

THE NAGEL EDITION
חומש קורן לב לדעת
THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH



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THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH



TORAH TRANSLATION BY
Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks זצ"ל

COMMENTARIES BY
Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn, Executive Editor
and Rabbi Dr. Zvi Grumet, Senior Editor

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THE NAGEL EDITION
OF THE KOREN YOUNG ADULT HUMASH LEV LADAAT
IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF

Jack M. Nagel ז"ו

ר' יעקב אלימלך ז"ל

A beloved husband, devoted father, adoring grandfather and great-grandfather.

A true Visionary, who survived the Shoah, and whose philosophy was
to deal compassionately and kindly with all people.

His love for Torah and being a mensch guided him throughout his life.

He believed Education was the key to Jewish survival, and he made it his life's mission
to enrich the Los Angeles community with all aspects of Jewish scholarship and culture.

He established and remained committed to many yeshivot and Centers of Jewish
Learning throughout the United States and in his cherished homeland, Israel.

He had great faith, great heart, and great courage and was blessed
together with his Eshet Chayil, our Mother Gitta,
to leave a legacy of Tzedaka, Chesed and Emunah.

מרבה תורה מרבה חיים. מרבה צדקה מרבה שלום.

"The more Torah, the more life. The more charity, the more peace." (Avot 2:8)

Dedicated with love by his children:

Dr. Ronnie and Cheryl Nagel

Los Angeles, California, USA

Esther and Dr. Paul Lerer

Englewood, New Jersey, USA

David and Marnie Nagel

Los Angeles, California, USA

Careena and Drew Parker

Englewood, New Jersey, USA

And his devoted wife, Dr. Gitta Nagel

Los Angeles, California, USA



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PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

“דור לדור ישבח מעשיך” (תהלים קמה, ד)

“One generation will praise Your works to the next...” (Psalms 145:4)

It is with gratitude and a certain ambition that we introduce this volume of **THE NAGEL EDITION OF THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH**, a Hūmash designed to encourage connection, reflection, and learning of our foundation stone, the Torah.

The connection between Jewish young adults and the Torah is critical. Our children must learn the text of the Hūmash and the classical commentators who have illuminated difficult passages. But it is just as important – and all-too-often neglected – that the student or young adult engage emotionally and experientially with the text. How does the Torah give them a prism to view the world around them? The need for this deeper, spiritual interaction gives rise to the name of this edition: **Lev Ladaat: The Understanding Heart**. For our ambition is that every Jew engage with the Torah and incorporate its values into his or her daily life, not just as an academic exercise.

It is with this ambition that Koren Publishers Jerusalem has created this edition, designed for 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 Hūmash 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 Shlomo Einhorn, from whose fertile imagination and broad educational

experience the concept for this Young Adult Hūmash sprang. Likewise to Rabbi Dr. Zvi Grumet, whose intimate knowledge of the Hūmash and its commentaries has enriched these pages inestimably. And to Rabbi Yedidya Naveh and Caryn Meltz, our Managing Editors, who brought it all together into a handsome and useful edition. And finally, to the team of translators, editors, and typesetters – Rabbi Jonathan Mishkin, Suri Brand, Ilana Sobel, Carolyn Budow Ben-David, Rina Ben-Gal, Efrat Gross, and Avichai Gamdani – who made the volume a reality.

None of this would have been possible without the support and detailed involvement of the Nagel Family of California and New Jersey, who understood both the ambitions and methods of this edition. **THE NAGEL EDITION OF THE KOREN LEV LADAAT HUMASH** is dedicated to the memory of Jack Nagel, *z”l*, who was an exceptional community leader. He and his beloved wife Gitta have enabled so much of Jewish life in the Los Angeles community, especially in the area of Jewish education: *yeshivot*, high schools, and so much more. Surviving the Holocaust and making a new life for himself and family, Jack’s was an exemplary Jewish life, combining *Torah im derekh erez*. Koren is honored to be associated with his memory.

On behalf of all our *rabbanim*, scholars, and designers, we thank the Nagel Family. And to the many thousands of readers, in this and future generations: We are forever in your debt.

We hope the use of this Hūmash will bring Jews closer and closer to the Torah and all the good it represents.

Matthew Miller, Publisher
Jerusalem, 5784 (2024)

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

What if there were no more bookstores left on Earth? What if we woke up to discover that the written word had been almost eliminated? This is the frightening possibility we confront when we visit “The Last Bookstore” in downtown Los Angeles. The Last Bookstore takes the guise of a survival shelter where all of Earth’s great books are sold, in case there may one day be no other places to find books. I once had the opportunity to spend some time there, and I found my way to a Bible, which included a commentary for teenagers. It roused my curiosity – why is there no edition of the *Ḥumash* directed toward young adults? Ought we be simply waiting for young Jewish people to come to the Torah, instead of bringing the Torah to them?

Some might say that teens aren’t interested in the *Ḥumash*. They are mistaken. For twenty-two years I have been teaching young adults, and I have always found them to be as hungry for knowledge and connection as any other group. Whenever I look past a student’s distracted veneer and genuinely engage them with some profound thought, it opens a reservoir of dialogue that I could not have found elsewhere.

With social media and technology becoming a constant part of our lives, our need for real and deep connection has only grown stronger. The Torah, we know, is an עץ חיים היא למחויקים בה – a tree of life for all who hold on to it.

Putting together a project like this *Ḥumash* is complex. It’s very easy to slip into anachronistic concepts aimed at grabbing attention. But we owe more to ourselves; we are hungry for substantive and truly thought-provoking conversations.

To you, our young adults, we now offer this *Ḥumash*. Will you use it? Will you allow it to guide you? When you are having a hard day and the walls seem to close in on you, will you pick this Torah up and let it lift you up? Will you let God into your life? We find Him in these words.

Why do we study Torah?

- *The Torah is a blueprint of the universe*, starting at the beginning – Bereshit. The Midrash teaches that God “looked into the Torah and created a world.” Do we want

to understand the world? “We should look at where it came from.”

- *How to practice Judaism*. Torah teaches us how to live as Jews. It teaches us how to practice our Judaism. The Gemara teaches: “תלמוד גדול, שדהתלמוד מביא לידי מעשה” – learning is great in that it moves us to action. I love the word *halakha*, which denotes Jewish Law. It means to walk. We can’t walk in the ways of Judaism unless we know the *halakha*.
- *The values of Judaism*. The Torah guides us not only in how to practice Judaism’s laws but, at times more importantly, how to live its values. The emphasis that our people places on charity, education, visiting the sick – it’s all derived from the sensibilities of the Torah.
- *To help us do battle*. The sages interpret the wars described in the Torah as symbolic of our struggle against the *yetzer hara*, our evil inclination. Our shadow side is cunning. We have only one weapon against it, says the Gemara in Kiddushin: Torah study.
- *It is our oxygen, our life force*. The Gemara in Berakhot teaches us that just as a fish cannot live without water, so too we cannot exist without Torah. There isn’t an example of a Jewish community that has thrived and flourished over multiple generations without a love and appreciation for producing Torah.
- *Crisis management*. Think about what enabled Yosef to survive trauma after trauma in Egypt? What made him so resilient? What did Yosef have that allowed him to survive? Rashi tells us that before he was thrown into the pit, Yosef would spend his time with Yaakov, studying the Torah taught by Shem and Ever. Shem and Ever were survivors. They had endured the flood and the generation of the dispersion. Deep down, Yaakov knew that Yosef would need this Torah.
- *To develop a relationship with God*. Part of our mission in this world is to cleave to the Almighty. Through a relationship with God one learns what it means to be a proper human being. We enter into a relationship with our Father in Heaven by learning His word.

◀ *It’s the*

- *It's the great equalizer.* Rav Boruch Ber, the great rosh yeshiva, is quoted to have once said that Torah is the great equalizer. A child starting sixth grade could learn Bava Metzia, as though it's the most basic and simple piece of the Gemara. But at the same time, it's one of the hardest parts of the Talmud, challenging even the most advanced scholars. Torah is accessible to everyone at all levels.
- *It's your story.* Project years ahead and imagine bringing your spouse back to the house of your parents. While you're cleaning up the house, you find your old yearbook. You can't wait to share it with the person that you love. Why are you so excited? Because you are going to share the story of your life. That's why we open up the Torah. Our entire legacy is there; where we came from, what we went through, where our customs come from, and where our identity has come from.
- *And finally: It's your way out.* Imagine you are lost in a maze. You cannot find the way out. Suddenly, you're told by the maze keeper, who stands above the maze, that there is one way out. It's the simplest way of all – the way that you came in. Retrace your steps, and that's how you'll find a way out. The Jews have survived the Shoah and have rebuilt a remarkable edifice called the State of Israel. We have done amazing things in America and around the world. We have built *yeshivot* filled to the brim with students. But we also find ourselves at a crossroads, facing multiple challenges. God's guidance for us is: Retrace your steps. Figure out where you became lost, because that will tell us how to get through the maze of life. That's why we need the Torah.

With all these ideas in mind, we have designed this *Humash* in such a way as to maximize the student's opportunity for reflection, connection, and learning. In addition to Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks's beautiful new translation of the Torah, we have included several different commentaries to add meaning to your journey:

WISDOM OF THE HEART: This commentary is designed to make you think critically about the stories, laws, and poetry in the Torah and how they relate to your life. It

often includes a question about your own experiences and opinions.

THE CLASSIC COMMENTATORS: This section begins with a guiding issue or question and brings two or three classic commentaries from Jewish history who have offered answers. Compare the answers given by the different commentaries. With whom do you agree? These are followed by *Questions for Thought*, which push you to read the commentaries more closely and find hidden ideas below the surface.

TEXTUAL SKILLS: These questions encourage you to read the text of the Torah more closely. The exact ways words and phrases appear carry tremendous meaning, and by paying attention to details we can make ourselves better readers.

QUICK BITES: This section provides a brief thought about the Torah that we can take with us out of the classroom and share with family and friends. It can be a jumping-off point for a deeper conversation.

EXPLORING HASHKAFAT: This essay at the end of most *parashot* deals with a "big idea" that challenges us as Jews in the modern world. It is not meant to give us easy answers, but to help us learn to think in creative ways about complex questions.

I write these words with profound gratitude to God. It is my hope that this project brings about a deeper love and understanding of God among the Jewish people.

It is an honor to work on this project together with Koren Publishers. Their professionalism, responsibility to tradition, and keen sense of style have made this a truly wonderful experience. Thank you to Matthew Miller and all the talented and hardworking editorial staff at Koren.

Thank you to my wonderful school and community, Yeshivat Yavneh, where many of these teachings were first developed and shared with teenagers.

Thank you to my wife, Shira. We were standing on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea when you held a rough draft of this *Humash* in your hand. You looked at me and said: "This project must happen."

◀ Thank you

Thank you to my parents and family who continue to encourage, praise, and support my work.

Thank you to the Nagel family. The connection between our families goes back over sixty years, and our bond of Torah began with a family *havura* on Wilshire Boulevard. Together with Jack, of blessed memory, we completed Sanhedrin and then began Bava Batra. It has been an exceptional privilege, and I have the *zekhut* of

continuing this tradition with the family. This work was made possible by the incredible family vision gifted to the Nagels by Jack and Gitta. To Dr. Ronnie, Esther, David, and Careena, my blessing is that the merit of this project may stand for your whole family's long life and health. May we continue to follow your trailblazing path, as together we celebrate this very historic moment – *The Koren Lev Ladaat Humash*.

Rabbi Shlomo Einhorn
Executive Editor

ספר בראשית GENESIS

פרשת בראשית PARASHAT BERESHIT

“Most of the world tells stories to put people to sleep.
We tell stories to wake people up.”
Rabbi Naḥman of Breslov

What was before the beginning? Silence? No. Silence would be too loud to describe that. In a single utterance, the supremely perfect being (God) brings into existence a world with all of its contents and inhabitants.

This world will become humanity’s home. The human race will rise and fall, love and hate, struggle to become something better and at times become something worse. The Torah is the mandate, the mission to rise above that which seeks to pull us down, and to bring others up with us.

The success of that mission is dependent on ...you, me, us. And what happens when we do not push to succeed, when we allow ourselves and others to slide? ... Well, let’s see.

PARASHAT BERESHIT

- 1 ¹/₂ When God began creating heaven and earth, the earth was void and desolate, there
 3 was darkness on the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved over the waters. God
 4 said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. God saw the light: it was good; and God
 5 separated the light from the darkness. And God called the light “day,” and the darkness
 He called “night.” There was evening, and there was morning – one day.

העמק דבר

זה הספר הנקרא ספר בראשית נקרא בפי הנביאים ספר הישר... וזה היה שבח האבות שמלבד שהיו צדיקים וחסידים ואוהבי ה' באופן היותר אפשר. עוד היו ישרים. היינו שהתנהגו עם אומות העולם אפילו עובדי אלילים מכוערים. מכל מקום היו עמם באהבה וחשו לטובתם באשר היא קיום הבריאה... וכן הרבה למדנו מהליכות האבות בדרך ארץ. מה ששייך לקיום העולם המיוחד.

HAAMEK DAVAR

The book of Genesis is known as “The Book of the Straight Path” [*Sefer Hayashar*] by the prophets... The name represents a praise of our patriarchs whose lives are recorded in this text. For these men were not only righteous and just individuals who loved God to the highest degree, but they were also honest and straightforward. We see this in the way that they interacted with the neighboring nations, despicable idolators though they were. Nevertheless, our ancestors treated them respectfully, sought what was good for them, and strove to protect their lives... Thus we have much to learn from the behavior of the patriarchs, especially with regard to the preservation of the world.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- On what assumption is Rashi’s question based? Do Rashbam and Netziv (*Haamek Davar*) agree with Rashi’s assumption?
- What do you find surprising about Rashbam’s approach?
- According to Netziv, what is Genesis supposed to teach us about the ways we relate to the rest of humanity?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. What two words are repeated many times, setting them up as the theme words of this passage?
2. What word appears in each of the verses in this passage, and even appears twice in one verse?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

According to a midrash, God created and destroyed many worlds before creating the one in which we exist. We will never know what existed on those realms, but perhaps there is an important message for us: if God can start over, so can we.

Rashi’s opening comment on the Torah asks why the Torah needed to include all the stories of Genesis, and cites the answer of R. Yitzhak: God shared the might of His actions with His people, so that if anyone challenged their claim to the land of Israel, they would be able to respond that God create the world and gave it to whomever He chose. It is highly unlikely that that argument

would win over many nations (can you imagine the response if an Israeli delegate tried that in the UN?) However, if you look carefully at Rashi’s words, you will notice that he does not say that you should *answer* this, but that you should *know how to answer*. It is important for the nation of Israel to be able to understand *for itself* the basis of its legitimate claim to the land – only then can we begin a discussion with anyone else.

**Do you feel secure in your Jewish beliefs?
 If not, would you like to be?**

פרשת בראשית

א ב א
 בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: וְהָאָרֶץ
 הַיְתֵה תְהוֹ וְבָהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת
 ג ד
 עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי־אֹר וַיְהי־אֹר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים
 אֶת־הָאֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ:
 ה
 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאֹר יוֹם וּלְחֹשֶׁךְ קִרָּא לַיְלָה וַיְהי־עֶרֶב וַיְהי־
 בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

Why was it important for the Torah to begin with a series of stories beginning with creation?

רש"י RASHI

אמר ר' יצחק: לא היה צריך להתחיל התורה אלא מהחדש הזה לכם (שמות י"ב:ב'), שהיא מצוה ראשונה שנצטוו ישראל. ומה טעם פתח בבראשית, משום: כח מעשיו הגיד לעמו לתת להם נחלת גוים (תהלים קי"א:ו'). שאם יאמרו אומות העולם: לסטים אתם שכבשתם ארצות שבעה גוים, והם אומרים להם: כל הארץ של הקב"ה היא, הוא בראה והוא נתנה לאשר ישר בעיניו, ברצונו נתנה להם וברצונו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו.

רשב"ם RASHBAM

כל הפרשה הזאת של מלאכת ששה ימים הקדימה משה רבינו לפרש לך מה שאמר הקב"ה בשעת מתן תורה: זכור את יום השבת לקדשו וגו' כי ששת ימים עשה י"י את השמים ואת הארץ את הים ואת כל אשר בס וינח ביום השביעי (שמות כ':ז-י'). וזהו שכתוב: ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום הששי - אותו ששי שהוא גמר ששה ימים שאמר הקב"ה במתן תורה. לכך אמר להם משה לישראל, להודיעם כי דברי הקב"ה אמת.

Rabbi Yitzhak taught: Would it not have been more reasonable to begin the Torah with the verse, "This month shall be to you the beginning of months" (Ex. 12:2), the first commandment assigned to the nation of Israel? Why then does the Torah begin with, "When God began creating heaven and earth"? By opening with the description of creation, God fulfilled the message, "He has revealed His powerful deeds to His people by granting them their share of the nations" (Psalms 111:6). For should the nations of the world point an accusing finger at Israel and say: You are bandits who conquered and stole the lands belonging to the seven Canaanite nations! we can justifiably retort: The entire world belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He. He created the universe and He distributes its areas to those whom He deems worthy. True, at one point He bequeathed the land of Israel to the seven nations. But it was later His will to take the country away from them and to give it to us!

Moshe employed the entire description of the six days of creation as an explanation for God's later declaration, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8), "For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that they contain, and He rested on the seventh day" (20:11). Now when our passage states, "There was evening, and there was morning - the sixth day" (Gen. 1:31), it must be referring to the culmination of creation that the Holy One, blessed be He, will relate to at the giving of the Torah. Moshe therefore described to Israel the activity of these six days here in the book of Genesis in order to convince the nation that God spoke the truth during His presentation of the Ten Commandments.

1:6–13 The second and third day feature the separation of the “upper waters,” the “lower waters,” and the dry land (without water). Following the separation, God brings vegetation – including self-reproducing grasses and fruit trees – to sprout from the ground. God names the **רקיע**, which separates the upper and lower waters, **שמים**; He calls the dry land **ארץ**, and the collections of waters He calls **ימים**.

- 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 gath-
11 ered waters He called “seas.” And God saw: it was good. Then God said, “Let the earth
produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees of all the kinds on earth that grow
12 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.

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. The word for land used in verse 9 is **יבשה**. What is the root of that word? What is the difference between calling something by what it is and by calling it by what it isn't?
2. Which word appears seven times in this passage and could be identified as the theme word?
3. How many times does the word **מין**, meaning “species,” appear in verses 11–12?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

God separates between the waters, so that there are both “upper” waters and “lower” waters. Pri Tzadik suggests that the upper waters went to a world where the “good light” of the first day was kept, while the lower waters remained in this world, where God’s power is often hidden. Humanity’s mission is to find a way to unite these worlds. Every time we discover God’s infinite power in our mundane daily lives we do a tiny bit to reunite the upper

waters and the lower waters.

In describing the emergence of vegetation, God proclaims **תדשא הארץ דשא**. Rav Yaakov Meir Halevi Horowitz explains that the word **דשא** is an acronym for **שלום**, **דין**, and **אמת** – justice, peace, and truth – which according to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel (Avot 1:18) are the three pillars that uphold the existence of the world.

א וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רִקְיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהִי מִבְּדִיל בֵּין מַיִם
 לַמַּיִם: וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַרְקִיעַ וַיְבַדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת
 לַרְקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לַרְקִיעַ וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים
 לַרְקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי:
 ב וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקְוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד
 וְתִרְאֶה הַיִּבְשָׁה וַיְהִי־כֵן: וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיִּבְשָׁה אֶרֶץ וּלְמַקְוֵה
 הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תְּדַשְׂא
 הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע עֵיץ פָּרִי עֵץ לְמִינֵו אֲשֶׁר
 זֶרַע־בוּ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן: וְתוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ
 זֶרַע לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֵץ־פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר זֶרַע־בוּ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים
 כִּי־טוֹב: וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

On the third day God creates something called דשא. What is it?

רש"י	RASHI
תדשא הארץ – תתכסה ותתמלא לבוש עשבים ... וכל שורש לעצמו נקרא עשב.	Let the land fill itself and cover itself with a garment of vegetation... and each root by itself is called <i>esev</i> .
ר' יוסף קרא	RABBI YOSEF KARA
דשא – אילנות.	The term <i>deshah</i> means "trees".
ר' עובדיה ספורנו	RABBI OVADYA SFORNO
דשא – מיני עשבים למאכל בהמה.	The phrase refers to a range of grasses that animals feed on.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- According to each of the above commentators, what is the purpose of the דשא?
- What could be God's message to us, according to each of the commentators, by the fact that the Torah specifies that He created דשא?

1:14–19 *The fourth day is marked by the appearance of the heavenly sources of light: the sun, moon, and stars. They also function as ways of marking and keeping time – days, season, and years.*

14 Then God said, “Let there be lights in the heavens’ expanse to separate day from night
 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.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- How do each of the commentators resolve the problem?
- What logical questions can you pose to challenge each of the commentaries above?
- Aside from the fact that the commentators address a technical question, can you find messages that their commentaries are trying to convey?
- What additional question does Rabbi David Tzvi Hoffman try to address in the second half of his comment?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Look carefully at verse 14. Notice that there is a mismatch between the title given to the heavenly objects being created, and the primary function the text ascribes to them.
2. Notice that the root **אור** appears seven times in this section. How many times does the root **משל** appear? What does it mean?

WISDOM OF THE HEART

Was there anything *before* creation? Did time exist before God created the world?

The Rebbe of Zidichov, based on a statement in Midrash Rabba, suggests that time, like God Himself, is infinite – it always was here and always will be. Others, however, from Rav Se’adya Gaon and Rambam to the Baal Hatanya (the first Lubavitcher Rebbe), disagree. These authorities claim that since God is infinite, time would have been meaningless in a world in which

there was only God. For them, God created time so that finite beings (like us) could exist.

The Torah writes about the “great (*gadol*) luminary.” Noticing that the same word, *gadol*, is used to describe God Himself, The Gaon of Vilna concludes that it is not a description of size, but of impact. God is the ultimate in being *gadol* as His impact is infinite. Similarly, the greatness of the “great luminary” relates not to its size but to its impact.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בְּרִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם
 וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: וְהָיוּ
 לְמְאֹרֹת בְּרִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי-כֵן: וַיַּעַשׂ
 אֱלֹהִים אֶת-שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת-הַמָּאֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת
 הַיּוֹם וְאֶת-הַמָּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים:
 וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בְּרִקְיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל-הָאָרֶץ: וְלַמַּשָּׁל
 בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיְרֵא אֱלֹהִים
 כִּי-טוֹב: וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם רְבִיעִי:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

If light and dark were created on the first day, how are we to understand the sources of light which were first created on the fourth?

רש"י

יהי מאורות וגו' – מיום ראשון נבראו, וברביעי צוה עליהם להתלות ברקיע.

RASHI

The lights were actually created on the first day, but on the fourth day, God command their suspension in the heavens and their fixture in the expanse of the sky.

רמב"ן

יהי מאורות – הנה האור נברא ביום ראשון, ומאיר ביסודות, וכאשר נעשה הרקיע בשני הפסיק באור, ומנע אותו מהאיר ביסודות התחתונים, והנה כאשר נבראת הארץ בשלישי היה בה חשך ולא אור. ועתה ברביעי רצה הקב"ה שיהיה ברקיע מאורות מגיעים אור לארץ.

RAMBAN

God created the light on the first day, whereupon it illuminated the elements. However, once God fashioned the expanse on the second day, that interposed between the light and the lower elements, plunging them into darkness. Thus when the earth was formed on the third day it existed temporarily with no light at all. Now on the fourth day, the Holy One, blessed be He, desired that there be luminaries in the expanse that would direct their light toward the earth.

ר' דוד צבי הופמן

בשלושת הימים הראשונים היה האור ברשות עצמו, מבלי שיהא קשור לגוף כלשהו. חילופי יום ולילה, ייתכן שבאו כתוצאה מסיבובי כדור הארץ, שבהמשכם הופנתה פעם מחצית זו ופעם מחצית זו כלפי האור. אך גם ייתכן, שערב ובוקר הנוכרים בימים הראשונים, לא היו אלא מידות זמן, וכפי שאמרנו לעיל, כלומר שלא היו אז כלל חילופי יום ולילה. ביום הרביעי היה צריך לקשור את האור אל גופים שישאווהו.

RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

During the first three days of the world's existence the universe was bathed in light that was not contained within, and did not emanate from, a particular light source. It would seem that the transitions from day to night were effected by the rotation of the earth; as the planet turned on its axis sometimes this half of the earth faced the light, and other times the other half faced it. Alternatively, it is possible that the terms "evening" and "morning" which are used to describe the first days refer only to units of time, since there was as yet no shifting between day and night. It was only on the fourth day that the original light became associated with specific heavenly bodies.

1:20–23 *On the fifth day animal life appears – the fish (including the great sea creatures) swarm in the seas and the flying creatures dominate the skies but reproduce on land. For the first time we hear God blessing His creation; the blessing is for these creatures to be fruitful and multiply and fill their domains.*

- 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.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- According to Sforno, why was there a need to mention the great sea creatures?
- In what way is Rabbi David Tzvi Hoffman’s interpretation exactly the opposite of that of Sforno?
- Ramban has a completely different understanding of why the Torah mentioned the great sea creatures. What is his understanding? What is surprising about Ramban’s interpretation?

TEXTUAL SKILLS

1. Notice that the name of the flying creatures is the verb used to describe the way they move. animals in both the heavens and the water. Where else in this chapter did we find the heavens and the water described together?
2. Notice that the Torah describes here the emergence of

WISDOM OF THE HEART

The word **נפש** should not be confused with **נשמה**. According to Rav Hirsch, **נפש** is the life force which is capable of distinguishing between those things which are beneficial and those which are harmful to the animal’s existence, and which motivates living things to move.

**How do we motivate ourselves to keep moving in a positive direction?
 How do we distinguish ourselves from others?**

כ וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרְעוּ הַמַּיִם שְׂרָץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל-
 כא הָאָרֶץ עַל-פְּנֵי רְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם: וַיְבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הַתַּנִּינִם
 הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֵת כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה וְהַדְּמָשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר שְׂרְעוּ הַמַּיִם
 לְמִינֵיהֶם וְאֵת כָּל-עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים פִּי-טוֹב:
 כב וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הַמַּיִם בַּיַּמִּים
 כג וְהָעוֹף יִרֶב בָּאָרֶץ: וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם חַמִּישִׁי:

CLASSIC COMMENTATORS

The large תנינים are given special mention. Why?

ר' עובדיה ספורנו

שלא הספיק הכח המוליד המסודר במים להמציא התנינים הראשונים בלי זרע, עד שברא אז כח מספיק לזה.

RABBI OVADYA SFORNO

When it was first created, the water lacked the power to produce these gigantic beasts without seed. So God created sufficient power to form these animals.

רמב"ן

יברא אלהים את התנינים הגדולים – בעבור גודל הנבראים האלה, שיש מהם ארכם פרסאות רבות, הגידו היונים בסיפריהם שידעו מהם ארוכים חמש מאות פרסאות. ורבותינו גם כן הפליגו בהם (בבלי ב"ב ע"ג). בעבור זה ייחס בהם הבריאה לאלהים, כי הוא שהמציאם מאין.

RAMBAN

The Torah mentions these creatures specifically, because of their tremendous size. Some of these sea creatures stretched for several miles in length, and indeed the Greeks claim to have seen some as long as five hundred parasang [equivalent to about two and a half miles each]. Our Sages also exaggerate the size of these animals [see Bava Batra 73b]. Thus the text wished to point out that God formed these beasts *ex nihilo*.

ר' דוד צבי הופמן

תחילה נזכרים התנינים הגדולים. ואת כל וגו' – שאר בעלי החיים, הקטנים יותר, הנמצאים במים.

RABBI DAVID TZVI HOFFMAN

The great sea creatures are mentioned first. They are followed by all the other, much smaller life forms which inhabit the ocean.

1:24–31 *On the sixth day we have the creation of the land animals and humans. Humans are unique as they are created **בצלם** **אלהים**, often translated as “in God’s image,” and their blessing includes being put in charge of all that God had previously created on earth. The vegetation, created on the third day, is given to the humans and the animals to eat.*

24 Then God said, “Let the land produce every kind of living thing: all the different species
 25 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 creature
 26 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 creature
 27 that moves upon the earth.” So God created humankind in His image: in the image of
 28 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

רמב"ן

ואמר ... כי: בצלם אלהים ברא אותו לספר הפלא
 אשר נפלא בו משאר הנבראים.

ר' שמשון רפאל הירש

תכלית תורתנו הקדושה היא, לא רק לקדש את רוחו
 של האדם אלא גם את גופו. זהו היסוד לכל המוסר
 האנושי: הגוף האנושי, על כל דחפיו וכחותיו, נברא
 בצורה הראויה לאלקים; וחובתו של אדם היא, לקדש
 את גופו כפי שמתאים לתפקידו האלקי.

RAMBAN

This clause emphasizes the wondrous and superior nature of human beings in comparison to the rest of God’s creations.

RABBI SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

The purpose of our sacred Torah is not merely to sanctify the spirit of man, but also to elevate his physical existence. This represents the fundamental principle behind all human ethics. The human body, with all its urges and powers was created in an image with the potential toward the divine. It is therefore incumbent upon every individual to make his body holy such as befits his godly mission.

QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

- Which of the commentators understands the word **אלהים** as referring to God? How do they deal with the problem of God not having an image?
- How do those who don’t understand **אלהים** as God understand the phrase?
- Which of the commentators do you think best captures the grandeur of humanity?
- Which of the commentators do you think best captures the Torah’s intent?