

THE MAGERMAN EDITION

תנ"ך קורן אביב • בראשית

THE KOREN AVIV TANAKH • BERESHIT



TORAH TRANSLATION BY
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KOREN PUBLISHERS JERUSALEM

The Koren Aviv Tanakh • Bereshit
The Magerman Edition
First Hebrew-English Edition

Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.
POB 4044, Jerusalem 9104001, ISRAEL
POB 8531, New Milford, CT, 06776, USA

www.korenpub.com

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ISBN 978-965-7812-62-4, HARDCOVER

Printed in the PRC
First printing
KATB01

The Torah is eternal.

Humanity is ephemeral and dynamic.

The Torah is the cornerstone of the world, of our People, and it forms the baseline of the Tanakh, the holy writings of God and His prophets. The changing nature of human society in which our children are growing up in demands a fresh while remaining rooted in the eternal essence of the Torah. The Tanakh is a living script, the screenplay of the history of humanity from Creation to the present.

We pray that this creative and innovative new approach to learning Tanakh will engage and empower young and old alike to find their own meaning in our ancient wisdom, uniting us in our traditions, exposing us to new ways of thinking, and ultimately bringing us closer to the Redemption.

אֲנִי מֵאֲמִין בְּאַמוּנַת שְׁלֵמָה
בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ
וְאֶף עַל פִּי שְׂוִיתֶמָּהֶּמָּה עִם כָּל זֶה אֶחַפֶּה לוֹ
בְּכָל יוֹם שְׂיָבוֹא.

*I believe with perfect faith
in the coming of the Messiah,
and though he may delay,
I wait daily for his coming.*

We are pleased that we were able to contribute to this critically important Tanakh series for young people.

Debra and David Magerman
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Publisher's Preface

דור לדור ישבח מעשיך.

One generation will praise Your works to the next.

(Tehillim 145:4)

It is with gratitude and a certain ambition that we introduce this volume of the Magerman Edition of *The Koren Aviv Tanakh*, a multivolume, colorful, and enticing Tanakh designed to encourage connection, reflection, and learning of our foundational text.

The Tanakh is under-studied by our teenagers. The connection between Jewish young adults and the Tanakh is critical, more so today than ever. Students must learn the text of the Tanakh and the classical commentators who have illuminated difficult passages. But it is just as important that young adults engage emotionally and experientially with the text, and all too often, those aspects are neglected.

This project's unique contribution to Tanakh education is that it places the students firmly at the center of the learning experience, allowing them to relate directly to the text and find their own meaning there. While learning Tanakh through the prism of traditional commentaries is undoubtedly important, these volumes empower the next generation to connect to Tanakh in a direct and personal way. Using creative educational resources and approaches, *The Koren Aviv Tanakh* encourages students to analyze the text and find meaning in the verses that is personal and relevant for their own lives.

It is with this ambition that Koren Publishers Jerusalem has created this edition, designed for middle and high school students and young adults in synagogue *minyanim*. Since 1962, the

Koren Tanakh has been recognized for its textual accuracy and innovative graphic design. We have remained committed to these qualities, and we have recently had the privilege of enriching the Tanakh text with the eloquent English translation of one of the most articulate and original Jewish thinkers of our time, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, *zt"l*.

It is with gratitude that we acknowledge Rabbi Sacks for this exceptional translation of the Torah. And our thanks are no less due to Rabbi Dr. Daniel Rose, Koren's Director of Education, whose vision is executed in these volumes. Caryn Meltz, our Managing Editor, brought it all together into a handsome and useful edition, and Tani Bayer, our art director, created the design for the Tanakh and cover. Finally, thank you to our typesetters, Esther Be'er and Taly Hahn, and to our copyeditors and proofreaders, Efrat Gross, Tali Simon, Avichai Gamdani, and Daniel Safran, who made this volume a reality.

None of this would have been possible without the support and vision of Debra and David Magerman of Philadelphia and Jerusalem, who understood both our ambitions and the methods of this edition.

On behalf of all our rabbis, scholars, editors, and designers, we thank the Magerman family. And on behalf of the many thousands of readers, in this and future generations – we are forever in your debt.

We hope the use of these volumes of Tanakh will bring Jews closer and closer to the Torah and all the good it represents.

Matthew Miller, Publisher
Jerusalem, 5784 (2024)

Introduction

The text of Torah is our covenant with God, our written constitution as a nation under His sovereignty. The interpretation of this text has been the subject of an ongoing conversation for as long as Jews have studied the divine word, a conversation that began at Sinai thirty-three centuries ago and has not ceased since. Every age has added its commentaries, and so must ours. Participating in that conversation is a major part of what it is to be a Jew. For we are the people who never stopped learning the Book of Life, our most precious gift from the God of life.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks¹

Tanakh studies has always been synonymous with Koren as a publishing house. Ever since Eliyahu Koren published the first edition of the Koren Tanakh in 1962, Koren has committed itself to bringing serious Tanakh scholarship to a broader Hebrew-speaking, and more recently, English-speaking audience. In 2013 Koren established an educational department dedicated to the education of young Jews through innovative pedagogical publications. The launch of *The Koren Aviv Tanakh* series heralds a new stage in this journey, utilizing innovative and creative educational approaches to Tanakh study for the young. In the words of Rabbi Sacks, every age has added its own commentaries to the Tanakh, and so must ours. What better time than the teenage years to begin the empowerment of the next generation in this process.

¹ | *Covenant & Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible – Genesis: The Book of Beginnings* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2009), 3.

Educational Vision Behind the Series

The wisdom of student-centered learning has been informing the pedagogy of thoughtful educators since the research on how children learn by, among others, John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky, generations before our classrooms became populated by Gen Z and now Gen Alpha. Our students, through no fault of their own, are more focused on their own sense of self and self-worth than young people at any previous point in history.² Conventional pedagogic wisdom has for some time encouraged the educator to think about becoming a “guide on the side” rather than a “sage on the stage.”

Perhaps influenced by these trends, the field of Tanakh study has also evolved in recent years toward encouraging students to engage directly with the text, rather than only through the prism of classical and modern commentaries. This approach has been pioneered by our friends at Herzog College, as well as other centers of Tanakh scholarship across the world. In the introduction to the Maggid series *Torah MiEtzion*, Rabbi Ezra Bick writes: “Tanakh is meant to be read and understood by the reader, without the absolute necessity of outside interlocutors. The keys to understanding Tanakh are found within Tanakh itself.”³

This pedagogy forms the foundation and guiding light behind the approach to learning and teaching Tanakh found in *The Koren Aviv Tanakh*. That is not to say that we believe this approach should replace the traditional in-depth study of Tanakh with classical commentaries. There is without doubt a deep value to approaching the text of the Tanakh through the eyes of the classical and modern commentators, who themselves reflect ancient traditions and readings. However, we believe this approach complements that one and, we would argue, should precede it. The brave educator will encourage his or her students to find their own meaning in the text before they then explore the rich library of Jewish commentaries available to navigate our understanding of Tanakh.

Explanation of Educational Elements

The educational elements found in *The Koren Aviv Tanakh* are explained below. Several of these elements contain excerpts from essays written by Tanakh scholars, and in some cases these texts have been slightly modified for the sake of standardization and consistency, or to make the text flow.

2 | For fascinating research on this topic, see Jean M. Twenge, *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood – and What That Means for the Rest of Us* (New York: Atria Books, 2017).

3 | *Torah MiEtzion: New Readings in Tanach – Volume I: Bereshit* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books and Yeshivat Har Etzion, 2011), xv.

While all of these elements are tools and resources to achieve the educational vision of the project – namely, independent, student-centered learning of Tanakh, allowing for a robust meaning-making process that will encourage connecting to the text in a direct and personal way – each element stands alone. Some of the elements may be more appealing than others to you as an educator and to your students. There is no need to feel that all the segments must be utilized in your classroom. Creative educators will plan their classes and facilitate the learning process in a way that only they can, and this edition can provide an array of educational resources to choose from to achieve their personal educational goals.

Taking an Episodic Approach to Structuring the Narrative

In order to focus the student on the narrative and thematic segments found in the Tanakh, *The Koren Aviv Tanakh* has taken an episodic approach, dividing the text into thematic episodes that aid in the reading and understanding of the text.

Over time, there have been various ways to break up the text of the Tanakh. For example, the division into chapters and verses dates from the thirteenth century and is Christian in origin. The Masoretic text was divided into *parashot*, and although there is some controversy over this tradition, the division of *parashot* used by *soferim* in writing modern-day *sifrei Torah* is based on Rambam's list found in the eighth chapter of *Hilkhot Tefillin UMezuza VeSefer Torah* in his *Mishneh Torah*. These *parashot* are delineated by "open portions" (*parashot petuhot*), where the line ends with an open space and the next *parasha* begins on the following line), and "closed portions" (*parashot setumot*), where a space is left at the end of the last verse of the *parasha*, and the next *parasha* begins after that space on the same line.

The division of the Torah into weekly readings (somewhat confusingly also called *parashot*) dates from the sixth century BCE as described in the book of Neḥemya, when the weekly system of reading the *parasha* with an annual completion was standardized. These weekly readings of the Torah portion were further divided into seven sections, one for each *aliya*, or person called to the Torah reading, on Shabbat.

It should be noted that while the episodic approach taken in this book maintains the divisions of the weekly readings, these divisions do not always coincide with the Masoretic (*setuma/petuḥa*) divisions. Due to the logistics of layout and design, at times a new episode begins on a new line and may appear to be a *parasha petuḥa*. While this is something to be avoided in general, after consultation with halakhic and educational experts, we decided it was justifiable to further the educational vision of this project.

Parasha Introduction Page

At the beginning of each *parasha*, an introductory page will feature a ***Parasha Overview***, a list of the episodes featured in this *parasha*, and a list of ***Parasha Stats***. The Parasha Overview is

generally taken from the introductions to the chapters of *Covenant & Conversation: A Weekly Reading of the Jewish Bible – Genesis: The Book of Beginnings* by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks.

The First Page of Each Episode

Each episode has a title and begins with a **Summary**. This is often adapted content from the *Steinsaltz Humash*. On the first page of each episode there is also a list of three underlying **Themes** that can be found in the text of the episode. More than twenty-five overarching themes were identified running throughout Tanakh, and through signaling the themes most central to each episode, we can highlight the intertextuality of parts of Tanakh, encouraging the student to identify and reflect on these themes throughout their Tanakh studies.

There are also two categories of reflection and textual analysis questions on this page, which encourage the student to engage directly with the text on their own terms, and become a Tanakh commentator in their own right. **Unlocking the Text** is a list of questions that identify the gaps in the text, which close readers of the Tanakh would wish to address and explore. Students are encouraged to use these questions (or ask their own questions) to unlock the meaning of the text, or develop their own commentary or creative midrash. **Finding Yourself in the Text** asks three questions that encourage the student to relate to the text in a personal way, using their own life as a frame of reference. Reflection on these questions and their own lived experiences could help them to understand the text, and this is the aim of these questions.

In the text of many of the episodes, there are key words and phrases (in Hebrew and English) highlighted in various colors which connect them to the **Taking a Literary Approach** sections (see below). This helps the student immediately see the textual analysis of those authors in a visual way.

Bibliodrama

Bibliodrama is a creative educational tool that enables students to deepen their connection to the characters in the text by “stepping into their shoes.” It is a form of role-playing in which students are asked to take on the role of the characters in biblical texts. Bibliodrama asks students to imagine what was going on in the minds and hearts of the personalities from the narrative, and in so doing, the students are creating their own midrash (as more often than not, the text keeps the emotions and thoughts of the characters hidden from the reader). The characters that feature in the **A Question of Bibliodrama** sections of this volume are largely the human personalities from the text, but in some cases they also include non-humans, such as animals (for example, Bilaam’s donkey) or spiritual beings such as angels or God.

Peter A. Pitzele, a pioneer in utilizing bibliodrama in Tanakh study, compares bibliodrama to Midrash in the following way:

Bibliodrama is a form of interpretive play. To honor it with a venerable Hebrew name, bibliodrama can be called a form of Midrash... For the rabbis, this interpretive engagement with the Bible manifested itself in word-plays, analogies, and even puns that intensified the active experience of reading texts. Midrash is derived from a Hebrew root that means to investigate or explore. In the Midrash the written text is closely examined for meanings and insights that will enrich our understanding and enhance our relationship to the Bible. In a more generic sense, however, midrash – now in lower case – may extend in time to later ages and to our own. From a more liberal perspective, midrash may include extra-literary acts of interpretation such as movement, song, visual art, and drama, which, like their classical forebears, serve to illuminate meaning in the biblical narrative.⁴

The questions in the Bibliodrama sections lend themselves well to full group role-play simulation, small group discussions, or even *chavruta* conversations, where one student could be an interviewer asking questions of the other, who plays the role of the character. They could then switch roles. You may also wish to invite your students to create their own questions. It is important to let the conversations flow in their own organic and creative directions, even if this may lead to some tricky discussions. While there are no right and wrong answers in bibliodrama, and one can never be sure of the direction the conversations will lead, you can intersperse the conversations with more information about the narrative that the students may not be aware of, using scholarship and other texts in Tanakh. But be careful not to use midrashic sources, as these would compete with the students' own midrashic approach taken during the process of bibliodrama. A period of reflection and discussion after the bibliodrama has ended is always worthwhile so that the process can be framed and reflected on, then brought back to the students and their task to develop understanding of the text.

The Art of Midrash

Using art as a modern form of Midrash has become more and more popular among creative Tanakh teachers. Just as our classical midrashim address the gaps in the text begging to be addressed, so have artists throughout the ages when they create a visual interpretation of the Tanakh text through their art. Rabbi Shlomo Riskin draws similarities between the midrashic processes involved in both ancient midrashim and contemporary art:

4 | *Scripture Windows: Toward a Practice of Bibliodrama* (Lewisville, NC: Torah Aura Productions, 1998), 11–12.

The Midrash expands and builds upon the text in its description of scriptural figures, inviting us to share its thoughts and emotions as it fills gaps left in the biblical account. It suggests conversations, actions, and spiritual quandaries that are not specified in the Bible itself. By describing the qualities and personalities of scriptural figures, the Midrash helps us to visualize the characters more vividly as human individuals....[Art] opens our eyes to additional interpretations of the text [which] emerge from the world of Torah, Jewish tradition, and from the world of artists from the seventy nations of the world and different cultures. All of them read the Torah and used visual and verbal means to express the particular facet they found there. The artist, like the commentator, has a unique gift, divine inspiration, emanating directly from the ultimate Creator.⁵

Each episode in this volume has an associated piece of art that expresses in some way an approach to the text of the episode. Asking our students to analyze the midrashic process the artists have embarked on, and to evaluate if and how it enlightens our own connection to and understanding of the text, can be a powerful way for students to engage in the text. For this to be most effective, a process of debriefing and reflection facilitated by the teacher is vital. Relating to artwork as midrash can also form the foundation for your students to use their own artistic talents as a midrashic expression of their understanding of text, and this could be a fun and meaningful class activity or assignment.

Integrating Hōkhma

In his book *Future Tense*, Rabbi Sacks describes a dual epistemology, knowledge of the world, through Torah and *hōkhma* (which he translates as wisdom). He distinguishes them in the following way:

Hōkhma is the truth we discover; Torah is the truth we inherit. *Hōkhma* is the universal heritage of humankind; Torah is the specific heritage of Israel. *Hōkhma* is what we attain by being in the image of God; Torah is what guides Jews as the people of God. *Hōkhma* is acquired by seeing and reasoning; Torah is received by listening and responding. *Hōkhma* tells us what is; Torah tells us what ought to be. *Hōkhma* is about facts; Torah is about commands. *Hōkhma* yields descriptive, scientific laws; Torah yields prescriptive, behavioral laws. *Hōkhma* is about creation; Torah is about revelation.⁶

5 | Shlomo Riskin, Yardenna Lubotzky, and Ruth Mark, *Brushes with the Bible: Jewish Commentaries and Biblical Illustrations* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2018), ix.

6 | *Future Tense* (Maggid Books, 2021), 221.

While differentiating between the knowledge of the world that we can gain from the Torah and that which we can gain from the sciences, he also described a conversation between these two worlds in his essays on the weekly *parasha*. In each essay, while drawing insight and understanding from this ancient divine text for our contemporary world, he also drew from scientific wisdom and the best that human culture has to offer, to deepen his and our understanding of the text of the Torah. For Rabbi Sacks, “Torah is a commentary on life, and life is a commentary on Torah. Together they constitute a conversation, each shedding light on the other.”⁷

In each episode in this volume, we have brought texts and resources from the world of *hokhma* to enlighten and deepen our understanding of the text. More often than not, this scientific wisdom was not available to the medieval and even many of the modern commentators, and this is an opportunity to empower students to engage with the text in a way that previous commentators could not.

Taking a Literary Approach

In the final section in each episode, a literary analysis approach to studying Tanakh is presented by a variety of recognized Tanakh scholars. Rabbi Ezra Bick makes the case for this approach when he writes:

If we are reading the text directly, then we are reading it as a text is meant to be read, and this introduces the need to read using the tools of literary analysis. Of course, if the Torah is not a book, but a code or a mystery, it would be illegitimate to read it with the same eyes and mind that one reads literature. For this we have the oft-repeated principle, *dibra Torah belashon benei adam* (the Torah speaks in human language). The Torah is literature, divine literature, written not in a special divine language but in the language and the style of man.⁸

Literary analysis tools found in this section include structural analysis, terminology analysis, such as the discovery of a “leading term,” textual comparison and intertextuality, plot analysis, and character analysis. Because the understanding of a literary work requires understanding of factors external to its writing, findings from history, archaeology, and Semitics also feature. The focus of these excerpts is on the story, the entire narrative, and in some cases, the whole Tanakh, rather than the traditional verse-by-verse approach taken by many of the classic commentaries.

7 | *Covenant & Conversation – Genesis: The Book of Beginnings*, 3.

8 | *Torah MiEtzion: New Readings in Tanach – Volume I: Bereshit*, xvi.

Acknowledgments

Every day I wake with newfound gratitude to God that I found my calling as a Jewish educator and have the privilege to make some small impact on the lives of young Jews around the world with the publications I contribute to.

My thanks and friendship to the publisher, Matthew Miller, who continues to show confidence in my abilities, and has supported my work consistently over many years, even when it means sometimes taking a risk on a radical new approach. He has assembled a world-class team of talented and wonderful people I have the honor to call my colleagues and my friends, without whom a project such as this would never see the light of day. These include Rabbi Reuven Ziegler, Rabbi Avishai Magence, Caryn Meltz, Tali Simon, Taly Hahn, Tani Bayer, Esther Be'ér, Dr. Yoel Finkelman, Aryeh Grossman, Efrat Gross, Daniel Safran, and Jenni Menashe.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank David and Debra Magerman once again for their generosity in supporting this project. This is the latest in a long line of projects I have worked on that they have made possible. Their vision and passion for Jewish education and the Jewish people is inspiring.

As always, my love and thanks must go to my loving family who are the foundation upon which anything I have ever achieved is built. To Jacqueline, Orli, Keren, Aryeh, Eliya, and Elisha, for your never-ending love and support, I dedicate this volume to you.

The last stages of this volume were completed during a very dark time for our nation. Rabbi Sacks taught me that just as the Chinese ideogram for “crisis” also means “opportunity,” the Hebrew word for crisis, *mashber*, also means “child-birth chair.” From pain and darkness comes new life. He writes, “Any civilization that can see the blessing within the curse, the fragment of light within the heart of darkness, has within it the capacity to endure.”⁹ From one of the darkest periods of our modern history has come forth light and goodness. I wish to dedicate this volume to those we have lost; to their families; to those who have fought, on whose shoulders our state exists; and to the Jewish people, *am hanetzah*.

Rabbi Dr. Daniel Rose
Modi'in, Nisan 5784

9 | *Studies in Spirituality* (Jerusalem: Maggid Books, 2021), 63–64.

בראשית

Bereshit

Parasha Overview

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 (Bereshit 1:1–2:3) emphasizes harmony and order. The second narrative (2:4–2:23) focuses on humanity, not as a biological species but as persons-in-relation. First God creates man, and then He creates woman, so humans do not live alone. The serpent tempts them; they sin and are banished from the Garden of Eden.

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 on the earth had become” and “regrets that He had made man on earth.” God creates order; man creates chaos. Which will prevail?

Episodes

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. The Seven Days of Creation | 1:1–2:3 |
| 2. The Second Account of Creation | 2:4–25 |
| 3. The Fall of Eden | 3:1–24 |
| 4. The Children of Adam and Ḥava | 4:1–26 |
| 5. The First Family Tree | 5:1–32 |
| 6. Humanity Disappoints | 6:1–8 |

Parasha Stats

- 7,235 letters
- 1,931 words
- 146 verses
- 241 lines in a sefer Torah
- 1 mitzva

- 1 ¹ When God began creating heaven and earth, the earth was void and desolate, there
 2 was darkness on the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved over the waters. God
 3 said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. God saw the light: it was good; and God
 4 separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light “day,” and the darkness
 5 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 from
 7 water.” So God made the expanse, and it separated the water beneath the expanse from
 8 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, and let
 10 dry ground appear.” And so it was. God called the dry ground “earth,” and the gathered
 11 waters He called “seas.” And God saw: it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth
 12 produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees of 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 fruit containing seeds, each of its kind. And God saw:
 13 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 from night

UNLOCKING THE TEXT

- Why does each day conclude with the words “There was evening, and there was morning”?
- Why is the first day described as “one day” but the others as a counted number (e.g., “a second day”)?
- What does it mean that “God saw... and it was good”?
- Who is God talking to when He says, “Let us make man”?
- What does it mean to be created “in the image of God”?
- Did God create a single human at first or two humans, one of each gender?
- Why does God use the language of “very good” on the sixth day?
- What does it mean that the seventh day is “blessed” and “holy”?
- What does it mean that God “rested”?

FINDING YOURSELF IN THE TEXT

- Have you ever created something you were so proud of that you needed to tell everyone about it?
- Can you see the godliness in all people? Is this sometimes a challenge for you?
- Is your weekly Shabbat “blessed” and “holy”? How?

Consider using these questions as the basis for your own commentary or creative midrash.

How does reflecting on these firsthand experiences help you better understand the text?

א בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תֵהוֹ
 ג וּבְהוֹיָשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
 ד יְהִי־אֹר וַיְהִי־אֹר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר
 ה וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קִרְיָ לַיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר
 וְיוֹם אֶחָד:
 ו וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים
 ז אֶת־הַרְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לְרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לְרָקִיעַ
 ח וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְרָקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי:
 ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְווּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מְקוֹם אֶחָד וְתִרְאֶה הַיַּבְשָׁה
 י וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיַּבְשָׁה אֲרֶץ וְלַמְקוֹהָ הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים
 יא כִּי־טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תְּדַשֵּׂא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשֶׂה פְרִי
 יב לְמִנּוֹ אֲשֶׁר זֶרְעוּבוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע
 יג לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֵשֶׂה־פְרִי אֲשֶׁר זֶרְעוּבוּ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב
 יד וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי:
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וַיְהִי

THEMES

GOD

CREATION

HOLINESS

Episode 1: *The Seven Days of Creation* – Bereshit 1:1–2:3

SUMMARY

It is commonly thought that the beginning of sefer Bereshit presents a theory of how the universe came to exist. While this is mostly correct, the account of creation appearing in sefer Bereshit diverges from other recorded accounts in that it disregards the question of what was the starting point of existence itself. For this reason, the Torah begins with the word *bereshit*, literally, “in the beginning of.” The account marks the start of a specific, unnamed, preexisting process. Had the verse stated *bareshit*, it would have been understood as meaning simply “in the beginning.” It appears that a fundamental message lies hidden in this first word: at some early stage in the mysterious process of creating existence, God created the heavens and the earth.

15 and to serve for signs and seasons, days and years. They shall be lights in the heavens’
16 expanse, shining upon the earth.” And so it was. God made the two great lights – the
17 greater light to rule by day and the lesser light to rule by night – and the stars. God set
18 them in the heavens’ expanse to shine upon the earth, to rule by day and by night and
19 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
21 the earth across the heavens’ expanse.” So God created the great sea creatures, and all
the kinds of crawling, living things that swarm in the water, and all the kinds of winged,
22 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.”
23 There was evening, and there was morning – a fifth day.

24 Then God said, “Let the land produce every kind of living thing: all the different
25 species of cattle, crawling things, and wild animals of the earth.” And so it was. God
made the different kinds of wild animals of the earth, and cattle, and all the species of
26 creature that creep upon land. And God saw that it was good. 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
27 creature that moves upon the earth.” So God created humankind in His image: in the
28 image of God He created him; 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
29 the earth.” Then God said, “I give you all these seed-bearing plants on the face of the
30 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
31 and has within it living spirit – I give every green plant for food.” 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
₂ 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 He rested from all
3 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.

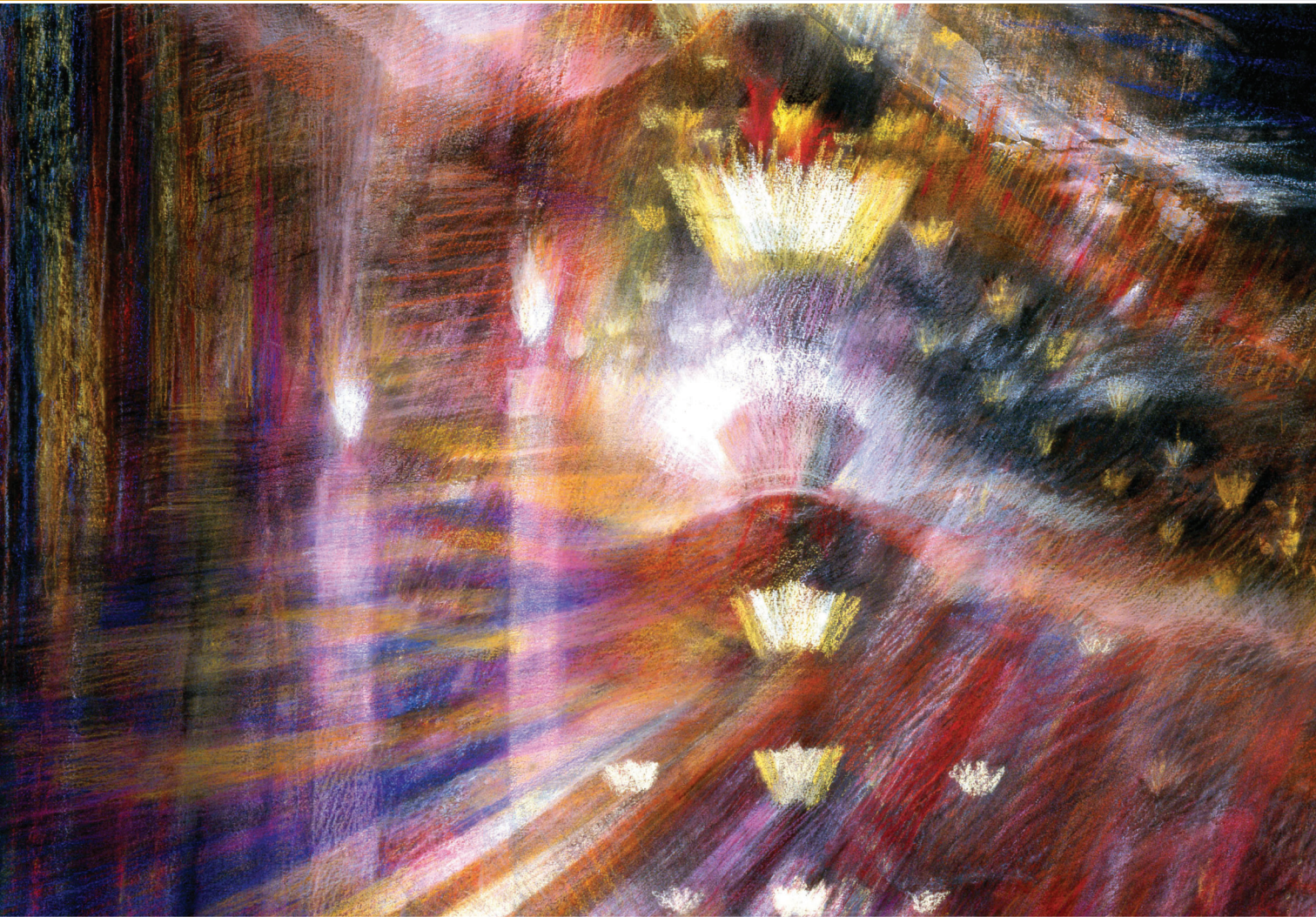
טו לַאֲתַת וְלִמְוַעֲדִים וְלִיָּמִים וְשָׁנִים: וַהֲיוּ לְמַאֲוֶרֶת בְּרִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-
 טז הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-שְׁנֵי הַמַּאֲוֶרֶת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת-הַמַּאֲוֶר הַגָּדֹל
 יז לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת-הַמַּאֲוֶר הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים: וַיִּתֵּן
 יח אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בְּרִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וְלַמַּשָּׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה
 יט וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב: וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם
 רְבִיעִי:

כ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרְצוּ הַיָּמִים שָׂרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל-הָאָרֶץ עַל-פְּנֵי רִקְיעַ
 כא הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַתַּנִּינִם הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֶת כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה וְהַרְמִשָּׁת
 כב אֲשֶׁר שָׂרְצוּ הַיָּמִים לְמִינֵהֶם וְאֶת כָּל-עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב:
 כג וַיִּבְרַךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הַיָּמִים בַּיָּמִים וְהַעוֹף יִרֶב בָּאָרֶץ:
 כד וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם חַמִּישִׁי:

כה וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ בְּהֵמָה וּרְמִשׁ וְחַיֵּיתוֹ-אָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ
 כו וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת כָּל-
 כז רִמְשׁ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינָהּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֵׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ
 כח כְּדַמוֹתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-הַרְמִשׁ
 כט הַרְמִשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים וְאֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא
 ל אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם: וַיִּבְרַךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ
 ל ומְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּכְבִשְׁתֶּה וּרְדוּ בְדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל-חַיֵּית הַרְמִשָּׁת
 לא עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נֹתְתִי לָכֶם אֶת-כָּל-עֵשֶׂב וְזֶרַע זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל-
 ל פְּנֵי כָל-הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת-כָּל-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ פְרִי-עֵץ זֶרַע זֶרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאֹכְלָהּ:
 ל וּלְכָל-חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ וּלְכָל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל וְרוֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה
 לא אֶת-כָּל-יֶדֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַהֲנִיחָ טוֹב
 מאד וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי:

ב א וַיִּכְלוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם: וַיִּכַּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ
 ג אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבַּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: וַיִּבְרַךְ אֱלֹהִים
 אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכַל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים
 לַעֲשׂוֹת:

THE ART OF MIDRASH



Day 7, Yoram Raanan (2014)

Analysis

- Which elements of this image are directly mentioned in the text?
- Which elements of this image are not found in the text?
- What midrashic interpretation is the artist giving us?

A QUESTION OF BIBLIODRAMA

TO GOD

- What was there before You created the universe?
- Why did You create the universe?
- Why did You choose to create the world in this way?
- Why did You create humankind last?
- Who are You talking to when You say, "Let us make man"?
- In what way is humankind created in Your image?
- Why did You create humanity despite knowing how much evil it will come to do?
- What does it mean for You to rest on Shabbat?

TO ADAM

- What does being created in the image of God mean to you?
- What does it feel like to be the first human being and know the world will be populated from your descendants?
- Do you feel part of the animal kingdom, or the pinnacle of creation?
- What does it feel like to be told by God to "fill the earth and subdue it"?
- What was the first Shabbat in history like?

oranges) in the high-G (or high-V) environment is actually longer than the duration between ticks of a clock (or beats of a heart) in the low-G (or low-V) environment. These differences in time's passage are known as time dilation....

Just as gravity affects the weight of mass, it also affects the flow of time, but at a much less dramatic rate. That is why it took an Einstein to discover this law of nature.

A few years ago at dinner, my family and I discussed the concept of time dilation. We decided to take a mental excursion into the realm of relativistic time to make the effect more clear. We can know how it works even if we can't understand *why* it works.

We conjured an imaginary planet so massive that its gravity slowed time by a factor of 350,000 *relative to Earth's rate of time*. That meant that while we here on Earth live out two years, a mere three minutes would tick by on that imaginary planet. My then eleven-year-old daughter, Hadas, exclaimed, "Dad, this is great! This is just super. Send me to that planet. I'll stay there for three minutes, do two years of homework, come home and no more homework for two years!"

That's not quite correct, is it?

In Hadas's time, three minutes will have passed. But for us on Earth, those three minutes will have taken two years. In those two years Hadas will have done only three minutes of homework and aged only three minutes. Upon return to Earth, all her friends will be thirteen while she will still be eleven. That is the proven nature of time in our awesome universe.

Had I watched Hadas from my low-gravity location, her time (and all her events, including her aging) would have passed *v e r y s l o w l y*. To me, events in my system were totally normal. From Hadas's perspective, her watch and her actions were normal, but looking across the reaches of space from her high-gravity system into my lower-gravity system, she would have seen my watch and everything else on Earth going very rapidly. Between two beats of her heart, my heart would beat 350,000 times.

There was only one sequence of events, one Hadas. For her, that sequence took three minutes. Three minutes of heartbeats, three minutes of study and homework. For us here on Earth, that identical time span took two years. Two years of heartbeats, two years of life's accomplishments and joys, two years of orange harvests. And both occurred in exactly the same "time." Hadas lived three minutes while we here on Earth lived two years. And which time is correct? Both. It's all relative.

Dr. Gerald L. Schroeder

Analysis

- ⦿ What specific information do we now have that was unavailable to classical Jewish commentators? How can it aid our understanding of the text?
- ⦿ How can this small excerpt from our new understanding of the laws of physics help us approach a tricky question facing us in the text?
- ⦿ What further questions do you have and what else do you need to understand after reading this?

INTEGRATING HOKHMA

In 1915, Einstein published a description of nature which revealed an extraordinary and seemingly quite unnatural fact: the rate at which time passes is not the same in all places. Changes in gravity and changes in the velocity at which we travel actually change the rate at which our time flows. At first, such a concept appeared to be highly speculative, and so this aspect of nature was referred to as the theory of relativity. But it is no longer a theory. During the past few decades, the relativity of time has been tested and verified thousands of times. It is now the law of relativity. Einstein had discovered a hitherto overlooked law of nature.

If anything in our life seems constant, it is the flow of time. This perception, or rather this misperception, of time results from the reality that the events with which we are familiar all occur on Earth, or if not exactly on Earth, then quite close to Earth. Huge changes in gravity (G) or velocity (V) are required to produce easily measurable changes in the flow of time. And even with the needed large variations in G or V , the flow of time wherever you happen to be will always appear as normal, just as it does right now. It appears normal because you and your biology are in tune with the local system. Only if we view events across a boundary, looking from one location into another location that has a very different G or V , can we observe the effect of this extraordinary law of nature discovered by Einstein. The relativity of time is encountered only when comparing one system relative to another; hence the name the law of *relativity*.

The law of relativity tells us that the flow of time at a location with high gravity or high velocity is actually slower than at another location with lower gravity or lower velocity. This means that the duration between ticks of a clock (and the beats of a heart, and even the time to ripen

<i>First cycle of creation</i>	<i>Second cycle of creation</i>
Day 1 <i>Or</i>	Day 4 <i>Meorot</i> (from the same Hebrew root as <i>or</i>)
Day 2 Separation of “lower” from “upper” waters	Day 5 Sea animals to inhabit lower waters Flying creatures to inhabit upper waters
Day 3 Emergence of land Vegetation	Day 6 Land animals and humans Consumers of vegetation

What emerges is a picture of a creation that is not only orderly and sequential, it is carefully planned and organized. It is not six sequential days of creation but two parallel cycles of three days each, in which the first round lays foundations that are developed or populated in the second.

This sense of structure, pattern, order, and planning is intentional, and stands in stark contrast to many ancient Mesopotamian creation stories in which the world emerges as a result of a clash between gods, is the violent or accidental product of some heavenly conflagration, or came to be to provide the gods with

their daily needs. In the Torah there is but a single Creator who plans, decides, controls, and creates everything.

God is not only a Creator, He is intelligent, thoughtful, organized, and powerful, among other adjectives which we can add based on the above observations. These are all part of our emerging “image” of God. It is no wonder that the Hebrew name for God used in this creation story is *Elohim*, which translated accurately would yield “the All-Powerful” or “Almighty.” God as Almighty is an essential thrust of *Bereshit* 1.

Rabbi Zvi Grumet

TAKING A LITERARY APPROACH

Pervasive throughout Bereshit 1 is a profound sense of order. One example is the five-step format which structures each “day” of creation:

- God said...
- God made/did/created/formed...
- God saw that it was “good”...
- (God named...)
- It was *erev* and it was *boker*, a (number) “day”

The regularity of the structure leaves us with a profound sense that the process has been carefully planned in advance and is methodical. Every stage is introduced by divine thought or speech, and speech is the vehicle through which things are created. At the conclusion of each creative stage, God is reflective about His creations, saying that they are “good.” The structure is so reliable that any deviation from it commands our attention and demands explanation. Thus, for example, when *ki tov* (“it was ‘good’”) is missing on the second “day” but appears twice on the third, or when the first

“day” concludes with a cardinal rather than an ordinal number (that is, *one* day rather than a *first* day), or the sixth “day” concludes with the definite article (that is, *the* sixth rather than *a* sixth), a flurry of commentary rushes to explain the anomaly.

The systematic nature of creation expresses itself in yet another remarkable way. The six days of creation are organized so that there are actually two cycles of three days each, with the second cycle paralleling the first; each day in the first cycle has its companion in the second. The first and the fourth discuss creations revolving around *or*; the second and the fifth focus on the separation of the “upper waters” from the “lower waters” (on the fifth day, those two domains – the upper waters and the lower waters – are populated by the water creatures and the flying things); the third and the sixth focus on the emergence of land and vegetation, and the beings which inhabit that land and consume that vegetation. The chart that follows illustrates this succinctly:



4 This is the story of the heavens and the earth when they were created, on the day the LORD
 5 God made earth and heaven. No shrub of the field yet grew on earth, and no plant had yet
 6 sprouted, for the LORD God had not yet brought rain upon the earth, and there was no one
 7 to work the land. A mist would rise up from the earth and water all the face of the land. Then
 8 the LORD God formed man from the dust of the land¹ and breathed the breath of life into
 9 his nostrils, and the man became a living being. The LORD God planted a garden in Eden,
 10 in the east, and there he put the man He had formed. And from the land, the LORD God
 11 caused all kinds of trees to grow, pleasant to look at and good to eat from, and the Tree of
 12 Life stood in the middle of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. A river
 13 flows from Eden to water this garden, and from there divides into four headwaters. The
 14 name of the first is Pishon. It surrounds the land of H̄avila, where there is gold. And the
 15 gold of that land is good; bdellium and rock crystal are there also. The name of the second
 16 river is Giḥon; it is the one that surrounds the land of Kush. The name of the third river is
 17 the Tigris, and it flows to the east of Assyria. The fourth river is the Euphrates. The LORD
 18 God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to work it and safeguard it. And
 the LORD God commanded the man: “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden. But
 the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil – you may not eat from that, for on the day you
 eat of it, you shall die.” Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for man to be alone. I will

¹ | The Hebrew *adam* (“man”) resonates with *adama* (“land”).

UNLOCKING THE TEXT

- ⦿ Why are there two accounts of creation?
- ⦿ Which aspects of this account of creation are the same as the previous one?
- ⦿ Which aspects of this account of creation are different from the previous one?
- ⦿ What do the new aspects in the second account add to our understanding of creation?
- ⦿ Why did God bring the animals to Adam to name them?
- ⦿ What specific messages can be learned from the description in this account of the way man and woman are created?

FINDING YOURSELF IN THE TEXT

- ⦿ Do you connect more to being created “in the image of God” or “from the dust of the land”?
- ⦿ Do you agree that it is not good to be alone?
- ⦿ What will your *ezer kenegdo* (“fitting partner”) be like?

Consider using these questions as the basis for your own commentary or creative midrash.

How does reflecting on these firsthand experiences help you better understand the text?

ד אֱלֹהֵי תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהַבְרֵאֵם בַּיּוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם: ב שְׁנֵי
 ה וְכָל שְׁיֵיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טָרֵם יִהְיֶה בָּאָרֶץ וְכָל-עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרֵם יִצְמַח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר
 ו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם אֵין לַעֲבֹד אֶת-הָאֲדָמָה: וְאֵד יַעֲלֶה מִן-הָאָרֶץ
 ז וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת-כָּל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה: וַיִּיצֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֹפֶר מִן-הָאֲדָמָה
 ח וַיִּפַּח בְּאָפָיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה: וַיִּטֵּעַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גֶּן בְּעֵדֶן
 ט מִקְדָּם וַיִּשֶׂם שֵׁם אֶת-הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָצָר: וַיִּצְמַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן-הָאֲדָמָה כֶּל־עֵץ
 י נֹחַמֵד לְמִרְאֵה וטוֹב לְמֵאֲכָל וְעֵץ הַחַיִּים בְּתוֹךְ הָגֶן וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע: וְנָהָר
 יא יֵצֵא מֵעֵדֶן לְהִשְׁקוֹת אֶת-הָגֶן וּמִשָּׁם יִפְרֹד וְהִיָּה לְאַרְבַּעַת רְאשִׁים: שֵׁם הָאֶחָד
 יב פִּישׁוֹן הוּא הִסְבִּיב אֶת כָּל-אֶרֶץ הַחִוִּילָה אֲשֶׁר-שֵׁם הַזֶּהָב: וְזָהָב הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת
 יג טוֹב שֵׁם הַבְּדֵלַח וְאֶבֶן הַשֹּׁהַם: וְשֵׁם-הַנְּהָר הַשְּׁנַיִ גִּיחוֹן הוּא הִסְבִּיב אֶת כָּל-אֶרֶץ
 יד כּוּשׁ: וְשֵׁם הַנְּהָר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי חֲדַקְל הוּא הִהְלִיךְ קִדְמַת אַשּׁוּר וְהַנְּהָר הָרְבִיעִי הוּא
 טו פָּרַת: וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם וַיְנַחֲהוּ בְּגֶן-עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹדָהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ: וַיִּצְוֶה
 יז יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל עֵץ-הָגֶן אָכַל תֹּאכַל: וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע
 יח לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בַיּוֹם אֲכַלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא-טוֹב

THEMES

GOD

CREATION

RELATIONSHIPS AND LOVE

Episode 2: The Second Account of Creation – Bereshit 2:4–25

SUMMARY

This episode is one of the most dramatic, mystifying, and challenging sections in the entire Torah. Some of its details can be understood only vaguely. Following the sweeping description of creation, which dealt with the universe on a broad scale, the Torah now provides a detailed description of the process of creating all that emerged from nothing (*yesh me'ayin*). This account is more tangible than the abstract, conceptual depiction of the first chapter. Even the divine name of God differs in this account from the previous one. In the first version, God is called Elohim, a term which on the one hand expresses God's authority and power, and on the other His all-encompassing, impersonal essence. By contrast, here God is called Adonai Elohim, the LORD God, the first word of which is spelled *yod-heh-vav-heh*, the Tetragrammaton, the personal name of God, as it were. In this account, God is not merely an abstract philosophical or theological entity, as He functioned in the first chapter, which focused on the large-scale plan of creation. Rather, God attends to the specific details of the creation process.

19 make a fitting partner for him.” The LORD God formed all the wild animals, and all the birds of the heavens, out of the land. He brought them to the man to see what he would
 20 call them, and whatever he called each living thing, that became its name. So the man gave names to all the animals, the birds of the heavens, and all the wild creatures. But
 21 he found no fitting partner for himself. Then the LORD God made the man fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping He took one of his ribs and closed the flesh in its
 22 place. And the LORD God built the rib He had taken from the man into a woman. He
 23 brought her to the man. And the man said: “This, at last is bone of my bones and flesh
 24 of my flesh. This shall be called Woman, for from Man was this one taken.”² That is why a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife and they become one flesh.
 25 The man and his wife were both naked, but they were not ashamed.

2 | *Isha* (“woman”) resonates with *ish* (“man”).

TO ADAM

- ⦿ How does it feel to know you were created from the dust of the land?
- ⦿ How does it feel to know you have the breath of God in you?
- ⦿ How did it feel to name the animals?
- ⦿ Why do you think God brought them to you to name?
- ⦿ What do you think about Ḥava?
- ⦿ How do you feel knowing she came from your own rib?
- ⦿ Are you interested, intrigued, or tempted by the two trees at the center of the Garden of Eden?
- ⦿ Why were you naked? How did it feel?
- ⦿ How do you feel about God?

TO ḤAVA

- ⦿ What do you think about Adam?
- ⦿ How do you feel knowing you came from his rib?
- ⦿ Are you interested, intrigued, or tempted by the two trees at the center of the Garden of Eden?
- ⦿ Why were you naked? How did it feel?
- ⦿ How do you feel about God?

ט הַיּוֹת הָאָדָם לְבָדוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה-לוֹ עֵזֶר כַּנְּגֹדוֹ: וַיִּצַּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן-הָאָדָמָה כָּל-
 חַיֵּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֶל-הָאָדָם לְרֹאוֹת מִה-יִקְרָא-לוֹ וְכָל־
 כ אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא-לוֹ הָאָדָם נִפְשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ: וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שִׁמוֹת לְכָל-הַבְּהֵמָה
 כא וְלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל חַיֵּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּלְאָדָם לֹא-מָצָא עֵזֶר כַּנְּגֹדוֹ: וַיִּפֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וְ
 כב תְּרַדְמָה עַל-הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אַחַת מִצַּלְעֹתָיו וַיִּסְגֶּר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתָּנָה: וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה
 כג אֱלֹהִים וְאֶת-הַיְצִלֶּע אֲשֶׁר-לָקַח מִן-הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיִּבְאֶהָ אֶל-הָאָדָם: וַיֹּאמֶר
 הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעַם עֵצָם מַעֲצָמִי וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ
 כד לָקַחְתִּי-זֹאת: עַל-כֵּן יִעֲזֹב-אִישׁ אֶת-אָבִיו וְאֶת-אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר
 כה אֶחָד: וַיְהִיו שְׁנֵיהֶם עֶרְוֹמִים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יָתַבְּשׂוּ:

A QUESTION OF BIBLIODRAMA

TO GOD

- ⦿ Why did You write two accounts of creation in the Torah?
- ⦿ Why do You appear in this second account by the name Adonai Elohim rather than just Elohim (as in the previous account)?
- ⦿ Why did You create humankind?
- ⦿ What was the purpose of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge?
- ⦿ Why did You start with a single human if “it is not good for humans to be alone”?
- ⦿ Does giving Adam the right to name the animals mean that humans are masters over them?

In these two chiastically related stories, we have seen:

A1. — Total separation – 1:1

B1. — Anticipation of interaction – 1:2

C1. — Vehicle for interaction (the creation of light) – 1:3, 5

D1. — Establishing boundaries – 1:6, 8

E1. — Fidelity of the species – 1:11–13

F1. — Illumination and power – 1:14–19

G1. — Reptiles – 1:20–22

H1. — Creation of animals – 1:24–25

I1. — Uniqueness of Man – 1:26–28

J1. — Man’s role on earth (Man’s responsibility) – 1:29–30

K. — Shabbat – 1:31–2:4

J2. — Man’s role on earth – 2:4–6

I2. — Uniqueness of humankind – 2:7–16

H2. — Creation of animals – 2:18–25

G2. — Reptiles – 3:1–4

F2. — Illumination and power – 3:5–7

E2. — Fidelity of the species – 3:8–12

D2. — Establishing boundaries – 3:14–20

C2. — Vehicle for interaction (the creation of light) – 3:21

B2. — Anticipation of interaction – 3:22

A2. — Total separation – 3:23–24



TAKING A LITERARY APPROACH

Although a superficial perusal of the text of the first two chapters of Bereshit leaves the impression that we are dealing with two distinct – and diametrically opposite – stories that demand reconciliation, this is not necessarily the case. If we take a closer look at the literary structure of these two descriptions, we will note an interesting pattern that suggests one integrated presentation.

The Biblical text is often presented in chiasmic form. A chiasmus (as with any parallelism) can be identified in one of two manners: 1. common words or phrases are used, or 2. similar ideas are presented. I would like to suggest that if we look at both creation stories, we will find some interesting parallels between them that suggest a chiasmic structure.

As in any inverted parallel, the focus point is at the fulcrum, or nexus, of the parallel. The extreme points of each story describe a total and ultimate separation. With each step, interaction and integration are enabled, enhanced, and realized. At the final step, not only are all creatures in place, but they all stand in proper relation to each other. Man, the crown of creation, is charged with implementing God's plan of dynamic growth and synthesis on earth, all within the divine mandate.

The neat symmetry presented here not only renders the challenges raised by the conflicting reports of creation moot, but also serves to reorient our

appreciation of the entire presentation of creation in the first three chapters and to see it as one integrated story. This is all fine and good, but what's the lesson here?

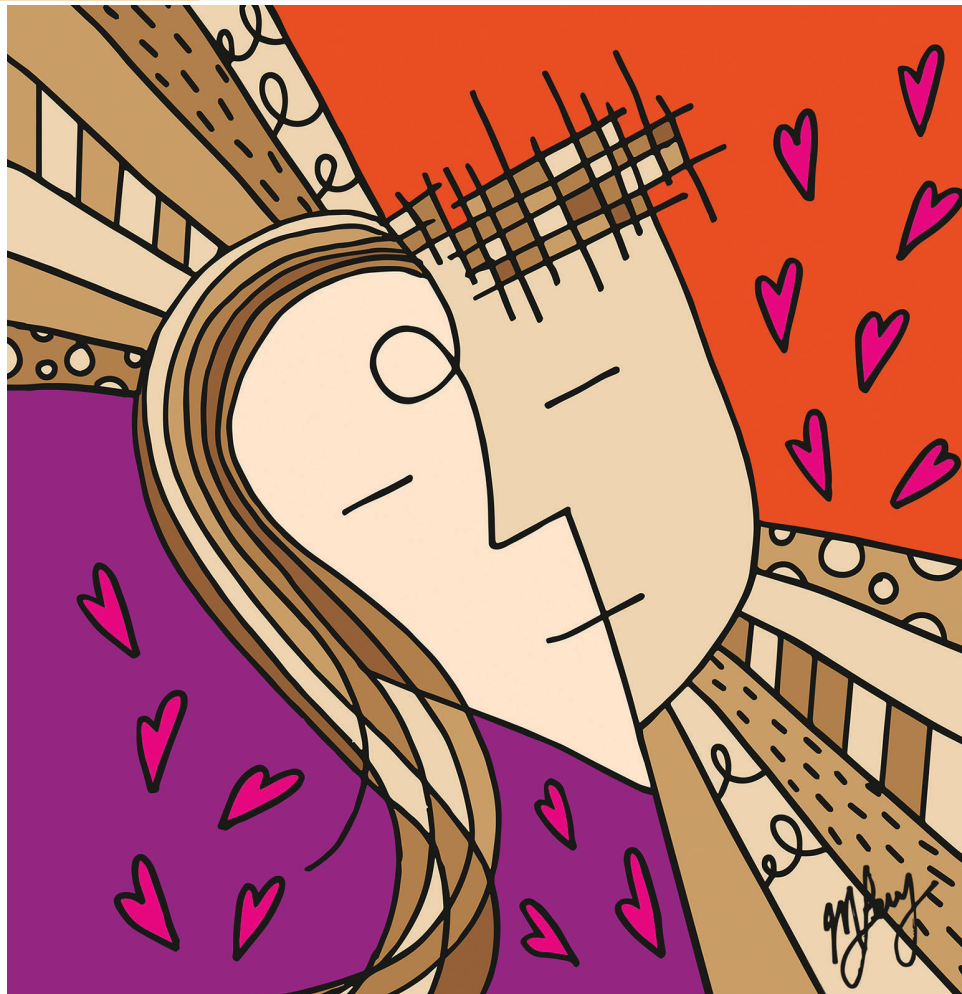
The pointing of each story as beginning with a total separation of God from His world, as it were, and culminating in unity, places *teshuva* as the glorious background on the tapestry of the world. All things stem from God's will and all things are profoundly connected to God. All of creation points toward God and yearns to return to its source. However we understand *teshuva* (repentance/return to God in its pure legal sense), as an independent mitzva or one that attaches to all others as a contingency, we see a powerful thread of *teshuva* woven throughout these two stories of creation.

Teshuva is the very life-spirit of all of creation. The separation and isolation, be it heavens from earth or Man from the garden, stand at the polar extremes from the holiness of Shabbat. Shabbat is that singular experience, which we are blessed with each week, where all of creation stands at its perfect place in relation to the Creator – and to itself. Is it any wonder that the Rabbis attributed the "Song of Shabbat" (Tehillim 92) to Adam, after he learned of the power of *teshuva* (Bereshit Rabba 22:13)? "Great is *teshuva*, that it preceded the creation of the world" (Midrash Tehillim 90:12).

Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

THE ART OF MIDRASH

Adam and Eve
Michelle Levy (2022)



Analysis

- Which elements of this image are directly mentioned in the text?
- Which elements of this image are not found in the text?
- What midrashic interpretation is the artist giving us?