

בְּרֵאשִׁית

Bereshit

Genesis 1:1-6:8: from the Creation to Noach
Haftarah: Isaiah 42:5-43:10: G-d the Master of the universe

In the beginning, *bereshit* בְּרֵאשִׁית God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

We begin with the story of creation, of man and his relationship with His maker. The first *Parasha* of the first book of the Torah speaks of beginnings and the basis on which the whole of history will rest. The glorious richness of Creation is displayed before our eyes, uncovering the very essence of the character of G-d, His love and His goodness toward His creation.

The heavens tell of His works; the first man is created and receives as his dwelling place a Paradise: the *Gan Eden*, a garden of delight exalted in perfection. Man is given a helpmate, someone with whom he can share his life. The Creator desires friendship with man, someone with whom

He can rejoice during the coolness of evening. He has given man free will, the ability to choose for himself right from wrong for without this liberty, this beautiful Paradise Garden would merely be a golden cage in which to contain man. Adam and *Chava* (*Eve*), have made a wrong choice and are expelled from the Gan Eden; its entrance forever barred by the flaming sword of two cherubim.

From now on man will have to toil by his own strength to eat and the woman will suffer the consequences of her mortal choice by giving birth with pain and difficulty.

Physical and spiritual death has entered the world. From now on, man must be reconciled to his Creator; salvation is needed. The plan of

redemption has been provided to blot out the fault of the first man and woman, to restore spiritual life.

The first of their offspring enters into conflict with one another. Jealousy and envy is born. Cain, whose offering is rejected, kills his brother Abel, bringing a curse upon himself and a curse upon the earth. Men reproduce and multiply and so does sin; G-d decides to destroy mankind by way of a flood, but one man has been found righteous in G-d's eyes: Noah.

The word *bereshit* in Hebrew means: "at the head, first". The book of Genesis is the book of foundations, the book of beginnings: the beginning of creation, the beginning of humanity, the beginning of sin, the beginning of the plan of redemption, the beginning of the chosen people, and the beginning of the people of Israel

This word also begins with a *beth* ב and the last book of the Torah, Deuteronomy ends with a *lamed* ל together they make the word LEV לב which means «heart». G-d has always had the intention to engrave His Torah upon our hearts, and it is from our heart that the desire to plunge into the study of His Word comes, so that we can be transformed into His image, from glory to glory ...

This letter *beth* ב written with a big letter in the original, is the second letter of the alphabet and teaches us that the act of creation, this beginning, though it takes first place, must none the less make room for the first letter of the alphabet, the *aleph* א which points to the Creator. He is the First and the Last:

Thus says Adonai, Israel's King and Redeemer, Adonai-Tzeva'ot: **I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no God.**

Isaiah 44:6

When I saw him I fell down at his feet like a dead man. He placed his right hand upon me and said, "Don't be afraid! **I am the First and the**

Last (Aleph א and Tav ת), the Living One. I was dead, but look! - I am alive for ever and ever! Revelation 1:17

The divinity of *Yeshua* is such a mystery:

...He is the visible image of the invisible God. He is supreme over all creation, because in connection with him were created all things – in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, lordships, rulers or authorities – they have all been created through him and for him. He existed before all things, and he holds everything together.

Also he is head of the Body, the Messianic Community – he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead so that he might hold first place in everything. Colossians 1:15-18

Tradition teaches that the Spirit that was hovering over the waters was the Spirit of the *Mashiach* like the numerical value this sentence suggests: “*veruach elohim meracheifet, the Spirit of God hovered*”: 1034; this is the same number value as in the sentence “*vezohi rucho shel meilech Mashiach, this is the Spirit of the King Messiah*” ...

❖ In the beginning, *bereshit* God created ...*bereshit bara elohim*....

The word *bara* בָּרָא is only used for divine creation made from nothing. This word proclaims the absolute sovereignty of G-d over matter.

He is the First, and He was also the light of the first day, which dissipated the unformed darkness of a chaotic world and allowed the vegetation of the third day to live before the creation of the sun. This divine light was there from the beginning, creating a separation from the darkness. Tradition tells us that this first free gift of light was a gift of love given to the world and that it comes forth from divine grace, the *midat chessed*, measure of grace, of goodness. This light has already announced the coming of the Light of the world, the Grace in the person of *Yeshua HaMashiach*:

Yeshua spoke to them again: “I am the light of the world; whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light which gives life.” John 8:12

He is the First and the Last, the Aleph א and the Tav ת, the Alpha and the Omega, and the Truth such as the last letters of this first verse reveals to us, forming the word TRUTH *Emeth*, אמת.

In the beginning God created... *Bereshit bara elohim,*

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים

Yeshua said, "I am the Way – and the Truth and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

- ❖ God saw that the light was good, and **God divided the light from the darkness.** Genesis 1:4

At once, G-d settles the principle of separation, of setting apart (in Hebrew it is called *havdalah*). This *havdalah* proceeds from divine characteristic, the organizational principle of the law, the *midat din*, measure of judgment, of rigor. *Havdalah* between day and night, *havdalah* between heaven and earth, *havdalah* between male and female, *havdalah* between the Shabbat and the other six days, *havdalah* between Israel and the nations, *havdalah* between the holy and the profane...

But notice that in spite of this divine principle of separation, the separation of this second day is not gratified with the blessing: "And God saw that it was good". The Midrash Hagadol tells us that this division of elements within the same category, like heaven and earth, was not good and that we shall have to wait for the third day for harmony to come between grace and rigor, love and Law, a harmony called *tipheret*.

It is said that in the messianic times, these differences between Israel and the nations will be abolished because all will recognize the only one G-d, the Shabbat will fuse with the profane days and all will rest in His eternal presence:

...there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female, for in union **with the Messiah, Yeshua, you are all one.**

Galatians 3:28

For it is we who have trusted who enter the rest. It is just as he said « And in my anger, I swore that they would not enter my rest. He swore this even though his works have been in existence since the founding of the universe. Hebrew 4:3

- ❖ G-d created man, *adam*, man and woman, and He created him in His own image:

Then God said, « Let us make humankind in our image *betzalmenu* **בְּצַלְמֵנוּ**, in the likeness of ourselves *kidmutenu* **כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ**, and let them rule over the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the animals and over all the earth, and over every crawling creature that crawls on the earth. So God created humankind in his own image, in the image *betzelem* **בְּצֶלֶם** of God he created him, male and female he created them. Genesis 1:26-27

The two words used to speak of the resemblance with G-d are interesting by the fact that they allude to the shadow and to the blood. The word *tzel* **צל** contained in “image” means “shadow” and the word *dam* **דם** forming the root of the word “resemblance” means “blood”. This means that in a way, man is the “shadow” of the almighty projected on the earth¹. Covered by the “shadow” of the almighty centuries later, a young virgin from the house of Israel will become the vessel to accomplish the original plan of redemption, giving birth to the image of the invisible G-d spoken of in the epistle to the Colossians:

He is the visible image of the invisible God; He is supreme over all creation. Colossians 1:15

The angel answered her The *Ruach Hakodesh* will come over you, the **power (shadow)** of Ha 'Elyon will cover you. Therefore the holy child born to you will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:35

It is again by His blood, clean from all unrighteousness, and poured for the salvation of his creatures, that the contact between G-d and man will be re-established, until final redemption:

Therefore, since we have now come to be considered righteous by means of his bloody sacrificial death, how much more will we be delivered through him from the anger of God's judgment!

For if we were reconciled with God through his Son's death when we were enemies, how much more will we be delivered by his life, now that we are reconciled! And not only will we be delivered in the future, but we are boasting about God right now, because he has acted through our Lord *Yeshua* the Messiah, through whom we have already received that reconciliation.

¹ Moshe Cordovero

Here is how it works: it was through one individual that sin entered the world, and through sin, death; and in this way death passed through to Sin was indeed present in the world before Torah was given, but sin is not counted as such when there is no Torah.

Nevertheless death ruled from Adam until *Moshe*, even over those whose sinning was not exactly like Adam's violation of a direct command. In this, Adam prefigured the one who was to come.

But the free gift is not like the offense. For if, because of one man's offense, many died, then how much more has God's grace, that is, the gracious gift of one man, *Yeshua* the Messiah, overflowed to many!

Romans 5:9-15

Almighty G-d has already spoken the prophecy, the final victory will be sure in its time and our old enemy will be crushed:

...I will put animosity between you and the woman, and between your descendant and her descendant; **he will bruise your head**, and you will bruise his heel. Genesis 3:15

And God, the source of shalom **will soon crush the Adversary under your feet**. The grace of our Lord *Yeshua* be with you. Romans 16:20

Then I heard a loud voice in heaven saying, Now has come God's victory, power and kingship, and the authority of his Messiah. **Because the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them day and night before God, has been thrown out!** Revelation 12:10

❖ Adonai God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden and there he put the person whom he had formed. Genesis 2:8

Adonai God took the person and put him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and care for it. Genesis 2:15

G-d had it all prepared for man and the only task of man was to till the ground, *leavda* of the garden and to keep it, *leshamra* literally to work in it, to serve it, in like manner with the praise due to G-d and to take care of it, to protect it, in like manner with the Shabbat.

Jewish interpretation tells us that there are two gardens, one Eden above, in relationship with the sphere of the spirit and in which spiritual fruits are grown and one Eden below, related with earthly enjoyments and blessings given by our Creator. The river flows out of the celestial

Eden to water the garden below and the chosen day to receive this blessing and this life is the Shabbat. The three words Eden **עֵדֶן**, river **נָהָר**, and garden **גֶּן** form together with the initials, the word *oneg* **עֲנֵג**, delight which is the characteristic designation of the Shabbat:

If you hold back your foot on Shabbat from pursuing your own interests on my holy day. If you call Shabbat a delight *oneg* **עֲנֵג**, *Adonai's* holy day, worth honoring. Then honor it by not doing your usual things or pursuing your interests or speaking about them. If you do, you will find delight in *Adonai* – I will make you ride on the heights of the land and feed you with the heritage of your ancestor *Yaakov* for the mouth of *Adonai* has spoken. Isaiah 58:13-14

It is this verse that is read every Shabbat at noon before the sanctification of the Shabbat through the *kidush*.

In the middle of the garden that man was to serve and protect, stood the Tree of Life and the Tree of knowledge of good and evil; this teaches us that man could find everything there. Two ways were set before him: he could choose between life and death. The commentators tell us that these two trees were close or even entangled together by the same root.

They were situated in the middle of the Gan Eden, easy to reach from north to south or from east to west. This setting will be repeated in the desert where the Tabernacle, the *Mishkan* will be placed in the midst of the camp of the Israelites, kept and protected by the Levites, but easy to reach and visible by all. In the middle of this *Mishkan*, was the Ark of the Covenant, covered with two cherubim facing each other. In its heart were the tables of the Torah.

In the Jewish mind, the Tree of Life, *etz chaim*, is the Torah, the holy Word of G-d, which existed before all things and through which all things were created:

She is a **tree of life** *etz chaim* to those who grasp her; whoever holds fast to her will be made happy. Proverbs 3:18

It is the Torah that was inside the Ark, and again, it is the Torah which will be found anew in the heavenly Jerusalem:

Between the main street and the river was **the Tree of Life** producing twelve kinds of fruit, a different kind every month. And the leaves of the tree were for healing the nations Revelation 22:2

How blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they have the right to eat from **the Tree of Life** and go through the gates into the city!

Revelation 22:14

From the beginning, G-d warns us to preserve this Tree of Life. This Tree of Life, this Torah is *Yeshua*, the Word made flesh, through whom all was created. Man was given the power to keep this Word in its wholeness on the pain of being cut off:

I warn everyone hearing the words of the prophecy in this book that if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues written in this book. And if anyone takes anything away from the words in the book of this prophecy, **God will take away his share in the Tree of Life** and the holy city, as described I this book. Revelation 22:18-19

In fact, *Yochanan* has confirmed in his epistle that sin is the transgression of the Torah:

Every one who keeps sinning is violating the *Torah* – indeed, sin is violation of the *Torah* (anomia). 1 John 3:4

anomia in Greek means²: *Violation of the Torah*

1) *Condition of the one who is without Torah*

1a) *because he ignores it*

1b) *because he violates it*

2) *Disparity and violation of Torah, iniquity, wickedness, unrighteousness*

It is indeed in the middle of the Gan Eden, in the center of the Tabernacle, in the midst of the heavenly Jerusalem and in the center of our hearts that G-d has desired to plant His Word to enable us to grow in the knowledge of Himself and according to His will. Adam and his wife were to be the keepers of this good deposit and so give shape to the first cell of humanity, in the holiness of His Presence.

But after their wrong choice, this Presence became inaccessible and they were sent away, exiled, far from His face. Adam and *Chava* have

² Strong LSG

chosen by their disobedience, to live without G-d and spiritual death came into the world. The word “man” in Hebrew is “ish איש” and the word “woman” is “isha אישה”. The letter *yud* י of the word “ish איש” and the letter *heh* ה from “isha אישה” make together the abbreviation of the Name of G-d יהי. This teaches us that if G-d is at the center of the couple and the family, and consequently of the people, blessings comes, but if He is not the center, only the two letters *aleph* א and *shin* ש are left. Those two letters make the word “aish, אש” which means “fire”, a consuming fire of destruction...

In His grace, eternally present from the beginning, G-d foreknew His plan for salvation to return His children to the joy of His presence; later he will choose through *Avraham*, a people for Himself who will also have the charge to keep the good deposit of His Word, of His essence and of the proof of His existence, His Being.

-all this because Avraham heeded what I said and did what I told him to do - he followed my mitzvot, my regulations and my teachings
(Torah, plural for Torah)... Genesis 26:5

He will send His Torah in a written form through the mouth of His prophet *Moshe* and He will prophetically deliver His people from the hands of the Adversary.

This Torah will then be made flesh, and He will engrave His commandments with letters of fire on the tables of our hearts by His Spirit. We wait for the final step of redemption to rejoice like at the beginning of the brightness of His presence.

The prophecy of the beginning which was given to *Chava*, will find its fulfillment as we said, at the beginning of our study; the enemy will be crushed under our feet and the evil will cease to exist like the numerical value of the snake *nachash נחש* suggests it. It is equivalent to the value of *Mashiach*, Messiah משיח: 358.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. **There will no longer be any death;** and there will no longer be any mourning, crying or pain; because the old order has passed away. Then, the One sitting on the throne said, **“Look! I am making everything new!”** Also he said “write, These words are true and trustworthy!” Revelation 21:4-5

While waiting for the return of the divine *Shechina*, the history of mankind will be conflictual and a great part of the book Genesis is dedicated to the conflicts that divide brothers: Cain and Abel, *Yitzchak* and *Yishmael*, *Yaakov* and *Esav*, *Yossef* and his brothers. Cain will also be sent away from the face of G.-d after having killed his brother, and we find again this theme of exile connected with sin. But the grace of G-d, which has always been present, will still be there to save a remnant and this grace will be manifested on behalf of *Noach* and his family. The name *Noach*, נֹחַ means “rest” but it is also a short name for *nacham*³ נָחַם, consolation, which itself refers to the word *chen* חֵן made of the same letters and meaning “grace”:

But Noah נֹחַ found grace, *chen* חֵן in the sight of Adonai. Genesis 6:8

It is again by His grace that He will come and bring us the first light in *Yeshua* so that we may become children of light in this world and by His grace, he will bring us back into His Presence:

I, Adonai, called you righteously, I took hold of you by the hand, I shaped you and made you a covenant for the people, **to be a light for the Goyim**, so that you can open blind eyes, free the prisoners from confinement, those living in darkness from the dungeons.

Isaiah 42:6-7

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. **I will bring your descendants from the east, and I will gather you from the west; I will say to the north, 'Give them up!' and to the south, 'Don't hold them back! Bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the ends of the earth.**

Everyone who bears my name, whom I created for my glory – I formed him, yes, I made him. Isaiah 43:5-7

³ Bahya

Then altogether as one man without any distinction, reunited in His eternal rest, we shall worship the only one true G-d, the Holy One of Israel!

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