THE FIVE BOOKS *of* MOSES

TORAH

WITH COMPLETE HAFTARAH CYCLE

with reflections and inspirations compiled by

RABBI CHAIM MILLER

from hundreds of Jewish thinkers, ancient to contemporary

The SLAGER EDITION

THE GUTNICK LIBRARY
of JEWISH CLASSICS

First Edition
First impression . . . . . November 2011

Torah — The Five Books of Moses
With Complete Haftarah Cycle

with reflections and inspirations compiled by Rabbi Chaim Miller
from hundreds of Jewish thinkers, ancient to contemporary

ISBN 13: 978-1-934152-26-3
ISBN 10: 1-934152-26-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2011920491

© Copyright 2011 by Lifestyle Books

Published and Distributed by:
Lifestyle Books
827 Montgomery Street, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213
For orders: 1-888-580-1900 718-951-6328 Fax: 718-953-3346
www.lifestylebooks.org e-mail: orders@lifestylebooks.org

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the copyright holder, except in the case of brief quotations in reviews for inclusion in a magazine, newspaper or broadcast.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Gefen Publishing House in the preparation of parts of the Hebrew text.

TABLE *of* CONTENTS

Introduction ..... **xi**
Transliteration rules ..... **xxi**
Blessings on reading the Torah ..... **xxiii**
Blessings on reading the Haftarah **1286**
References **1481**
Bibliography **1495**

GENESIS | בראשית

	PARASHAH	HAFTARAH
Bereʾshit	2	1288
Noaḥ	36	1291
Lekh Lekha	62	1293
Va-Yeraʾ	88	1295
Ḥayyei Sarah	120	1298
Toledot	142	1301
Va-Yetzeʾ	166	1303
Va-Yishlaḥ	198	1307
Va-Yeshev	228	1310
Mikketz	252	1311
Va-Yiggash	282	1313
Va-Yeḥi	304	1315

EXODUS | שמות

	PARASHAH	HAFTARAH
Shemot	328	1316
Va-ʾEraʾ	354	1319
Boʾ	380	1322
Be-Shallaḥ	406	1323
Yitro	432	1328
Mishpatim	456	1330
Terumah	480	1332
Tetzavveh	498	1334
Ki Tissaʾ	518	1336
Va-Yakhel	550	1340
Pekudei	572	1342

LEVITICUS | ויקרא

	PARASHAH	HAFTARAH
Va-Yikraʾ	590	1344
Tzav	618	1347
Shemini	638	1349
Tazriaʿ	660	1353
Metzoraʿ	676	1356
ʾAḥarei Mot	696	1358
Kedoshim	716	1359
ʾEmor	734	1363
Be-Har	760	1365
Be-Ḥukkotai	774	1367

NUMBERS | במדבר

	PARASHAH	HAFTARAH
Be-Midbar	794	1369
Nasoʾ	820	1371
Be-Haʿalotekha	852	1373
Shelaḥ-Lekha	882	1376
Koraḥ	908	1378
Ḥukkat	930	1381
Balak	954	1384
Pinḥas	978	1386
Mattot	1010	1388
Maseʿei	1032	1390

DEUTERONOMY | דברים

	PARASHAH	HAFTARAH
Devarim	1056	1394
Va-ʾEtḥannan	1080	1396
ʿEkev	1106	1398
Reʾeh	1132	1401
Shofetim	1160	1402
Ki Tetzeʾ	1184	1404
Ki Tavoʾ	1210	1405
Nitzavim	1234	1407
Va-Yelekh	1246	1409
Haʾazinu	1256	1412
Ve-Zoʾt Ha-Berakhah	1270	1476

TORAH READING	MAFTIR	Occasion	HAFTARAH
WEEKLY PARASHAH		*Shabbat Erev Rosh Ḥodesh*	P. 1415
NUMBERS 28:1–15 P. 998		*Rosh Ḥodesh*	
WEEKLY PARASHAH	NUMBERS 28:9–15 P. 1000	*Shabbat Rosh Ḥodesh*	P. 1417
GENESIS 21:1–34 P. 106	NUMBERS 29:1–6 P. 1004	*Rosh Ha-Shanah I*	P. 1457
GENESIS 22:1–24 P. 112	NUMBERS 29:1–6 P. 1004	*Rosh Ha-Shanah II*	P. 1460
EXODUS 32:11–14; 34:1–10 P. 530		*Fast of Gedaliah* [1]	P. 1455
LEVITICUS 16:1–34 P. 698	NUMBERS 29:7–11 P. 1004	*Yom Kippur morning*	P. 1462
LEVITICUS 18:1–30 P. 710		*Yom Kippur afternoon*	P. 1464
LEVITICUS 22:26–23:44 P. 744	NUMBERS 29:12–16 P. 1006	*Sukkot I*	P. 1469
LEVITICUS 22:26–23:44 P. 744	NUMBERS 29:12–16 P. 1006	*Sukkot II*	P. 1471
NUMBERS 29:17–25 P. 1006		*Sukkot intermediate day I*	
NUMBERS 29:20–28 P. 1006		*Sukkot intermediate day II*	
NUMBERS 29:23–31 P. 1006		*Sukkot intermediate day III*	
NUMBERS 29:26–34 P. 1006		*Sukkot intermediate day IV*	
EXODUS 33:12–34:26 P. 540	SEE NOTE 2	*Sukkot intermediate Shabbat*	P. 1472
NUMBERS 29:26–34 P. 1006		*Hoshana Raba*	
DEUTERONOMY 14:22–16:17 P. 1148	NUMBERS 29:35–30:1 P. 1008	*Shemini Atzeret*	P. 1474
DEUT. 33:1–34:12; GEN. 1:1–2:3 P. 1272; 4	NUMBERS 29:35–30:1 P. 1008	*Simḥat Torah*	P. 1476
NUMBERS 7:1–17 P. 840		*Ḥanukkah I*	
NUMBERS 7:18–29 P. 844		*Ḥanukkah II*	
NUMBERS 7:24–35 P. 844		*Ḥanukkah III*	
NUMBERS 7:30–41 P. 844		*Ḥanukkah IV*	
NUMBERS 7:36–47 P. 844		*Ḥanukkah V*	
NUMBERS 28:1–15; 7:42–47 P. 998; 846		*Ḥanukkah VI* (*Rosh Ḥodesh*)	
NUMBERS 7:48–59 P. 846		*Ḥanukkah VII*	
NUMBERS 28:1–15; 7:48–53 P. 998; 846		*Ḥanukkah VII* (*Rosh Ḥodesh*)	

1. On these days the *Torah* is read during both morning sevices and afternoon services. The *Haftarah* is read during afternoon services only.

2. Intermediate **Day One**—*Numbers* 29:17–22 (p. 1006); **Day Three**—ibid. 23-28 (p. 1006); **Day Four**—ibid. 26-31 (p. 1006).

3. **Day One**—*Numbers* 7:1–17 (p. 840); **Day Two**—ibid. 18–23 (p. 844); **Day Three**—ibid. 24-29 (p. 844); **Day Four**—ibid. 30-35 (p. 844); **Day Six**—six *aliyyot* are read from the weekly *Parashah*, the seventh *aliyah* is read from *Numbers* 28:9-15 (p. 1000), and *Maftir* from ibid. 7:42-47 (p. 846); **Day Seven**—ibid. 48–53 (p. 846); **Day Eight**—ibid. 54–8:4 (p. 846).

INDEX of SPECIAL TORAH READINGS

HAFTARAH	Occasion	MAFTIR	TORAH READING
	Ḥanukkah VIII		NUMBERS 7:54–8:4 P. 846
P. 1420; 1423	*Shabbat Ḥanukkah (I and II)*	SEE NOTE 3	WEEKLY PARASHAH
P. 1455	*Tenth of Tevet* [1]		EXODUS 32:11–14; 34:1–10 P. 530
P. 1424	*Parashat Shekalim*	EXODUS 30:11–16 P. 520	WEEKLY PARASHAH [4]
P. 1427	*Parashat Zakhor*	DEUT. 25:17–19 P. 1208	WEEKLY PARASHAH
P. 1455	*Fast of Esther* [1]		EXODUS 32:11–14; 34:1–10 P. 530
	Purim		EXODUS 17:8–16 P. 428
P. 1431	*Parashat Parah*	NUMBERS 19:1–22 P. 932	WEEKLY PARASHAH
P. 1433	*Parashat Ha-Ḥodesh*	EXODUS 12:1–20 P. 392	WEEKLY PARASHAH [4]
P. 1437	*Shabbat Ha-Gadol*	WEEKLY MAFTIR	WEEKLY PARASHAH
P. 1439	*Pesaḥ* I	NUMBERS 28:16–25 P. 1002	EXODUS 12:21–51 P. 396
P. 1441	*Pesaḥ* II	NUMBERS 28:16–25 P. 1002	LEVITICUS 22:26–23:44 P. 744
	Pesaḥ intermediate day I		EX. 13:1–16; NUM. 28:19–25 P. 402; 1002
	Pesaḥ intermediate day II [5]		EX. 22:24–23:19; NUM. 28:19–25 P. 468, 1002
	Pesaḥ intermediate day III [6]		EX. 34:1–26; NUM. 28:19–25 P. 542; 1002
	Pesaḥ intermediate day IV		NUMBERS 9:1–14; 28:19–25 P. 860; 1002
P. 1443	*Pesaḥ intermediate Shabbat*	NUM. 28:19–25 P. 1002	EXODUS 33:12–34:26 P. 540
P. 1445	*Pesaḥ* VII	NUM. 28:19–25 P. 1002	EXODUS 13:17–15:26 P. 408
P. 1445	*Pesaḥ* VIII *(weekday)*	NUM. 28:19–25 P. 1002	DEUTERONOMY 15:19–16:17 P. 1154
P. 1445	*Pesaḥ* VIII *(Shabbat)*	NUM. 28:19–25 P. 1002	DEUTERONOMY 14:22–16:17 P. 1148
P. 1447	*Shavuot* I	NUM. 28:26–31 P. 1002	EXODUS 19:1–20:23 P. 440
P. 1450	*Shavuot* II *(weekday)*	NUM. 28:26–31 P. 1002	DEUTERONOMY 15:19–16:17 P. 1154
P. 1450	*Shavuot* II *(Shabbat)*	NUM. 28:26–31 P. 1002	DEUTERONOMY 14:22–16:17 P. 1148
P. 1455	*Seventeenth of Tammuz* [1]		EXODUS 32:11–14; 34:1–10 P. 530
P. 1452	*Ninth of Av morning*		DEUTERONOMY 4:25–40 P. 1088
P. 1455	*Ninth of Av afternoon*		EXODUS 32:11–14; 34:1–10 P. 530

4. When *Parashat Shekalim* or *Ha-Ḥodesh* occurs on *Rosh Ḥodesh*, six *aliyyot* are read from the weekly *Parashah*, the seventh *aliyah* is read from *Numbers* 28:9-15 (p. 1000).

5. If the first intermediate day occurs on *Shabbat*, we read the portion for the first intermediate day (p. 402) on the second day.

6. If the first intermediate day occurs on *Shabbat*, we read the portion for the second intermediate day (p. 468) on the third day

INTRODUCTION

In my childhood and teenage years the Torah's doors had not yet opened for me. I found the Torah reading in synagogue thoroughly boring and devoid of meaning. I didn't understand Hebrew, and the antiquated translation and commentary available to me were really quite disturbing. Something *was* tugging at me, probably a sense of family and peoplehood; but why did our customs seem to be so weird and incomprehensible? And why did *nothing* in the synagogue actually make me feel accomplished and adequate? It all seemed so burdensome.

I never dreamt that the Torah could be a powerful tool of personal transformation, and that it could calm the worries of my body, mind, heart and soul on a daily basis. I had no idea that the text which appeared to me so boring would, in fact, *relieve* much of the existential boredom of my adult life and infuse it with meaning.

There is a reason why the Torah—the Five Books of Moses—is the oldest sacred text in western civilization that has been in constant use: *Because the Torah reflects your own life back to you.*

The Torah is not a story about some other people and it is not about some other time. It is a guide to your inner self, which, if read properly, can illuminate every possible human experience.

This book will prime you to read the Torah as a guide to life. You will learn to appreciate every line, perhaps every word, of the Torah as a set of tools that empower you to expand consciousness, to discover your humanity, and to cultivate your inner life.

These pages don't contain any of my own ideas. I have merely collected teachings of the great Rabbinic minds of the past two thousand years, rendering them in a contemporary voice. But you will probably find it different from any Torah commentary you have read before, because I have chosen to emphasize things that others have generally overlooked.

You see, most commentaries presume that the reader is extremely interested in the text, that he or she wants to pore over multiple possible translations, delve into the nuances of the Hebrew language, uncover inconsistencies and fix them, or be exposed to as many interpretations as possible. I'm presuming that you're not especially interested in that kind of stuff. I've included some of it—probably accounting for around ten to twenty percent of the commentary—just so that you get a "balanced diet," but I have mainly looked for something else. My key criterion for selecting comments has been *relevancy*. When selecting a passage I repeatedly asked myself: Is this insightful? Is it life-enhancing? Does this open new possibilities for self-transformation? Is it refreshing?

In other words, I'm presuming that you're turning to this book primarily for guidance in your life, to enhance your stay on this planet, and not to become the world's next great Biblical scholar.

Are we betraying the Torah's sanctity by turning it into some sort of "self-help" book?

Absolutely not. In fact, we betray the Torah by *not* doing so. "Torah" is usually translated as "law," but in Hebrew it is also derived from the word *hora'ah*, meaning "lesson" or "guidance." If you study the Torah in a mood of personal detachment, you fail to capture its essence and spirit. The Torah is meant to engage you.

And when I say "guidance" I am not talking here about Jewish law (*halakhah*). The Five Books of Moses are the source text for an enormous body of civil, criminal and ritual law which was codified in the Talmud, and subsequently in the 16th century Code of Rabbi Joseph Caro, the *Shulḥan Arukh* ("Set Table"). While this is extremely important, it has not been my focus here, and is amply dealt with in other works.

I want you to experience the Torah as a guide to inner life, as a tremendous blessing which simply needs to be unwrapped like a gift. I want the Torah to be a *revelation* which flows forth to you in the present moment. I want you to read each Torah portion as your spiritual homework for the week, helping you to reach the fullness of your humanity—something that heals your soul, and thereby the world.

All of this is to be found in the Torah and its vast ocean of classic commentaries. I have spent the last fifteen years of my life learning how to read the Torah as a book of *hora'ah*, insight and guidance, and this book is a humble offering to you of some of the lessons I have gathered.

If you want the Torah to be a blessing in your life, it's crucial that you have the right attitude towards reading and studying it. The emphasis should be on savoring every word and allowing it to penetrate you. Sacred energy is gushing forth when the Torah is read in the synagogue, or even when you read the text in the privacy of your own home, and you need to surrender to its power so that it can begin to transform you.

Don't be concerned if this kind of language is unfamiliar to you. As with anything, you will come to it with time. While volumes could be filled with this topic, I'd like to give you just a few basic pointers as to how to open yourself to the Torah's transformational and healing properties.

There are several phases to this process, which could be briefly summed-up as: *awakening, self-realization, growth* and *healing.*

- First, you must *awaken* from the constraints of your narrow consciousness. That's a fancy way of saying that you need to expose the faulty thought patterns that have led you to unhealthy or dysfunctional behavior.
- *Self-realization* is the difficult task of acknowledging your resistance to healing and becoming convinced that you have a problem that needs fixing.
- Then you need to *grow,* by repeatedly meditating on the Torah insight which initially brought about your awakening, affirming its truth over an extended period of time so that it gradually becomes your new perception of reality.
- Once this elevated perspective of life becomes the norm, you will begin to *heal,* over a period of weeks, months, or perhaps, years.

You've probably realized by now that surrendering to the Torah's power is far from a passive experience. Surrendering doesn't mean sitting back and doing nothing while the Torah does its work. It's an arduous process of releasing your attachment to unhealthy mind patterns that you mistakenly thought were a source of stability and security, and replacing them with attitudes that are truer to your real self and essence.

And this brings me to another point. What determines whether a thought pattern is dysfunctional or healthy?

It's often very difficult to tell, since we are all such masters of self-deception when it comes to these things, but I'm going to give you a couple of very

important rules which will help you navigate the turbulent waters of personal transformation and healing.

The arrows of growth always point in the direction of interconnectedness and love, and away from separation and fear.

From a very young age, you learned that this world is a dangerous place. If you hit your knee on a table, it hurt. There were times when you were distressed and nobody really understood. People were nasty towards you because they wanted to gain something for themselves. So you slowly developed a scarcity mentality, imagining that the pleasurable stuff of this life is in short supply and nobody except "yours truly" is going to ensure that you get your fair share (or more than your fair share). These kinds of thoughts fuel an outlook of separation and fear. The result is that you desperately cling to whatever you think is going to provide you with the security and bounty that you need in this lonely, dangerous world.

The Torah teaches that this kind of attitude is incorrect and dysfunctional. Your trust in mankind, and in God, might have been tested by some unpleasant experiences, but goodness is going to come your way by expanding your mind, not by narrowing it. If you can learn to love and identify with all of God's creatures, by training your eye to see the spark of goodness in everything and the utter sacredness hidden just below the surface of mundane acts, then you will feel safe enough to start shedding your dysfunctional attitudes of fear and isolation. These emotions suffocate your spirit and dim your light, because your mind is not made to function in a state of constriction. Daily, we are told in the Torah to leave Egypt (*mitzrayim*): we are to depart from the mind-set of narrowness and constriction (*metzarim*).

How can you tell if you are succeeding in this journey of *tikkun*, healing yourself and, ultimately, the universe?

You will notice a gradual shift from *resentment* to *wonder*.

When you look at the world through the narrow lens of fear and separation, you are always angry at something. You don't have enough of what you need. Somebody is wronging you or treating you unfairly. If only your boss, or your spouse, or your kids would change, then everything would be okay. So much seems to be in the hand of circumstances beyond your control.

As you heal, you begin to look at this world in wonder and gratitude. Every person you meet, all the details of the natural world, and even—yes, even the

difficulties of life, are all enriching encounters with the all-pervasive Divine presence. You come to know that you are the universe in microcosm. Everything you see or hear teaches you something about yourself. And it works the other way too: as you heal yourself, you are making the universe a better place.

You realize that *everything* is in your hands. The more positive you'll be, the more you'll cheer up your surroundings, engendering more healthy relationships at work and at home. Instead of worrying about what you don't have and what might soon go wrong, you are overwhelmed by encountering God's presence in all the people you meet, all the events of your life and the words of Torah that you read—embracing it all in radical amazement. As you shift from anger to wonder, you will attract wholesome people and experiences to your life, and negative things will either depart or they will be reframed in a different light. You'll realize that they were only there because you had invited them in.

I have not completed this journey, but I am on my way and I know which directions the arrows face. This book will, I hope, be a great blessing to your life, igniting and fanning your inner flame for many years to come.

If your perception of the Torah is only as a book of law, then you will read the numerous instructions in this book as "commandments"—an ethical and religious code of conduct. But the word *mitzvah*, has another, extremely important connotation; it also means "connection."

A mitzvah is a connection ritual, a sacred technology that brings you closer to God.

If you observe a *mitzvah* purely out of a sense of fear, or to feel good, or to appear religious (to yourself or to others), or to please your parents, or your spouse, or your rabbi—then you have missed the most important point. A *mitzvah* is a powerful act of connection which slices through the myriad layers of "white noise" that separate you from the Power of the universe. But for it to be fully effective *you need to be conscious of what you are doing.* Like any spiritual practice, the *mitzvah* requires a focused intention and awareness for it to be a fully transformational force.

To appreciate this book and to harness its powers of personal healing, you need to go beyond just reading, thinking and talking about it; you need to start *doing* it. Regardless of your current level of observance, I recommend that you begin by focusing on a handful of *mitzvot*—and it doesn't matter in the slight-

est whether these are *mitzvot* which you observe already, have observed in the past and now lapsed, or have never observed at all. These will become your spiritual work, your primary connection rituals.

You know that when your mind is narrow, fear and separation rule supreme. Your special *mitzvot* will connect you to God, expanding the boundaries of your soul and warming your heart; they will stimulate that part of you which is never judgmental, always connected, and gushing with love. As you practice your special *mitzvot* regularly, you will deepen and refine the experience over time.

A few words about the translation and commentary. The Torah, of course, was written in ancient Hebrew, which is really quite impossible to translate into English. That's because the two tongues differ so radically: Hebrew is a *pregnant* language, as opposed to English, which is a *precise* tongue. A single Hebrew word lends itself to multiple interpretations; it is pregnant with meaning. In fact, it may have many different possible translations, and since the Torah text in its original source contains no vowels or punctuation, it could literally have a host of renditions.

English, on the other hand, is extremely precise. There are a host of different words to say the same thing, each differing slightly in nuance and implication. So by its very nature, an English word carries a certain connotation and level of emphasis which is just not present in biblical Hebrew.

Any English translation of the Torah is only able to bring to light one facet of the multiple meanings and implications that are present in the Hebrew original. In other words, *the translation really is a commentary.* It must take a particular approach to decoding the source text.

Since this fact is disconcerting—an honest translator wishes to render the text *as it is* from one language to another—most translations of the Torah try to hide their inevitable exegetical bias. They present commentary and interpretation as if it were straight translation (although to minimize the problem they usually follow the most straightforward and simple commentaries).

I have taken a more open approach. I figure that if my "translation" has to be a very particular interpretation/commentary then this fact needs to be obvious. So I have placed anything that is "interpretive" in nature in parentheses, to distinguish it from the rest of the text which is a more or less "pure" translation.

Another courageous leap is that I have stuck exclusively to one particular interpretation of the text. It is always easier for the translator to pick and choose which interpretation to follow on a verse-by-verse basis. While the result may be clearer, it is exegetically disjointed. One phrase may be rendered from an interpretative viewpoint which is at odds with the next one.

So I have opted for consistency, following the interpretation of Rabbi Solomon Yitzhaki (known by the acronym of his Hebrew name, *Rashi*), the 11th century French commentator of Bible and Talmud. Avoiding this approach might have made my task as translator—and yours as reader— a lot easier. But *Rashi* is the most popular, most printed and most loved of all the Torah commentaries; and, I believe, even his more "alarming" interpretations are motivated by a rigorous internal consistency. So by following *Rashi*, and highlighting his exegetical comments in parentheses, I hope to have rendered a translation which is thoroughly transparent to its biases and historically consistent with the way the Torah has popularly been taught and read for the past nine hundred years, or so.

A small final point—which is kind of obvious but I will state it in any case—is that any part of the text which seems to be intended as an instruction (command) as opposed to narrative, has been presented as a bulleted list, for the sake of clarity and an easier read.

I've already told you my criteria for choosing and adapting the commentaries presented on each page, so I won't repeat them here. But a word or two is in order about the highlighted features which are swimming inside the commentary: *Kabbalah Bites, Spiritual Vitamins* and *Food for Thought*.

Kabbalah is Jewish esotericism. It seeks to *open* and *expose* classical texts, rather than to merely understand and explain them. Its teachings, the most important of which are found in the *Zohar* (*Book of Radiance*) and the writings of Rabbi Isaac Luria (16th century), offer a bold transformation of the scriptural understanding of God and the universe.

In the Bible, the relationship between us and God seems largely covenantal: we enter into an agreement with God to observe certain ethical and ritual practices, and this pleases Him. When God is happy, He directs the events of our lives, and of history in general, for the good.

According to the Kabbalah, these same ethical and ritual deeds are perceived as having a strikingly different role. God and the world are linked in

a *causal system*. Through the correct actions and intentions we somehow "activate" the Godhead, harmonize Divine emanations, and cause them to flow into the world, bringing the desired positive results.

That does not mean to say that we have stripped God of His will, or that man is now controlling God, because in the Kabbalistic system man can only influence God's *emanations*, not His infinite, unknowable *essence*. By drawing this important distinction, we preserve God's utter aloofness and oneness, while at the same time rendering Him extremely accessible and even subject to human influence. Most of the Kabbalah is devoted to a discussion of these complex and dynamic Divine emanations, the core of which are called the ten *sefirot*.

The origins of the Kabbalah are extremely obscure because any public teaching of this wisdom violated the basic rule of esotericism: secrecy. Besides the obvious fear of error (the doctrine of the *sefirot* treads extremely close to a heretical pluralism), Kabbalists felt that popularizing such intimate secrets about the Godhead was simply inappropriate; this was for the eyes of a few enlightened souls only. So while the Zohar, for example, only began to emerge in the thirteenth century, the Kabbalah was in the hands of an elite few for many centuries prior to that. Some see it as being as old as Judaism itself—or even older, attributing Kabbalistic knowledge to Adam, the first man.

But what is undisputed is that since the sixteenth century and on, Kabbalistic ideas have become irreversibly enmeshed in the beliefs and observances of Judaism. And in today's postmodern climate, interest in the Kabbalah has flourished more than ever.

Kabbalah comes from the root *k b l*, which means "receive," to stress that it was not the figment of human imagination, but was actually received from a higher source. This is especially important to stress in the case of esoteric wisdom, because, unlike the exoteric law which follows strictly defined rules of exegesis, there is no critique which can be applied to test the validity of a proposed esoteric teaching. Either you accept it *because it comes from a reliable source*, or you reject it. It cannot be evaluated by any revealed, traditional system.

What does the *Kabbalah* discuss? In addition to dealing with conventional theological topics such as creation, God's emanations, man's soul, the meaning of the commandments, the problem of evil, and the afterlife, *Kabbalistic* wisdom also includes fascinating discussions of more obscure topics, such as demonology, reincarnation (*gilgul*) and astrology.

The *"Kabbalah Bites"* presented here do little justice to this fascinating and immense body of Jewish esoteric wisdom. But for the vast majority of people who are intrigued by the *Kabbalah* but have never tasted from it, these insights will provide an excellent primer. No background knowledge should be required to understand them, other than what I have written here. (Sources for each "bite" are found in the back of this volume.)

The *"Spiritual Vitamins"* interspersed throughout this book are based on traditional, Rabbinic Judaism. They are novel in the sense that they are not actually a commentary on the Torah at all. I placed them here out of the conviction that you might often read the Torah on a weekly or even daily basis looking for suggestions or ideas of how to bring the teachings of Judaism directly and practically into your life. I wanted to make sure that you always find inspirational teachings of healing, awareness and well-being without having to look too hard, wading through scripture, commentary and super-commentary. I hope you find these "vitamins" gentle and affirming, and that they help to make your day more fulfilling, less stressful and a little happier.

Each weekly Torah reading provides plenty of material for stimulating discussion—in the classroom, or around the family table—about a broad range of ethical, personal and behavioral issues. The Torah and its commentaries are not only meant to impart you with wisdom as a passive receiver, they should also stimulate your mind and get you thinking. So I have included here some points for discussion and contemplation, under the heading *"Food for Thought."* No answers are given, of course, because that would defy the point. Some parts of the learning experience cannot be spoon-fed.

My favorite part of writing a book is the acknowledgments. Unlike a regular "thank you" which easily gets lost in the wind, a written, published acknowledgement is eternal, and that thought is awesome.

First and foremost I would like to thank David Slager whose tireless support of my work has made this book possible. David is an outstandingly generous man, and his philanthropy to countless causes around the globe has been an inspiration to thousands of people. Thank you, David, for your friendship, for your support, and for believing so strongly in what I do. May God bless you, Lara and your precious daughters Hannah and Sara Malka, both physically and spiritually.

My partner in publishing for close to a decade has been my dear friend Rabbi Meyer Gutnick. Meyer is a person who simply takes pleasure in helping

people and in getting things done. I was unbelievably fortunate that he chose to support my writing career, not only financially but also with so much of his time and energy. Not many people get to write a Torah commentary in their lifetime, and I have now the merit of writing two. Thanks to Meyer, the first was a resounding success, and it is a privilege to have him behind this project too. Thank you, Meyer, for your love, support and dedication, and for being patient with me and giving me the space and peace of mind to work freely and productively. May God bless you, Shaindy and all your wonderful family forever.

Putting a work like this together is a formidable task, and would not have been possible without the dedicated assistance of many. First, the loyal team in my office who have really made this project a labor of love. I thank you all for tolerating me and for working so hard on this project: Rabbis Itzik Yarmush, Mendy Angyalfi, Yaakov Paley, Yossi Barber, Menachem Kirschenbaum and Chani Telsner. I also thank the following for their significant contributions: Rabbi Mendy Lent, Rabbi Shmuel Rabin, Chaviva Galatz, Nancy Rosenbaum, Chana Boteach, Chaya Sara Cantor, Yehudis Homnick, Sarah Yarmush, Ya'akovah Weber, Sarah Lehat, Boruch Ezagui, Mendel Katzman, Yehuda Kirsh, Zushe Greisman and Raphael Freeman. I extend a special thanks to Yossi Belkin for designing the beautiful front cover and for his tireless assistance with much of the interior design.

May God bless my wife, Chani, and our wonderful children, Leah, Mendel, Mushka, Levi and Esther Miriam, with a vibrancy of spirit and a sincerity of heart, to aspire to goodness all their lives and to live with the Torah.

Rabbi Chaim Miller
Rosh Ḥodesh Nisan 5771

Name of Letter	Hebrew Character	English Transliteration
alef	א	ʾ —*generally not transliterated*
bet	בּ	b
vet	ב	v
gimmel	ג	g
dalet	ד	d
he	ה	h
vav	ו	v —*when not a vowel*
zayin	ז	z
ḥet	ח	ḥ
tet	ט	t
yod	י	y
—	—	i —*when a vowel or at end of words* [1]
kaf	כּ	k
khaf	כ	kh
lamed	ל	l
mem	מ	m
nun	נ	n
samekh	ס	s
ayin	ע	ʿ —*generally not transliterated*
pe	פּ	p
fe	פ	f [2]
tzadi (tzaddik)	צ	tz
kof	ק	k
resh	ר	r
shin	שׁ	sh
sin	שׂ	s
tav	תּ	t
tav (sav)	ת	t—*as per Sephardic pronunciation* [3]

Name of Vowel	Hebrew Vowels	English Transliteration
kametz	אָ	a
pataḥ	אַ	a
tzere	אֵ	e
tzere + yod	אֵי	e—*biblical*
—	—	ei—*non-biblical*
segol	אֶ	e
sheva	אְ	e—*only* sheva na *is transliterated*
ḥirek	אִ	i
ḥirek + yod	אִי	i
ḥolem	אֹ, וֹ	o
kibbutz, shurek	אֻ, וּ	u

1 Occasionally, *y* is used to emphasize the letter *yod*. **2** Or *ph* to emphasize association with *pe* in a related word. **3** In *Ashkenazic* pronunciation—*s*.

טעמי המקרא

CANTILLATION NOTES

מַנַּח זַרְקָא מַנַּח סֶגוֹל מֻנַּח | מֻנַּח רְבִיעִי
מַהְפַּךְ פַּשְׁטָא זָקֵף קָטֹן זָקֵף־גָּדוֹל מֵרְכָא טִפְחָא
מֻנַּח אֶתְנַחְתָּא פָּזֵר תְּלִישָׁא־קְטַנָּה
תְּלִישָׁא־גְּדוֹלָה קַדְמָא וְאַזְלָא אַזְלָא־גֵּרֵשׁ גֵּרְשַׁיִם
דַּרְגָּא תְּבִיר יְתִיב פְּסִיק | סוֹף־פָּסוּק: שַׁלְשֶׁלֶת
קַרְנֵי־פָרָה מֵרְכָא־כְּפוּלָה יֵרַח־בֶּן־יוֹמוֹ:

NOTE *on* PAGE FLOW

For ease of use, the English commentaries on each page-spread flow from left-to-right. That means, for example, that the English commentaries that begin on page 23 continue on page 22.

PAGES GO THIS WAY



ENGLISH COMMENTARIES FLOW THIS WAY

בִּרְכוֹת לְעוֹלֶה לַתּוֹרָה
BLESSINGS ON READING *the* TORAH

The Reader indicates the section in the Torah scroll about to be read.

The one called to the Torah touches the text of the scroll at the place indicated with a corner of his *tallit*, *tefillin* strap, or the belt/mantle of the Torah, which he then kisses.

Holding the handles of the Torah scroll, he begins the blessing.

בָּרְכוּ* אֶת יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ׃

Congregation responds:

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ* לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

The one called to the Torah continues:

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְבֹרָךְ* לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד׃

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה׃

After the Torah is read, the one called to the Torah concludes:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה׃

ספר בראשית





THE BOOK *of* GENESIS

You can experience **Creation** by contemplating the fact that **God recreates** the world continually. Focus your consciousness on the **present moment,** to receive, in **radical amazement,** the creative energy within the **now.**

BERE'SHIT
בראשית

CREATION	1:1 – 2:24
SIN OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE	2:25 – 3:24
CAIN AND ABEL	4:1–26
OFFSPRING OF ADAM	5:1–32
BIRTH OF NOAH	5:28–29
MORAL CORRUPTION OF MAN	6:1–8

NAME
Bere'shit

MEANING
"In the beginning"

LINES IN TORAH SCROLL
241

PARASHIYYOT
10 open; 12 closed

VERSES
146

WORDS
1931

LETTERS
7235

DATE
0 – 1556

LOCATION
Garden of Eden, country of Nod

KEY PEOPLE
Adam, Eve, the Serpent, Cain, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah

MASORETIC FEATURES
The letter *bet* of the word *bere'shit* is oversized (1:1).

MITZVOT
1 positive

NOTE
Read the Sabbath following *Simḥat Torah.*

CHARACTER PROFILE

NAME
Eve (“mother of all life”)

HUSBAND
Adam

CHILDREN
Cain, Abel and Seth

BURIAL PLACE
Cave of Machpelah in Hebron

ACHIEVEMENTS
Formed by God out of Adam’s thirteenth rib; was created fully developed as a twenty-year-old

KNOWN FOR
Was extremely beautiful; influenced by the serpent to first touch the Tree of Knowledge and then to eat from its fruit, together with her husband; cursed that women would have pain in childbirth

CREATION

God created the world with the intention that we should sanctify the mundane, making a “home” for Him down below. God constantly recreates the world, keeping us in existence for this purpose (1:1).

TIME

God finished working exactly as the Sabbath began. Every single moment is important and you should endeavor to not misuse or waste even a second (2:2).

WHERE ARE YOU?

God knew where Adam was, but He still asked him, “Where are you?” Every day God says to you, “Where are you?”—how are you using your capabilities and talents to make the world a better place? (3:9).

א 1 בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ: 2 וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה
תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם:
3 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי־אוֹר: 4 וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל
אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: 5 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים | לָאוֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא
לָיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד: פ 6 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ

But this enormous love would have completely overwhelmed the Creation, bringing about its annihilation, so it had to be restrained. God therefore looked at the future deeds of the wicked, and His powers of severity were aroused. This is what made it possible to create the world (*Rabbi Gedaliah b. Isaac of Lunietz, 18th century*).

2. Astoundingly desolate. God desires a "home" in the *lowest* realms (*Midrash Tanḥuma*).

The world began with utter desolation—the lowest of all existence—into which light and the Torah were then added (*Rabbi Alexander Zusya ha-Kohen, 19th century*).

God's breath. This "breath" refers to the spirit of the Messiah (*Genesis Rabbah*).

The concept of the Messiah is even more primal than that of light, for the spirit of the Messiah *preceded* the creation of light (*Rabbi Moses Aryeh Leib Lits-Rosenbaum, 19th century*).

Hovered. Kabbalah teaches that the purpose of Creation is to elevate two hundred and eighty-eight Godly "sparks" which are trapped in the physical world. This number is hinted to by the word "hovered," *meraḥefet*, whose root letters *resh-pe-ḥet* have the numerical equivalent of two hundred and eighty-eight (*Rabbi Ḥayyim b. Joseph Vital, 16th–17th century*).

4. God separated the light from the darkness. God saw that this primordial light was good and it was not proper for the wicked to use it, so He put it away for the righteous in the future (*Rashi, 11th century*).

The light which was created on the first day had two properties: (a) its superficial quality of physical illumination; and (b) an inner, deeper "goodness" that was detached (*Rabbi Judah Loew b. Bezalel of Prague, 16th century*).

The *form* of the light was altered. In its original form it had such a potent spirituality that it negated man's free choice, giving him no opportunity to sin. By revealing truth, the inner purpose of every object was plainly evident.

In its altered state, the spirituality of the light was "separated" for all future generations, with the provision that people obtain it through their own efforts in genuine worship. Men who use their free choice unwisely do not receive it at all (*Rabbi Israel Friedman of Ruzhin, 19th century*).

kabbalah bites

1:1 Before God created this world He created other, spiritual worlds, *but He was not happy with them, so He destroyed them.* The problem with all those worlds is that they lacked empathy; they were worlds of *tohu* (chaos) because their constituent forces could not tolerate each other. Our world, which God favored, is called *tikkun* (corrected), because every element of this world has the capability to appreciate everything else.

parashat bere'shit

Creation: The First Day—Light and Darkness

1 [1] In the beginning of God's creation of the heavens and the earth (and their contents), [2] when the earth was astoundingly desolate, darkness was on the surface of the deep (waters that covered the land), and the (throne of) God('s glory) hovered over the water (at the command of God's) breath, [3] God said, "Let there be light!"—and there was light.

[4] God saw that the light was good, and God separated the (times of) light from the (times of) darkness (in the following manner:) [5] God called out to the light (and assigned it to the) day, and He called out to the darkness (and assigned it to) the night.

It became evening and it became morning—one day.

The Second Day—Separation of Waters

[6] God said, "Let the firmament (materialize) between the waters, and let it separate between (the upper) waters and (the lower) waters."

1:1 In the beginning (*bere'shit*) of God's creation. What is the significance of the Torah beginning with the *second* letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *bet?* Why did it not start with the first letter, *alef?*

Bet is the first letter of the word *berakhah*, "blessing," whereas *alef* is the first letter of the word *'arur*, "curse." God said, "I will not create the world with an *alef*, so that people should not say, 'How can you expect the world to endure if it was created with a letter of curses?' Instead, I will create the world with the letter *bet* that suggests blessing—and I wish that it will endure" (*Jerusalem Talmud, Ḥagigah* 2:1).

The Torah begins with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *bet*, which has a numerical value of two, alluding to the creation of two worlds: this world and the afterlife (*Rabbi Jacob b. Asher, 13th–14th century*).

A foundation of Torah is the belief that God created the universe *ex nihilo*. The phrase *"In the beginning"* should not be understood in terms of time, for time itself is a creation. Time is dependent upon the movement of the heavenly bodies, and they too were created (*Maimonides, 12th century*).

Just as God renews the Creation every day, you too must make some innovation in this world every single day (*Rabbi Aaron b. Jacob of Karlin, 18th century*).

When God foresaw the future deeds of the righteous, it aroused in Him a very great longing to bestow good upon them, and this is what prompted Him to create the world.

food for thought

1. *"In the beginning of God's creation"*—why do you think we exist?

2. *"It was good"*—how often do you contemplate the beauty of Creation?

3. *"Let there be light!"*—what light have you brought to your surroundings?

הַמָּיִם וִיהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לָמָיִם: 7 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָרָקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין
הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לָרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לָרָקִיעַ וַיְהִי־כֵן: 8 וַיִּקְרָא
אֱלֹהִים לָרָקִיעַ שָׁמָיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי: פ 9 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקָּווּ
הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד וְתֵרָאֶה הַיַּבָּשָׁה וַיְהִי־כֵן: 10 וַיִּקְרָא
אֱלֹהִים | לַיַּבָּשָׁה אֶרֶץ וּלְמִקְוֵה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב:
11 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תַּדְשֵׁא הָאָרֶץ דֶּשֶׁא עֵשֶׂב מַזְרִיעַ זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי עֹשֶׂה פְּרִי
לְמִינוֹ אֲשֶׁר זַרְעוֹ־בוֹ עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן: 12 וַתּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דֶּשֶׁא עֵשֶׂב מַזְרִיעַ
זֶרַע לְמִינֵהוּ וְעֵץ עֹשֶׂה־פְּרִי אֲשֶׁר זַרְעוֹ־בוֹ לְמִינֵהוּ וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב:
13 וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי: פ 14 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי מְאֹרֹת בִּרְקִיעַ

heavens to grant them life. For if the letters were to depart even for an instant, God forbid, and return to their source, all the heavens would revert to absolute nothingness, and it would be as though they had never existed at all (*Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, 18th century*).

10. God called the dry land "earth" (*'aretz*). After a while, the habitual pleasures of life begin to lose their appeal. One thing, however, which is always a great source of pleasure to man is the ability to give to others, so that they can enjoy life.

The same is true with God, so to speak. His greatest pleasure is not to receive, but to provide. "*God called the dry land 'aretz*"—dry land gave Him the greatest pleasure, because it satisfied His desire to give, making human life possible. Therefore He named it *'aretz,* which also means "desire" (*Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel of Apta, 18th century*).

11. Let the earth be covered with ... trees (with edible bark that tastes like its) fruit. God instructed that the tree should taste like the fruit, but the earth did not comply. Therefore, when man was cursed because of his sin, the earth too was punished for its sin (*Rashi, 11th century*).

Obviously the earth, which has no free choice, did not sin in the literal sense. Rather, what *Rashi* is pointing to here is an intrinsic metaphysical flaw in all earthly, physical things.

The physical world is situated at the end of countless worlds of emanation, so it is, by definition, a *recipient.* Because of this, a recipient mentality plagues the earth and everything that was created from it—an overstated desire to receive and a reluctance to give. This is ultimately the cause of all our sins.

Here, at the beginning of Creation, this flaw first began to manifest itself with the creation of the fruit tree. Mirroring the physical and

food for thought

1. Why did God create unintelligent creatures?

2. What does the universe's vastness mean to you?

3. When the sun rises daily, is it natural, or a miracle?

7 God made the firmament (fixed in its position). He separated between the waters that were below the firmament and the waters that were above the firmament (by suspending the upper waters in mid-air), and it remained that way. 8 God called the firmament "sky."

It became evening and it became morning—a second day.

The Third Day—Land and Vegetation

9 God said, "Let the water that is below the skies gather into one location, and let the dry land appear!"—and that is what happened.

10 God called the dry land "earth," and He called the gathering of the waters "seas." God saw that (the work) was good.

11 God said, "Let the earth be covered with vegetation, plants that reproduce by seed, and trees (with edible bark that tastes like its) fruit, which produce fruit of their own species containing their own seed, over the earth!"—and that is what happened. 12 The earth germinated vegetation, plants that reproduce by seed of their own species, and fruit-producing trees, in which seeds of its own species are found.

God saw that it was good.

13 It became evening and it became morning—a third day.

The Fourth Day—Sun, Moon and Stars

14 God said, "The luminaries shall be positioned in the firmament of the skies to separate between the day and the night! They will serve as omens (of bad events,

6. Let the firmament (materialize) between the waters. These words of God's original utterance, *"Let the firmament (materialize) between the waters, etc.,"* are *constantly* found within the

spiritual vitamin

"When you get hold of a printed book of hundreds of pages, containing a connected story, or philosophy, you cannot by any stretch of the imagination assume that a bottle of ink has been spilled and has accidentally produced the book. Still less, and infinitely so, is it possible that our universe, with its infinite number of atoms, molecules and particles, all arranged in perfect order and harmony, could have come into existence by accident. Obviously there is a Creator and Architect, who arranges and relates all the various parts of the universe in perfect unity and harmony."

הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלָּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאֹתֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וְשָׁנִים:
15 וְהָיוּ לִמְאוֹרֹת בִּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ וַיְהִי־כֵן: 16 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת־הַמָּאוֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת־הַמָּאוֹר
הַקָּטֹן לְמֶמְשֶׁלֶת הַלָּיְלָה וְאֵת הַכּוֹכָבִים: 17 וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בִּרְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמָיִם
לְהָאִיר עַל־הָאָרֶץ: 18 וְלִמְשֹׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה וְלַהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ
וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: 19 וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם רְבִיעִי: פ 20 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
יִשְׁרְצוּ הַמַּיִם שֶׁרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה וְעוֹף יְעוֹפֵף עַל־הָאָרֶץ עַל־פְּנֵי רְקִיעַ הַשָּׁמָיִם:
21 וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַתַּנִּינִם הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֵת כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה | הָרֹמֶשֶׁת אֲשֶׁר
שָׁרְצוּ הַמַּיִם לְמִינֵהֶם וְאֵת כָּל־עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: 22 וַיְבָרֶךְ
אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ אֶת־הַמַּיִם בַּיַּמִּים וְהָעוֹף יִרֶב בָּאָרֶץ:
23 וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם חֲמִישִׁי: פ 24 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים תּוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ נֶפֶשׁ
חַיָּה לְמִינָהּ בְּהֵמָה וָרֶמֶשׂ וְחַיְתוֹ־אֶרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וַיְהִי־כֵן: 25 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־
חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ לְמִינָהּ וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה לְמִינָהּ וְאֵת כָּל־רֶמֶשׂ הָאֲדָמָה לְמִינֵהוּ וַיַּרְא
אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב: 26 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ בִדְגַת

impart flavor to the tree, it could not do so, because, as a *recipient,* the earth was metaphysically inferior to the tree—a *provider*.

Man, who was created from the earth, also inherited the recipient mentality. *He was therefore attracted to the fruit which possessed the same flaw as himself.* His sin was that he detached the fruit from the tree—he made receiving primary and giving secondary (*Rabbi Judah Loew b. Bezalel of Prague, 16th century*).

26. God (consulted the Heavenly Court and) said, "Let us make man in our mold." The Torah's term for "man," *'adam*, comes from the term *domeh*, "comparison."

Once God had finished the work of Creation, He desired that His handiwork could appreciate His work and marvel at the complexity of the universe. Until that point, only fish, birds, and mammals had been created—creatures that understand things according to their own limited context.

So God created *'adam*, the "creature of comparison." Combining elements of the spiritual and physical realms—a clay body and a Godly soul—resulted in a creature with the exclusively

when there is an eclipse, and will determine the times of the) festivals, (and the sun and moon will define) the days and years! [15] They will (also) act as luminaries in the firmament of the skies to shed light upon the earth!"—and that is what happened.

[16] God made two large luminaries (but since they clashed, He reduced one in size. Thus,) the large luminary was to rule over the day and the small luminary was to rule over the night, and (He made) the stars (in order to appease the moon). [17] God placed them in the firmament of the skies to shed light upon the earth, [18] to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate between the light and between the darkness.

God saw that it was good.

[19] It became evening and it became morning—a fourth day.

The Fifth Day—Small Creatures, Fish and Birds

[20] God said, "Let the waters produce swarms of (small) living creatures, and let birds fly over the earth, across the firmament of the skies!"

[21] God created the large sea fish, all the creeping living creatures that the waters produced in swarms, according to their species, and all the winged birds according to their species.

God saw that it was good.

[22] God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the birds multiply upon the earth!"

[23] It became evening and it became morning—a fifth day.

The Sixth Day—Animals and Man

[24] God said, "Let the earth produce living creatures according to their (various) species, cattle, creeping things and wild animals of the earth according to their (various) species!"—and that is what happened.

[25] God made the wild animals of the earth according to their (various) species, the cattle according to their (various) species, and all the creeping things of the ground according to their (various) species.

God saw that it was good.

[26] God (consulted the Heavenly Court and) said, "Let us make man [*'adam*] in our mold, (intellectually endowed) like us, and (if he is worthy) let him rule over

spiritual worlds, the fruit and its tree are in a *recipient-provider* relationship: the tree provides nourishment from the ground, which the fruit absorbs and stores. When God told the earth to

הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ׃
27 וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה
בָּרָא אֹתָם׃ 28 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ
אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְכִבְשֻׁהָ וּרְדוּ בִּדְגַת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבְכָל־חַיָּה הָרֹמֶשֶׂת עַל־
הָאָרֶץ׃ 29 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים הִנֵּה נָתַתִּי לָכֶם אֶת־כָּל־עֵשֶׂב | זֹרֵעַ זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר עַל־
פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ פְרִי־עֵץ זֹרֵעַ זָרַע לָכֶם יִהְיֶה לְאָכְלָה׃
30 וּלְכָל־חַיַּת הָאָרֶץ וּלְכָל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכֹל | רוֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ

entirely populated with dishonest and quarrelsome people? Surely it was obvious that there would be a mixture of temperaments?

The opposing angels' argument was that, in many instances, life will place man in a situation of irresolvable dilemma. If he follows the path of truth, he will offend his fellow; if he follows the path of peace, he will be guilty of dishonesty. Neither group of angels saw mankind as entirely untruthful or entirely disharmonious, but *collectively* they saw a world where truth *and* peace would be inviable.

"What did God do? He took 'truth' and threw it to the ground." He gave us the Torah here on earth ("the ground"), a teaching which guides us, in every area of life, in how to balance the sensitivities of truth and peace (*Rabbi Ḥayyim Soloveichik, 19th–20th century*).

28. Be fruitful and multiply. Technically according to Jewish law, the responsibility to *"be fruitful and multiply"* rests on the man, and not the woman. This, however, points to the spiritual superiority of women. Knowing that men are inclined to deviate from their primary mission in this world, to rear the next generation in a functional family unit, God *commanded* them to do so by the force of the law. Women, who are more instinctively attuned to this God-given mission, do not need the law to tell them what they know already to be true.

Thus, the stronger legal emphasis on the man is, paradoxically, suggestive of an inferior spiritual status (*Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, 20th century*).

29. Plants ... fruit ... shall be food for you. God did not allow Adam and his wife to kill a creature and to eat its flesh. They were only permitted to eat the vegetation, as were the animals. Later, He permitted the sons of Noah to eat flesh (see *Genesis* 9:3; *Rashi, 11th century*).

spiritual vitamin

"The world is a well-coordinated system created by God, in which there is nothing superfluous and nothing lacking."

the fish of the sea, over the birds of the skies, over the cattle, over all the earth and over all the creeping things that creep upon the earth!"

27 God created man (by hand) in (the) mold (which was made for) him. The mold (which He used) to create him (resembled the image of) God. (On that day,) He created (both) male and female.

28 God blessed them. God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth! Take control of it! Rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the skies and over all the wild animals that move upon the earth!"

29 God said, "I have hereby given you every plant that reproduces by seed that is upon the surface of the entire earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit! They shall be food for you, 30 for all the wild animals of the earth, for all the birds of the skies, and for everything which moves upon the earth that is alive! The food (for humans and animals) shall be plant vegetation (only)!"—and that is what happened.

human ability to contrast and compare, observe and ponder all of Creation. *'Adam* could envision spiritual concepts with his mind, and, at the same time, experience physical phenomena with his body. The ability to see this "bigger picture" is God's exclusive gift to mankind (*Rabbi Simḥah Bunem of Przysucha, 18th–19th century*).

Man's name—Adam—reflects his gift of free choice. Adam can either mean "comparable" (*domeh*) or it can refer to the earth (*'adamah*). If man chooses good, then he is comparable to the Divine; if he chooses evil he is like the animals who were formed from the earth. The choice is his (*Rabbi Menahem Azariah da Fano, 16th–17th century*).

This statement, *"Let us,"* is phrased in the plural. The Sages teach that when God was about to create man, He consulted with His ministering angels. However, with the creation of woman, God consulted no one.

Therefore, women recite the blessing each morning, *"Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has made me according to His will,"* because God created woman as He willed, without consulting others (*Rabbi Jacob Meshullam Ornstein of Lvov, 19th century*).

When God came to create man, the angels split into groups. The angels of kindness and angels of righteousness were in favor of man who, they argued, would perform kind and charitable acts. But the angels of truth and angels of peace opposed man's creation, arguing that humanity would be torn apart with lies and quarrels.

What did God do? He took "truth" and threw it to the ground (*Genesis Rabbah*).

The angels' arguments are puzzling. Why did the angels of kindness assume that mankind would be *entirely* charitable? And why did the other angels assume that the world would be

food for thought

1. Are humans better off, or do animals have easier lives?

2. In which ways do we reflect "the image of God"?

3. Have we become tyrants in our charge to *"rule over ... all the earth"?*

נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה אֶת־כָּל־יֶרֶק עֵשֶׂב לְאָכְלָה וַיְהִי־כֵן: 31 וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה וְהִנֵּה־טוֹב מְאֹד וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי: פ

ב 1 וַיְכֻלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צְבָאָם: 2 וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה:
3 וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת: פ [SECOND READING] 4 אֵלֶּה תוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ
בְּהִבָּרְאָם בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמָיִם: 5 וְכֹל | שִׂיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה טֶרֶם
יִהְיֶה בָּאָרֶץ וְכָל־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה טֶרֶם יִצְמָח כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־

utmost fervor! What could this lowly generation possibly achieve beyond the accomplishments of our illustrious ancestors?

The answer to this question can be derived from God's conduct when creating the world. Just as we see that every moment was precious to God, to the extent that He continued working to the very last opportunity, likewise, the final work of the very last generations is of paramount importance (*Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, 20th century*).

On the seventh day, He rested. What is the Sabbath? It is the name of God (*Zohar*).

God's very name is Sabbath or "rest," because movement cannot be attributed to Him. Movement is only possible for an entity that exists within time and space. But God does not move from place to place, nor is He limited by time (*Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, 18th century*).

3. God blessed the seventh day. The peace and pleasure that your soul finds on the Sabbath is so great that it is as if you have been given an additional soul. When this condition ceases at the end of the Sabbath, and you re-enter the period of hard work and stress, it is as if this additional soul has departed from you, and you become weakened (*Rabbi Solomon b. Abraham Adret, 13th century*).

spiritual vitamin

"One of the foundations of our faith and way of life is the firm conviction that God's Providence extends to everyone individually, and that He is the essence of goodness, and does only good, as the Torah states, *"God saw everything that He had made, and—look!—it was very good"* (1:31)."

31 God saw everything that He had made, and—look!—it was very good.

It became evening and it became morning—the sixth day.

The Seventh Day—God Rests from Work

2 1 The skies, the earth and all their numerous components were completed.
2 On the seventh day, God completed His work that He had made. On the seventh day, He rested from all His work that He had done.

3 God blessed the seventh day (so that a double portion of manna should descend in its honor) and He sanctified it (so that no manna should descend on the Sabbath itself), because on that (day) God rested from all His work that He had created, (for the remaining work which was left) to be done (on the Sabbath, He carried out on Friday instead, by doubling His workload).

[SECOND READING] 4 These (above-mentioned details) are the chronology of the skies and the earth when they were created, on the (first) day when God, Almighty God, made earth and skies, (and the subsequent days, when He materialized the creations).

Details of the Creation of Man and Woman

(The Torah now adds further details concerning the creation of man and woman, mentioned above, 1:27.)

5 (The vegetation had only germinated within the ground, but) none of the trees of the field were yet (sprouting) on the (surface of the) earth, nor had any

31. The sixth day. You will notice that the other days of creation are described simply as *"a* third day" or *"a* fourth day," unlike *"the* sixth day."

The article *the* hints to the unique "sixth day" made eternally famous in another context, namely, the sixth day of the month of *Sivan*, the day that the Torah was given at Sinai. By linking the conclusion of Creation with the event at Sinai, the Torah informs you that one was conditional upon the other. God stipulated with the works of Creation, "If Israel accepts the Torah, you will continue to exist. If not, I will return you to primordial nothingness!" (*Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat* 88a).

2:2 On the seventh day, God completed. How was Creation *completed* on the seventh day, when God merely rested? God continued working all the way up to the Sabbath and entered the Sabbath "by a hairsbreadth."

Another answer: The world was lacking one thing—rest. When the Sabbath came, rest came. The work of Creation was then completed and finished (*Rashi, 11th century*).

Rashi explains that God worked until the last possible moment. What was gained by this feat of precision? God was teaching a lesson to mankind about the preciousness of time: *So long as you have the opportunity to carry out your Divinely ordained mission in this world, you should utilize every moment in order to realize your fullest potential, pushing every allocation of time to its utmost limits.*

Also, you might bemoan the fact that you are living in a spiritually desensitized generation. Gone are the days of the prophets and Talmudic sages, when the people served God with the

הָאָ֖רֶץ וְאָדָ֣ם אַ֔יִן לַעֲבֹ֖ד אֶת־הָֽאֲדָמָֽה׃ 6 וְאֵ֖ד יַעֲלֶ֣ה מִן־הָאָ֑רֶץ וְהִשְׁקָ֖ה אֶת־
כָּל־פְּנֵ֥י הָאֲדָמָֽה׃ 7 וַיִּיצֶר֩ יְהוָ֨ה אֱלֹהִ֜ים אֶת־הָאָדָ֗ם עָפָר֙ מִן־הָאֲדָמָ֔ה וַיִּפַּ֖ח
בְּאַפָּ֑יו נִשְׁמַ֥ת חַיִּ֖ים וַיְהִ֥י הָאָדָ֖ם לְנֶ֥פֶשׁ חַיָּֽה׃ 8 וַיִּטַּ֤ע יְהוָה֙ אֱלֹהִ֔ים גַּ֖ן בְּעֵ֣דֶן
מִקֶּ֑דֶם וַיָּ֣שֶׂם שָׁ֔ם אֶת־הָאָדָ֖ם אֲשֶׁ֥ר יָצָֽר׃ 9 וַיַּצְמַ֨ח יְהוָ֤ה אֱלֹהִים֙ מִן־הָ֣אֲדָמָ֔ה
כָּל־עֵ֛ץ נֶחְמָ֥ד לְמַרְאֶ֖ה וְטֹ֣וב לְמַאֲכָ֑ל וְעֵ֤ץ הַחַיִּים֙ בְּתֹ֣וךְ הַגָּ֔ן וְעֵ֖ץ הַדַּ֥עַת טֹ֖וב
וָרָֽע׃ 10 וְנָהָ֥ר יֹצֵ֖א מֵעֵ֣דֶן לְהַשְׁקֹ֑ות אֶת־הַגָּ֔ן וּמִשָּׁ֖ם יִפָּרֵ֥ד וְהָיָ֖ה לְאַרְבָּעָ֥ה
רָאשִֽׁים׃ 11 שֵׁ֚ם הָאֶחָ֣ד פִּישׁ֔וֹן הֽוּא֙ הַסֹּבֵ֔ב אֵ֖ת כָּל־אֶ֣רֶץ הַחֲוִילָ֑ה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁ֖ם
הַזָּהָֽב׃ 12 וּזְהַ֥ב הָאָ֛רֶץ הַה֖וּא טֹ֑וב שָׁ֥ם הַבְּדֹלַ֖ח וְאֶ֥בֶן הַשֹּֽׁהַם׃ 13 וְשֵׁ֥ם־הַנָּהָ֖ר

and not the *"Why?"* For him, dignity—"Divine image"—is translated as control: *"Fill the earth and take control of it."*

Adam the second asks *"Why?"* The living soul breathed into his nostrils by God indicates his primary concern with the spiritual and the Divine. He is not a practical, creative being, but one interested in introspection and self-discovery.

Contemporary man has failed to take notice of the duality in Adam. The creative enterprises of our civilization have led us to deny that Adam the second exists. Man's ties to religion are not motivated by a desire for introspection and redemption, but to furthering his sense of dignity and success. For this reason, contemporary majestic man stands as an incomplete being (*Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, 20th century*).

8. God planted a garden in Eden. God did not initially create man within the Garden of Eden, rather, He placed him there afterwards. This was in order that man should see how unpleasant the world was, so that he should not imagine that the entire world was as beautiful as Eden (*Rabbi Hezekiah b. Manoah, 13th century*).

As a result of being brought into Eden from the outside, man would recognize the kindness God had performed for him by placing him in Eden (*Rabbi David Kimḥi, 12th–13th century*).

kabbalah bites

2:6 When you pray to God, it is not merely that God "listens" to your prayers from above and responds accordingly. The process of prayer itself *refines* you spiritually, rendering you a suitable receptacle for additional Divine blessings. The receipt of a blessing is the *direct outcome* of sincere, focused prayer.

This process is mirrored in the physical world by the method in which rain is formed. Rain is not a new entity that is formed in heaven, but rather, the same "mist" that ascends from the ground, forms clouds and eventually condenses into rain which showers back down onto the earth.

vegetation of the field yet grown, because God, Almighty God, had not brought rain upon the earth (since) there was no man to (appreciate the rain and) work the soil.

6 (God caused) a mist to ascend from the earth (moistening the clouds in order to) soak the entire surface of the ground (so that man should be created from moist earth). 7 God, Almighty God, formed man out of soil from (the four corners of) the earth. He blew into his nostrils a living soul, and man became a living, (thinking and speaking) being.

8 God, Almighty God, planted a garden in Eden to the east, and placed there the man that He had formed. 9 (In the garden) God, Almighty God, made every tree that is pleasant to look at and good to eat grow out from the ground. The Tree of Life (grew) in the middle of the garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil (also grew in the garden).

10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it separated and became the source of four riverheads. 11 The name of one is Pishon (the Nile), which surrounds the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 The gold of that land is good. Crystal and onyx (are found) there. 13 The name of the second river is

6. (God caused) a mist to ascend from the earth. This first rain came in response to man's prayer (*Rashi, 11th century*).

7. God formed man out of soil from the earth. In creating man, God gathered soil from the entire earth, from all four directions, so that wherever man would die, the earth would accept him for burial (*Rashi*).

He blew into his nostrils a living soul. This scriptural analogy illustrates that the soul contains a deeper manifestation of Divinity than the rest of the world, since it was "blown" out from God's "innards," rather than the more "superficial" creative method of Divine "speech." When you blow, you exhale from deep inside your body (*Naḥmanides, 13th century*).

In the case of animals and plants God created the soul and body together as a single unit. In creating man, God first created a lifeless body into which He *later* infused a "soul of life." The soul of man is simply so high in comparison to the body that it could not reasonably be formed as a single unit. Rather, a separate act of God was required to achieve the astounding union between them (*Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyady, 18th century*).

In the first account of Adam's creation (*Genesis* 1:27), we are told that man was made "in the image of God," but we are not informed *how* his body was fashioned, only *why* he was created: *"Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and take control of it"* (ibid. 28). Here, in the second account of Adam's creation, this emphasis on controlling the world is lacking. Instead, we find a greater insight into the *interior* workings of man: *"He blew into his nostrils a living soul."*

These two accounts speak of two distinct "types" of men that exist within us all. Adam the first is a creator. He expresses his "Divine image" through practical activity in the world. Adam the first is not busy with the metaphysical questions of life; he is concerned only with the *"How"*

הַשֵּׁנִי גִּיחוֹן הוּא הַסּוֹבֵב אֵת כָּל־אֶרֶץ כּוּשׁ: 14 וְשֵׁם הַנָּהָר הַשְּׁלִישִׁי חִדֶּקֶל
הוּא הַהֹלֵךְ קִדְמַת אַשּׁוּר וְהַנָּהָר הָרְבִיעִי הוּא פְּרָת: 15 וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים
אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיַּנִּחֵהוּ בְגַן־עֵדֶן לְעָבְדָהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ: 16 וַיְצַו יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־
הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכֹּל עֵץ־הַגָּן אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל: 17 וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע לֹא תֹאכַל
מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת: 18 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא־טוֹב
הֱיוֹת הָאָדָם לְבַדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה־לּוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ: 19 וַיִּצֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאֲדָמָה
כָּל־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֶל־הָאָדָם לִרְאוֹת מַה־יִּקְרָא־
לוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא־לוֹ הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ: 20 [THIRD READING] וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם
שֵׁמוֹת לְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה וּלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכֹל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּלְאָדָם לֹא־מָצָא עֵזֶר
כְּנֶגְדּוֹ: 21 וַיַּפֶּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | תַּרְדֵּמָה עַל־הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אַחַת מִצַּלְעֹתָיו
וַיִּסְגֹּר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתֶּנָּה: 22 וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הַצֵּלָע אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם

19. Whatever the man called each living thing (remained) its name (forever). A Hebrew name tells you something about an entity's essential qualities. In his great wisdom, Adam was able to discern the correct name for each species through observing its nature (*Rabbi Abraham Menahem Rapa of Porto, 16th century*).

spiritual vitamin

Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden *"to cultivate it and to guard it"* (v. 15), and only after that did God tell him, *"You may eat freely from every tree of the Garden"* (v. 16).

Do not strive towards a state of life in which you can enjoy the maximum pleasure with the minimum effort. Human nature is such that you derive true pleasure only if you are a partner in its attainment, through your own exertion. If you receive it entirely *gratis* it is degrading to you, as though you were receiving charity, "bread of shame."

And the harder the work, the sweeter tastes the fruit of achievement.

Gihon, which surrounds the entire land of Cush. [14] The name of the third river is Hiddekel (the Tigris), which flows to the east of Asshur (Assyria), and the fourth river is Pras (the Euphrates).

[15] God, Almighty God, (persuaded) the man (to enter the garden), and settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to guard it.

[16] God, Almighty God, commanded man, saying, "You may eat freely from every tree of the Garden, [17] but you must not eat from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. For on the day that you will eat from it you will certainly die."

[18] God, Almighty God, said, "It is not good that man is alone. I will make him a helpmate opposite him."

[19] God, Almighty God, formed from the earth every beast of the field and every bird of the skies, and He brought (each species straightaway as it was formed) to man to see what he would call it. Whatever the man called each living thing (remained) its name (forever).

[THIRD READING] [20] Man named all the cattle and the birds of the skies and all the beasts of the field (and saw that each had a male and female partner). Man, however, did not find any helpmate opposite him (so he complained to God).

[21] God, Almighty God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and he slept. He took (a piece from) one of his sides, and He sealed the flesh in its place. [22] God,

kabbalah bites

2:22 The *Zohar* teaches that a man and his wife are, in essence, two halves of the same body. So, according to the Kabbalah, it would not be correct to say that women are "exempt" from some of the commandments incumbent on men. Rather, as Rabbi Isaac Luria writes, "Once the man has observed the commandment, there is *no need* for the woman to do it separately, for she was already included with him when he carried out the command."

15. And settled him in the Garden of Eden. God enticed him with pleasant words and persuaded him to enter (*Rashi, 11th century*).

18. It is not good that man is alone. People might mistakenly assume, "There are two dominions! God alone rules over the upper worlds and He has no partner, and man is the sole ruler of the lower worlds, and he has no partner!" (*Rashi, 11th century*).

The creation of man differed from the creation of other living species in that man was created as a single individual, unlike the other living creatures, which were created in pairs. *It was God's design that the human race, all humans everywhere and at all times, should know that we all descend from the one and the same single progenitor, a fully developed human being created in the image of God, so that no human being could claim superior ancestral origin* (see *Mishnah, Sanhedrin* 4:5). This would make it easier to cultivate a real feeling of kinship in all interhuman relationships (*Rabbi Menahem Mendel Schneerson, 20th century*).

I will make him a helpmate opposite him. If he is worthy, she will be a helpmate. If he is not worthy, she will be against him, to fight him (*Rashi, 11th century*).

לְאִשָּׁה וַיְבִאֶהָ אֶל־הָאָדָם: 23 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הַפַּעַם עֶצֶם מֵעֲצָמַי וּבָשָׂר
מִבְּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקָּרֵא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לֻקְחָה־זֹּאת: 24 עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזָב־אִישׁ אֶת־
אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד: 25 וַיִּהְיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִּים
הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יִתְבּוֹשָׁשׁוּ:

ג 1 וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם מִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר
אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אַף כִּי־אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִכֹּל עֵץ הַגָּן: 2 וַתֹּאמֶר
הָאִשָּׁה אֶל־הַנָּחָשׁ מִפְּרִי עֵץ־הַגָּן נֹאכֵל: 3 וּמִפְּרִי הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ־הַגָּן אָמַר
אֱלֹהִים לֹא תֹאכְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ וְלֹא תִגְּעוּ בּוֹ פֶּן־תְּמֻתוּן: 4 וַיֹּאמֶר הַנָּחָשׁ אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה
לֹא־מוֹת תְּמֻתוּן: 5 כִּי יֹדֵעַ אֱלֹהִים כִּי בְּיוֹם אֲכָלְכֶם מִמֶּנּוּ וְנִפְקְחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם
וִהְיִיתֶם כֵּאלֹהִים יֹדְעֵי טוֹב וָרָע: 6 וַתֵּרֶא הָאִשָּׁה כִּי טוֹב הָעֵץ לְמַאֲכָל וְכִי

kabbalah bites

2:23 In the supernal realms, both *Din* (severity) and *Ḥesed* (love) are always a good thing. Down here, however, the world cannot always tolerate severity, unless it has undergone *tikkun* (spiritual healing).

The Kabbalah teaches that Adam had a first wife, Lilith, who was rooted in *Din*. She soon passed away as the young, fresh world was not yet ready for harshness. Eve—Adam's second wife—was rooted in *Ḥesed*.

The two wives are alluded to here: the hard "*bone from my bones*"—Lilith; and the softer "*flesh from my flesh*"—Eve. And "*this*"—second wife, Eve—"*shall be called woman.*"

"Did God perhaps say?" Is it really so terrible if you do not listen to Him?

Simply minimizing the importance of the Torah can lead you to become lax in observing it (*Rabbi Isaac Meir Alter of Gur, 19th century*).

4. Your eyes will be opened and you will be like God (with the ability to create worlds and) knowing good and evil. The Kabbalah teaches that all of our souls were included in the "universal soul" of Adam. This means, presumably, that we were also there at the moment Adam sinned and ate from the Tree of Knowledge. Why, then, did we not stop him from eating?

We had to let him eat the fruit, because, otherwise, the serpent's lie would have remained unrefuted. The serpent had promised, "Your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, *with the ability to create worlds* and knowing good and evil," so Adam had to eat the fruit to prove that he would remain a human being and no more (*Rabbi Elimelech of Lyzhansk, 18th century*).

Almighty God, built the side that He had taken from man into a woman, and He brought her to man. [23] Man said, "(After searching for a mate among all the animals and failing,) this time (I have found the) bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh. This shall be called *'ishah* (woman) because she was taken from *'ish* (man)." [24] Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (through their children).

The Sin of the Tree of Knowledge

They were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed (since they had no evil inclination, but their nakedness aroused the interest of the serpent).

3 [1] The serpent was cunning, more than all the beasts of the field that God, Almighty God, had made. It said to the woman, "Did God perhaps say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees of the garden'?"

[2] The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat from the fruit of the trees of the garden, [3] but from the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, God has said, "You shall not eat of it, and you shall not touch it, lest you die.'"

[4] The serpent said to the woman, "You will surely not die. [5] God (told you not to eat it, because He) knows that on the day that you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God (with the ability to create worlds, and) knowing good and evil."

[6] The woman (believed the serpent) that the tree was good food (that would make a person like God), that it was desirable to the eyes (for it would open them), and that the tree was desirable to make one wise (knowing good and evil). She took of its fruit and she ate (it), and she also gave (some to the cattle and wild animals, and fearing that she would die and that her husband would remarry, she gave some) to her husband (who was) with her, and he ate (it).

Through merely seeing the physical animal, Adam was able to determine its spiritual source (*Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz, 16th–17th century*).

Man's naming of the animals *connected* the spiritual source of each creature with its existence on the physical plane (*Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Lyady, 18th century*).

22. God, Almighty God, built the side that He had taken from man into a woman. *"Understanding"* (*binah*, spelled: *bet-yod-nun-he*) has the same etymology as the term "God *built"* (*yiven*, spelled: *yod-bet-nun*), implying that He granted women understanding. This teaches you that God has endowed women with more understanding than men (*Babylonian Talmud, Niddah* 45b).

3:1 Did God perhaps say? The serpent's question is written with a dismissive tone, minimizing the significance of God's command and denigrating the consequence of transgressing it.

תַּאֲוָה־הִוא לָעֵינַיִם וְנֶחְמָד הָעֵץ לְהַשְׂכִּיל וַתִּקַּח מִפִּרְיוֹ וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּתֵּן גַּם־
לְאִישָׁהּ עִמָּהּ וַיֹּאכַל: 7 וַתִּפָּקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי עֵירֻמִּם הֵם וַיִּתְפְּרוּ
עֲלֵה תְאֵנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם חֲגֹרֹת: 8 וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִתְהַלֵּךְ בַּגָּן
לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגָּן: 9 וַיִּקְרָא
יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אַיֶּכָּה: 10 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־קֹלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בַגָּן
וָאִירָא כִּי־עֵירֹם אָנֹכִי וָאֵחָבֵא: 11 וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עֵירֹם אָתָּה הֲמִן־הָעֵץ
אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לְבִלְתִּי אֲכָל־מִמֶּנּוּ אָכָלְתָּ: 12 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הָאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה
עִמָּדִי הִוא נָתְנָה־לִּי מִן־הָעֵץ וָאֹכֵל: 13 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לָאִשָּׁה מַה־זֹּאת
עָשִׂית וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה הַנָּחָשׁ הִשִּׁיאַנִי וָאֹכֵל: 14 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | אֶל־
הַנָּחָשׁ כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹּאת אָרוּר אַתָּה מִכָּל־הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה עַל־גְּחֹנְךָ

14. God, Almighty God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are (now) cursed, etc." Whoever sets his eyes on something that does not belong to him will not obtain what he desires, and what he already has will be taken away from him.

The serpent in the Garden of Eden craved something that was out of bounds—it lusted after Eve—so the thing it wanted it did not get, and what it already had was taken away from it. God said, "Originally, I said that the serpent should be the king of all animals, but, *'You are now cursed more than all the cattle and more than all the wild animals of the field!'* I said that the serpent should walk with an erect posture, but now, *'You shall go on your belly.'* I said that it should eat the same food as man eats, but now it will eat dust. The serpent had planned to kill Adam and wed Eve, but now, God said, *"'I shall place hatred between you and between the woman and between your descendants and between her descendants'"* (v. 14-15; *Babylonian Talmud, Sotah* 9b).

You shall eat soil all the days of your life! How is this a curse? Soil is found almost everywhere, so it seems as if the snake is being blessed, as he never will lack nourishment.

Being surrounded by his sustenance will ensure that the snake never has to ask God to provide for him. Unlike the other animals who pray to God, as described by King David, *"He gives the beast his food and to the young ravens who cry"* (*Psalms* 147:9), the snake is given everything he needs. This is the curse: being cast out and sent away from God's Presence (*Rabbi Simḥah Bunem of Przysucha, 18th–19th century*).

kabbalah bites

3:7 After the sin, the serpent caused a spiritual pollutant, called *zuhama'*, to enter Eve's soul. This pollutant would plague all the souls of her children until it was finally eradicated when the Torah was given at Sinai.

But when the people sinned with the Golden Calf, it returned, and we will only rid ourselves of it completely when the New Era finally comes.

7 The (intellectual) "eyes" of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked (of Divine commandments, having ignored the only command they had been given by God). They sewed together fig leaves (from the tree) and made themselves loincloths.

8 They heard the sound of God, Almighty God, walking in the garden in the direction (which the sun sets every) day. The man and his wife hid from God, Almighty God, among the trees of the garden.

9 God, Almighty God, called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" (to engage him in conversation).

10 (Man) said, "I heard Your sound in the garden, and I was afraid because I am naked, so I hid."

11 (God) said, "Who told you that you are naked? Have you eaten from the tree from which I commanded you not to eat?"

12 The man said, "The woman whom You gave (to be) with me gave me from the tree, and I ate."

13 God, Almighty God, said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent misled me, and I ate."

14 God, Almighty God, said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, you are (now) cursed more than all the cattle and more than all the wild animals of

7. They sewed together fig leaves (from the tree) and made themselves loincloths. Rabbi Nehemiah said, "The tree from which Adam and Eve ate was a fig tree, for it is logical that the thing with which they sinned—the fig—became the means through which the damage was repaired, when *'they sewed together fig leaves'* as clothing" (*Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin* 70b).

13. The serpent misled me, and I ate. Everything in the world contains holy "sparks." Nothing is devoid of these sparks, even wood and stones. In all of man's actions, even in a sin he commits, there are sparks.

What are the sparks in a sin? Repentance. When repenting for the sin, you elevate the sparks contained within it to the Supernal World. This is the inner meaning of *"Is my sin too great to bear?"* (4:13)—lit. "to carry," i.e., to be raised and elevated on high (*Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, 18th century*).

spiritual vitamin

"When Adam committed the sin, he experienced a Divine call demanding, *"Where are you?"* (3:9). Do you realize what you have done and what you are supposed to do? From time to time you should also ask yourself, "Where am I?" Take a moment of introspection and soul-searching to find yourself again."

תֵּלֵךְ וְעָפָר תֹּאכַל כָּל־יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ׃ 15 וְאֵיבָה | אָשִׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ
וּבֵין זַרְעָהּ הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ וְאַתָּה תְּשׁוּפֶנּוּ עָקֵב׃ ס 16 אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר
הַרְבָּה אַרְבֶּה עִצְּבוֹנֵךְ וְהֵרֹנֵךְ בְּעֶצֶב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים וְאֶל־אִישֵׁךְ תְּשׁוּקָתֵךְ וְהוּא
יִמְשָׁל־בָּךְ׃ ס 17 וּלְאָדָם אָמַר כִּי שָׁמַעְתָּ לְקוֹל אִשְׁתֶּךָ וַתֹּאכַל מִן־הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר
צִוִּיתִיךָ לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ בְּעִצָּבוֹן תֹּאכְלֶנָּה
כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ׃ 18 וְקוֹץ וְדַרְדַּר תַּצְמִיחַ לָךְ וְאָכַלְתָּ אֶת־עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה׃ 19 בְּזֵעַת
אַפֶּיךָ תֹּאכַל לֶחֶם עַד שׁוּבְךָ אֶל־הָאֲדָמָה כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לֻקָּחְתָּ כִּי־עָפָר אַתָּה
וְאֶל־עָפָר תָּשׁוּב׃ 20 וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ חַוָּה כִּי הִוא הָיְתָה אֵם כָּל־
חָי׃ 21 וַיַּעַשׂ יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לְאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כָּתְנוֹת עוֹר וַיַּלְבִּשֵׁם׃ פ [FOURTH READING]
22 וַיֹּאמֶר | יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים הֵן הָאָדָם הָיָה כְּאַחַד מִמֶּנּוּ לָדַעַת טוֹב וָרָע וְעַתָּה |
פֶּן־יִשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וְלָקַח גַּם מֵעֵץ הַחַיִּים וְאָכַל וָחַי לְעֹלָם׃ 23 וַיְשַׁלְּחֵהוּ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהִים מִגַּן־עֵדֶן לַעֲבֹד אֶת־הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר לֻקַּח מִשָּׁם׃ 24 וַיְגָרֶשׁ אֶת־הָאָדָם
וַיַּשְׁכֵּן מִקֶּדֶם לְגַן־עֵדֶן אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִים וְאֵת לַהַט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת לִשְׁמֹר
אֶת־דֶּרֶךְ עֵץ הַחַיִּים׃ ס

18. Thorns and thistles will grow (with) your (crops). When God said to Adam, *"Thorns and thistles will grow with your crops and you will eat the herbs of the field,"* tears flowed from Adam's eyes. He cried to God, "Master of the universe! Will my donkey and I eat from the same trough? Being confined to a donkey's diet, will we humans be reduced to having the same nature and intelligence as a donkey?"

When God said to him, *"With the sweat of your face ... will you eat bread"* (3:19), assuring him of a uniquely human food that stimulates intelligence, he was relieved (*Babylonian Talmud, Pesaḥim* 118a, according to *Rabbi Samuel Edels, 16th–17th century*).

21. He clothed them. The Torah begins with an act of kindness and ends with an act of kindness. It begins with kindness, as the verse states, *"God, Almighty God, made for Adam and for his wife skintight garments and He clothed them."* It ends with kindness, as the verse states, *"(God) buried him in the valley"* (*Deuteronomy* 34:6; *Babylonian Talmud, Sotah* 14a).

the field! You (will have your legs cut off so that you) shall go on your belly, and you shall eat soil all the days of your life! [15] I shall place hatred between you and between the woman (you desired), and between your descendants and between her descendants. (Man) will crush you (on the) head, and you will bite his heel."

[16] To the woman He said, "I will greatly increase your anguish (of rearing children) and your (labor pains of) pregnancy. You will give birth to children in pain. You will desire (to be with) your husband but he will rule over you (to be with you when he desires)."

[17] To man He said, "Since you listened to your wife's voice, and you ate from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'Do not eat from it,' the ground will be cursed because of you (producing loathsome insects), and you will toil to eat from it all the days of your life. [18] (When you sow seeds, then artichokes and cardoons that have) thorns and thistles will grow (with) your (crops), and you will eat the(se artichokes, cardoons and other) herbs of the field (that take a long time to prepare, due to lack of an alternative. [19] Only) with the sweat of your face (after much toil) will you eat bread, until you go back to the earth from where you were taken. For you are (from the) soil, and to soil you will return."

(The narrative now returns to the subject of giving names, mentioned above, 2:19-20.)

[20] The man named his wife Eve [*ḤAVvah*], because she was the mother of all life [*ḤAI*].

[21] God, Almighty God, made for Adam and for his wife skintight garments (alternatively: garments of animal skins), and He clothed them.

Expulsion from the Garden of Eden

[FOURTH READING] [22] God, Almighty God, said, "Look! Man has become unique in the (lower) world by himself (since, unlike the animals,) he has the ability of knowing good and evil. Now, (there is a fear that) perhaps he will stretch out his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat (from it, and he will) live forever (and is likely to lead others astray, as they will think he is a god)."

food for thought

1. Have you been talked into something you greatly regretted later on?

2. Are you swayed by emotional arguments or by rational ones?

3. Do you have a strategy for ignoring an inappropriate urge or enticement?

[23] God, Almighty God, sent him out of the Garden of Eden to cultivate the earth from which he had been taken. [24] He drove the man out, and to the east (side) of the Garden of Eden He stationed angels (of destruction) and the flame (alternatively: blade) of the revolving sword, to guard the way to the Tree of Life.