בראשית

א בְּקַדְמִין בְּרָא יִי יַת שְׁמַיָּא וְיָת אַרְעָא: בּ וְאַרְעָא הַוָּת צָדְיָא וְרֵיקּנְא וַחֲשׁוֹכָא פרש על אפּי תהומא ורוּחא

א א °בְּרֵאשַׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהֵים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאֶרְץ: ב וְהָאָרֶץ הֵיְתָה תֹהוֹ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּגֵי תְהַוֹם וְרָוּחַ

ב' רבתי

דבורו של הקב"ה בהושע ויאמר ה' אל הושע וגו'. ואם תאמר, להורות בא שאלו תחלה נבראו, ופירושו בראשית הכל ברא אלו, ויש לך מקראות שמקלרים לשונם וממעטים תיבה אחת כמו כִּי לא סַגַר דַלְחֵי בַּטִנִי (איוב ג, ט) ולא פירש מי הסוגר, וכמו ישה את חיל דמשק (ישעיה ח, ד) ולה פירש מי ישאנו, וכמו אָס יַחַרוֹשׁ בַּבַּקְרִים (עמוס ו, יב) ולא פירש אם יחרוש אדם בבקרים, וכמו מגיד מראשית אחרית (ישעיה מו, י) ולא פירש מגיד מראשית דבר אחרית דבר, אם כן תמה על עלמך, שהרי המים קדמו שהרי כתיב (פסוק ב) וְרוּחַ מֵלֹהִים מַרַחַפַּת עַל פָּנֵי הַמֵּיִם ועדיין לא גילה המקרא (בסידור הקודמים והמאוחרים כלום) בריאת המים מתי היתה, הא למדת שקדמו המים לארץ. ועוד, שהשמים מאש ומים נבראו, על כרחך לא לימד המקרא בסדר המוקדמים והמאוחרים כלוס: ברא אלהים. ולא נאמר ברא ה׳, שבתחלה עלה במחשבה לבראתו במדת הדין, וראה שאין העולם מתקיים הקדים מדת רחמים ושתפה למדת הדין, היינו דכתיב (להלן ב, ד) בִּיוֹם עַשׂוֹת ה' מֵלֹהִים מָרַן וְשְׁמֵיִם: (ב) תהו ובהו. תהו לשון תמה ושממון, שאדם תוהה ומשתומם על בהו שבה: תהו. אשטורדי"שון בלע"ז: בהו. לשון רקות ולדו:

(ה) בראשית. אמר רבי ילחק, לא היה לריך להתחיל את התורה אלא מהחדש הזה לכם (שמות יב, ב), שהיא מלוה ראשונה שנלטוו בה ישראל, ומה טעם פתח בבראשית משום כת מעשיו הגיד לעמו לתח להם נחלת גוים (חהלים קיא, ו), שאם יאמרו אומות העולם לישראל לסטים אתם שכבשתם ארצות שבעה גוים, הם אומרים להם כל הארץ של הקב"ה היא, הוא בראה ונתנה לאשר ישר בעיניו, ברלונו נתנה להם וברלונו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו: בראשית ברא. אין המקרא הזה אומר אלא דרשני, כמ"ש רז"ל בשביל התורה שנקראת ראשית דרכו (משלי ח, כב), ובשביל ישראל שנקראו ראשית תבוחתה (ירמיה ב. ג). וחם בחת לפרשו כפשוטו כך פרשהו, בראשית בריאת שמים וארץ והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך ויאמר אלהים יהי אור. ולא בא המקרא להורות סדר הבריאה לומר שאלו קדמו, שאם בא להורות כך היה לו לכתוב בראשונה ברא את השמים וגו', שאין לך ראשית במקרא שאינו דבוק לתיבה שלאחריו כמו בראשית ממלכת יהויקם (שם כו, א), רחשית ממלכתו (להלן י, י), כחשית דגנה (דברים יח, ד). אף כחן אתה אומר בראשית ברא אלהים וגו' כמו בראשית ברוא, ודומה לו מַחַלַּח דְבָּר ה׳ בָּהוֹשֵע (הושע א, ב), כלומר תחלת

ברא אַלְהִים - In the beginning God created. The basic idea expressed in these words is that creation took place ישׁ מַאַר, something [was created] from nothing, or creatio ex nihilo. This concept is a tenet of faith in Judaism. However, the Torah is not a guide to metaphysics; its focus is on moral imperatives. Each article of faith must therefore be converted into a moral norm.

King David emphasized in *Psalms*: To God is the earth and its fullness, the land and all who dwell there, because He established it on seas and firmed it on rivers (Ps. 24:2). David suggested that by virtue of having created the world, God is its Owner in the full legal sense.

One can clarify this idea through a *halachic* principle. There is a disagreement in the Talmud (*Bava Kamma* 98b) regarding the ownership rights of a craftsman who was given raw material by a second party and then fashioned it into something more valuable—whether or not we maintain that אַיָּקוּ בְּשְׁבֶּח בֵּלִי Does the craftsman have ownership rights over the value that his craftsman-ship added to the raw material? If so, the owner of the raw material must compensate the craftsman if he wishes to own the finished object (אִיּמָן קּוֹנֶה). Alternatively, perhaps the craftsman has no rights to the finished object (אִיּמָן אֵינוֹ קּוֹנֶה) and he is only entitled to payment for his work. Maimonides (*Hilchos Sechirus* 10:4) and many *Rishonim* maintain that the craftsman has no ownership rights, while the Rosh (*Bava Kamma* 9:14) and others argue that he does.

But although there is a difference of opinion regarding a human craftsman, there is no controversy when discussing the Creator of the world. The Master of the universe unquestionably owns

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1 In the beginning God created* the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth consisted of formless matter*, and darkness was on the face of the deep, and the spirit

the world by virtue of His having created it precisely because the world was created *ex nihilo*: He both created the raw material and also formed it into the world as we know it. There can thus be no contender for ownership rights.

The moral message of creation מַשְּׁמַאַן is that all of a person's organs, talents and capabilities actually belong to God and are only on loan from Him. With every sin he commits he misuses that which has been lent to him and thus in a sense forgoes his very right to existence. Living a life of sin is thereby an act of theft and extortion. (Boston, 1971; Derashot Harav, p. 15)

We use the expression יֵשׁ מֵאַיִן for lack of a better term, but in fact, before Creation there was no אָן, there was Existence—there was God Himself. The popular Adon Olam prayer declares, אָדוֹן עוֹלְם אֲשֶׁר מָלַךְ בְּשֶׁרֶם כָּל יְצִיר נִבְרָא, The Master of the universe, Who ruled before anything was created. Before the world was created there was infinite, absolute Being—God Himself existed.

It may be asked, however, that if God is infinite, encompassing all, how could He create a finite world extraneous to Himself? When God's splendid majesty shines forth and stands revealed, everything reverts to chaos and void. To address this question, Lurianic mysticism asserts that God engaged in *tzimtzum*, contraction, thereby leaving "room" for the existence of the world (see *Shemos Rabbah* 34:1). The creation of the world took place on account of God's goodness, for He descended, as it were, from absolute transcendence to the domain of concrete existence.

The task of man is to bring the Divine Presence down to the lower world, to this vale of tears. Man is able to reside together with his Creator in this world, and it is only through cultivating that togetherness in the here and now that man can acquire a share in the world to come. It is the will of God that His *Shechinah*, His Divine Presence, should contract and limit itself within the realm of empirical reality. (*Halachic Man*, pp. 51-52)

בראשית ברא אַלהִים - In the beginning God created. The Targum Yerushalmi here translates the word בְּרְאשִׁית בָּרָא אֵלֹהִים, with wisdom; the verse thus should read, With wisdom God created the heavens and the earth. Wisdom is the beginning of everything, the spring from which all flows, the primal point, the beginning of a created world as regulated with mathematical exactitude. In the Kabbalistic tradition, wisdom is represented by the letter yud in the Ineffable Name. The letter yud is nothing more than a single point: it is dimensionless, lacking concreteness. Nonetheless, the point is the origin of all mathematical figures. Ancient mathematicians taught that by merely moving a point one creates a line, and by moving a line one creates a plane. Though it is intangible and dimensionless, the geometric world cannot exist without the point. The point cannot be explained, cannot be described and cannot be measured, yet it is the origin, the primary of everything. The discursive thinking of man has no categories in which to accommodate anything dimensionless, a "something" which is "nothing." Yet this "nothing," this "unreality," is actually the very origin of all reality. (The Ray Speaks, p. 167; Noraos Haray 15:119-120)

רוה תהו ובהו - Now the earth consisted of formless matter. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 1:9) asserts that the הקב"א ע"י הקב"א ע"י הקב"א האון בהו הווישה על פני תהום גם הַמָּה נָבְרָאוּ ע"י הקב"א —the primordial, amorphous matter, the hyle, was also part of creation. Science cannot postulate nor even address the origin of matter. The concept of שֵׁשְׁמֵּאוֹ , something from nothing, is not scientific but rather metaphysical. Plato

מן קָדֶם יְיָ מְנַשְּׁבָא עַל אַפֵּי מַיָּא: גוַאֲמַר יְיָ יְהִי נְהוֹרָא הַהָּוֹה נְהוֹרָא: דוֹחַזָּא יִיְ יִת הַשׁוֹכָא: ה וִקְרָא יְיָ לְּהוֹרָא יְמָמָא וְלַחֲשׁוֹכָא קַרָא בִּילִי, לְנְהוֹרָא יְמָמָא וְלַחֲשׁוֹכָא קָרָא בַּילִי, וְהַנָּה רְמַשׁ וַהֲנָה צְפָּר יוֹמָא חָד: אֶלהִים מְרַחֶפֶּת עַל־פְּגֵי הַמָּיִם: ג וַיַּאמֶר אֱלֹהָים יְהִי־ אֵוֹר וַיְהִי־אִוֹר: ד וַיַּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָוֹר כִּי־מֵוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בַּיִן הָאָוֹר וּבֵין הַחְשֶׁך: ה וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לָאוֹר יוֹם אָחָר: פּ יוֹם וַלַחִשֶּׁךְ קַרָא לַיִלָה וַיִהִי־עֶרֶב וַיִּהִי־בַּקְר יִוֹם אָחַר: פּ

להשתמש בו רשעים והבדילו ללדיקים לעתיד לבא. ולפי פשוטו כך פרשהו, ראהו כי טוב ואין נאה לו ולחשך שיהיו משתמשים בערבוביא, וקבע לזה תחומו ביום ולזה תחומו בלילה: (ה) יום אחד. לפי סדר לשון הפרשה היה לו לכתוב יום ראשון, כמו שכתוב בשאר הימים שני שלישי רביעי. למה

על פני תהום. על פני המים שעל הארץ: ורוח אלהים מרחפת. כסא כבוד עומד באויר ומרחף על פני המים ברוח פיז של הקדוש ברוך הוא ובמאמרו, כיונה המרחפת על הקן. אַקוב"טיר בלע"ז: (ד) וירא אלהים את האור כי טוב ויבדל. אף שה אנו לריכין לדברי אגדה. ראהו שאינו כדאי

could not accept the possibility that physical matter was created by a spiritual Being. Aristotle likewise believed that matter predated creation. They insisted that God could be only a יוֹצֵר, a fashioner of preexisting matter, and not a בּוֹרֵא, the Creator of matter itself.

Religiously, it matters greatly whether or not one accepts the notion of יָשׁ מַאַּיִן, because it suggests that God is Omnipotent, that He is the Master of the universe, which He directs in accordance with His will. Creation is an assurance of His enduring involvement with the universe and with man in particular, whose very existence depends on His continuous support. To deny the concept of יִשׁ מַאַיִן is to posit a dualism, allowing for the eternal existence of something besides God. Such a limited God is not, however, the God of Israel, whose existence predates everything.

Although man cannot create *ex nihilo*, the spiritual message behind the story of Creation is that man too must be creative. Man must conquer disease, control rivers, and alleviate misery. Man must also educate; education is creativity *par excellence*: an undisciplined child, comparable to the formless המהו בבהו, is transformed into a spiritual personality. A moral principle follows from this article of faith; the Creation narrative challenges man to create. (*Reflections*, 1:26, 34)

ר והאַרץ היתה תחו ובהו - Now the earth consisted of formless matter. The Midrash states, "Rabbi Abahu said "Now the earth consisted of formless matter," we learn that the Holy One Blessed Be He created worlds and destroyed them (Bereishis Rabbah 3:7). These worlds were fashioned out of תהו ובהו the hyle, this potential, but then perished to make place for new worlds to be born. Between the destruction of previous worlds and the fashioning of this one, there is hidden the awesome mystery of what is known in Kabbalistic literature as שְׁבִּירֶת הַבָּלִים, the shattering of the vessels. The world is conceptualized here as a vessel, a receptacle for God's Presence, the Shechinah. The world exists only because God resides in it, and when each of these worlds rebelled against His Presence, the vessel was emptied and automatically broken—hence the term שֵּבְיָרָת הַבְּלִים. The worlds which were born and collapsed are called הוֹלְרִים דְּתֹהוֹ, a reference to the fact that these worlds reverted to the primordial state of formlessness, to the הדה which became the basis for our own world. (Boston, 1974) At first glance, this Midrash seems almost absurd. When man builds something, he may be dissatisfied with his initial design, destroy it and start over. Why would omniscient God need to engage in such experimentation, building worlds and then destroying them? This Midrash speaks to the imperative of הַלְּכָתְ בְּדֵרְכָיו, and you shall walk in His ways (Deut. 28:10). Just as God builds and destroys, so must we. Parashas Bereishis not only challenges man to be a creator, but it challenges man, when

of God was hovering over the face of the water*. 3 And God said*, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 And God saw the light that it was good, and God separated between the light and between the darkness. 5 And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night, and it was evening and it was morning, one day*. 6 And

necessary, to rebuild as well. For example, Rabbi Akiva taught Torah to twenty-four thousand students who perished within a short period. The Talmud describes the result of this catastrophe as *vehaya ha'olam shamem*, the world became desolate (*Yevamos* 62b). Yet Rabbi Akiva persevered until he restored the glory of Torah to its former splendor, engaging in *imitatio dei*, emulating God, who created worlds after they were destroyed. Our history is replete with worlds created and destroyed: Jewish communities and Torah scholarship in Babylonia, the Byzantine empire, Spain, Poland and Germany. Following the destruction of one world, a new one was born. Our survival, our ability to persevere in the face of hardship and to rebuild, are founded upon this Midrashic principle. The saga of Jewish history is implied in this Midrash. (*Darosh Darash Yosef*, pp. 30-31)

ביר הְמָּיִם מְרָהֶפֶּת עֵל פְּנֵי הָמִיִם - and the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the water. In speaking of God, Scripture never neglects to emphasize the dynamic aspect; God is identified with ceaseless movement, whether in the sense of continuous activity, like the creation of, or eternal vigilance over, the universe, or locomotion. God comes and goes, visits the world and departs. The Divine spirit is dynamic, restless. The word היח denotes both spirit and wind for a simple reason: wind symbolizes motion, activity, speed—phenomena that are indispensible for a living being. (The Emergence of Ethical Man, pp. 49-50)

ביא מלהים - And God said. The word יאפָר here does not refer to speech; God would not have spoken to the void of nihility (nothingness). Rather, the term is used here to indicate the creative act of God, which is identical with His will. Only in man is there a dichotomy between thought, often expressed through speech, and realization; to the Master of the universe will and action are one. (Family Redeemed, p. 99; Yemei Zikaron, p. 217)

ביי שוב - And God saw the light that it was good. Rashi comments that God recognized that the world did not deserve to use the originally created light, and He therefore reserved it for the righteous of the eschatological era (see Chagigah 12a). He thus maintains that the אוֹ discussed here does not refer to the electromagnetic phenomenon of light. The light referred to in this verse was something that was "too good" for mankind at that time, so God reserved it for the future. This light will be the source of illumination for the righteous in the age of redemption, as mentioned in Isaiah: "Arise! Shine! For your light has come, and the glory of God has shined upon you" (Is. 60:1). Even now, however, each person is endowed with some degree of this metaphysical illumination. God implanted this אוֹר in the inner recesses of each person, and He affirms in our verse that this spiritual light is good—that something inherently redeeming resides in the human personality. The Kabbalah portrays man's inner light as אוֹר sparks, which can never be completely extinguished. In the world to come, this clear light will emerge from out of the darkness that envelops it, and all the hidden potential within the heart of each person will emerge. (Noraos Haray, 16:119; MiPeninei Haray, p. 346)

בְּיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם אָחָד - and it was evening and it was morning, one day. Evening is referred to as עָרֶב it denotes עָרְבוּבְיִא, confusion. Man often gropes in the darkness, sensing