, at worst actively hostile to human beings. Genesis speaks of a God who endows

- 24 Then God said, “Let the land produce every kind of living thing: all the different species of cattle, crawling things and wild animals of the earth.” And so it was.
- 25 God made the different kinds of wild animals of the earth, and cattle, and all the species of creature that creep upon land. And God saw that it was good.
- 26 Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, our likeness, that they may rule over the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens, the cattle and all the earth, and every living creature that moves upon the earth.”
- 27 So God created humankind in His image: in the image of God He created him;
- 28 male and female He created them. God blessed them, saying, “Be fertile and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea, and the flying creatures of the heavens, and every living thing that moves upon the

SHELISHI

רש"י

הַמִּינִים פֶּתַח בְּרָא: "וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם", וְלֹא פֶתַח "וַיִּבְרָאוּ":
בְּצִלְמֵנוּ. בְּדִפּוּס שְׁלֵנוּ: בְּדִמוּתֵנוּ. לְהִבְיָן וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל: וַיִּרְדּוּ בְּדִגְתַּת הַיָּם.
יֵשׁ בְּלֶשׁוֹן הָאֵל לֶשׁוֹן רַדּוּי וּלֶשׁוֹן יִרְדָּה, זָכָה – רֹדֶה בְּחַיִּית וּבִבְהֵמֹת,
לֹא זָכָה – נִעְשָׂה יֶרֶד לַפְּנִיָּה וְהַחֲיָה מוֹשְׁלֵת בּוֹ:

כ"ו וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצִלְמוֹ. בְּדִפּוּס הָעֲשׂוֹי לוֹ, שֶׁהַכֹּל נִבְרָא
בְּמִחְמָר וְהוּא בִּידִים, שְׁנִיחָמֵר: "וַתֵּשֶׂת עָלַי פִּפְכָּה" (תהלים קלט, ה) נִעְשָׂה
בְּחוּתֶם בְּמִטְבֵּעַ הָעֲשׂוּיָה עַל יְדֵי רֶשֶׁם, שְׁקוּרִין קוּי"ן בְּלֻעוֹ, וְכֵן הוּא
חוּמֵר: "תִּתְּנֶהּ פֶּחָמֶר חוּתֶם" (חובב לז, יד): בְּצִלְמֵ אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אוֹתוֹ.
פֶּרֶשׁ לֶךְ שְׁאוֹתֵינוּ עֲלֵם הַמִּתְקֵן לוֹ עֲלֵם דְּיוקָן יוֹצֵרוֹ הוּא: זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה
בָּרָא אֹתָם. וְלִהְיוֹן הוּא חוּמֵר: "וַיִּקַּח חַחַת מִצִּלְעֹתָיו" וְגו' (לחלק ב, כח)!
מִדְּרַשׁ חֲזָקָה, שֶׁבְּרָאוֹ שְׁנֵי פְרָעוּפִים בְּרִיָּה רַחֲשׁוּנָה, וְאַחֵר כֶּךָ חֲלָקוֹ.
וּפְשׁוּטוֹ שֶׁל מִקְרָא: בָּחוּן הוֹדִיעַךְ שֶׁנִּבְרָאוֹ שְׁנֵינָם בְּשֵׁשׁ, וְלֹא פֶרֶשׁ לֶךְ
פִּינֵד בְּרִיתוֹ, וּפֶרֶשׁ לֶךְ בְּמִקּוֹם אֲחֵר:

כ"ח וַיְבָרֶשֶׂה. חֲסֵד וַי"ו, לְלַמֶּדְךָ שֶׁהַזָּכָר כּוֹבֵשׁ אֶת הַנְּקֵבָה שֶׁלֹּא תִהְיֶה
יִצְחָנִית. וְעוֹד לְלַמֶּדְךָ, שֶׁהָאִשׁ שֶׁדִּרְכּוֹ לִכְבֹּשׁ מֵעַתָּה עַל פְּרִיָּה וּרְבִיָּה
וְלֹא הָאִשָּׁה:

כ"ד תוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ. הוּא שְׁפָרְשֵׁתִי (לעיל פסוק יד) שֶׁהַכֹּל נִבְרָא מִיּוֹם רֵאשִׁון
וְלֹא הִצְרִיכוּ אֱלֹהִים לְהוֹצִיאָם: נִפְשׁ חַיָּה. שֵׁשׁ בָּהּ חַיִּית: וְרִבּוּשׁ. הֵם
שְׂרָעִים שֶׁהֵם נִמּוּכִים וְרִמְשִׁים עַל הָאָרֶץ, וְנִרְאִים כְּאִלוֹ נִגְזְרִין שְׁחִין
הַלּוֹכֵן נֶפֶד, כֹּל לֶשׁוֹן רֶמֶשׁ וְשָׂרָץ בְּלִשְׁוֹנוֹ קוֹנֵמוּבְרִי"ש:

כ"ה וַיַּעַשׂ. תָּקַן לְבִיּוֹנָן בְּקוֹמָתוֹ:

כ"ו נִעְשָׂה אָדָם. עֲנוּתֵנוּתוֹ שֶׁל הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמַדְנוּ מִכָּאן, לְמִי
שֶׁהָאָדָם בְּדִמוּת הַמַּלְאָכִים וַיִּתְקַנְאוּ בּוֹ, לְמִיכָּךְ נִמְלֶךְ בָּהֶם. וּכְשֶׁהוּא
דָּן אֶת הַמַּלְאָכִים הוּא נִמְלֶךְ בְּפִמְלִיָּה שְׁלוֹ, שֶׁכֵּן מַעֲנוֹ בְּאַחֲבָב שֶׁאִמֵּר
לוֹ מִיכָּה: "קִחִיתִי אֶת ה' יֵשׁב עַל פֶּסָאוֹ וְכָל גְּבַח הַשָּׁמַיִם עֹמֵד עָלָיו
מִימִינוֹ וּמִשְׁמָאלוֹ" (מלכים ח, כב, יט), וְכִי יֵשׁ יָמִינוֹ וּשְׁמָאל לַפְּנִיָּה? אֱלֹהִים חִלּוֹ
מִימִינֵם לְזָכוּת וְאִלוֹ מִשְׁמָאֵלִים לְחוּבָה, וְכֵן: "בְּגִזְרַת עֵינֶיךָ פִּתְגָמָא
וּמִחְמָר קִדְּשִׁין שֶׁאֲלֵתָא" (דניאל ה, יד), אֵךְ בָּחוּן בְּפִמְלִיָּה שְׁלוֹ נִטַּל הָשׂוּת.
אִמֵּר לָהֶם: יֵשׁ בְּעֲלִיוֹנֵם בְּדִמוּת, אִם אֵין בְּתַחֲנוּנֵם בְּדִמוּתוֹ הִרִי יֵשׁ
קִנְיָה בְּמִנְעָה בְּרִאשִׁית: נִעְשָׂה אָדָם. אֵךְ עַל פִּי שֶׁלֹּא סִיעֵוָהוּ בִּיצִרְתּוֹ,
וְיֵשׁ מִקּוֹם לְמִינֵם לְרִדּוּת, לֹא נִמְנַע הַכְּתוּב מִלְּלַמֵּד דְּרֶךְ אֶחָד וּמִדַּת
עֲנוּהָ, שֶׁיִּהְיֶה הַגָּדוֹל נִמְלֶךְ וְנוֹטַל הָשׂוּת מִן הַקָּטָן. וְאִם פֶּתַח 'אֵעֲשֶׂה
אָדָם' לֹא לְמַדְנוּ שֶׁיִּהְיֶה מִדְּבַר עִם בֵּית דִּינוֹ, אֱלֹהִים עִם עַמּוּ. וַיִּשְׁוִיבֵת

and Hava is the phrase “Be fertile and multiply” experienced not just as a blessing but as a command. Bringing children into the world thus presupposes moral responsibility, for one might have chosen otherwise. That responsibility for those one has brought into existence extends to caring for them in their dependency, and to ensuring that they will have a world to inherit.

1:28 מְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשֶׁהָ Fill the earth and subdue it – Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, in *The Lonely Man of Faith*, noted that in the phrase “and subdue it” we receive our mandate to be masters of our environment. As a result of developments over time – in knowledge, control, medical technology, education, and our range of resources and facilities – we are able to address problems in ways that previous generations were

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ בְּהֶמָּה וְרֶמֶשׂ וְחַיְתוֹ-
 אָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְהַיְכֹן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת-
 הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת כָּל-רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינָהּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב:
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ וַיִּרְדּוּ בְּדֶגֶת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף
 הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ:
 וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר
 וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ
 וּמִלְאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשׁוּהָ וַיִּרְדּוּ בְּדֶגֶת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיָּה

אונקלוס

דְּשִׁמְיָא, וּבְבַעֲרִיא וּבְכָל אֶרְעָא, וּבְכָל רַחֲשָׁא דְרַחֲשִׁי עַל אֶרְעָא:
 וַיְבָרֵא יי ית אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵיהּ, בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא יְתִיה, דְּכָר וְנְקֵבָא
 בָּרָא יְתִיהוֹן: וַיְבָרֶךְ יְתִיהוֹן יי, וַיֹּאמֶר לְהוֹן יי, פּוֹשִׁי וְסָגוּ, וּמִלּוּ יֵת
 אֶרְעָא וְתִקְוּפוּ עָלֶיהּ, וְשִׁלְטוּ, בְּנוֹנִי יִמָּא וּבְעוֹפָא דְשִׁמְיָא, וּבְכָל חַיָּתָא

וַיֹּאמֶר יי, תִּפְיִק אֶרְעָא, נִפְשָׁא חַיָּתָא לִזְנָה, בְּעִיר וְרַחֲשִׁי, וְחַיַּת
 אֶרְעָא לִזְנָה, וְהוּהּ כֵּן: וַיַּעֲבִד יי ית חַיַּת אֶרְעָא לִזְנָה, וְיֵת בְּעִירָא
 לִזְנָה, וְיֵת, כָּל רַחֲשָׁא דְאֶרְעָא לִזְנָה, וְחָזָא יי אַרִי טָב: וַיֹּאמֶר יי,
 נַעֲבִיד אִנְשָׁא, בְּצַלְמֵנָא כְּדִמוּתֵנָא, וְיִשְׁלְטוּן בְּנוֹנִי יִמָּא וּבְעוֹפָא

MAN IN GOD'S IMAGE

Genesis 1:26–27 is not so much a metaphysical statement about the nature of the human person as it is a *political protest against the very basis of hierarchical, class- or caste-based societies*, whether in ancient or modern times.

The phrase “in the image of God” would not have been unfamiliar to the first readers of the Torah; they knew it well. It was commonplace in the first civilizations, Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, that certain people were said to be in the image of God. These were the kings of the Mesopotamian city-states and the pharaohs of Egypt. Nothing could have been more radical than to say that not just kings and rulers are in God’s image. We all are. In some fundamental sense we are all equal in dignity and ultimate worth, for we are all in God’s image regardless of colour, culture, or creed, physical form or mental ability. Today the idea is still daring; how much more so must it have been in an age of absolute rulers with absolute power.

Momentous ideas made the West what it is, ideas like human rights, the abolition of slavery, the equal worth of all, and justice based on the principle that right is sovereign over

might. All of these ultimately derived from the statement in the first chapter of the Torah that we are made in God’s image and likeness. No other text has had a greater influence on moral thought, nor has any other civilization ever held a higher vision of what we are called on to be.

1:26 נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם *Let us make humankind* – There are several understandings of this enigmatic first-person plural. The view put forth by Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch is striking. According to Rabbi Hirsch, “us” refers to the rest of creation. Before making mankind, with its potential for disrupting nature, God invites nature itself to give its assent. The implied condition is that man will use nature only in the service of God, its maker. To exploit nature rapaciously for our own ends is *ultra vires*. It breaks the condition on which man was made.

1:28 פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ *Be fertile and multiply* – All of nature shares with God the property of being creative, of bringing new life into being, but only humanity shares with God the moral choice of bringing new life into the world. Only for Adam

- 29 earth.” Then God said, “I give you all these seed-bearing plants on the face of
 30 the earth and every tree with seed-bearing fruit. They shall be yours to eat. And
 to all the beasts of the earth and birds of the heavens and everything that crawls
 over the earth and has within it living spirit – I give every green plant for food.”
 31 And so it was. Then God saw all that He had made: and it was very good. There
 was evening, and there was morning – the sixth day.
- 2 ¹ So the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their vast array. On the
 seventh day God finished the work that He had done, and on the seventh day
 3 He rested from all the work that He had done. God blessed the seventh day and
 sanctified it, because on it He rested from all His work, from all that God had
 created and done.

רש"י

ב ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי. רפי שמעון חומר: בשר ודם שאינו
 יודע עתיו ורגעיו צריך להוסיף מחול על הקדש, הקדוש ברוך הוא
 שיודע עתיו ורגעיו, נכנס בו כחוט השערה, ונראה כאלו כלה בו
 ביום. דבר אחר: מה היה העולם חסר? מנוחה, באת שבת באת
 מנוחה, בלתה ונגמרה המלאכה:

ג ויברך ויקדש. ברכו במן, שכל ימות השבוע יורד להם עמר
 לגלגלת, ובשאי לחם משנה. וקדשו במן שלא ירד בו מן כלל,
 והמקרא פתוב על העתיד: אשר ברא אלהים לעשות. המלאכה
 שהיתה רחוקה לעשות בשבת כפל ונעשה בשאי, כמו שמפרש
 בבראשית רבה (יח, ט):

כט-ל | לכם יהיה לאכלה וכל חית הארץ. השנה להם הפתוב בהמות
 וחיות למאכל, ולא הקשה לאדם ולאשתו להמית ברהיה ולאכל בשר,
 אך כל ירק עשב יאכלו יחד כלם. וכשצאו בני נח, התיר להם בשר,
 שנאמר: "כל דמש אשר הוא חי וגו' פירק עשב" שהתירתי לאדם
 הרחשון "נתתי לכם חית כל" (להלן ט, יא):

לא | יום הששי. הוסיף ה"א בשאי בגמר מעשה בראשית, לומר
 שהתנה עמהם על מנת שיקבלו עליהם ישלחל חמשה חמשי תורה.
 דבר אחר, "יום הששי", כלם תלויים ועומדים עד יום הששי, הוא
 ששי בסיון המוכן למתן תורה:

The Sabbath was and remains a revolutionary idea. Many ancient religions had their holy days. But none had a day on which it was forbidden to work. Rabbinic tradition says that when the Torah was first translated into Greek, the translators changed this sentence to make it comprehensible. Instead of "On the seventh day God finished the work that He had done," the translators wrote, "On the sixth day..." It is as if they knew that the Greeks could understand that in six days God made the universe but not that on the seventh He made rest – that rest itself is a creation. Rest is the creation which allows us to enjoy all other creations. Just as clear space surrounds a page or frames a picture, so clear time is the frame in which we set our work, giving it the dignity of art.

2:3 *אשר ברא אלהים לעשות* That God had created and done –
 "Because on it He rested from all His work, from all that God had created." The sentence should finish there. In fact, though, there is one extra word in the Hebrew, *laasot*, translated here "and done," but which literally means "to do," "to make," "to function."

Ibn Ezra and Abrabanel interpret it to mean "[He had created it] in such a way that it would continue to create itself." God as we see Him in Genesis 2 is a gardener, not a mechanic, one who plants systems that grow. It is a universe impossible to predict in detail, one that gives rise to agencies that are themselves creative. Without stretching the text too far, we might say that *laasot* means, quite simply, "to evolve."