

# *Shiur L'Yom Shenit*<sup>1</sup>

[Monday's Study]

READINGS:     ***Torah B'reshit:***                     **Genesis 1:1 - 2:3**  
                  ***Haftarah:***                                 **Isaiah 42:5-8**  
                  ***B'rit Chadasha:***                     **John 1:1-3**

*Then the Holy One saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.*  
[Genesis 1:35]

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Today's Meditation is Proverbs 8:22-31;  
This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the *Avot*, the Prayer of the Fathers

The Creator of the Universe is about to pull back the curtain of Divine Mystery for us ever so slightly. Through simple words on the scrolls of Torah the Holy One is poised and ready to reveal to us things far too wonderful for even angels to comprehend.

What mysteries am I talking about, you ask? I am talking about mysteries like how and why and in what order the universe in which we live came into existence. I am talking about mysteries like the Divine institution of the dimension of *time* – and the establishment therein of the unique and especially holy and blessed interval/island in the realm of time called *Shabbat* [Sabbath]. I am talking about mysteries such as the establishment of the *Garden of Eden*. I am talking about mysteries such as how there came to be both an *essential unity* and a *physical uniqueness* between the male and female of the human species. I am talking about mysteries such as the supernatural blessings that flow to a human being who *sh'ma-s*<sup>2</sup> the Voice of the Creator, and the dire spiritual and physical consequences that flow from *lo-sh'ma*-ing that Voice, and instead entertaining and heeding other,

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<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew verb *sh'ma* [*shin, mem, ayin*, Strong's Hebrew word #8085] is one of the most frequently encountered verbs in the Bible. , Sometimes translated "*he listens*", sometimes "*he hears*", and sometimes "*he obeys*", this verb describes the proper response of man to the Voice of the Creator. To *sh'ma* means much more than either to listen or to hear. It means to *totally restructure one's life based solely upon what one has heard*, forsaking all other ways besides that way explicitly spoken by he who has spoken. In the case of Torah, the speaker is, of course, the Holy One Himself. An example of what it means to *sh'ma* is found in the way a mother of a newborn baby responds when her baby cries in the night. No matter how tired the mother is, or how inconvenient it may be, or who may tell her just to let the baby cry, it will be alright, she is driven to respond, and does respond. Her reaction to the baby's cry is a *sh'ma* response. She knows her baby's voice. When she hears it, she drops everything and responds because of the depth of the relationship – the bond – she has with the baby. We are to *sh'ma* the Holy One's voice the way the mother responds to her baby's cry – drop everything, listen to no other counsel, and respond appropriately, in a manner consistent with the relationship.

competing voices.

I am talking about mysteries such as the *various approaches men take in the name of 'worship'*. I am talking about mysteries such as the *roots of such dangerous human emotions as jealousy, rage, and intent to murder*. I am talking about mysteries such as the *ten generations preceding Noach*; the sparks of sin that ignited the fuse leading to *the explosive power of the judgment on Noach's generation, and of the Holy One's choosing of a man through which to save a species*.

This week we will peek behind the curtain of these mysteries. We will read Torah's words concerning them. We will *marvel*. We will *ponder*. We will even *comment about it all* with seeming profundity. But we will not *comprehend* them. And that is as it should be. Our task is not – and has never been - to *comprehend* or *explain* these mysteries. If you, the reader, came to this study hoping for answers that will enable you to comprehend or explain these mysteries you have come to the wrong place. Comprehending or explaining these mysteries does not, in my opinion, have anything to do with the reason Divine Author of Torah pulled back the curtain for us to look into them.

Why then? Why did the Almighty begin His instruction book for life on earth with a *poetic account of Creation*, and a history of the heavens, the earth, life, and man, instead of simply laying out a to-do list of things He wants us to accomplish on earth or a promise of a Messianic figure that would reward those who accomplish such things and punish those who do not? Because, Beloved, I believe, He wanted us to *wrestle* with the mysteries of Genesis. I believe He wanted us to *struggle* with the mysteries of Genesis to the point of exhaustion. I believe He wanted to push our fallen minds and wills to – and through - the threshold of pain. I believe He wanted us to all, like Ya'akov [Jacob] at the end of his long night of wrestling with a Divine Messenger, experience the helplessness of a dislocated hip joint. I believe He wanted us to come to the end of both our intellect and our sense of self-importance. I believe He wanted us to breathlessly acknowledge the incomprehensibility of His wisdom, His power, and His goodness - and, in the process, to finally accept and submit to His Majesty, His Creativity and His Holiness.

The intent of the Author appears to be to *overwhelm our minds*, to *captivate our hearts*, to *enthrall us*, and to leave our inner man *veritably quivering - awestruck, dumbfounded* and, most important of all, very, very *hungry for MORE*.

Our task in relation to the mysteries of *B'reshit*, I believe, is not to strive to

understand or explain them, but simply to *surrender* to them – and to yield our wills to, and to bow in adoration and humble submission before, the great Mystery Maker. The doorway of *B'reshit* was not, you see, in my view, created to open for scholars or theologians – only for *worshippers*. And so . . . *let worshippers arise!*

### ***Elohim bara . . .***

*[The Almighty One 'created' . . .]*

What our English translations of Torah tell us the Holy One did “*in (or from) the beginning*”, or “*in shaking*”<sup>3</sup>, is to “create” the heavens and the earth. The first thing we have to understand, however, if we want to interact with Torah in a truly meaningful manner, is that the *Torah was not given to man in English*. Our English translations are just that – translations. They are imperfect approximations. They are useful tools, but that is all. English, at least in any form we today would recognize it, simply did not exist when Torah – or, for that matter, any other part of Scripture - was given.

The Holy One’s chosen medium for revealing Himself, His deeds, and His Ways to man was the language of the ancient Hebrews. The Holy One could have chosen, but did not, to reveal Himself in either the Egyptian, or Sumerian, or Akkadian, or Greek, or German, or French, or Spanish tongue. For good reasons, the Almighty chose to reveal Himself to His Creation not only in the *Hebrew language*, but in the greater context of *Hebrew culture*, and to and through a people of *Hebraic worldview*. That should not, of course, be taken as an insult to any of the other languages, or the people who speak them. Each language is, in its own right, a wonderful medium of communication. In some ways, for some kinds of communication, some may actually be *superior to Hebrew*. Communication in the fields of law, philosophy, and science, for instance, is certainly more precise in Greek or English than in it is in Hebrew. In the Holy One’s view, however, there is one very important area in which the Hebrew language far excels all languages that have ever been or will ever be spoken by men – *as a medium for the communication of spiritual truth*.

One reason this might be so is that Hebrew is the ultimate *verb-oriented language* – focused very heavily on *actions* instead of *ideas*. It is a language that fosters communication through *drawing pictures* instead of by *defining concepts*. Each Hebrew consonant is not just a symbol for a sound, but constitutes a pictographic representation of some kind of activity. Whenever three Hebrew letters are combined to form a verb, the pictographs of the respective letters make up a hieroglyphic mural, flowing into each other, showing a ‘motion picture’ depicting

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<sup>3</sup> See the Rabbi’s son’s Introductory Study to parsha *B'reshit* for a discussion of the meaning of the Hebrew verb ‘*reshit*’ as used in the opening phrase of Torah.

visually what is being discussed.

Another reason, I believe, why the Holy One chose Hebrew as the medium through which He would communicate spiritual truth is that Hebrew is an ‘*other-actor centered*’ language. English, like most other human languages, is an “egocentric” language, focusing primary attention on what *I* do. Virtually every English verb in its root form speaks of what *I* am doing. For example, the most basic, rudimentary form of an English verb is virtually always the form the verb takes when describing what *the speaker*, as opposed to someone else, is doing. The infinitive form in English is not *to runs* or *to talks* or *to dances* [what he or she does], but is *to run*, *to talk* and *to dance* [i.e. what *I* do]. An English verb actually has to be modified in form, usually by addition of a consonant, to make its action attributable to someone other than the speaker. Hebrew is different; the essence of virtually all Hebrew verbs is found in the form of the verb that describes what *he* [a single male actor other than the speaker] does. A Hebrew verb actually has to be modified to make its action attributable to the speaker.

The Hebraic mindset, you see, envisions the Holy One, the ultimate “He”, as the single most important actor in the world. Other languages, like English, tend to picture the *individual human being* in that leading role. Other languages, like English, may be wonderful for expressing what an individual thinks, feels, theorizes, or opines. But Hebrew is by far the best language for discussions of what the Almighty *has done, is doing, and is going to do* in days to come. So, let us not second-guess the Holy One’s choice of languages. If we want to see as fully and clearly as possible what the Holy One is trying to show us when He pulls back the curtain on the history of the universe, does it not make sense that the best possible lens through which we can examine what the Holy One has revealed is the lens of the very language He chose as the vehicle of communication of spiritual truth to man – i.e. the tongue of the ancient Hebrews?

In Hebrew what Genesis 1:1 says the Holy One did “in (or from) the Beginning” was to *bara*’, *beit, resh, alef* [Strong’s Hebrew word #1254, pronounced *baw-raw*’]. The verb *bara* does not mean to “conjure” something up out of nothing, or to make something appear out of thin air, like magic. *Bara* means, instead, to *act upon something that already exists into a more perfect or useful or beneficial form*.

How does the Holy One *bara* things? Torah pictures the Holy One *bara*-ing things *with His Voice*, through *WORDS*. Over and over again, Torah shows the Holy One speaking to or over some aspect or other of what He has created, then proceeds to show the explosive, refining, re-structuring effect His Words have on whatever He spoke to.

In today's aliyah we are given an account of "seven days" of *bara-ing* by Elohim. Each day was unique, but each one *built upon the last*, and each one *prepared the way for the next*. More on that later. In the meantime, here are some general things you may want to make note of as you read through the Torah account.

First of all, you may want to note that *the Holy One did not create the earth before He established the heavens with their complicated interacting realms of gravitational pulls and orbits*. He did not form birds before He made skies in which they could fly, or form animals before He spoke into existence plant life by which they would be sustained. He did not form man before He planted a garden in Eden. In other words, the Holy One did not just let the world "evolve" or "mutate" or develop on its own according to chance. Instead, Torah pictures Him purposefully and very methodically molding and shaping each of the elements of Creation in such a way as to produce "good" out of that which, without His direct involvement and loving touch, would have had no order, no intelligent design, and no divine spark.

Secondly, as you read through the Creation week narrative you may want to note how Torah depicts the Holy One as infusing everything He creates - from the *ohr* (light) to the *Shabbat*<sup>4</sup> (Seventh-day Sabbath) - with a measure of His Creativity.

Thirdly, you may want to note how *the Holy One's Spirit, the Ruach HaQodesh "hovers" and "broods" over whatever is in confusion, disorder, and darkness*.

Fourthly, you may want to note how *the Holy One but speaks, and everything changes in response to His Words*. The sages of Israel therefore say that the world was created with ten Divine utterances<sup>5</sup>.

Fifthly, you may want to note how *the Holy One works [creates] "good" from all things* - even those things we consider inconvenient or even traumatic.

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<sup>4</sup> *Shabbat* is the Hebrew word from which the English word *Sabbath* is derived. The word *Shabbat* is made up of the consonants *shin*, *beit*, and *tav*, and is pronounced *shaw-bawt*'.

<sup>5</sup> See *Pirkei Avot* [Ethics of the Fathers] 5:1. The sages calculate ten times in the Creation narrative when Torah records: 'And Elohim said . . .' E.g. "And Elohim said: **Let there be light . . .**"; "And Elohim said: **Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters . . .**"; "And Elohim said: **Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together . . .**"; "And Elohim said: **Let the earth sprout grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind . . .**"; "And Elohim said: **Let there be luminaries in the firmament of heaven . . .**"; "And Elohim said: **Let the waters swarm abundantly with moving creatures . . .**"; "And Elohim blessed them, saying: **Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters . . .**"; "And Elohim said: **Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind . . .**"; "And Elohim said: **Let us make Man in Our image . . .**"; and "And Elohim blessed them; and said to them: **Be fruitful, and multiply, fill the earth, and conquer it; and have dominion . . .**"

Sixthly, you may want to note how *the Holy One remains always in firm control of the Creative process, methodically accomplishing His wonderful redemptive purposes* in the midst of circumstances which, when looked upon by human eyes, seem chaotic and incomprehensible.

### ***Introduction to the Creative Process - Divine Fission Followed by Divine Pairing***

And finally as you read the Creation narrative you may also want to take note that the Holy One's *modus operandi* [mode of operation] of *bara-ing* things always seems to involve *taking one thing He has created, dividing that into two things, and then pairing off those two things in such a way as to counter-balance them and establish between them a synergistic tension that leads to further creativity.* We will read first of the pairing off of 'the heavens and the earth' [Genesis 1:1]. We will then read of the pairing off of *darkness and light* [Genesis 1:2-3]. We will proceed to read of the pairing off of 'evening and morning' [Genesis 1:3 ff], of *the waters above and the waters below*, of the *firmament and dry land*, of the creatures of the air with those of the seas, of animal life and the human being, and even of the pairing off of *males and females*, from the animal world all the way up to Adam and Chava [Eve].

Let's begin our study with the first pairing. Genesis 1:1 tells us:

#### ***B'reshit bara Elohim***

*In (or from) the Beginning, God created*

#### ***et ha-shamayim v'et ha-eretz***

*the heaven and the earth.*

[Genesis 1:1]

If you look at this closely at this verse through Hebraic eyes, you can see that what happened is that the Holy One took one mysterious thing – something called 'reshit' [shaking] - and from it *bara-ed* two other mysterious things – *ha-shamayim* and *ha-eretz*. By halving that with which He began, He released the energy necessary to more than double the creative potential of the original substance.

In nuclear science such a process is called 'fission'. Let us look into this great mystery for a moment.

#### ***Ha-Shamayim v'et ha-Eretz***

*[The Primordial Heavens and Earth]*

It appears from Torah that the emphasis of the Holy One in connection with the initial phase of Creation involved setting up a series of perfectly balanced parallel

realms of energy and matter. From *reshit* [shaking] came forth two things - *ha-shamayim* [usually translated as *the heavens*] and *ha-eretz* [usually translated as *the earth*].

Of what exact *substantive elements* did these two most elemental primordial realms consist? No one really knows, of course. Certainly the *ha-shamayim* of Genesis 1:1 cannot be equated with the heavens as we know them today. After all, Torah makes it very clear that the things that make up the heavens as we know them today were not created until the 4<sup>th</sup> day of Creation week. **Genesis 1:14**<sup>6</sup>. Likewise the *eretz* of Genesis 1:1 cannot possibly be equated with the earth as we know it today – after all, ‘firmament’, dry land, and the waters above and the waters below were not *bara*-ed until the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> days of Creation week, respectively. **Genesis 1:6-10**.

The *ha-shamayim* and the *ha-eretz* of Genesis 1:1, prior to *yom echad* [the first ‘day’], appear to have been perfectly balanced against, parallel to, each other, intelligently designed to operate as offsetting realities, synergizing, stimulating, and drawing creative energy from each other.

We know virtually nothing about the conditions, components, or characteristics of the primordial *shamayim*. We are, however, given one interesting tid-bit of information about the offsetting reality of the primordial *ha-eretz*. We are told very clearly that the *ha-eretz* of Genesis 1:1 was initially *tohu v’vohu* [i.e. without form, and void/empty]. What would eventually become ‘the earth’ originally operated, it appears, something like a *black hole* in space – it was a realm of pure energy, where all matter was reduced to *infinite density*, where *no light shone*, and where *time – which is a function of light’s interaction with dense matter - simply did not exist*. Mysterious eh? But *fascinating*. Let’s keep reading, shall we?

### ***Four Things Which Pre-Existed The Realm We Know as ‘Time’***

Genesis 1:1 told us in conclusory terms about the two offsetting realms the Holy One *bara*-ed - *shamayim* and *eretz*. Genesis 1:2 is about to start filling in some details.

*V’ha-aretz hayetah tohu u’vohu*  
*The eretz was without form and empty,*

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<sup>6</sup> *Rashi* [Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak of Troyes, a very prominent Jewish sage who lived in France and Germany in the Eleventh Century (i.e. the era of the Crusades) and who is considered by many Jewish theologians as the greatest Torah commentator of all] teaches, on the other hand, that Genesis 1 is not in chronological order, and that what is described in verse 1 could not have preceded what is described in verse 3. *Rashi* may well be correct on this point. For purposes of this discussion, however, we are merely dealing with Torah as it is presented to us – not as *Rashi* (or anyone else) interprets it.

***v'choshech al-penei tehom***  
*and Darkness was face to face with the Deep*<sup>7</sup>

Genesis 1:2 appears to be telling us, if we have ears to hear, that the *shamayim* and *eretz* that the Holy One *bara*-ed in Genesis 1:1 contained at least four component parts:

1. something Torah calls *tehom* [the Deep],
2. something Torah calls *choshech* [Darkness]
3. something Torah calls ‘*Ruach Elohim*’ [the ‘spirit of God’], and
4. something Torah calls ‘*mayim*’ [waters].

Let’s take a brief look at these four things.

1. ***Tehom*** – i.e. ‘***the Deep***’

The first primordial element of the Holy One’s creation to which we are introduced is something our English Bibles translate as ‘*the Deep*’. In the original Hebrew the word used is *tehom*, *tav*, *hey*, *vav*, *mem*, Strong’s Hebrew word #8415, pronounced *tay-home*<sup>8</sup>.

To what exactly is the writer of Torah referring when he uses the term *tehom*? We are not, if you will notice, told what *tehom* – the Deep - looked like. Nor are we told of what kind(s) of matter the *tehom* consisted. All we really are told about *tehom* in Genesis 1 is that, originally at least, ‘*choshech* – *darkness* - *was face-to-face with it*’. Most of us have over the millennia come to associate *tehom* with *water*. Most of us tend to picture ‘the Deep’ as some kind of *massive, murky, and highly turbulent ocean* – *some mixture of dust and water - floating in space*. Students of astronomy today, armed with insights obtained through the Hubble space telescope, might picture *tehom* as something akin to a ‘*supermassive black hole*’.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Genesis 1:2(a).

<sup>8</sup> The Hebrew verb root from which this noun is drawn is **הוּמ** *huwm*, *hey*, *vav*, *mem*, Strong’s Hebrew word #1949, meaning to *put into motion*, to *disturb (especially by making a great noise)*, or to *put into commotion*.

<sup>9</sup> Astronomers are now able to confirm that there are, in space, certain mysterious entities which for some reason neither emit light [as do stars] nor reflect light [as do planets, moons, etc]. When light is directed at these entities, ‘black holes’ envelope and absorb the light, making it seem to the human eye to disappear. “Black holes” appear to have intense gravitational fields, which cause all matter entering them to collapse to infinite density. As a result, the curvature of space-time in black holes is extreme.

Black holes cannot be seen because any light that enters or approaches them is trapped. They are thus like the wind, which neither emits nor reflects light, so the human eye has never seen it. But everyone knows wind exists because we see *the effect it has on its surroundings*. The same is true of black holes. Scientists know they are looking at a black hole when they see nearby matter being disturbed by their intense gravitational pull.

Whatever *tehom* was and/or is, it is clear that the Torah identifies it as one of four primordial elements of Creation – one of four things which appear on the ‘stage’ of the poetic Creation narrative in Genesis 1:2 with no real explanation. Before there was the sun, the moon, the stars, or the earth in any form we would recognize, and long before there was any living organism of any size or variety whatever, there was *tehom*. It was a physical realm, but apparently a realm where physical things were reduced to *infinite density*.

## 2. *Chosech* – i.e. *Darkness*

Just as in Genesis 1:1 *shamayim* offset *eretz*, likewise the reality Torah calls *tehom* was not alone, but was offset and counter-balanced by something else – something Torah calls *choshech*.

The verb root of the Hebrew noun *choshech* is *chashach*, *chet*, *shin*, *kaf sofit*, Strong’s Hebrew word #2821, pronounced *khaw-shawkh*. The verb refers to something being *invisible* to human vision. It refers to an unseen and unseeable realm – perhaps a realm of spiritual activity, a spiritual realm lying just beyond the physical realm of *tehom*, but totally outside the line of human sight.

## 3. *Ruach Elohim* [usually translated as ‘the spirit of God’]

Sent by the Holy One to disturb the delicate balance between the *tehom* and the *choshech* [Darkness], we are told, was the Holy One’s *Ruach*. While the *tehom* and *choshech* were largely if not totally passive, the *Ruach* of the Holy One was – and always is – extremely purposeful and proactive. Concerning the *Ruach* we are told:

*v’Ruach Elohim*<sup>10</sup> *merachefet al-penei ha-mayim*

*And the Breath of God brooded* [moved with emotion] *over the surface of the water.*  
[Genesis 1:2]

Wherever and whenever the *Ruach Elohim* broods, things begin to change, Beloved. To that which is without form the Holy One’s Breath brings order – parameters of time and space, laws [natural and spiritual], and the like. To that which is void, or empty of meaning, the Holy One’s Breath brings fullness, and purpose, and blessing. And to that which is enshrouded in darkness, the Holy One’s Breath brings Light - Light that pushes back the darkness, Light that sets boundaries for it, and Light that causes it to retreat to a place that does not interfere with the order and the fullness, the purpose, or the blessing He has called forth.

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<sup>10</sup> One of the premier ancient rabbinical commentaries on the Torah is the *Midrash Rabbah*, believed to have been redacted around 425 C. E. In *Midrash Rabbah 2:4*, it is stated with reference to the reference to the *Ruach Elohim*, or ‘spirit of G-d’, which was said in Genesis 1:2 to have hovered or brooded over the waters: "*This refers to the spirit of Mashiach* [i.e. Messiah]"

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. We have yet to discuss the fourth, and final essential component of the Holy One's primordial Creation – *Ha-mayim*.

#### 4. *Ha-Mayim* [usually translated as 'the *waters*'].

Genesis 1:2 tells us that what the Holy One paired off with *Ruach Elohim* was something the Hebrew text calls *ha-mayim*. As *choshech* offset, counter-balanced, and synergized *tehom*, so *Ruach Elohim* offset, counter-balanced, and synergized *ha-mayim*. But were the *ha-mayim* referenced in the last phrase of Genesis 1:2 'waters' as we know them – reserves of flowing liquid containing a compound of two parts hydrogen fused with one part oxygen?

The similarity between the Hebrew phrase usually translated as 'the waters' [*ha-mayim, hey, mem, yod, mem sofit*] and the phrase usually translated as 'the heavens' [*ha-shamayim, hey, shin, mem, yod, mem sofit*] should be noted carefully. The only difference between these two phrases is that, in the case of the phrase translated as 'the heavens', the Hebrew consonant *shin* [which makes the 'sh' sound] is added between the *hey* and the first *mem*. The *shin* is present in the phrase translated 'the heavens', but absent from the phrase translated 'the waters'.

What is the significance of this? Consider that the Hebrew letter *shin* is a pictograph of ascending tongues of fire, symbolizing the active, manifest Presence of the Holy One in the physical realm. In the phrase *ha-shamayim*, the Holy One is demonstrably present in an active, manifest way [hence, the Psalmist says "The heavens declare the glory of the Holy One . . ." (Psalm 19:1), and "The heavens declare His righteousness . . ." (Psalm 97:6)], while in *ha-mayim*, the Holy One is present, but only in an inactive, hidden way not obvious to human observation.

But all this was before 'time' as we know it.

### ***The Birth of the Concept of 'Time'***

Have you ever given much thought to the concept of 'time', Dear Reader? Like the air that we breathe, we tend to take time totally for granted. We think time just *is*. We think it *always was*, and *always will be*. We do not dare think of a world where there is no time, any more than we dare think of a world where there is no air to breathe. But we are wrong. Torah makes it clear that the Holy One is outside 'time', and that the *shamayim* [heavens] and the *eretz* [earth] were originally outside 'time' as well.

Outside 'time' however the *shamayim* and the *eretz* were *tohu u'vohu* – i.e. *without form* and *void/meaningless*. The Holy One therefore designed time, and brought

time into being as a convention or dimension to bring order and meaning to the state the *shamayim* [heavens] and *eretz* [earth] were in when they were created.

The Holy One introduces us to the created dimension we know as time through the concept of a ‘day’. At the conclusion of each strategically planned and carefully measured release of creative energy, He says, as a repeating refrain of Creation’s song: *Vayehi erev vayehi boker yom* [there was evening and there was morning – a day . . . ].

### ***Shesh Yamim***

[The Six “Days” of Creation Week]

Torah then meticulously recounts for us all we need to know about where the things we know as ‘Creation’ came from, and how they were brought into existence. We are introduced to the vast and perplexing realms of virtual reality our scholars like to call ‘time, ‘energy’ and ‘matter’ in a series of seven ‘Creation songs’, each one building upon the next. The secrets of the Universe, and of life as we know it, are locked in the flowing verse of these 7 songs.

The Holy One begins with a song about something we have come to call the *yom* – the first ever interval of time. How long was the first *yom*? It was not a day as we know it, because a day as we know it consists of the period of time it takes for a point on the earth to receive full light of the sun, be completely hidden from the sun, and then receive the full light of the sun again.

Why could the first *yom* not have been such a day? Because there was not yet any sun, Beloved. The sun was not yet created. It was not created until the *yom rev'i* – the fourth of the seven *yomim* of Creation Week.

The first three *yomim* of Creation week, therefore, could not have been ‘days’ in the sense we now think of days. The Holy One could have made them 24 hours long or 2 billion years long. I do not know how long those first three ‘days’ were. And the truth is that *neither does anyone else* on this planet – be he/she a secular scientist *or* a theologian.

### ***Yom Echad: Day 1***

In Modern Hebrew the first interval in time would be called *Yom Rishon*. In Torah, however, it is called *Yom Echad – Day 1* - the ‘*Time of Complete Unity*’.

*Yom Echad* introduces to us the most powerful force that will ever exist in our Universe – Divine Speech. Powered by *Ruach Elohim*, the breath of God, the words the Holy One speaks over His Creation are pure energy, full of creative and

prophetic power. He speaks, and Creation springs into action, rearranging itself, in order to give birth to what His Voice called into existence.

It is not therefore that what the Holy One spoke was not there previously – it *was*. It is just that, prior to the Divine Declaration, the thing He called forth was ‘*in utero*’ [in the womb], hidden from view, in a place and realm where it was nurtured. The Divine Voice causes the womb to contract, as it were, and that which the Holy One called forth was ‘born’.

The first thing the Holy One’s Voice causes to be ‘born’ into His Creation is *Ohr* - ‘Light’. The first of literally thousands of phrases of Divine Utterance recorded for us in the Torah is simply:

***Yehi-ohr***  
*Light, Be!*  
[Genesis 1:3(b)]

And of course the instant the Holy Voice uttered these words Light burst forth. Creation knew its Master’s Voice - and had no desire to resist. The most powerful force in the Universe – or anywhere – the Voice of *Elohim*, did not return to Him void. The first and purest example of *sh’ma*-ing the Holy One’s word was established. Oh that we the student of Torah might take note and learn the lesson of *Yom Echad*. For you see, we are designed, called, and commissioned to be nothing short of *the light of the world*.

But take note if you will that the Light introduced to Creation on *Yom Echad* is *not ordinary light as we know it*. We think of light as the energy released from the sun, the moon, and the stars [or by man-made things emulating those luminaries]. As was pointed out above however, the sun, and other luminaries we know as light-producers were not ‘birthed’ until *Yom rev’i* – the Fourth Day. Hence, *the* Light of *Yom Echad* is something else - something absolutely Divine in its essence.

I personally believe, Dear Reader, that the *ohr* of *Yom Echad* is nothing less than the Light of Messiah. Immediately after describing the introduction of Divine Light into Creation, Torah tells us:

***Vayar Elohim et-ha-or***  
*And Elohim gazed upon the light,*  
***ki-tov***  
*for it was tov [often translated as ‘good’]*

This is absolutely beautiful poetry - but *what exactly does it mean?* If the Hebrew

word 'tov'<sup>11</sup> means 'good',<sup>12</sup> what are we to understand was 'good' about the LIGHT?

And what does the Divine sense of sight have to do with the qualitative value of the LIGHT? The Hebrew word *tov* does not mean merely 'pleasant' or 'pleasurable'. It means capable of, presently engaged in the process of, and destined for, completely fulfilling the Divine purpose for which it was created.

### **Yom Sheni: Day 2**

On Day 2 the Holy One introduced into our world the marvelous aspect of Creation we know as the 'sky'. In the text of Torah, the word is *rakia*. And what was its purpose? The Holy One tells us:

*yavdel beyn ha-mayim asher mitachat l'rakia*  
*it separated the water below the sky*

*uveyn ha-mayim asher me'al l'rakia*  
*from the water above the sky.*

The sky set a boundary between *ha-shamayim* and *ha-eretz* forever. In so doing, it established upon the *eretz* an atmosphere conducive to life as we know it. And that is what the Holy One will begin to introduce to Creation on the next 'yom' – the one the Torah calls *Yom sh'lishi*.

### **Yom Sh'lishi: Day 3**

On Day 3 of Creation Week the Holy One released *two separate bursts* of creative energy. First, He called for the primordial waters to gather themselves together, in effect producing the first miraculous parting of the waters. The parting of the waters, in turn, produced something heretofore unknown to Creation – *dry land*. In Hebrew, what our English Bibles call 'dry land' is *yabashah*.

Once the *yabashah* was in place the Holy One spoke again, and directed the *yabashah* to *deshe esev mazria zera etz* [send forth vegetation, plants bearing seeds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their particular type of seed]. And the *yabashah* [which we know as *ha-eretz*] did so.

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<sup>11</sup> The Hebrew adjective *tov* [Strong's Hebrew word #2896] is written with a *tet* followed by a *vav* followed by a *veit*. This verse is the first usage of this word in Torah. The verb root has the identical spelling. Classic Torah Commentator Nachmanides taught that the intended meaning of the word *tov* in the Creation account was "everlasting."

<sup>12</sup> *Tov* does not mean 'good' in a moral sense, as Westerners tend to think of things. *Tov* means good in that it is delightful, healthy, pleasure-giving, joy-inspiring, and overflowing with potential for life, health and peace.

## **Yom Revi'i: Day 4**

As plants and trees were bursting forth from the dry land of earth, the Holy One turned His attention to the heavens. He released a burst of creative energy that created **meorot birekia ha-shamayim** [lights in the heavens] – what we know as the sun, the moon, and the stars and light-reflecting planets. The Holy One calls them **shenei ha-meorot ha-g'dolim** [the two large lights] and **ha-kochavim** [the stars].

And then the Holy One does a strange and wonderful thing. He actually *pulls back the curtain on His thoughts*, and tells us WHY the sun, moon, and stars were created and placed in the Heavens. Torah tells us it is:

***L'havdil beyn ha-yom uveyn ha-laylah***

*To divide between day and night.*

***V'hayu l'otot ul'moadim ul'yamim v'shanim***

*And to serve as signs, and for the festivals, and for days and years.*

In the economy of the Holy One our God, creation always seems to involve *division*. The Holy One speaks, and that which is one thing becomes two. And then a boundary, or firm line of demarcation, is placed between the two. This is the *repeating pattern* of the Creation song.

Some of us have come to know this Divine Principle as *havdalah* – separation. The root of that concept is found here, in the opening Hebrew word of the above-quoted phrase: *l'havdil* i.e. *for dividing/separating*. We are called to emulate the Holy One's acts of *havdalah*, specifically in separating/dividing the realm of the 'clean' [Hebrew *t'hor*] from the realm of the 'unclean' [Hebrew, *tamei*], and the realm of the 'holy' [Hebrew *k'dosh*] from the realm of the 'profane' [Hebrew, *chol*].

If you will receive it, that is the principle underlying the 'festivals' [in Hebrew, *mo'edim*] of the Holy One. The foundation for the establishment of *mo'edim* [days set apart solely for divine appointment with the Holy One] is laid very clearly on *Yom Revi'i*. For it was on that day that the Holy One laid the foundation for the 'calendar' under which He would interact with man forever.

According to Torah the sun, the moon, and the stars and other luminaries were created *not* for the light they could give – after all, the Holy One had already provided all the Light the world would ever need on *Yom echad*. According to Torah the primary reason the sun, moon, stars, etc. were given was to mark off the *mo'edim*!

## **Yom Chamishi: Day 5**

Day 5 introduces us to something else heretofore unknown to Creation – living creatures. God establishes the first life on earth in the waters, salt and fresh, and in the air canopy surrounding the earth we know as the sky. All varieties of aquatic and aviary life - *ha-tanim ha-g'dolim* [the great sea creatures], *kol nefesh ha-chayah ha-romeset asher shartzu ha-mayim l'minehem* [every species of living thing that crawls with which the water teems] and *kol-of kanaf l'minehu* [every flying creature] were spoken into existence simultaneously.

And as God shared for the first time His breath of life with created beings, He also introduced us to a form of Divine Speech that will become very, very important to us – the Divine ‘blessing’. Torah introduces this essential aspect of life as follows:

***Vayevarech otam Elohim l'emor***

*And God blessed them, saying,*

***P'ru ur'vu umil'u et ha-mayim b'yamim***

*Be fruitful and become many, and fill the waters of the seas.*

***V'ha-of yirev b'eretz***

*And let the flying creatures multiply on the land.'*

We will speak much more in coming weeks about the Hebraic concept of the *b'racha* [blessing]. For the time being, please just keep in mind that a *b'racha* is not just ‘words’ – it is a prophetic, creative release of Divine Energy. It is an *empowerment*.

## **Yom Shishi: Day 6**

The skies and the waters now teem with birds and aquatic creatures, respectively. Dry land is producing endless varieties of plant life and trees. There is now a sun, a moon, and stars and light reflecting planets in the heavens to shine light on the earth, and sustain all the above. It is, therefore, almost time to introduce higher forms of life – wild beasts, domestic animals, all things that crawl or walk or run upon the earth. Torah calls these things *nefesh chayah l'minah* [species of living creatures], *behemah* [livestock], *v'remes ha-adamah* [things that creep or crawl on the earth], *v'chayeto-eretz l'minah* [and beasts of the earth].

Then, as He had done on Day 3 the Holy One released a double portion – a second burst - of creative energy in one day. Here is how Torah records the most momentous event of all – the introduction of man into Creation:

***Vayivra Elohim et ha-adam b'tzalmo***

*And God created man with His image.*

***B'tzelem Elohim bara oto***

*In the image of God He created him.*

***zachar unekevah bara otam***

*Male and female He created them<sup>13</sup>.*

At this point the Holy One spoke the 2<sup>nd</sup> blessing recorded in Torah – the blessing of man. This blessing tells man why he is here, and empowers him to do all he was created to do – to *fulfill his destiny, and find meaning and purpose in life*. Here are the words Beloved. ***Sh'ma*** them, and *let them flood over you, and fill your life with meaning*:

***P'ru ur'vu***

*Be fruitful, and become great in number*

***umil'u et ha-eretz v'chiveshuha***

*'Fill the land and conquer it.*

***uredu b'degat ha-yam uv'of ha-shamayim***

*Take dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky,*

***Uv'chol-chayah ha-romeset al ha-eretz***

*and every beast that walks the land.*

[Genesis 1:28]

You will never find fulfillment in life until you come to grips with this Divine Directive, and receive, appropriate, and begin to flow in this Divine Empowerment. Never, never forget that. You were made to *be fruitful*. You were made to *reproduce yourself*. You were made to *take and exercise dominion over a sphere of influence the Creator of the Universe has created just for you*.

### ***The Seventh Day***

On the seventh day, as we all know, the Holy One *rested from His work*. What – was He *tired*? Was He *'through'*? Why did He rest? And what does that have to do with us? Let's give that some thought.

Consider for a moment the calendar of man. It is built upon *astronomical phenomenon*, is it not? It is made up of days, and months, and years. What is a

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<sup>13</sup> The writer of Torah records that the creation of man began when the Holy One said: ***'Let us make the human being in our image and after our likeness.'*** " **Genesis 1:26**. The use of the plural form [translated 'us'] has spurred a lot of midrash. The Vilna Gaon interprets this to mean that *since the human being was created last, the Creator was addressing everything that was created previous to the human being, bidding each to contribute a portion of its characteristics to the human being*. For example, the human being's inner strength is traced to the lion, his swiftness to the deer, his agility to the eagle, his cunning to the fox, his capacity for growth to the flora - all of which are unified within the human being.

“day”? A “day” is the period of time it takes for the earth to rotate 360 degrees on its axis. What is a month? A “month” is the period of time it takes for the moon to complete its cycle, from new, to quarter, to half, to full, to quarter, and back to new. What is a year? A “year” is the period of time it takes for the earth to complete its orbit of the sun. Notice the pattern? The world calculates time based upon *astronomical cycles observable by man’s natural eye*.

But wait! Something else has crept into the calendar of man – something we know of as the “*week*”<sup>14</sup>. From where, do you think, this measurement of time came? What exactly is a “week”, anyway, pray tell? What observable astronomical phenomenon does a seven-day “week” measure or define? Have you ever thought about it?

Ah Beloved, you stand at the brink of understanding the secret of the calendar of the Holy One’s people. It is not, at its essence, based upon observable astrological phenomena. Before dealing with any “yearly” or “monthly” event, the Holy One establishes something radical as the foundation stone of the calendar by which we are to live. You see, a “week” commemorates nothing astronomical at all. A “week” commemorates only one thing - the seven days of Creation as described in Torah. The “week” is something the calendar of man unknowingly picked up from Torah, through interactions with the Hebrews. The *week* exists only for – and by reason of – one thing - the Lord’s *Shabbat*!

So the first instruction the Holy One gives relating to how we are to structure our lives is that we are to work six days, and commemorate the Holy One’s prophetic blessing over the seventh day of Creation on the anniversary thereof. This is offensive to the world. How dare we – or anyone – the world says, interrupt commerce, profit taking, religion, and entertainment once every seven days! It is *not natural*, they say. And they are right. It is not “natural”. It is solely spiritual.

Understand what I am saying. I am saying that Shabbat is much more than a “day of rest”. If it were only a “day of rest” it could be taken any time – on any day. Many now take what they call a day of “rest” on Sunday (the *first* day) for instance. But the Holy One makes it very clear *when* we are to take our “rest”. It is to be the *seventh day*. Why? Why does the Holy One suggest that one day is better to “rest” than the other six? Because of what is being commemorated – and rehearsed – on that day, Beloved. What happened on the seventh day – and will happen on some future seventh day - that makes that day special? We have to go

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<sup>14</sup> At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the atheistic leaders of the French Revolution attempted to impose a ten-day week upon their revolutionary society. Their attempt failed, and seven-day weeks became and remain the norm in the world.

back to Genesis to find out. There we read:

*V'yevarech Elohim et-yom ha-shvi'i*

*God blessed the seventh day . . .*

[Genesis 2:3]

Whatever the Holy One blesses is both *blessed indeed* and *blessed forever*. His Word – and His Blessing - endure forever. The seventh day, therefore, because it was blessed *at Creation*, is still blessed *today*, and will remain blessed *tomorrow*, and *for all eternity*. The seventh day therefore carries the Holy One's blessing as a pregnant woman carries her unborn child. But what exactly does that mean, you ask?

Hebraically, to 'bless' [*b'rach, beit, resh, kaf sofit*] means *to release the object of the blessing from restrictions and limitations*. Torah tells us that Shabbat is *blessed*. On the 7<sup>th</sup> day of Creation the Holy One released over the specific island in time we calculate as sundown on Friday till sundown on Saturday, something wonderful, refreshing, and uplifting – something transcendent, and which has unlimited spiritual capacity and potential<sup>15</sup>.

Shabbat is thus not an ordinary 24-hour period. It is, instead, a 24-hour period of *unlimited, unrestricted spiritual potential*. By 'blessing' the 7<sup>th</sup> day the Holy One made the Shabbat an *island in time where Heaven touches earth* in a unique manner. It is a period of seconds, minutes, and hours over which the supernatural, creative, prophetic blessing of the Holy One hovers, waiting for a person on which to light. It is an "enchanted garden". It is a chance for human beings to step through the mundane into the holy, through the temporal into the eternal.

During the blessed seconds, minutes, and hours of Shabbat, each breath we take, each thought we think, each morsel of food we ingest, each conversation in which we engage with our family members and friends, each swallow of water or wine, each prayer we may pray, is – or can be – BLESSED – mixed, as it were, with the sweet residue of the blessing the Holy One spoke lovingly over His Creation.

Wow! No wonder resting on Shabbat is qualitatively different from – and more refreshing and restorative than - resting on any other day.

### *The Essential, Eternal Holiness of the 7<sup>th</sup> Day*

And the fact that the Holy One's blessing rests upon the seventh day is only half the story. After telling us that the Holy One "*blessed the seventh day*", Genesis 2:3

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<sup>15</sup> The sages of Israel speak of the world to come [the new heavens and the new earth] as *yom sh'kalo Shabbat* – a time that is *all Shabbat*. This is the ultimate state of release from restrictions and limitations.

continues by saying:

*... V'yekadesh oto ...*  
*“... and He made it holy...”*

The seventh day is simply not like other days. It has been infused by the Holy One with an essential, over-riding aura of holiness. You can acknowledge it or you can reject it, enjoy it or ignore it, but *you cannot change it*. You can choose to work, or barbeque, or go bowling or shopping, or play X-box, work on your car, or tend your garden if you wish – but you are thereby letting something holy and blessed pass you right by, and saying “*no Thanks!*”

All the while I believe the Holy One is whispering in our ears something like the following:

***“STOP! Let ME plan one day a week.  
Make no plans.  
Let the distractions of your daily lives and the drive to “do something” go.  
Take a deep breath. In so doing, you will breathe into your soul  
both My Blessing and My Holiness.<sup>16</sup>”***

The Shabbat, you see, is intended to be our point of connection with the wonder of Creation. Every Shabbat we are to *step out of time as we know it and relive the Creation from the perspective of the Holy One*. If we do that we are virtually guaranteed to continue forever to be childlike in faith, trusting Him with every fiber of our being, innocently gazing in wide-eyed wonder at His Marvelous Works, falling on our faces like the *Serafim*, and proclaiming with them “***Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God Almighty! The whole earth is full of His Glory!***”

### ***Questions For Today’s Study***

1. List the things the Holy One made [or did] on each of the seven days of supernatural Creation.
2. In *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* and in the *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* by Wilhelm Gesenius (hereinafter referred to simply as *Gesenius’ Lexicon*), look up the word our English Bibles translate as “created” in the opening verse of the Bible. Write the Hebrew word and describe the word

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<sup>16</sup> Obviously this is my interpretation of what Torah tells us about the Sabbath. I do not however by any means intend to imply that the language employed is specifically stated in Scripture. I invite you to examine what Scripture says for yourself, at which point you may agree - or you may disagree - with my interpretation of the message of Sabbath.

picture that Hebrew word draws for us. What “raw material” did the Holy One use for “creation”?

3. How did the Holy One create “living creatures” for the land, sea, and air? [See verses 1:20 and 1:24]

4. What four things did the Holy One tell man to do when He created him? Write the Hebrew verbs the Holy One told us to act out, and describe the word pictures those verbs present.

5. What did the Holy One give man to eat?

6. The “seventh day” [Friday at sundown to Saturday at sundown] is shown to be very special and different than the other days. There are at least three distinct reasons given by Torah as to why the seventh day is special.

*On the seventh day God finished his work that he had made;  
and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had made.  
God blessed the seventh day, and made it holy,  
because he rested in it from all his work which he had created and made.*

[A] List the three things that Torah says make the Shabbat [Sabbath, or 7th day] “special”.

[B] In Strong’s Concordance and Gesenius Lexicon look up the Hebrew words translated as “rested”, “blessed”, and “made [it] holy”. Write each of these words in Hebrew letters, with vowel markings, and describe the word picture that each word represents.

7. In today’s Haftarah from the scroll of Yeshayahu [Isaiah], the Holy One again speaks creatively over an aspect of His Creation – the descendants of Avraham. In Chapter 42, verses 5-8, we read:

*Thus says God the Holy One, He who created the heavens, and stretched them forth;  
He who spread abroad the eretz and that which comes out of it;  
He who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk therein:*

*“I, The Holy One, have called you in righteousness,  
and will hold your hand, and will keep you, and give you for a covenant of the people,  
for a light of the Goyim; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,  
and those who sit in darkness out of the prison-house.  
I am the Holy One, that is my name;  
and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to engraved images.”*

[A] What three ways does Yeshayahu [Isaiah] describe the Holy One in verse 5?

[B] According to verse 6 what things has the Holy One done for His people?

[C] According to verses 6-7 what is the purpose of the Holy One’s actions

on behalf of His people?

8. The reading from the apostolic writings of the followers of Y'shua of Natzret which I have selected to go along with the themes of parsha **B'reshit** is Yochanan [John] chapter 1. In John 1:1-4, which we read and study today, there are repeated references to what we read in English as "*the Word*".

*In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God,  
and **the Word** was God. The same was in the beginning with God.  
All things were made through him.  
Without him was not anything made that has been made.  
In him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

[A] Look up the Greek word translated "Word", then write a definition of it.

[B] What Hebrew word do you think Yochanan [John] was thinking of when he wrote verses 1-3? What hieroglyphic word picture does that Hebrew word present for us?

[C] List the things that are said of "*the Word*" in verses 1-4.

*May the Holy One's Spirit brood and hover over the areas of darkness,  
confusion, and disorder in your life, and May He speak Shalom Peace over you.*

### ***The Rabbi's son***

## ***Meditation for Today's Study***

Proverbs 8:22-31 [*The Song of Torah*]

*The Holy One possessed me in the beginning of his work, before his deeds of old.  
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, before the eretz existed.  
When there were no depths, I was brought forth,  
When there were no springs abounding with water.  
Before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, I was brought forth;  
While as yet he had not made the eretz, nor the fields, nor the beginning of the dust of the world.  
  
When he established the heavens, I was there;  
When he set a circle on the surface of the deep, when he established the clouds above,  
When the springs of the deep became strong,  
When he gave to the sea its boundary, that the waters should not violate his mitzvah,  
When he marked out the foundations of the eretz; then I was the craftsman by his side.  
  
I was a delight day by day, always rejoicing before him,  
Rejoicing in his whole world. My delight was with the sons of men.*