

א שטיקל תורה A LITTLE SLICE OF TORAH

פון פרשת דער וואָך FROM THE WEEKLY PORTION

October 02, 2021



ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו, וצונו לעסוק בדברי תורה:

“Tachometer Torah”



...read down to the red line

Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: b'Reisheet

Consists of: Genesis 1:1-6:8

Sequence—

in annual Torah cycle: 1st of 54

in Genesis: 1st of 12

- A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Genesis 1:1-19

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.*

In honor of this Shabbat marking the start of a new annual Torah-reading cycle, our study focuses, right out of the box, with the opening passage of the Book.

1:1] **At** the outset of God's creation of the heavens and the earth, [1:2] the earth was a chaotic void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and the spirit of God hovering over the water— [1:3] until God **said**, “**Let light be**,”; and light **was**. [1:4] **Seeing** the light **was good**, God made a distinction between light and darkness. [1:5] God called the light, “Day”; the darkness, He called Night. So it is that evening and morning is one day.

[1:6] God said, “**Let there be** an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate one water from the other.” [1:7] Thereby God **made** that expanse, distinguishing the water within it from the waters outside and beyond that expanse—and **thus it became**. [1:8] This expanse, God called “Sky.” So there was that evening and that morning—a second day.

1:9] God **said**, “Let the water below the sky **be gathered together**, that the dry land may appear”— and **thus it became**. [1:10] The dry land

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ: והארץ הייתה תהו ובהו וחושך על-פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על-פני המים: ויאמר אלהים יהי-אור ויהי-אור: וירא אלהים את-האור כי-טוב: ויבדל אלהים בין האור ובין החושך ויקרא אלהים לאור יום ולחושך קרא לילה ויהי-ערב ויהי-בקר יום אחד: פ

ויאמר אלהים יהי רקיע בתוך המים ויהי מבדיל בין מים למים: ויעש אלהים את-הרקיע ויבדל בין המים אשר מתחת לרקיע ובין המים אשר מעל לרקיע ויהי-כן: ויקרא אלהים לרקיע שמים ויהי-ערב ויהי-בקר יום שני: פ

ויאמר אלהים יקוו המים מתחת השמים אל-מקום אחד ותראה היבשה ויהי-כן: ויאמר אלהים יקוו המים

- more over

God called “Earth”; the gathering-together of waters, He called “Seas.” **Seeing that this was good**, [1:11] God **declared**: “Let the earth sprout with vegetation: plants bearing seeds, and fruiting trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit containing their own seed within”— and **thus it became**. [1:12] The earth brought forth vegetation: plants bearing seeds, and fruiting trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit containing their own seed within, **all of which God saw was good**. [1:13] So there was that evening and that morning— a third day.

[1:14] God **said**, “Let there be luminaries in the expanse of the sky, to distinguish day from night. They will be markers by which to measure the passage of time, the days and the years, [1:15] as well as serving as lights in the sky to shed light upon the Earth”— and **thus it became**. [1:16] God **made** the two great luminaries—the greater light to have dominion over the day, and the lesser light to have dominion over the night— as well as the stars, [1:17] setting them all in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth; [1:18] to have dominion over the day and the night; and to distinguish the light-of-day from the darkness-of-night. **All this God saw to be good**— [1:19] So there was that evening and that morning— a fourth day.

מתחת השמים אל-מקום אחד ותראה היבשה ויהי-כן: ויקרא אלהים לניבשה ארץ ולמקוה המים קרא ימים וירא אלהים פני-טוב: ויאמר אלהים תדשא הארץ דשא עשב מזריע זרע עץ פרי עשה פרי למינו אשר זרעו-בו על-הארץ ויהי-כן: ותוצא הארץ דשא עשב מזריע זרע למינהו ועץ עשה-פרי אשר זרעו-בו למינהו וירא אלהים פני-טוב: ויהי-ערב ויהי-בקר יום שלישי: פ

ויאמר אלהים יהי מארת ברקיע השמים להבדיל בין היום ובין הלילה: ויהיו לאתת ולמועדים ולקמים ושנים והיו למאורת ברקיע השמים להאיר על-ארץ ויהי-כן: ויגעש אלהים את-שניה המארת הגדלים את-המאור הגדל לממשלת היום ואת-המאור הקטן לממשלת הלילה ואת הכוכבים: ויתן אתם אלהים ברקיע השמים להאיר על-הארץ: ולמשל ביום ובלילה ולהבדיל בין האור ובין החשך וירא אלהים פני-טוב: ויהי-ערב ויהי-בקר יום רביעי: פ

מאי קא משמע לן – Some of the Details...and What's At Stake

בראשית ברא אלהים

1:1 - **b**'Reisheet bara Elohim

- Septuagint (c. 150 BCE) ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν “**in** the beginning He created”
- Jerome - Vulgate (405) in principio creavit “**in** the beginning He created”
- John Wycliffe (1383), William Tyndale (1526) In the begynnynge dyd Godde forme from nothyng

↗

ב-ר-א “to create; to bring into existence” *creatio ex nihilo*
 (as opposed to **י-צ-ר** “to form; to shape; to craft”)

Geneva (1550), King James Bible (1611), Jewish Publication Society (1917), Aryeh Kaplan (1981), Mesorah (1993) **In** the beginning, God **created**

Martin Luther (1534) **Am Anfang schuf** “At the outset He **created**”

Everett Fox (1995) **At the beginning of** God’s **creating**

Jewish Publication Society (1999), Robert Alter (2004)

When God **began to create**

verb **בָּרָא** | / קָל / simple active -
“he **created**.”

noun **בְּרֵא** construct state -
“**the creating of**...”

A Structural Schematic of the Chronology of Creation in Genesis 1

Day	Creation du Jour	Creation du Jour
1)	time (dark / light)	4) luminaries to mark time
2)	space (sea / sky)	5) fish and birds
3)	location (land / sea)	6) land animals and humanity

למה נברא העולם ב'בי

A) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 1:10 - Why was the universe created with a **ב bet**?
אלא מה ב' זה סתום מכל צדדיו ופתוח מלפניו

Just as this letter **ב bet** is closed on all its other sides, and open only on the side facing forward,

כך אין לך רשות לומר מה למטה מה למעלה מה לפנים מה לאחור אלא מיום שנברא העולם ולהבא

So to do we have no authority to inquire into what is below or above; **what happened before** or what is yet to come— but only from the time that this world was created and subsequently.

B) Isaac Newton (1643-1727), *Philosophiae Naturalis Principis Mathematica* -

Nam tempus, spatium, locum et motum vulgus quantitates hasce non aliter quam ex relatione ad sensibilia concipit. Tempus absolutum verum & Mathematicum, in se & natura sua absq; relatione ad externum quodvis, æquabiliter fluit, alioq; nomine dicitur Duratio.

Time, space, place, and motion are commonly conceived as quantities under no other notions save their relation to tangible objects. **Absolute, true, and mathematical time— of itself, and from its own nature— flows equably without regard to anything external,** and by another name is called duration.

למה נברא העולם בבי' להודיעך שהן שני עולמים העוה"ז והעוה"ב

C) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 1:10 - Why was the universe created with a ב *bet* [which is the second letter of the *alef-bet*, with a numerical value of 2]? To inform you of the **duality of the Cosmos**— that there is this world, and The World To Come.

ד"א ולמה בב' שהוא לשון ברכה ולמה לא באל"ף שהוא לשון ארירה

Alternately: why with a ב *bet*? Because **it is associated with *b'rachah* “blessing.”** But why **not** with an א *alef* [which should have conceptual primacy, as the first letter of the *alef-bet*]? Because it is associated with *arirah* “cursing” [specifically the twelve formulaic declarations of malediction in Deuteronomy 27, pronounced by the third generation of Israelites when reaffirming the ethical principles of their Covenant].

ד"א למה לא באל"ף שלא ליתן פתחון פה לאפיקורסין לומר היאך העולם יכול לעמוד שהוא נברא בלשון ארירה אלא אמר הקב"ה הרי אני בורא אותך בלשון ברכה והלואי יעמוד

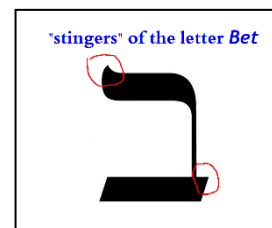
So why not with an א *alef*? **To avoid giving ammunition to detractors** who would demand: “How can the world endure, when it was created with a letter associated with cursing?” To obviate that, The Holy And Blessed One declared: “I am creating it with a letter associated with blessing, that it might better endure!”

ד"א למה בבי' אלא מה ב' זה יש לו שני עוקצין אחד מלמעלה ואחד מלמטה מאחוריו אומרים לבי' מי בראך והוא מראה בעוקצו מלמעלה ואמר זה שלמעלה בראני

Alternately, why with a ב *bet*? **This letter is formed with two “stingers”**— one pointing upwards, and one point backwards behind it. Should they say to a ב *bet*: “who created you?”, it points upwards with its top stinger.

ומה שמו והוא מראה להן בעוקצו של אחוריו ואומר ה' שמו

And should they then demand: “what is his name?”, **it shows them its rear stinger** [pointing backwards to the deeds of Creation] and says: “His Name is The Eternal One.”



D) Jeremiah 10:16 - He is **the Creator of all things; The Eternal One** is His Name

יוצר הכל הוא יהוה צבאות שמו

E) 7x in Psalms - **The Eternal One is the Maker of Heaven and Earth**

יהוה עשה שמים וארץ

כה-אמר האל יהוה

F) Isaiah 42:5 - Thus says The Eternal One, Who is God—

רַקַּע הָאָרֶץ וְנִפְצְצָאֶיהָ בּוֹרֵא הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנוֹטִיָּהֶם

Creator of the heavens, Who unfurled them;

Spreader-forth of the earth, in its vast expanse;

וְרוּחַ לְהַלְכִים בָּהּ נָתַן נְשָׁמָה לָעָם עָלֶיהָ

Who gave breath to the people upon it,
and spirit to all who walk upon it. . . .

G) Egyptian creation myth – pyramid of Mer-ne-Re (c. 2350 BCE) -

O Atum-Kheperer[, embodiment of the sun], You were on high in the primordial hill,
arising like the flame-bird in the house of the sun;
You spit out [the air-god] **Shu**; **You sneezed out** [the water-goddess] **Tef-Nut**,
Enwrapping them in Your arms to imbue them with the spirit of life.

H) Akkadian creation myth – *Énuma Elish* (c. 1850 BCE) -

When on high the sky had no name,
when the ground below had not been named,
Nothing was except for Absu [the abyss of salt-water], who begot them,
and mother Tiâmat [the expanse of fresh water], who bore them all.
When none of the gods had yet been brought into being—
no names assigned them; their destinies undetermined—
Then it was that **the gods were formed between** [these two waters].

The Babylonian thunder-god Marduk destroys his mother, Tiamat, to become king of the gods



Assyrian cylinder seal roll-out



bas relief from the palace of Sennchariv at Nimrud

I) Greek creation myth – digested from *Theogonos* by Hesiod (c. 700 BCE) -

Initially there was only Chaos, a yawning nothingness, out of which void emerged Gaia [the Earth]; the Abyss below it; and Erebus, unknowable realm of the dead. **Gaia of herself conceived Uranos** [the sky], **who then impregnated her** so that **she bore the twelve Titans**: Kronos [time] and his five brothers and six sisters.

In a bid for power, **Kronos castrated his father** Uranos [from whose severed genitals, cast into the depths of the sea, arose the love-and-fertility goddess, Aphrodite]; proclaimed himself king; and **married his sister Titan, Rhea, who bore him the gods**. But fearing that his children would betray him— as he had his own father— Kronos snatched up each of the gods at birth and swallowed them whole.

But Rhea rescued her son Zeus, fooling her husband by giving him a stone in swaddling clothes to eat instead of the baby. Raised by his mother in secret, Zeus fed his father mustard to make him vomit up the other immortal gods who had remained alive and come of age inside him. With their grateful support, **he defeated Kronos and proclaimed himself king** of the gods.

Yussuf ul-Ghamal,
Librarian of the Isfahan *Madrassa* (c. 1060)

آن گروه محارب
زناکارن ناکاران
That incestuous gang
of squabbling fornicators.

J) Joseph Herman Hertz (1872-1946), *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs* on Genesis 1:1 - “In the beginning, God created” - The existence of the Deity is throughout Scripture assumed: it is not a matter for argument or doubt. The Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים *Elohim* is the general designation of the Divine Being in the Bible, as **the foundation and source of all things**.

Elohim is a plural form, which is often used in Hebrew to denote plentitude of might. Here, in this opening verse of Scripture, it indicates that **God comprehends and unifies all the forces of eternity and infinity**.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְדָּה הָעוֹלָם	
עוֹלָם	1) “the world; this planet” [synonyms תִּבְלַל “the world” and כָּל-הָאָרֶץ “the whole Earth”]
עוֹלָם	2) “a world, a planet” [plural כל העולמות “all the worlds”]
עוֹלָם	3) “the endless expanse of space, to all infinity.”
עוֹלָם	4) “the endless scope of time, to all eternity.”

K) RaMBaM (Musa ibn-Maimun, 1135-1204), *Mishneh Torah, Y'sodei haTorah* 1:1-4 -

יסוד היסודות ועמוד החכמות
לידע שיש שם מצוי ראשון
הוא ממציא כל נמצא

1) The foundation of all foundations, and the pillar on which all wisdom stands, is the knowledge that **there is An Initial Reality, Who brought into being all that exists,** וכל הנמצאים משמים וארץ ומה שביניהם לא נמצאו אלא מאמתת המצאו

so that everything that exists— from the heavens above to the earth beneath, and all that is in between them— **came into existence only from the fact of His Own existence.**

ואם יעלה על הדעת שהוא אינו מצוי אין דבר אחר יכול להמצאות

2) Should one even conceptualize that [this Initial Reality / First Cause / Prime Mover] does not exist, then there is no other thing that could possibly have existence.

ואם יעלה על הדעת שאין כל הנמצאים מלבדו מצויים הוא לבדו יהיה מצוי ולא יבטל הוא לבטולם

Isaac Newton, *Principia* -

Axiomata Sive Leges Motus
Axioms, or Laws, of Motion

Lex. I - *Corpus omne perseverare in statu suo quiescendi vel movendi uniformiter in directum, nisi quatenus a viribus impressis cogitur statum illum mutare.*

First Law – Any body will continue in its resting state, or else in its ongoing motion in a particular direction, **until it is compelled by some external force acting upon it** to change that state.

Aristotle (384-322), *Physics* 8; *Metaphysics* 12 -

There must be **an immortal, unchanging being**, ultimately responsible for the existence; organic integrity; and orderly conduct of the perceived world around us.

ὁ οὐ κινούμενον κινεῖ “unmoved Mover”
primum movens “the Prime Mover”

להם ולא לאחד מהם לפיכך אין אמתתו כאמתת אחד מהם

3) If one would imagine that none of the entities aside from Him exist, **He alone would continue to exist, and the nullification of their existence would not nullify His existence—**

שכל הנמצאים צריכין לו והוא ברוך הוא אינו צריך להם ולא לאחד מהם
לפיכך אין אמתתו כאמתת אחד מהם

because all the other entities require Him, whereas He (may He be blessed!) is not dependent upon all or any of them. **Therefore, the truth of His existence has no resemblance to the truth of any of their beings.**

L) Shlomo ibn-Gabirol (c. 1020-1058), Hymn, Adon 'Olam -

אָדוֹן עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר מְלִךְ בְּטָרִם כָּל יְצִיר נְבָרָא.

The **eternal and infinite** Lord, Who ruled
even before all Creation was formed—

לְעֵת נַעֲשָׂה בְּחֶפְצוֹ כֹּל, אֲזִי מְלִךְ שְׁמוֹ נִקְרָא.

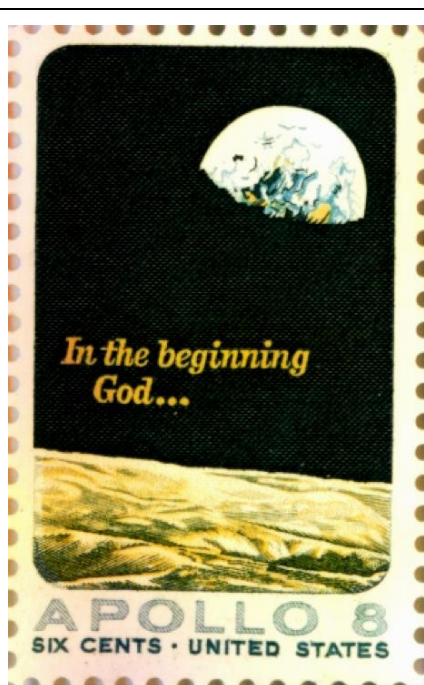
Yet since the time that all came into being in accord with His Will,
His Name has been “Mighty Ruler”!

וְאַחֲרֵי כָכָלּוֹת הַכֹּל, לְבַדּוֹ יִמְלֹךְ נֹרָא.

And even after the dissolution of all that is,
He alone shall, awesome, rule—

וְהוּא הָיָה, וְהוּא הוֹה, וְהוּא יִהְיֶה, בְּתִפְאָרָה.

For He was; He is,
and He shall ever be, in radiant splendor!



1969 U.S. Postal Service Commemorative

In preparation for their 1968 orbit of the moon, Apollo 8 astronauts Bill Anders, Jim Lovell, and Frank Borman spent a lot of time working together on an inspirational message to share at the moment of Earthrise on Christmas day.

They felt that a conventional Yuletide “peace on earth, goodwill to men” statement would not ring true, at a divisive time of America’s escalating military presence in Southeast Asia, and also agreed that any Christian religious content fitting to the holiday would not be appropriate coming from explorers embarked on a peaceful mission on behalf of the entire human family.

Their solution was for each of them to read in turn a selection from the Creation account in Genesis 1, celebrating the unity of all the beings sharing our “big blue marble” floating in space.

תִּדְשֵׂא הָאָרֶץ דְּשֵׂא עֵשֶׂב מִזְרִיעַ זֶרַע
1:11 - Let the earth bring forth vegetation: plants bearing seeds

בזכות ג' דברים נברא העולם בזכות חלה ובזכות מעשרות ובזכות בכורים ומה טעם בראשית ברא אלהים

M) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 1:4 - **It was for the merit of three things that the world was created:** for the merit of our taking *challah* [Numbers 15:17-21]; for the merit of our relinquishing to God a tenth of our crops [Leviticus 27:30]; and for the merit of our offering to God the first-fruits [Leviticus 2:14]. What is the proof of this? The opening verse in the Torah, which declares: “for the sake of The First did God create”

ואין ראשית אלא חלה שנאמר ראשית עריסותיכם

Now “The First” can only refer to *challah*, even as it is said of *challah* in Torah: “...the first of your dough” [Numbers 15:17].

ואין ראשית אלא מעשרות היך דאת אמר ראשית דגנך

Moreover, “the First” can also only refer to tithing, even as it is said in Torah “...the first of your grain” [Deuteronomy 18:4].

ואין ראשית אלא בכורים שנאמר ראשית בכורי אדמתך וגו'

Moreover, “the First” can also only refer to first-fruits, even as it is said in Torah “...the first of your grain” [Exodus 23:19].

