

1.

Bereishit

Purpose Before Process

*How the Creation of Light Creates a
Road Map for Personal Success*



*Dedicated in loving memory of Leah bas Shlomo Zev HaKohen Brenner,
מרת לאה בת שלמה זאב הכהן ע"ה, marking her yahrtzeit on 24 Tishrei.*

*May the merit of the Torah study worldwide accompany her soul in the
world of everlasting life and be a source of blessings to her family with
much health, happiness, nachat, and success.*

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Bereishit

G-d creates the world in six days. On the first day, He makes darkness and light. On the second day, He forms the heavens, dividing the “upper waters” from the “lower waters.” On the third day, He sets the boundaries of land and sea, and calls forth trees and greenery from the earth. On the fourth day, He fixes the position of the sun, moon, and stars as timekeepers and illuminators of the earth. Fish, birds, and reptiles are created on the fifth day; land animals and then the human being on the sixth. G-d ceases work on the seventh day and sanctifies it as a day of rest.

G-d forms the human body from the dust of the earth and blows into his nostrils a “living soul.” Originally, man is a single person, but deciding that “It is not good that man be alone,” G-d takes a “side” from the man, forms it into a woman, and marries them to each other.

Adam and Eve are placed in the Garden of Eden and are commanded not to eat from the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.” The serpent persuades Eve to violate this command, and she shares the forbidden fruit with her husband. Because of their sin, it is decreed that man will experience death, returning to the soil from which he was formed, and that all gain will come only through struggle and hardship. Man is banished from the Garden.

Eve gives birth to two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain quarrels with Abel and murders him and becomes a rootless wanderer. A third son, Seth, is born to Adam; Seth’s eighth-generation descendant, Noah, is the only righteous man in a corrupt world.

I. LIGHT: THE FIRST CREATION

First Impressions

TEXT 1

BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 1:3

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים יְהִי אוֹר, וַיְהִי אוֹר:

And G-d said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

TEXT 2a

DEVARIM (DEUTERONOMY) 33:14

וּמִמְגַד תְּבוֹאוֹת שֶׁמֶשׁ, וּמִמְגַד גֶּרֶשׁ יָרֵחַיִם:

And with the sweetness of the produce of the sun, and with the sweetness of the moon’s yield.

TEXT 2b

RASHI, AD LOC.

”וממגד תבואות שמש”: שהיתה ארצו פתוחה לחמה, וממתקת הפירות.

“And with the sweetness of the produce of the sun.” For Joseph’s land was exposed to the sun, which sweetened its fruit.

Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (Rashi)

1040–1105

Most noted biblical and Talmudic commentator. Born in Troyes, France, Rashi studied in the famed *yeshivot* of Mainz and Worms. His commentaries on the Pentateuch and the Talmud, which focus on the straightforward meaning of the text, appear in virtually every edition of the Talmud and Bible.

*Save Some for Later***TEXT 3**

TALMUD TRACTATE CHAGIGAH, 12A

אור שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא ביום ראשון, אדם צופה בו מסוף
העולם ועד סופו . . . גנזו . . . ולמי גנזו? לצדיקים לעתיד לבא.

With the light that the Holy One, blessed be He, created on the first day, a person would be able to peer from one end of the world to the other. . . . [G-d] concealed it. . . . For whom did He conceal it? For the righteous people in the future.

Babylonian Talmud

A literary work of monumental proportions that draws upon the legal, spiritual, intellectual, ethical, and historical traditions of Judaism. The 37 tractates of the Babylonian Talmud contain the teachings of the Jewish sages from the period after the destruction of the 2nd Temple through the 5th century CE. It has served as the primary vehicle for the transmission of the Oral Law and the education of Jews over the centuries; it is the entry point for all subsequent legal, ethical, and theological Jewish scholarship.

II. A GUIDE TO PURPOSEFUL LIVING

Purposeful Living

TEXT 4

MIDRASH BEREISHIT RABAH 1:1

בְּנֵהַג שְׁבַעוֹלָם, מֶלֶךְ בְּשׂוֹר וְדָם בּוֹנֵה פְּלָטִין, אֵינּוּ בּוֹנֵה אוֹתָהּ מִדַּעַת
עֲצָמוֹ אֶלָּא מִדַּעַת אַמֶּן. וְהָאֵמֶן אֵינּוּ בּוֹנֵה אוֹתָהּ מִדַּעַת עֲצָמוֹ,
אֶלָּא דְּפִתְרָאוֹת וּפְנִקְסָאוֹת יֵשׁ לוֹ, לְדַעַת הַיָּאֵךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה חֲדָרִים,
הַיָּאֵךְ הוּא עוֹשֶׂה פְּשָׁפְשִׁין. כִּךָּ הָיָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מִבֵּית בִּתְרוּרָה
וּבְנוֹרָא אֶת הָעוֹלָם.

In the way of the world, an earthly king who builds a castle does not do so from his own knowledge, but rather from the knowledge of an architect. The architect does not build it from his own knowledge, but rather he has scrolls and books to know how to make rooms and doorways. So, too, G-d gazed into the Torah and created the world.

TEXT 5

SIDDUR TEHILLAT HASHEM, LITURGY FOR FRIDAY NIGHT PRAYERS

לְקִרְאוֹת שַׁבַּת לְכוּ וּנְלַכְהוּ, כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה. מִרֵּאשׁ מְקַדֵּם
נְסוּכָה, סוֹף מַעֲשֵׂה בַּמַּחֲשָׁבָה תַּחֲלִילָה.

Come, let us welcome the Shabbat, for it is the source of blessing; from the beginning, from aforesaid it was chosen; last in Creation, first in [G-d's] thought.

Bereishit Rabah

An early rabbinic commentary on the Book of Genesis. This Midrash bears the name of Rabbi Oshiya Rabah (Rabbi Oshiya "the Great"), whose teaching opens this work. This Midrash provides textual exegeses and stories, expounds upon the biblical narrative, and develops and illustrates moral principles. Produced by the sages of the Talmud in the Land of Israel, its use of Aramaic closely resembles that of the Jerusalem Talmud. It was first printed in Constantinople in 1512 together with four other Midrashic works on the other four books of the Pentateuch.

Siddur Tehilat Hashem

One of the prayer books that follow the tradition of the Arizal, as established by Rabbi Shne'ur Zalman of Liadi. It was first published in New York in 1945.

Purpose Time and Action Time

TEXT 6

TALMUD TRACTATE BAVA BATRA, 78B

בואו ונחשב חשבוננו של עולם: הפסד מצוה כנגד שכרה, ושכר
עבירה כנגד הפסדה.

Come and let us calculate the account of the world, i.e., the financial loss incurred by the fulfillment of a mitzvah in contrast to its reward, and the reward for committing a transgression, i.e., the pleasure and gain received, in contrast to the loss it entails.

Purpose and Particulars

TEXT 7

RABBI SHNEUR ZALMAN OF LIADI, TANYA 36

התכלית הוא עולם הזה התחתון, שכך עלה ברצונו יתברך – להיות
נחת רוח לפניו יתברך כד אתכפיא סטרא אחרא ואתהפך חשוכא
לנהורא, שיאיר אור ה' . . . במקום החושך והסטרא אחרא של
כל עולם הזה כולו, ביתר שאת ויתר עוז, ויתרון אור מן החושך,
מהארתו בעולמות עליונים.

The ultimate purpose [of Creation] is this lowest world, for such was His blessed will that He shall have satisfaction when the ungodly perception is subdued and the darkness is turned to light, so that the divine light . . . shall shine forth in the place of the darkness and ungodliness throughout this world, with more intensity than its effulgence in the higher worlds.

**Rabbi Shneur
Zalman of Liadi
(Alter Rebbe)
1745–1812**

Chasidic rebbe, halachic authority, and founder of the Chabad movement. The Alter Rebbe was born in Liozna, Belarus, and was among the principal students of the Magid of Mezeritch. His numerous works include the *Tanya*, an early classic containing the fundamentals of Chabad Chasidism; and *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*, an expanded and reworked code of Jewish law.

III. LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

The Point of Light

TEXT 8

THE REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON,
LIKUTEI SICHOT 10, P. 9

ובזה יובן למה נברא האור ביום ראשון, קודם כל שאר הנבראים, כי האור היא המטרה שקבע הקדוש ברוך הוא בהקדמה לבריאת עולמות, במאמרו הראשון – "יהי אור" – כלומר, שכל הבריאה העתידה להיות, העולם על כל פרטיו וברואיו, כל זה יהפך ויהי אור.

This explains why light was created on the first day, before any other creation: It is because light is the purpose with which G-d prefaced the Creation of the worlds, with His first utterance—"Let there be light." It means that everything that is about to be created—the world in all its details and constituent creations—all of it will be transformed into light.

Exit Stage Light

TEXT 9

BEREISHIT (GENESIS) 1:31

וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה, וְהִנֵּה טוֹב מְאֹד. וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי.

And G-d saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson **1902–1994**

The towering Jewish leader of the 20th century, known as "the Lubavitcher Rebbe," or simply as "the Rebbe." Born in southern Ukraine, the Rebbe escaped Nazi-occupied Europe, arriving in the U.S. in June 1941. The Rebbe inspired and guided the revival of traditional Judaism after the European devastation, impacting virtually every Jewish community the world over. The Rebbe often emphasized that the performance of just one additional good deed could usher in the era of Mashiach. The Rebbe's scholarly talks and writings have been printed in more than 200 volumes.

TEXT 10

TALMUD TRACTATE SOTAH, 12A

בשעה שנולד משה, נתמלא הבית כולו אור. כתיב הכא: "ותרא אותו כי טוב הוא", וכתיב התם: "וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב".

At the time when Moses was born, the entire house was filled with light, as it is written here, "And when she saw him, that he was a goodly [tov] child," and it is written there, "And G-d saw the light, that it was good [tov]."

TEXT 11

THE REBBE, RABBI MENACHEM MENDEL SCHNEERSON, LIKUTEI SICHOT 10, P. 9

והענין: מטרת הפעולה (במשל, באדם למטה) מתבטאת בשני אופנים:

א) כפי שהיא באה בגילוי כמטרה העיקרית והכוללת במחשבתו וכוונתו של הפועל – לפני הפעולה ובהתחלתה;

ב) כמו שמטרת הפעולה נרגשת באדם בעת הפעולה בכל פרט ופרט שהוא עושה, בכדי שכולם יתאימו לתכליתם ומטרתם – דהיינו שהמטרה אינה נמשכת אז, בעת הפעולה, בכל גילוייה והיקפה, כמו לפני הפעולה.

ועל דרך זה יובן גם במטרה העליונה של כל הבריאה – האור "שנברא ביום ראשון" – שיש בה שתי מדרגות: א) מדרגת עצם האור: (שהוא מפורש בתורה) "וירא אלקים את האור כי טוב" – "האור" (עצמו) כמו שהוא מתגלה ביום ומאמר ראשון קודם התהוותם של כל נבראי העולם, וכמטרתם ותכליתם; ב) הארה ומעין מה"אור" הנמשך בכל מאמר ונברא פרטי, שהאור האלקי הזה הוא הנותן את הכח והאפשרות בנבראים שיתאימו למטרתן – שיהפכו לאור. ועל "אור" ומטרה זו נאמר: "וירא אלקים כי

טוב" – היינו "אור", אבל אינו בגילוי ממש (כי אם ברמז, העלם)
כמו ביום ראשון.

The purpose of any action (say, for example, that of a person) can be expressed in two ways:

1. As revealed in the mind and intent of the actor, as a primary and overarching sense of purpose, before the act itself, and in its early stages
2. During the act itself, as the person perceives the overall purpose of every specific thing he does, so that they are all in accord with their purpose and their goal. Throughout the duration of the act, the purpose is not being conveyed as openly, or to the same extent, as it was before the act.

Similarly, the supernal purpose of Creation—signified by the light “that was created on the first day”—has two levels:

1. The level of the light itself (which is mentioned explicitly in the Torah): “And G-d saw the light, that it was good”—that is the light (itself) that was manifest on the first day and the first utterance, before every other creation in the world, as their ultimate purpose.
2. A ray and reflection of that light was conveyed in each successive utterance and creation. It is this G-dly light that enables these creations to align with and achieve their purpose—to transform creation into light. Of this “light” and purpose it was said, “And G-d saw that it was good”—meaning, “that it was light,” but (merely an allusion to it, that is, hidden, and) not as fully revealed as it was on the first day.

