

תלמוד-תורה ביחד ממרחק
TORAH-STUDY TOGETHER FROM AFAR



October 17, 2020

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶד הָעוֹלָם,
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְּרֵי תוֹרָה:

Parashah Stats

<u>Weekly Portion:</u>	<i>b'Reisheet</i>
<u>Consists of:</u>	Genesis 1:1-6:8
<u>Sequence—</u>	
<u>in annual Torah cycle:</u>	1 st of 54
<u>in Book of Genesis:</u>	1 st of 12



- A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Genesis 1:26-2:9, 2:15

Context: *Genesis, first of the Five Books of the Torah, is an outline of the Creation of the physical universe; a description of the origin of the human family by their respective nations; and an account of Abraham's and Sarah's lineage through their grandson Jacob as the founder of the Israelite people.*

Content: *This week's portion bridges two complementary accounts of the Creation of the physical world, by focusing on the formation of Humanity as God's crowning achievement.*

[1:26] Then God said, "I will make **Humanity** in My Own Image, after My Own Likeness. **They shall have dominion over** the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the beasts, the whole earth, and every creeping thing on earth."

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ
 כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בְדֹגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף
 הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל-
 הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל-הָאָרֶץ

אָדָם "a person; humanity" – derivative of...

...אֲדָמָה "ground; land; soil" ...Assyrian 𒀭𒊩𒌆 adāmu, "making; producing"

רָדָה verb, "dominate; exercise authority over; draw upon for gainful use"

A) Manasseh ben-Israel (Manoel Dias Soiero, 1604-1657), *The Conciliator*, Question 10 - After God had blessed Adam, and made him supreme over every animal, **although he had dominion over them it was not as an absolute master**, nor did he have license to avail himself of them for food. Yet we will see on verse 29 below what Don Isaac Abravanel observes: that The Eternal One demonstrated Adam's superiority over the animals even in the matter of food. [Text D below - wait for it!].

דרבנן צער בעלי חיים דאורייתא

B) Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 128b - It is a comprehensive teaching of our sages that **traumatizing any animal is a violation of God's Law in Torah.**

- more follows

[1:27] So God created Humanity in God's Own Image, creating them in the Image of God— **creating them male and female.**

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ
בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה
בָּרָא אֹתָם

זָכָר	verb ז-כ-ר	“remember, mention; protrude.”
נְקֵבָה	verb נ-ק-ב	“pierce, bore through; distinguished.”

[1:28] God blessed them, saying to them, “Be fertile and increase, filling the earth and **mastering it, to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.”

וַיְבָרֵךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ
וּכְבֹּשׂוּהָ וּרְדוּ בְּדִגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
וּבְכָל-חַיָּה הֶרְמֵשֶׁת עַל-הָאָרֶץ.”

C) OvadYah S'forno (1475-1550) – “Mastering it, to have dominion” - this is not a directive to conquer earth with brute strength, but rather to subdue it by means of superior human intellect. It means that humanity is to **use our intelligence to prevent wild animals from invading our domain**, invoking the superior human thought and capabilities to outwit the beasts.

[1:29] Moreover God said, “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit— they shall be yours for food; [1:30] while to every animal on land, to all the birds of the sky, and to everything that creeps on earth, in which there is the breath of life **I have given all the green plants for food.**”

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת-
כָּל-עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי כָל-
הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת-כָּל-הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ פְּרִי-עֵץ
זֶרַע זֶרַע לָכֶם יְהִי לְאֹכְלָהּ וְלִכְל-חַיַּת
הָאָרֶץ וְלִכְל-עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלִכְל רֹמֵשׁ
עַל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת-כָּל-
יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאֹכְלָהּ

D) Isaac ben-Judah Abravanel (1437-1508), Peirush al-haTorah - Note that the dominion and superiority God granted to Humanity over the other animals, even extends to **the nature of sustenance assigned to us**. To Humanity are given an array of seeds, and fruits, and whole plants; the animals, only grass.

So that's the way it was— [1:31] – God regarded all that He had made— and, behold, [it] **was very good**. Thus there had been evening and morning constituting the Sixth Day.

וַיְהִי-כֵן וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה-טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-
בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי:

[2:1] Thus were completed the sky and earth, together with all that is in them.

וַיִּכְלֹו הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם

“Good”ness Scoreboard in the Creation Account

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי-טוֹב “And God saw that [it] was good.”

Day	incidence	citation	item
1	1)	1:4	light, and separation of day and night
2	no incidence of this formulation when describing formation of the Firmament		
3	2)	1:10	separation of dry land from the sea
	3)	1:12	appearance of plant life on the surface of the earth
4	4)	1:18	orderly array of luminaries in the sky
5	5)	1:21	proliferation of marine life and birds
6	6)	1:25	proliferation of land animals
7	7)	1:31	formulaic change: “...and behold, [it] was very good.”

ירמוז כאן טעם הבריאה למה שידענו כי עיקר הכל הוא האדם ובשבילו ואליו ברא ה' כל ברואיו ומעתה תבא השאלה לאדם למה נברא

E) Chayim ibn-Attar (1696-1742), *Or haChayim* on Genesis 1:31 - There is an intimation in this verse about the whole purpose of Creation. How so? For we know that the point of it all was for the sake of Humanity, on whose account The Eternal One formed all the cosmos. But from that there progresses the question: why was Humanity formed?

לזה אמר וְהָיָה-טוֹב מְאֹד פִּירוּשׁ שֶׁהַגֵּם שֶׁבְחִינַת נִשְׁמַת הָאָדָם הוּא מִבְּחִינַת הַטוֹב עִם כָּל זֶה בְּרָאוּ ה' לַעֲלוֹת בַּמַּעֲלוֹת הַטוֹב יוֹתֵר מִמָּה שֶׁהוּא וְהוּא אוֹמְרוּ מְאֹד

It is for that purpose that the Scripture text says “and, behold, [it/he] was very good.” The meaning is that clearly the inclination of the human soul is towards the good— yet The Eternal One **nonetheless created us to rise to an even higher level of goodness than that with which we are endowed.** That is why it says “very”:

[2:2] Having finished by The Seventh Day the work in which He had been engaged, **God ceased as of The Seventh Day** from all the work in which He had been engaged.
 [2:3] **So God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy**, because on it God ceased from all the work of Creation that He had done.

וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ
 אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכֹל-
 מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים
 אֶת-יּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּו-
 שַׁבַּת מְכֹל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים
 לַעֲשׂוֹת

F) Judah Aryeh-Leib Alter, the Gurer Rebbe (1874-1905), *S'fat-Emet* - It is customary, during the week following the wedding, to recite the Seven Nuptial Blessings as part of *Birkat haMazon* only if one of those sharing the meal had not witnessed the *chuppah*. On Shabbat, however, the Seven Blessings are part of Grace After Meals even if none of the diners is a “new face.”

The reason for this ruling is that The Seventh Day, **having been blessed and hallowed by God** at the end of the first week of Creation, **is inherently sacred in character.** **Thus the holiness of Shabbat transfigures the light of every face, giving each of us a “new face”** from the one we wear during the rest of the week.

[2:4] **Such is the account** of how sky and earth came to be created when The Eternal One, Who is God, made the sky and earth.

**אֱלֹהֵי תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם
בְּיוֹם עָשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם :**

תּוֹלְדוֹת ← noun construction of verb י-ל-ד “to birth; to engender” ∴ “generations of...” “details about...” “the [start of the] story of...”	
Initial incidence, in Genesis 2:4 - summation of Creation,	אֱלֹהֵי תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהִבְרָאָם launching human history.
10 generations later, in Genesis 9:1 – inaugurating No’ach narrative,	אֱלֹהֵי תוֹלְדוֹת נֹחַ setting stage for Humanity v. 1.1.
1 generation later, in Genesis 10:1 – lineage of the Semites,	אֱלֹהֵי תוֹלְדוֹת שֵׁם setting stage for the family of Abraham.
15 generations later, in Genesis 37:2 – narrative of Jacob’s sons,	אֱלֹהֵי תוֹלְדוֹת יַעֲקֹב setting stage for Israelite sojourn in (and eventual Exodus from) Egypt.

[2:5] **Now no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted**, because the Eternal One, Who is God, had not sent rain upon the earth (**for there was no person to till the soil.** [2:6] Instead, a mist would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth)— [2:7] until The Eternal One, Who is God, formed Humanity from the dust of the earth, breathing into their nostrils the breath of life so Humanity became a living being.

**וְכָל שִׁיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יִהְיֶה בָּאָרֶץ וְכָל-
עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טָרָם יִצְמַח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר
יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל-הָאָרֶץ וְאָדָם אֵין
לְעַבֵּד אֶת-הָאֲדָמָה וְאֵד יַעֲלֶה מִן-
הָאָרֶץ וְהִשְׁקָה אֶת-כָּל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה
וַיִּצְרַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם עֹפֵר
מִן-הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפָּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים
וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה**

- Continuum of Precipitation in Hebrew -

0	1	2	4	6	7	9	10
לְחוּת	אֵד	עָרַפֶּל	מְלֻקוֹשׁ	שֶׁלֶג	גֶּשֶׁם	גֶּשֶׁם קָרָחִי	בָּרָד
humidity	mist	fog	drizzle	snow	rain	sleet	hail

**כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר - וּמָה טַעַם לֹא הִמְטִיר לְפִי שֶׁאָדָם אֵין לְעַבֵּד אֶת-הָאֲדָמָה וְאֵין מְכִיר
בְּטוֹבָתָן שֶׁל גְּשָׁמִים**

G) RaSHI (Shlomo Yitzchaqi, 1040-1105) on Genesis 2:5 - “Because [God] had not sent rain” – and what is the reason that [God] had not sent rain”? Because “**there was no person to till the soil,**” so **there was none to recognize the beneficial value of due seasonal precipitation.**

וכשבא אדם וידע שהם צורך לעולם התפלל עליהם וירדו וצמחו האילנות והדשאים
But once Humanity arrived, and knew that the world had need of [the seasonal rains], did they pray for them to fall, so that the trees and fields could flourish.

[2:8] Then God, The Eternal One, planted a garden in Eiden, in the east, and **placed there** the Humanity whom He had formed.
[2:9] Then from the ground God, The Eternal One, caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the Tree of Life in the middle of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad.

וַיִּטַע יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים גֶּן-בְּעֵדֶן מִקְדָּם
וַיִּשֶׂם שָׁם אֶת-הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָצַר
וַיִּצְמַח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן-הָאֲדָמָה כָּל-
עֵץ נֹחֵמַד לְמַרְאֵה וְטוֹב לְמֵאֲכָל וְעֵץ
הַחַיִּים בְּתוֹךְ הָגֶן וְעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וְרָע

[2:15] God, The Eternal One, took Humanity and **left them** in the garden of Eiden, **to till it and tend it**.

וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם וַיְנַחֲהוּ
בְּגֶן-עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ

לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ - משמעות הכתוב יגיד כי הגן צריך לה עובד ושומר
H) Chayim ibn-Attar (1696-1742), Or haChayim on Genesis 2:15 - The simple statement of the Scriptural text tells us the Garden needed a laborer and a guardian.

והאמת יכחיש זה כי למה יהיה צריך לשמרה אם מהגנבים זה הבאי לח היא ומה היא העבודה שהיתה צריכה הגן

But the truth disabuses us of this. For what need was there need to guard it, when there were no thieves to steal from it? Moreover, **what tending did the Garden need?**

ואם צריכה עובד אם כן זה לה חמשת אלפים וחמש מאות שנה מי עבדה
And if it did, indeed, require an attendant, then who has been tending it for the past 5500 years?

וַיְנַחֲהוּ בְּגֶן-עֵדֶן - שהניחו שם להיות זורע לו חטים ומיני תבואות וכל עֵשֶׂב זֶרַע זֶרַע וערוגות הבשמים וקוצר ותולש ואוכל כרצונו

I) RaMBaN (Bonastruc da Porta, 1194-1270) - "...and left them in the garden of Eiden" – meaning that God **deposited him there, to sow for himself wheat and all kinds of produce**, and "every kind of seed-bearing grass" [1:29] and flower-beds of fragrant spices, **for him to reap and harvest to eat as he liked**.

וזה טעם לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ לעבוד אדמת הגן הערוגות שיעשה שם כי הגן שהם האילנות לא יעבדו

And that is the significance of "to till it and tend it": namely, to work the earth in the furrows he would be making there— for that part of the garden where the two Trees were did not need to be cultivated.

מה הלשון הזה לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ לא אמר לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשִׁמְרָהּ אלא לעסוק בדברי תורה ולשמור את כל מצותיה

J) Midrash Pirquei d'Rabi Eli'Ezer 11 - What is the meaning of this expression, “to till it and tend it”? It says “to till it and tend it” specifically to mean **engaging with the words of Torah and keeping its commandments**.

שני לשמר את-דרך עץ החיים ואין עץ חיים אלא תורה שני עץ-חיים היא
למחזיקים בה

For this is even as it is said [farther in the same narrative:] “to keep the way of the Tree of Life” [3:24]— and “The Tree of Life” is nothing other than Torah, even as it is said in Scripture: “It is a Tree of Life to its adherents” [Proverbs 3:18].

והיה אדם מטיל בגן עדן כאחד ממלאכי השרת

So it is that Humanity was placed in the Garden like one of the Ministering Angels.