

Bereshit

1:1. IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH.

The wise understand that the intent of the Torah is not to teach of the natural sciences, but that the Torah was given only to direct humankind on the path of righteousness and justice, and to establish belief in the Unity and Providence of God in their hearts, for not to the scholars alone was the Torah given, but to the entire people. Just as the concepts of Providence and reward and punishment are not explained (and properly not explained) in the Torah in a philosophical manner, but are treated in human terms (“And the Lord was angry with them,” “And His heart grieved,” and many other such expressions), so the story of the Creation is not told (and properly not told) in the Torah in a philosophical manner—for as the Rabbis said, to impress upon flesh and blood the power of the Creation is impossible.

Therefore it is not proper for the Torah scholar to force the Scriptures from their literal meaning to make them conform with the natural sciences, nor is it proper for the critic to deny the Divine origin of the Torah if he finds things in its stories that do not conform with scientific research. Both scholar and critic ought instead to examine the inner nature of the human mind, and the different learning approaches nature takes when it speaks to each mind: to a child in its way, to a youth in another way, to an aged man in another, to the strong in a special way, to the weak in a special way, to the rich in one way, to the poor in another. So with all groups of human beings nature speaks to their minds in a

way particularly befitting them, and nature never reveals to any of them the naked truth without some veil or garb. And so the blessed Giver of the Torah (for the God Who created nature and the God Who gave us the Torah is one God), when He speaks to human beings, must speak according to their level and not according to His.

Now God wanted to proclaim to humankind the unity of the world and the unity of the human race, for error in these two matters caused many evils in ancient times. Without knowledge of the world's unity it followed that people believed in private gods with limitations and imperfections, and that people would do evil deeds in order to gain their favor (see my comment in *Yitro* [Ex. 20:3] on "You shall not have other gods").¹ Without knowledge of the unity of the human race it followed that one people would hate and despise another, and that physical force, not justice and righteousness, would rule among them. These two cardinal principles—the unity of the world and the unity of the human race—are the overall purpose in the story of the Creation. Other parts of the Book contain still other purposes, which will be explained.

In the beginning, God created. Many have been aroused to ask why no specific utterance is mentioned in the creation of heaven and earth, and why the creation of the angels is not mentioned. One may also wonder why the first day is different from the rest of the days of creation: each of them is devoted to a particular thing, or to particular things of one type or class, but the first day includes a particular thing, the creation of light, and includes besides that a general thing that is more comprehensive than anything else—the creation of heaven and earth. This is very strange; it would have been fitting for one day to be devoted to the creation of heaven and earth, without adding the creation of a particular thing, the light.

It seems to me that one answer will suffice for the three questions, and that is that heaven and earth were not created on the first day but before it. As it is said, "The Torah was not given to the ministering angels." The purpose of the creation story is only to tell of the beginning of the lower world, the abode of humankind, and only partly of the beginning of the higher world as it relates to humankind, that is, the good that reaches us from it. It would not have been possible to explain Heavenly matters to man, and yet neither was it God's intention to cause man to believe that nothing exists other than what we see and

1. In that comment, Luzzatto expands on this concept: those who believe in one God believe that He is good, and they seek to emulate His goodness, but those who believe in many gods inevitably believe in one or more evil gods and seek to emulate their evil, as ancient history attests. Polytheists ascribe jealousy, hatred, and rivalry to their gods, with the result that human relations suffer. It was only after the Torah was disseminated over the world that the nations began to recognize that all men are brothers.

know. For this reason the Torah tells what was created and done on each of the six days of creation, but prefaces the details of the creation with one verse to include another creation, one which preceded the six days. Its details are not explained in the Torah, which merely states, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and not, "And God said, 'Let there be heaven; let there be earth'"—in order to inform us that it was not His purpose to tell us the details of that creation, and that this is only an abbreviated statement including several utterances.

The "heaven" and "earth" mentioned here are not exactly the same heaven and earth that are later specified on the second and third days. The "heaven" mentioned here includes everything above the earth, while the heaven mentioned on the second day includes only that part of it known to man. The "earth" mentioned here includes the land with the water, and the air above it, while the earth mentioned on the third day includes only the dry land.

This, in my opinion, is the essential plain meaning of this verse. One might object that this negates what is written in the Ten Commandments [Ex. 20:11]: "For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth," but actually there is no contradiction there to my interpretation. It does not say, "In six days the Lord created (*bara*) the heaven and the earth," but "In six days the Lord made (*asah*) the heaven and the earth," meaning the making of the sky and the division of the land from the water. The words "and all that is in them" in the Ten Commandments refer to the light, the luminaries, and the living things on the land and in the water. In *Ki Tissa* (Ex. 31:17) ["For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, and on the seventh day He ceased and rested"], the verse is brief and mentions only the heaven and the earth, while "all that is in them" is included by inference.

The Rabbis, too, said that the Throne of Glory preceded the creation of the world [Bereshit Rabbah 1:5].

created. The verb "to create" (*bara*) in the *kal* and *nif'al* conjugations, is never found anywhere to refer to human activity. We find that a human being is called "maker" (*oseh*) or "fashioner" (*yotser*) but never "creator" (*bore*). It seems that this root refers to anything out of the ordinary way of the world, as "I will do wonders which were never performed (*nivre'u*) in all the land" (Ex. 34:10); "If the Lord performs a creation (*beri'ah yivra*) so that the earth opens its mouth" (Num. 16:30); "I have announced to you new things from this time. . . They are created now, and not from old" (Is. 48:6, 7); "For the Lord has created a new thing in the land" (Jer. 31:22). Here, "God created the heaven and the earth" is a Divine activity without compare.

We find creation *ex nihilo* stated explicitly in II Maccabees 7:28.² The Sa-

2. "I beg you, child, look at the sky and the earth; see all that is in them and realize that God made them out of nothing. . ." (New English Bible).

maritans, too, in their liturgy say that the world was created from nothing, and so the Karaites also believe.

Ezekiel, in speaking of the king of Tyre, does use the terminology of “creation”: “In the day that you were created (*hibbara'akha*) they were prepared” (Ezek. 28:13); “From the day that you were created (*hubbar'akh*)” (v. 15). By way of poetic metaphor he likened the king to Adam, whom God created and placed in the Garden of Eden, as he says, “You were in Eden, the garden of God” (v. 13). For this reason the prophet refers to him in terms of “creation,” as if he had not been formed by a father and mother but had been a creation of God Himself.

In the *pi'el* conjugation [*here*] we find this root in the sense of “hewing” and “cutting,” and in the *hif'il* conjugation, *lehavri'akhem* (“to make yourselves fat”) [I Sam. 2:29], in the sense of “healthy” or “fat.” In some manuscripts we find, in the *kal* conjugation, “neither did he eat (*bara*) bread with them” (II Sam. 12:17), with an *aief* (ברא) instead of a *he* (ברה); this was Ibn Ezra's reading but not Kimhi's.

God (Elohim). *El* (“god”) and *ayil* (“lord”) are terms of strength and power. *Elohim* is the plural form, and it was used by idol-worshipping peoples (*Kuzari* 4:1). They used this term for all the forces of nature that are the causes of events on earth. They worshipped them all, and each one was a god to them. The monotheistic Hebrews, however, kept this name in the plural form to show that the God they worshipped was not one individual force—as the nations used to say, “The Lord is a God of the hills, but He is not a God of the valleys” (I Kings 20:28)—but a grouping of all the forces, and master of them all (for a similar explanation, see the comment on the word “seas” at v. 10 below). Thus they called Him by the name *Tseva'ot* (“Hosts”), to say that He Himself includes the forces of all the hosts of heaven that the nations used to worship. See my comment on Is. 1:9.³

the heaven and the earth (*et ha-shamayim ve-et ha-arets*). The Torah speaks in the language of man and divides the whole world, and all the worlds, into two parts, upper and lower, according to the viewpoint of man who lives on the earth. In Arabic, *sham* is the equivalent of *gavah* (“to be high”) in Hebrew, and in Aramaic, *are* (from which stems *arets*, which equals *ארץ* (“land”)) with the exchange [from Aramaic to Hebrew] of *ayin* and *tsadi*, as in *צאן* and *עאן* (“sheep”), *רבע* and *רבץ* (“lie down”) which yields *ארבעה* (“four”), and similarly *עיר* as a term for “angel,” corresponding to the Heb. *ציר*, which denotes “messenger”) means “low,” as in, “And after you shall rise another kingdom inferior (*arets*) to you” (Daniel 2:39).

3. In this comment, Luzzatto elaborates on these ideas and expresses disagreement with those who translate *YHVH Tseva'ot* as “Lord of Hosts,” i.e. God of the angels or of the stars.

According to some (Golius and Clericus), the words *sham* and *are* were formed from *shamayim* and *erets*. It seems likely, as per R. Jacob Abendana, that *shamayim* comes from *sham* (“there”), denoting a distant place, and that it was called *shamayim* because it is far and high from every direction that a human being faces. The Arabic verb meaning “to be high” was afterwards derived from *shamayim*, for verbs that refer not to action but to a characteristic of the subject—like the verb *sham*—do not likely come into existence before the noun or adjective that indicates the characteristic in question. First, for example, the blood of living creatures was called *dam*; later, anything resembling blood was called *adom* (“red”); and still later, the adjective was made into the verb *adam*, *ademu* (“was red,” “were red”). However, the adjective *are*, which describes anything low, probably came into use before the “land” was called *arets*.

1:2. AND THE EARTH WAS DESOLATION AND SOLITUDE, AND DARKNESS WAS ON THE FACE OF THE ABYSS, AND A WIND OF GOD [THAT IS, VERY STRONG] WAS STIRRING OVER THE FACE OF THE WATER.

And the earth was, etc. This verse is connected to the one after it; at first the earth was such, and therefore God said, “Let there be light.”

desolation and solitude (*tohu va-vohu*). These words denote *shemamah* (“desolation” or “astonishment”). The words *taha* and *baha* in Aramaic mean “astonishment,” as it is said in *Bereshit Rabbah* 2, “That servant sat *tohe u-vohe*,” meaning “astonished.” So also in Syriac, *ܐܘܬܒܗܒܐ* means “to be made bored” or “moody,” and *ܒܘܚܒܗܐ* means “astonishment” and “desolation.” Just as the desert is called *shemamah* and *yeshimon* (“wilderness”), so it is called *tohu va-vohu*. The meaning is that on the earth there were neither plants nor animals.

and darkness was on the face of the abyss (*tehom*). It seems to me that *tehom*, too, is from the root *taha*, like *tohu* (as per Saadia Gaon), meaning desolation and astonishment, but that it refers especially to the multitude and depth of the waters, which were without end. The meaning is that the whole earth was an abyss, because the waters covered it completely, and on the face of this abyss there was no light, but darkness. This, then, is a terrifying description—desolation below and desolation above.

and a wind of God was stirring, etc. As the Targum says, *ve-ruha min kodam YHVH menasheva* (“and a wind from the presence of the Lord was blowing”). “A wind of God” (*ruah Elohim*) means a great, strong wind, as in:

- “Because the breath (*ruah*) of the Lord blows upon it” (Is. 40:7);
- “He causes His wind (*ruho*) to blow, and the waters flow” (Ps. 147:18);
- “You blew with Your breath (*be-ruhakha*)” (Ex. 15:10).

Parallel expressions are *harerei El* (“mountains of God,” or mighty mountains) [Ps. 36:7] and *shalhevetyah* (“flame of the Lord,” or great flame) [Songs 8:6].

was stirring (merahefet). The word expresses motion, as in “Hovers (*yerahef*) about its fledglings” (Deut. 32:11), and “All my bones shake (*rahafu*)” (Jer. 23:9). The reason that the term “blowing” (*menashevet*) was not used is that the wind was not blowing as it customarily does, for wind blows from a particular direction, but here the wind was moving in all directions.

Some explain the term “wind (or “spirit”) of God” to refer to God’s will and Providence, but besides the fact that the word “stirring” is unsuitable as a description of Divine activity, it is entirely correct to view this whole verse as describing conditions as they were at first, and afterwards telling of God’s act, which was sudden and brief, accomplished as it was through a mere utterance (“God said, ‘Let there be light’”)—rather than to say that God, or His will or power, was moving about upon the water as if He were striving or struggling over the matter for some time. Moreover, this description of the wind stirring in all directions teaches us of God’s mercy toward His creatures, because now the blowing of the wind is not so, but is ordered by laws that God ordained in His world. Had the world remained in chaos as it was then, the wind would always have moved strongly in every direction, or would not have moved at all, and no creature could have survived.

1:3. GOD SAID, “LET THERE BE LIGHT”; AND THERE WAS LIGHT.

God said. God is described as a king who commands. Everything comes into being at His word, to show that God’s work is not like the work of a man who uses his hands, but it is as if He were commanding others to work, even though in this case there was no one to command (Ibn Ezra).

Let there be light. In my opinion, the Torah records the creation of light first because most peoples worshipped the sun, for its great influences on the earth through light and heat. For this reason the Torah promptly let it be known that even before the luminaries existed, there was light and there was day and night, for at God’s word all came into being.

1:4. GOD SAW THAT THE LIGHT WAS A GOOD THING; AND GOD SEPARATED THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS.

God saw. Because He saw and knew that the light was a good and beneficial thing, He separated it from the darkness. Here the Torah is speaking on a human level, for human knowledge is gained only through trial and error, and often a person will make a thing thinking that it will be good, but afterwards he sees it is not so. Therefore the Torah relates that after each act of the Creator, He saw that it was good.

and God separated. He arranged for them not to mix together, that when there is light there should not be darkness, or vice versa. He said this (even though

He need not have said it) because the ancients believed that darkness was not merely the absence of light, but was a substance in and of itself, as it is said, “I form the light and create darkness” (Is. 45:7), and also (Job 38:19), “Where is the way to the dwelling of light, and as for darkness, where is its place?” So it was that the nations would associate one god with light and another with darkness; but the Holy One, blessed is He, wanted to let His people know that He was the Lord of light and darkness, and that their natures were decreed by Him alone.

1:5. GOD CALLED THE LIGHT DAY, AND THE DARKNESS HE CALLED NIGHT. SO THERE WAS AN EVENING, AND THERE WAS A MORNING, (THAT IS) ONE DAY.

God called the light Day. Clericus correctly said that this naming was a symbol of authority and rulership over the matter, to show that day and night depend on the Divine will, and the other namings during the creation served a similar purpose. For the same reason, God brought the animals to Adam so that he could name them, to show that he would rule over them [below, 2:19]. Similarly it was the custom of kings in ancient times to rename their servants, as Pharaoh did to Joseph [below, 41:45], Pharaoh Nekhoh did to Eliakim son of Josiah [II Kings 23:34], and Nebuchadnezzar to Mattaniah, whose name he changed to Zedekiah [II Kings 24:17]; he also renamed Daniel, Hannaniah, Mishaël, and Azariah [Daniel 1:7].

the light Day. The time when light functions He called day, and the time when darkness functions He called night. Even before the creation of the luminaries there was day and night, for the light would function for some time and then cease and be removed, and the darkness would function in its place. At that time there was also evening and morning, because that light contained degrees of evening, morning, and noon, as per Don Isaac Abravanel.

So there was an evening, and there was a morning. “Evening” (*erev*) sometimes includes (as per Kimhi) the part of night close to it, and so “morning” (*boker*) also includes the part of day close to it. Since there was already darkness before the creation of light, the evening was mentioned first, and thus the Torah day is from evening to evening. As long ago as Ibn Ezra’s time, someone wanted to say that the night followed the day, and that the Sabbath begins in the morning. This person interpreted the phrase *va-yehi boker yom ehad* (“and there was a morning, one day”) to mean that when there was a second morning, the first day was finished. Ibn Ezra countered this theory in the book *Iggeret Ha-Shabbat*, in which he explained the nature of the year, the month, and the day as mentioned in the Torah. (I have published this book in *Kerem Hemed*, vol. 4.) However, the verse “From one evening to another [shall you celebrate your rest]—Lev. 23:32] is decisive proof and there is no need for other proofs.

Even so, it would have been possible to explain (following De Vignolle's interpretation)⁴ that first the time of light continued and afterwards came the evening, and then the time of darkness continued and afterwards there was morning, and that this was one day of the days of creation, albeit not a Torah day. But according to this theory, there was no reason for Scripture to record the measurement of a creation-day, since it was not a Torah day. Moreover, it cannot be said that there is no relationship between the Torah day and the creation-day, for the Sabbath day is based on the Creation. If the Sabbath of Creation were from morning to morning, why would our cessation from labor be from evening to evening? Therefore the correct explanation is as I have said. **evening (erev).** So called because of the confusion (*irbuv*) of objects to the human eye due to the lack of light.

morning (boker). From *baka* or ("break of light"), in the sense of *az yibbaka ka-shahar orekha* ("Then shall your light break forth as the morning") (Is. 58:8). **one day.** There was evening and there was morning, *that is*, one day. The words "that is" are missing in the Scriptures hundreds, even thousands, of times.

one day (yom ehad). A whole day; evening followed by morning comprises one day. The meaning [of *yom ehad*] is not "the first day," but "one complete day." Nachmanides wrote that it did not say "first" because there can be no first without a second, and the second had not been yet; but this is not a sufficient answer, because just at the end of the first day began the night, which was the start of the second day, so the first day could have been called "first."

The principal meaning of the term *yom* was the time of light, and afterwards the term was made to refer to the time including both "day" and "night," that is, 24 hours. Similarly in other languages a single word (*dies, jour, Tag*) refers to the time of light and also to the 24-hour period; it is a common practice in all languages to call a thing by the name of one of its more obvious, well known, or useful major parts,⁵ as [in Italian] *vela* ("sail") is said for "boat," or [in Hebrew] *raham rahamatayim* (from "womb") is said for "woman." So here, the 24-hour period was called *yom* after its major part, the time of light. Here the Torah's intention was to say that the conjunction of evening and morning—first the evening and then the morning—is called one day.

1:6. GOD SAID, "LET THERE BE A LAYER IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS, AND LET IT SEPARATE WATERS FROM WATERS."

Let there be a layer in the midst of the waters. The Holy One, blessed is He, wanted to let Israel know that neither the sun nor anything else orders the rain to fall or not to fall. Therefore He told of the existence of the higher waters

before that of the luminaries.

a layer (It. *strato*, Heb. *rakia*). A flat body like a kind of platter, in the sense of, "To Him that spread forth (*roka*) the earth above the waters" (Ps. 136:6), and, "They beat (*va-yerakke'u*) thin plates of gold" (Ex. 39:3); and from this came, "And over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of a firmament (*rakia*), like the color of the terrible ice" (Ezek. 1:22). Here it describes the air between the earth and the clouds as a flattened body that divides the water on the earth from the water in the clouds, supporting the water above it. At God's will the water falls from there to earth, as it is said, "The Lord will open for you his good treasure, the heaven, to give to your land the rain in its time" [Deut. 28:12], and, as a curse, "I will render your heaven as iron" (Lev. 26:19) to prevent the falling of the water above them. So also, below (7:11), "And the cataracts of the heaven were opened."

Later, however, in Isaiah's time, apparently it was realized that there are no stores of water above, and that rain water returns upward, for he says (55:10), "For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, except it water the earth," meaning that after it waters the earth, it returns to heaven; see my comment there.⁶ So also, Jeremiah asked ironically (14:22), "Can the heavens give showers?"—meaning that they do not give rain themselves, because they contain no stores of water. The mists that rise (*mitnasse'im*) from the earth came to be called *nesi'im*, as in, "Who causes the vapors (*nesi'im*) to ascend from the ends of the earth" (Ps. 135:7); "He causes the *nesi'im* to ascend from the ends of the earth" (Jer. 10:13 and 51:16); "As *nesi'im* and wind without rain" (Prov. 25:14). It is not known when this term became common, for Psalm 135 is not attributed to David, and Proverbs from chapter 25 and onward is not definitely by Solomon. In Job, on the other hand, it is said (38:22), "Have you entered the treasuries of the snow, or have you seen the treasuries of the hail?"—and this is proof of the book's antiquity.

Because the term *rakia* was based on the belief in higher waters, "the waters that are above the heavens" (Ps. 148:4) and which the *rakia* supported, and because this belief became obsolete and forgotten, the term *rakia* itself became obsolete. It does not appear as a synonym for "heavens" (*shamayim*) except in three places, two of them in Psalms: "And the *rakia* shows His handiwork" (19:2), and "Praise Him in the *rakia* of His power (150:1); the word remained in the poetic vocabulary, as is the custom in all languages for poets to use archaic words. The third place is Daniel 12:3, "And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the *rakia*," where it is again a poetic figure. So also Malachi 3:10, "If I will not open you the windows of heaven," is a poetic expression.

4. Apparently a reference to Alphonse De Vignolles; see Sources.

5. The technical term for this rhetorical device is "synecdoche."

6. In that comment, Shadal disagrees with the view that the verse should be interpreted as meaning, "For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven, and never returns there." He also cross-refers to the present verse.

There is another use of the terminology of *rakia* referring to the heavens, in Job 37:18, which is a further sign of the book's antiquity: "Can you with him spread out (*tarkia*) the sky, which is strong as a molten mirror?"—so said because it supports much water. Solomon, too, said, "When He made firm the skies above" (Prov. 8:28).

Hence the Torah spoke on a human level and according to human belief when it said, "Let there be a *rakia*." However, its intended message remains true and settled: God set the waters in nature to be lifted up and then to fall to earth.

In the Greek translation attributed to the seventy elders [the Septuagint], *rakia* is translated as *stereoma*, implying "strength," and so they later translated it in Latin as *firmamentum*. They were drawn to this by an analogy to the Syriac root רקע, denoting "strength"; רָקִיעַ in Syriac means "strong" or "hard." Johannes Clericus says that they translated it this way because some of the ancient philosophers believed that the sky and the air surrounded the earth on all sides, preventing it and everything upon it from breaking up and scattering, and thus they caused the earth to remain solid and cohesive. He himself translates *rakia* in terms of beating or stamping, as in, "Smite with your hand and stamp (*u-reka*) with your foot" (Ezek. 6:11); "Because you have clapped your hands and stamped (*ve-rak'akha*) with the feet" (ibid. 25:6)—for the sky "stamps" upon the earth and stops its parts from disintegrating. All this is far from the plain meaning of Scripture, but nevertheless it is likely that the original denotation of the root רקע was stamping and beating, and since a beaten object is flattened and taut, the root רקע was transferred to denote tautness and flatness.

1:7. GOD MADE THE LAYER, WHICH SEPARATED THE WATERS THAT ARE BENEATH THE LAYER FROM THE WATERS THAT ARE ABOVE THE LAYER; AND IT WAS SO.

and it was so. That the *rakia* succeeded in supporting the upper waters so that they did not mix with the lower.

1:8. GOD CALLED THE LAYER HEAVEN. SO THERE WAS AN EVENING, AND THERE WAS A MORNING, (THAT IS) A SECOND DAY.

God called. See above on v. 5. The Torah states that God named the heaven in order to show that He rules it, causing the rain to fall or withholding it at His will, and that humankind has no power over it.

1:9. GOD SAID, "LET THE WATERS BENEATH THE HEAVEN BE GATHERED IN ONE PLACE, SO THAT THE DRYNESS MAY APPEAR"; AND IT WAS SO.

God said, "Let the waters. . . be gathered." Because the sea is a great and terrifying thing, so much so that some of the ancient peoples attributed a special god to it, and primitive thought was afraid that it would rise and flood the land, as the prophet said (Jer. 5:22), "Fear you not me? says the Lord; Will you not tremble at My presence? Who have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, an everlasting ordinance, which it cannot pass"—and similarly, Job 38:11: "And [He] said, 'Thus far shall you come, but no further; and here shall your proud waves be stayed'"—therefore the Holy One, blessed is He, wanted to let Israel know that the sea, too, is His handiwork, that it was He Who commanded the waters to be gathered.

Let the waters. . . be gathered (*yikkavu ha-mayim*). The root *kavah* is derived from *kav* ("line"), and the term *kivvui* ("gathering") is applied to water because it maintains a straight level and a plane surface, unlike nonliquid substances, which form a heap when piled one on the other. This term is found only in connection with water, except in the verse, "And all the nations shall be gathered (*ve-nikvu*) to it" (Jer. 3:17), where it is a figure of speech borrowed from water, as is the verse, "And all the nations shall flow (*ve-naharu*) to it" (Is. 2:2), where the idea is borrowed from the running of water in a river (*nahar*).

From the term *mikveh* ("collection of water") apparently was formed the Latin word *aqua* ("water"), and also *aequus*, which denotes "straightness."

beneath the heaven. . . in (*el*) one place. Let them come from their places, for they are scattered under all the heaven, and let them go to one place and stay there. The word *el* ("to"; here, "in") usually implies movement, not repose, and so I say that *yikkavu* ("be gathered") includes the sense of moving toward the place of gathering and not only the gathering itself. Similarly, in the verse "And all the nations shall flow (*ve-nikvu*) to it," the meaning is that they will come toward it and gather in it.

one place. And only one place.

the dryness (*ha-yabbashah*). A noun marked with a *dagesh*, meaning a thing that is dry (*yavesh*), similar to *haravah*, which means something dry (*harev*); cf. *avedah* ["a lost object," from *avad*, "to lose"], *genevah* ["a stolen object," from *ganav*, "to steal"], and *gezelah* ["a robbed object," from *gazel*, "to rob"]. It is not an adjective but [a noun] like *tohu* and *bohu*.

7. As appealing as this theory may sound, modern dictionaries draw no connection between *aqua* (which has been traced to a hypothetical Indo-European root word *akwa*) and *aequus*; although some of Shadal's suggested connections between Hebrew words and their Greek or Latin counterparts are supported by modern linguistic scholarship (see below at *eravon*, 38:17, and *mekheroteihem*, 49:5), a link between *mikveh* and *aqua* has apparently not been attested. At my suggestion, however, a reference to such a conjectured link was included in Isaac E. Mozeson's *The Word* (1995), a book that claims to reveal Hebrew sources of English words.

1:10. GOD CALLED THE DRYNESS LAND, AND THE RECEPTACLE OF THE WATERS HE CALLED SEA. AND GOD SAW THAT (THIS WAS) GOOD.

God called. See above on verse 5. The Torah states that God named the land and the sea in order to proclaim that it is He Who stops the sea waters from rising and flooding the land, but when He pleases He casts them out to inundate land and destroy great nations, so that what was dry land yesterday will be sea today, with humankind having no authority over this at all.

Sea (yammim, lit. "seas"). One sea that includes all the seas (as I wrote above on the word *Elohim*), for they are all united to each other.

And God saw that (this was) good (ki tov). The meaning is that His will was done and that which He wanted to be came into being. Above, at the second day, *ki tov* was not said, because the work of the water was not finished (Rashi). God's will in separating the upper and lower waters had not yet been done, because the purpose of the creation of the *rakia* was for the falling of rain and the growth of vegetation. Until the waters had been gathered and the dry land was seen there was no place for all this, for the land was still *tohu va-vohu*, covered with water everywhere and unfit for habitation. Once the waters were gathered in one place and the dry land appeared, however, the work of the water was finished, for there was a place for rain to fall on the land to fertilize it and make it grow.

One might object and ask if so, why did it not say "Let the waters be gathered" on the second day, along with "Let there be a layer"? However, the order of things would not have been fitting and proper if God had dealt in one day with both heaven and earth. On the contrary, it was entirely befitting that He would create the *rakia* on the second day, and that on the third He would prepare the earth for vegetation. In order for this to be, the waters first had to be gathered in one place so that the dry land could appear.

1:11. GOD SAID, "LET THE LAND PRODUCE GRASS, VEGETATION PROVIDED WITH SEED, FRUIT TREES PRODUCING FRUIT, OF VARIOUS SPECIES, HAVING THEIR OWN SEED WITHIN THEMSELVES (WITH WHICH TO PROPAGATE THEMSELVES) OVER THE LAND." AND IT WAS SO.

Let the land produce grass (tadshe ha-arets deshe). The correct interpretation of *deshe* is the small, tender vegetation whose seed is not discernible (and therefore it does not say "*deshe* provided with seed"), while *esev* ("vegetation") is larger. R. Ovadiah Sforno said that *deshe* is food for animals and *esev* is food for man. However, the opinion of the commentator to *Netivot Ha-Shalom*, that *deshe* includes trees, is improbable, because the word is often found in conjunction with *esev* and *yerek* ("herbiage"), but never with *ets* ("tree"). Nevertheless, the phrase *tadshe ha-arets* does include the trees, because trees at the start of

their growth are small and tender like *deshe* (as per my student R. Abraham Hai Mainster). The word *tadshe* is equivalent to "let there grow"; afterwards *deshe*, the smaller growth, is specified, followed by "*esev* provided with seed," which is larger, and then "fruit trees."

For this reason the *revia* is properly placed over the word *deshe*, because this sign marks a lesser pause than the *zakef* over the word *zera* ("seed") later in the verse (חֲדָשָׁה הָאָרֶץ וְשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מְזֻרְעִי זֶרַע עֵץ פֶּרִי...). The terms *deshe* and *esev* are linked because they are similar, but "fruit trees" are in a different category and so this phrase is separated.

The *pashta* over the word *ha-arets* ("the land") marks a greater disjunction than the *revia* after it (over *deshe*), as is the rule with every *revia* that follows a *pashta*, for the purpose of this *revia* is only to avoid having the *pashta* repeated three consecutive times. An example of this is the verse (below, 27:37): הֵן נָבִיר שִׁמְחִי לֵךְ וְאֵת כָּל אֲחָיו בָּחֲזִי לוֹ עֲבָדִים. Here, of course, the *yetiv* under the word *esev* appears instead of a *pashta* merely because the word is short [and the *yetiv* is a shorter sound than the *pashta*].

The versions that have a *zakef* over the word *deshe* are undoubtedly incorrect. The proof is in the next verse: וְהוֹצֵא הָאָרֶץ דֶּשֶׁא ("The land produced grass"), where the word *deshe* is marked not with a *zakef* but with a *telishah gedolah*, and the words *va-totse ha-arets* are marked with a *kadma ve-azla*, which would not likely have appeared if they were to be followed by a *zakef* over *deshe*. The mistake arose in the first verse, because it is easy [for the eye] to mistake a *revia* for a *zakef*, and besides, a *pashta* usually comes before a *zakef* [and not before a *revia*]. The mistake did not arise in the second verse, for it would have been unlikely to mistake a *telisha* for a *zakef*, and besides there is no *pashta* before it.

provided with seed (mazria zera). Containing seed. This is one of the uses of the *hif'il* conjugation; cf. *makrin mafris* ("[a bullock that] has horns and hoofs," more lit. "horns it and hoofs it," from *keren*, "horn," and *parsah*, "hoof") [Ps. 69:32]. Also, *marbeh raglayim* ("[a swarming thing that] has many legs," more lit. "multiplies legs," from *harbeh*, "many") [Lev. 11:42]. [So, too, in this instance *mazria* is the *hif'il* form of *zera*, "seed."]

fruit trees producing fruit, of various species (ets peri oseh peri le-mino). All the commentaries I have seen connect *le-mino* (lit. "of its kind") with the words *oseh peri* ("producing fruit"). However, the accentuator saw better than any of them, and connected *le-mino* with *ets peri* ("fruit trees"), making *oseh peri* [which is set off with a disjunctive *pashta*] a parenthetical phrase merely modifying *ets peri*.

The word *le-mino*, or *le-minehu*, is one of the idioms of the Hebrew language and means "of many kinds," "of all kinds." Some examples of its usage are found in Lev. 11: "Every raven, with its various species (*le-mino*)"; "the hawk *le-mino*"; "the parrot *le-mino*"; "the locust *le-mino*"—the meaning being

the raven, hawk, etc. of *any* kind. So below (v. 21), “all the living, crawling creatures with which the water swarmed, *le-mineihem*”; “all the flying winged things *le-minehu*”; and also (v. 24), “Let the earth give forth living things *le-minah*; animals, reptiles, and wild beasts *le-minah*.” So also (below, 6:20), “Of the flying things *le-minehu*, of the quadrupeds *le-minah*, of all the reptiles of the earth *le-minehu*.” The best example of all is Ezek. 47:10, “Their fish shall be *le-minah*, as the fish of the Great Sea, exceeding many”—meaning that the fish will be numerous and of all kinds. The Jerusalem Talmud (Shekalim, ch. 6) similarly explains it, “‘*le-minah* shall be their fish’—*le-minei minim* (‘of all kinds’) shall be their fish.”

I wrote this explanation in the year 5596 (1836) in my book *Prolegomeni [ad una grammatica ragionata della lingua ebraica]*, p. 191. Ten years later I acquired the book *Ha-Rekhassim Le-Vik'ah*, and I found that the author [R. Judah Leib Spira] had also explained it this way. (See also below, 13:3.)

having their own seed within themselves. This phrase modifies “trees.” It means that the tree will have within it everything it needs to perpetuate its species upon the earth.

1:12. THE EARTH PRODUCED GRASS, VEGETATION PROVIDED WITH SEED, OF VARIOUS SPECIES, AND NUMEROUS TREES PRODUCING FRUIT, HAVING THEIR OWN SEED WITHIN THEMSELVES. AND GOD SAW THAT (THIS WAS) GOOD.

The earth produced, etc. (va-totse ha-arets deshe esev mazria zera le-minehu ve-ets peri oseh peri asher zar'o vo le-minehu). In this verse, too, the accentuator separated the word *le-minehu* from the words *asher zar'o vo* (“having their own seeds within themselves”) [set off with a disjunctive *tip'ha*] and made it refer back to “trees,” so that the phrase means, “The earth produced numerous trees, which produce fruit and also have their own seeds.” This accentuator further separated *le-minehu* from *mazria zera* (“provided with seed”) [set off with a disjunctive *pashita*] and made it refer back to *deshe* and *esev*.

1:13. SO THERE WAS AN EVENING, AND THERE WAS A MORNING, (THAT IS) A THIRD DAY.

1:14. GOD SAID, “LET THERE BE LUMINARIES IN THE LAYER (CALLED) HEAVEN, TO DISTINGUISH THE DAY FROM THE NIGHT; AND LET THEM FORM SIGNS, AND PERIODS, AND DAYS, AND YEARS.

Let there be luminaries (yehi me'orot). The root *hayah* (“to be”), when it precedes the subject, does not always agree with the gender or number, because it is a kind of impersonal verb. [So here, *yehi* (“let there be”) is in the singular masculine form, while *me'orot* (“luminaries”) is in the plural feminine.] The same

occurs in the French *il y a* and *il y aura* (“there is,” “there will be”). Other examples are *va-yehi anashim* (“there were [lit. “was”] men”) (Num. 9:6), and *ki yihyeh na'arah betulah* (“when there is [fem.] a virgin girl”) (Deut. 22:23).

luminaries. Included in this term are all the visible stars, for they all shed light on us in one degree or another.

in the layer (called) Heaven (bi-rekia ha-shamayim, lit. “in the layer of Heaven”). In the *rakia* which is called *shamayim*, which forms the sky for those on earth. This use of *rekia* is one of the uses of the *semikhut* (construct) state, as in:

- *nehar Perat*, “the river of (i.e. which is called) Euphrates”;
- *betulat bat ammi*, “the virgin of (i.e. who is) the daughter of my people” (Jer. 14:17);
- *betulat bat Tsiyyon*, “the virgin (who is) the daughter of Zion” (Is. 37:22);
- *anshei ha-tarim*, “men (who) go about” (that is, “merchants”) (I Kings 10:15);
- *anshei venei veliyya'al*, “men (who are) scoundrels” (Judges 19:22);
- *zera mere'im*, “children (that) deal corruptly” (Is. 1:4);
- *zera berukhei YHVH*, “children (who are) blessed of the Lord” (Is. 65:23).

Still another example is *Elohei Tseva'ot*, “God of (i.e. Who is) the hosts.” (Ibn Ezra similarly writes at v. 31 below that *yom ha-shishi* means “a day which is the sixth,” and that *rekia ha-shamayim* means “the *rakia* that is the Heaven.”) **to distinguish the day from the night.** What was at first accomplished by Divine will without an intermediary (for during the first three days, the light would function for a time and then withdraw, and the darkness would take its place, all this being done by Divine word and deed) was now to be done through the luminaries. This sequence of events was to show that the sun and all the heavenly bodies are nothing but God’s servants, doing His will.

let them form signs (otot). The luminaries were to be the cause of the heavenly signs, as it is said, “And be not dismayed at the signs of heaven” (Jer. 10:2) (so Ibn Ezra). The peoples of the world called the constellations “signs” because they believed them to be portents of the future, as Jeremiah said (ibid.), “For the nations are dismayed at them.”

One might have thought it fitting for the verse to have said, “Let them form days and years and periods,” and mention the “signs” last, since they appear only at intervals. However, the intention was to start with the greatest (as below, v. 21), for the “signs” are the major subject of this half of the verse. The Holy One, blessed is He, wanted to let Israel know that even the constellations, like the days and years, are all arranged according to His will, as are the rest of the laws of nature. Just as day and night, cold and heat, planting season and harvest season have no special deities and do not foretell the future, so too the heavenly “signs.” Moreover, the fact that belief in the fortune-telling properties

of the constellations and solar and lunar eclipses was widespread among the nations, while Moses (and later Jeremiah) rejected this error and declared that they were things of nature like days and years, is a great proof of the Divine origin of the Torah.

One must not wonder, however, why God did not wish to reveal to His people other mistaken beliefs to which they were accustomed. Other mistakes posed no harm to the principles of the faith or to ethical life, unlike the belief in heavenly signs, which was just as harmful as divination and similar practices forbidden by the Torah. Such activity fills one's mind with folly and removes one's faith in God.

and periods (*u-le-mo'adim*). The word *mo'ed* is said of anything that recurs at a fixed time. The holidays are called *mo'adim* because of their regularity; a similar use of the word occurs in the phrase *asah yare'ah le-mo'adim* ("Who appoints the moon for seasons"—Ps. 104:19), for the moon appears and disappears at fixed times. All the luminaries are causes of *mo'adim*, of fixed cycles of time, and in particular of days and years.

1:15. "AND LET THEM SERVE AS LUMINARIES IN THE LAYER (CALLED) HEAVEN, SO THAT THEY MAY GIVE LIGHT OVER THE EARTH." AND IT WAS SO.

And let them serve as luminaries. This adds that their light was to reach the earth. It would have been possible for them to illuminate the heaven and to do all the things mentioned above without illuminating the earth (Nachmanides).

1:16. GOD MADE THE TWO GREAT LUMINARIES, THE MAJOR LUMINARY FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE DAY, AND THE MINOR LUMINARY FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NIGHT, AND THE STARS.

the two great luminaries. The sun and moon, which illuminate the earth more than the stars do; in this sense, which is the reason for their being called "luminaries," they are larger than the others. Even though the moon is physically smaller than the stars, and even though it has no light at all of its own, the Torah speaks from a human viewpoint. We receive much light from the moon and therefore it is a "great luminary."

the major luminary. . . and the minor luminary. Though their light is greater than that of the stars, they differ one from the other. One is large and one small in respect to the light we receive from them.

for the government of the day. . . night. Not that they have power over the earth, but the day is under the power of the sun, and the night under the power of the moon; that is, the day's light is from the sun, and the night's from the moon. This concept deserves further study. It is also to be considered why the

etnah (major disjunctive) was not placed at the word *lailah* ("night") [but earlier in the verse] (my student, Isaac Judah Klineberger). See below at v. 18.

1:17. GOD ESTABLISHED THEM IN THE LAYER (CALLED) HEAVEN, SO THAT THEY MIGHT GIVE LIGHT OVER THE EARTH—

God established them, etc. He established their natural laws so that they would illuminate the earth.

1:18. —AND TO PRESIDE OVER THE DAY AND THE NIGHT, AND TO SEPARATE THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS. AND GOD SAW THAT (THIS WAS) GOOD.

and to preside over the day and the night (*ve-limshol ba-yom u-va-lailah*). The root *mashal* ("to rule," "to preside") is followed by the preposition *bet* [and its object], as in *mashol timshol banu* ("lord it over us"—below, 37:8). The meaning here is that the day and night are under the rule of the luminaries, as I have explained, and not that the luminaries were to rule over the earth, one by day and one by night, as per Nachmanides. This matter deserves much further research, however; perhaps his opinion is the correct one. It was indeed in such a sense that the psalmist said, "The sun to rule by day. . . The moon and stars to rule by night" (Ps. 136:8, 9). It seems that this was the intention of the accentuator at v. 16 in connecting the phrase *ve-et ha-ma'or ha-katon le-memshelet ha-lailah* ("and the minor luminary for the government of the night") with *ve-et ha-kokhavim* ("and the stars"), as the psalmist said, "The moon and stars to rule by night."⁸

and to separate the light from the darkness. That the light and darkness should be arranged in their separate times.

1:19. SO THERE WAS AN EVENING, AND THERE WAS A MORNING, (THAT IS) A FOURTH DAY.

1:20. GOD SAID, "LET THE WATER SWARM WITH A SWARM OF LIVING THINGS, AND LET FLYING CREATURES FLY OVER THE EARTH, OVER THE FACE OF THE LAYER (CALLED) HEAVEN."

8. Umberto Cassuto offers a plausible solution: the ancients thought of the luminaries as actual "rulers," but this notion was blurred in the Torah text, where the meaning is merely that the luminaries, situated as they are far above the earth, *seem* to rule over the earth and its days and nights (*Perush al Sefer Bereshit* [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1978], pp. 27–28).

Let the water swarm (*yishretsu*). The root *sharats* always appears as an intransitive verb, and its principal meaning refers to the rapid movement of living things that are not very high above the ground, whether or not they have legs. Every living thing that is not very tall is called *sherets* (as Rashi says); such flying things as flies, such crawling things as ants and worms, such quadrupeds as moles, mice, and lizards, and all fish.

The phrase "Let the water swarm" does not mean that the water was to produce or beget these creatures, but that the water should appear to be reverberating with them. Similarly, "The Nile will swarm (*ve-sharats*) with frogs" (Ex. 7:28); "Their land swarmed (*sharats*) with frogs" (Ps. 105:30)—i.e. the river and the land appeared to reverberate from the movement of the frogs. (The verb may be translated *brulicare* in Italian, *wimmeln* in German.) So also, "Every living creature wherewith it [the water] swarms (*yishrots*)" (Ezek. 47:9)—i.e. the river is said to "swarm" because of the swarming of the creatures in it. This expression is similar to *elah novelet aleha* ("an oak whose leaf fades," or more literally, "an oak which fades [with] its leaf"—Is. 1:30)—the tree is said to fade because of the fading of its leaf. Also, *rak ha-kisse egdal mimmekka* ("I will have nothing more than you, except for the throne," or, "only [by virtue of] the throne will I be greater than you"—below, 41:40).

a swarm of living things (*sherets nefesh hayyah*). That is, many living things. This use of *sherets* is different from its every other instance in Scripture, where it is the name for a kind of swarming creature, for there is no parallel phrase *behemah nefesh hayyah* ("animals, living things") or of *nefesh hayyah* ("birds, living things"). Here, *sherets* simply means swarm or multitude, like the Italian *brulicame*. The meaning is that even one or two "swarming creatures" moving about the earth appear to be many, due to their agility and the shortness of their legs (or lack of them). From this meaning the root *sharats* was transferred to denote multiplicity, as in *paru va-yishretsu* ("proliferated and propagated themselves"—Ex. 1:7).

living things (*nefesh hayyah*). The basic meaning of *nefesh* is "breath"; the word is metathesized from *nashaf* ("to blow, exhale"). Such a use of *nefesh* is found in Job 41:13, "His breath (*nafsho*) kindles coals." So too, the words *neshamah* and *ruah* [which, like *nefesh*, are often translated "soul"] refer basically to inhalation and exhalation, the mainstay of the life of humankind and all living creatures.

Here the word *hayyah* ("living") is an amplification of *nefesh*, that is, a being that inhales and exhales and by so doing lives. The word *nefesh* is used idiomatically to refer to humankind in general, as in, "If a person (*nefesh*) sins" (Lev. 4:2), while the phrase *nefesh hayyah* refers to other living things, meaning "a breathing thing" that has life and no more, in contrast to a human being, who has other qualities, such as speech and thought, which other living things lack.

and let flying creatures fly. This is a separate command; the water was to be filled with a swarm of living things, and the sky was to be filled with flying creatures. [The verse might have been mistranslated, "Let the water swarm with a swarm of living things and flying creatures."] It is not necessary to ask if the flying creatures were created from the water, because in fact the "swarm of living things" was not created from the water either, since *yishretsu* ("let [the waters] swarm") is not transitive verb.

over the face of the layer (called) Heaven (*al penei rekia ha-shamayim*).

The air and everything above the earth is called *rekia ha-shamayim*, or *shamayim*, and the side of it facing the viewer is called *panim* ("face"). The lower part of the sky is visible to us and so is called *penei rekia ha-shamayim*; it was "over" (*al*) this part of the sky that the flying creatures were to fly. Hence there is no need to explain *al penei* as equivalent to *el penei* ("toward the face"), as Rosenmueller did.

Why were the birds juxtaposed with the fish in one day? Some say it is because both lay eggs and use their tails for navigation. I would add that the Torah intended to connect the creation of humankind with that of the beasts, rather than with the creation of the birds and fish, because human beings are physically more analogous to the former than to the latter. Moreover, the beasts dwell with humankind on the land, unlike the birds and fish, who dwell in the air and the water.

1:21. GOD CREATED THE GREAT CETACEANS, AND ALL THE CREEPING LIVING THINGS, WITH WHICH THE WATER SWARMED, OF VARIOUS SPECIES, AND ALL THE NUMEROUS WINGED FLYING THINGS AS WELL. AND GOD SAW THAT (THIS WAS) GOOD.

God created the great cetaceans (*tanninim*) [i.e. whales, porpoises, and dolphins]. The *tanninim* are listed first because of their unusual size, in order to declare that even they are the work of His hands. All animals of unusual size that live in water or crawl on the earth are called *tanninim*.

creeping (*ha-romeset*). The term *remisah* means going on one's belly, with the entire body upon the ground.

with which the water swarmed. See on the verse above.

various, numerous (*le-mineihem, u-le-minehu*). See above on v. 11.

1:22. GOD BLESSED THEM, SAYING, "PROLIFERATE AND MULTIPLY, AND FILL THE WATERS IN THE SEAS; AND LET THE FLYING CREATURES MULTIPLY IN THE LAND."

God blessed them. He decreed for them the blessing of fertility; that is, He ordained that by nature they were to proliferate and multiply, whether in the

water or on land. This blessing was stated specifically in connection with the fish and birds because, since they lay eggs, they increase more rapidly than the other animals.

in the seas (*ba-yammim*). "Seas" (*yammim*) always refers to a gathering of waters, even rivers, which are not strictly speaking "seas," but are in fact "receptacles of water," as it is written, "Over their rivers, over their canals, over their pools, and over their every receptacle of water" (Ex. 7:19).

multiply in the land. Even the creatures that live and take nourishment in the water lay their eggs on land (*Netivot Ha-Shalom*).

1:23. SO THERE WAS AN EVENING, AND THERE WAS A MORNING, (THAT IS) A FIFTH DAY.

1:24. GOD SAID, "LET THE EARTH GIVE FORTH LIVING THINGS OF VARIOUS SPECIES, ANIMALS, REPTILES, AND WILD BEASTS, IN MULTITUDES"; AND IT WAS SO.

Let the earth give forth, etc. Most of the elements of which the bodies of animals are composed are found in the earth, and after a long time a dead body turns to dust. The ancients believed that the earth spontaneously generated man and beast. Ovid (*Metamorphoses* I, 70) was uncertain, with respect to the creation of man, whether the Creator of all made him from a divine seed, or whether the earth, newly separated from the sky, enclosed a heavenly seed. But the divine Torah declares to us that man and beast all came to be at the command of God, and not by accident.

living things (*nefesh hayyah*). A general term that here includes animals, reptiles, and wild beasts.

of various species (*le-minah*). As above in v. 11.

animals (*behemah*). In my opinion, the original meaning of this term was non-preying, herbivorous quadrupeds, e.g. oxen, sheep, horses, and donkeys. This is its meaning here and in every place in which it appears in conjunction with "beasts" (*hayyah*). It seems to me that the principal connotation of this root is in contrast to the cruelty of "beasts"; in Syriac the root ܒܗܡܐ means "tender" or "good," the opposite of "hardness." Thus I have found in the books of St. Ephraem, part 3, p. 614, לְשִׁיבִיתֵךְ דְּבָרָא בְּהֵמִין נְנָרִיד meaning, "Are we not obligated to give thanks to your goodness, for through it even your chastisements are softened and sweetened?"

At times the term *behemah* is transferred to include all living things except for humankind, as in, "Man and beast (*behemah*) You preserve, O Lord" (Ps. 36:7). Elsewhere it does not include all living things, but only quadrupeds, whether "animals" or "beasts."

reptiles (*va-remes*). Swarming creatures (*sheratsim*) that creep on the ground as if they were being dragged along, for their means of locomotion is imper-

ceptible (Rashi). The term *remes* is different from *sherets* in that it does not include birds and fish (Clericus), for the *remes* by definition creeps on the ground. Nevertheless the verb root *ramas* is also used in connection with all quadrupeds, as in "Wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth (*tirmos*)" (Ps. 104:20), and also in connection with birds, as in "And every flesh creeping (*ha-romes*) upon the earth perished, flying creature (*ba-of*) as well as animal and beast, and every creature (*u-ve-khol ha-sherets*) swarming upon the earth, and all the people (*ve-khol ha-adam*)" (below, 7:21). Note, however, that it does not say *u-ve-khol ha-adam* but *ve-khol ha-adam*, for human beings are not included with the creeping things but are a separate species; the accentuator understood this and placed a major disjunctive (*e'nah*) before *ve-khol ha-adam*. The reason is that the bodies of animals and birds in locomotion are horizontal to the ground, while that of man, who walks erect, is vertical. This is also the opinion of Nachmanides, who wrote (in comment on this v.), "[The *remes*] tread on the earth with their entire body."

and wild beasts (*ve-haito erets*). Preying carnivores are called *hayyot* because of their vitality (*hayyut*) and strength, in the same sense as, "But they [the Hebrew mothers] are vigorous (*hayyot*)" (Ex. 1:19). Such creatures are called "beasts of the land" (*hayyot ha-arets*) or "beasts of the field." The word *haito* has a *vav* suffix, similar to *beno Be'or* (Num. 24:3) and *le-ma'yeno mayim* (Ps. 114:8). The form *haito* is found only in poetry, as are *beno* (for *ben*) and *ma'yeno* (for *ma'yan*), and apparently is an Aramaism. The expression *beno shel Be'or* ("son of Beor," lit. "his son, of Beor"), like *mittato she-li-Shelomoh* (Songs 3:7, "palanquin of Solomon," lit. "his palanquin, of Solomon"), is analogous to the Aramaic *shemah di Elaha* (Daniel 2:20, "the name of God," lit. "His name, of God"). Even though *mayim* is not in the singular and *erets* is not in the masculine [thereby rendering the expressions *le-ma'yeno mayim* and *haito erets* technically ungrammatical], this *vav* suffix remained in the poetic forms even where it should not strictly have been placed.

1:25. GOD MADE THE WILD BEASTS OF VARIOUS SPECIES, THE ANIMALS OF VARIOUS SPECIES, AND ALL THE MANY CREEPING THINGS ON THE EARTH; AND GOD SAW THAT (THIS WAS) GOOD.

God made, etc. This verse explains [the statement] "And it was so" [in the previous v.].

1:26. GOD SAID, "LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, IN OUR LIKENESS; LET HIM RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA, OVER THE FLYING CREATURES OF THE HEAVEN, OVER THE QUADRUPEDS, AND OVER ALL THE EARTH, AND OVER ALL THE REPTILES WHICH CREEP UPON THE EARTH."

Let Us make. In my opinion, this too is an archaism analogous to the Aramaic. It does not mean that He consulted with others, such as the angels, for He also said “in Our image,” and man is not in the image of the angels. Neither is it the plural of majesty; but such is the Aramaic idiom, as in, “And we [i.e. Daniel] will tell its interpretation before the king” (Daniel 2:36). Daniel would not have spoken in a self-aggrandizing manner when speaking with the great king (as Ibn Ezra notes). This mode of speech is often found in the Jerusalem Talmud and in the *midrashim*; for example:

- “He said to him [Simeon ben Shetah to Yannai], ‘What shall we say for the food we have not eaten?’” (Berakhot ch. 7).
- “I, too, will explain it (נפחרינא, lit. “we will explain it”) according to the opinion of the Rabbis” (Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah, on “O my dove in the clefts of the rock”) [Songs 2:14].
- “Would that I had a father and mother, that I might honor them (דאיקרינא lit. “that we might honor them”) and inherit Paradise” (Peah ch. 1, in the Jerusalem Talmud).

Rosenmueller wrote that it was the custom in Hebrew to refer to oneself in the plural, as in, “Let us [i.e. David] fall now into the hand of the Lord” (II Sam. 24:14). This, however, is no proof, because David was not speaking of himself alone, but of himself and his people. So also Rehoboam, when he said, “What counsel give you, that we may return answer to this people?” (I Kings 12:9), was including his advisers with him, as was Absalom when he said, “Give your counsel what we shall do” (II Sam. 16:20).

man (adam). A generic term, like “sheep” or “cattle,” and therefore it says *ve-yirdu* (“let him rule,” lit. “let them rule”) in the plural. The term *adam* is apparently derived from *adom* (“red”), and not from *adamah* (“earth”), for the animals, too, were created from the earth. Man, however, is physically distinguished from the animals in that he is not covered with hair, and his skin (in moderate climates) tends to ruddiness.

in Our image (be-tsalmenu). The form of the body and its parts is not called *tselem* (“image”) but rather *to'ar* or *tavnit* (as Maimonides says in the *Guide for the Perplexed*, Part I, ch. 1). The expression is *yefeh to'ar* (“fair of form”), not *yefeh tselem* (“fair of image”), and in speaking of the composition of the parts of a whole it is said, “The model (*tavnit*) of the tabernacle and the model of all its furnishings” (Ex. 25:9). The term *tselem*, however, is applied to anything made to resemble something else, such as a portrait on paper of the likeness of a particular person, or a sculpture or molten image in resemblance of anything, as it is written, “Images of (*tsalmei*) your emerods, and images of your mice” (I Sam. 6:5); “And made for you images of (*tsalmei*) men” (Ezek. 16:17); “The images of (*tsalmei*) the Chaldeans portrayed with vermilion” (*ibid.*, 23:14).

The word *tselem* is derived from *tsel* (“shadow”) (as per Bochart), for the

shadow, too, portrays a form resembling a body, and from its example people learned the beginnings of representational art. In Aramaic, too, we find *tselem dehava* (“golden image”) and similar phrases, and the reference is always to a thing made in resemblance of another. Only once have we found it, in Daniel (3:19, “And the form (*u-tselem*) of his visage was changed”), in reference to the appearance of a living man, but there its meaning is transferred and inexact.

Man is “the image of God,” that is, in some aspect he resembles God, Who is Master of all the forces of nature. Now it would seem that the prefix *bet* in the word *be-tsalmenu* (“in Our image”) contradicts my explanation—similarly, the phrases “in the image of God He created him” [next v.], and “in the image of God He made man” [below, 9:6]—for as I have explained it, man is himself the image of God, and not *in* His image. However, it is worth noting that the *bet* is occasionally added to the predicate:

- “How it [the people] is inclined to evil (*be-ra*) [more lit. “is evil”]” (Ex. 32:22);
- “Behold, the Lord God, the Mighty One (*be-hazak*), will come” (Is. 40:10);
- “But He is one (*be-ehad*)” (Job 23:13);
- “Extol Him Who rides upon the skies, whose name is the Lord (*be-Yah*)” (Ps. 68:5).

This *bet* is quite customary in Arabic. Apparently the expressions *be-ra*, *be-hazak*, *be-ehad* are the equivalent of saying, “So-and-so is in the state which is called ‘evil,’ ‘mighty,’ ‘one.’” Here, too: “Let Us make man in such a state that can justly be called ‘the image of God.’”

The expressions “in Our image” and “image of God” are no proof that the Torah teaches that God has a human form (anthropomorphism), yet it cannot be denied that some of our forebears ascribed a human form of God. Thus they said in the nuptial blessing (Ketubot 8), “Who created man in His image, in the image of the likeness of His form (*be-tselem demut tavnito*),” and *tavnit* is certainly a term for the structure of the parts of the body. Nevertheless, our forebears did not believe that God or the angels possessed a physical body like ours; Rashi expressly wrote (Makkot 112) that the angels are not flesh and blood. However, the truth of the matter is that a pure, disembodied intelligence, without any form, without any length, width, or height, is a concept that a human being finds impossible to imagine and difficult to accept. If the philosophers speak of it, ultimately they have only a negative conception of it, not a positive one. The Torah, however, was given to all the people, and the people must be able to conceive of their God in positive, not negative, terms. The ancients attributed to God, the angels, and the souls an ethereal substance finer than any body known to us, yet possessing a physical form (see *Melekheth Mahashevet* on the *parashah* of *Shelah Lekha*).

in Our likeness (ki-demutenu). To resemble Us. How does man resemble

God? In my opinion (as I wrote in *Bikkurei Ha-Ittim*, 5588 (1827), p. 165), just as God is Master of all the forces of nature—this being the very meaning of the word *Elohim*—so man is distinguished from all other creatures in that each one of them has a strength or talent for a single attribute or activity, but only man has the strength and talent for all the attributes and activities in the world (see Wessely, *Sefer Ha-Middot*, Part I, chapters 1 and 2). From this it follows that he rules over all the creatures, and therefore God said immediately thereafter: **let him rule over the fish of the sea, etc.** As David said, “Yet You have made him but little lower than the angels. . . You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands” (Ps. 8:6, 7). In connection with man it is not said, “And it was so,” because it was not said, “Let there be man,” but rather, “Let Us make man.” To glorify man, God portrayed him as a work of art, as if he were made with more particular consideration and supervision than all the other animals. In the same vein, Seneca wrote (*De beneficiis*, Book VI, ch. 23):

Nature conceived the idea of us before she formed us, and indeed, we are no such trifling piece of work as could have fallen from her hands unheeded. . . you will perceive that man is not a hurriedly put together, or an unstudied, piece of work.⁹

This was done, to be sure, to make us realize how great are the mercies of God upon us.

let him rule. . . over all the earth, etc. Nachmanides interpreted “over all the earth” as dominion over the earth itself, to uproot, pull down, and dig out copper and iron. At first, however, it seems difficult to explain why God spoke of the earth itself and then referred back to the reptiles that creep upon it. One of my students would answer this by saying that the phrase is a *kelal* (general statement) following *peratim* (specific statements), as if it had said, “Let him rule over the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heaven and over the quadrupeds, and *in general* let him rule over the earth and everything that creeps upon it,” making “the reptiles that creep” (*ha-remes ha-romes*) include all living things, as it similarly says in the verse after the next, “Rule over the fish of the sea, over the flying creatures of the heaven, and over every animal that creeps (*hayyah ha-romeset*) upon the earth.”

My own opinion is that the other animals are called *basar ha-romes al ha-arets* (“flesh that creeps upon the earth”), or *hayyah ha-romeset al ha-arets* (“beasts that creep upon the earth”), but the expression *ha-remes ha-romes al ha-arets* is nowhere found to refer to all animals, but only to the reptiles. In the verse after the next it is written, “. . . and subjugate it,” referring to the land it-

9. Quoted in the original Latin by Luzzatto; English translation by Aubrey Stewart (London: Bohn’s Classical Library, 1887). Like many of Shadal’s Latin citations, this one is omitted in the 1965 Schlesinger edition.

self. Therefore, Nachmanides appears to be correct in saying that here, too, when it says “all the earth,” the meaning is the subjugation of the earth itself, to dig, plant, build houses, and do what we will with it, and afterwards the reptiles are mentioned, since (as my student Joseph Jarè says) they are close to the ground and dwell within the earth, and appear to be born out of the earth itself. Thus, after He said that man should rule over all the earth, He added that he should also rule over the reptiles, which appear to cleave to the earth and be part of it. The meaning is that when a person tills the earth, he drives out and destroys the reptiles within it.

1:27. GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM; MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM.

in the image of God He created him. The idea is repeated in order to impress the mind with the greatness of this superiority man has (*Netivot Ha-Shalom*). A similar construction is, “And when one commits adultery with a married woman—commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor!” (Lev. 20:10). See also below, 9:5 [“And from man, from man his brother, will I demand account of the life of man.”]

male and female He created them. This is a general statement, and below it explains, in specific statements, the creation of woman.

1:28. GOD BLESSED THEM, AND GOD SAID TO THEM, “PROLIFERATE AND MULTIPLY, AND FILL THE WORLD AND SUBJUGATE IT; AND RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA, OVER THE FLYING CREATURES OF THE HEAVEN, AND OVER EVERY ANIMAL THAT CREEPS UPON THE EARTH.”

God blessed them. He empowered them and prepared them for this, and in addition said to them:

Proliferate and multiply. That is, He explained to them their power and their nature, and what He sought of them. Above (v. 22), in connection with the fish and the birds, it does not say, “God said to them,” because they are not thinking creatures. To man, however, when the human race was at the beginning of its existence, and also below (9:1, 7) when the human race was small in number, He expressed His will that humankind should proliferate, multiply, and fill the earth. When God gave the Torah to Israel, He did not have to command them in this respect, because the land was already settled, yet the Rabbis did well in including “Proliferate and multiply” among the *mitsvot*, for it is certainly God’s will that the human race should be fertile and increase. Especially after the destruction [of the Jewish commonwealth], when the people decreased, were they obligated to reinforce this *mitsvah*. Blessed be He Who chose them and their learning, for were it not for their remonstrances and enactments, the na-

tion would have disappeared from the earth, just as many great and mighty nations have disappeared and been forgotten.

and subjugate it (ve-khivshuhah). Conquer it from the beasts—in the same sense as every use of the term *kibbush* is used in relation to the land, implying conquest from others. The term is well employed, then, in conjunction with “and fill the world,” for to fill it, it was necessary to conquer it from the beasts, as it is then specified, “and rule over. . . every animal,” etc.

and rule over the fish of the sea, over the flying creatures of the heaven. Even though they are not subject to man to serve him, man uses them for all his needs, for his food and his work.

1:29. GOD SAID, “BEHOLD I GIVE YOU EVERY VEGETATION PROVIDED WITH SEED WHICH EXISTS ON THE FACE OF ALL THE EARTH, AND EVERY TREE IN WHICH THERE IS FRUIT OF THE TREE, PROVIDED WITH SEED; (ALL THIS) WILL BE YOURS TO FEED UPON.

provided with seed (zorea zera). Equivalent to *mazria zera* (above, v. 11). **in which there is fruit of the tree.** The word *peri* (“fruit”) is not restricted to fruit of the tree, for there is “fruit of the ground” and “fruit of the womb.” Anything that comes out of another is called the “fruit” of the latter. Therefore it says here, “in which there is fruit of the tree,” that is, the fruit peculiar to a tree.

1:30. “TO ALL THE BEASTS OF THE EARTH, THEN, TO ALL THE FLYING CREATURES OF THE HEAVEN, AND TO EVERY CREEPING THING UPON THE EARTH IN WHICH THERE IS THE BREATH OF LIFE, (I GIVE) EVERY GREEN PLANT TO FEED UPON.” AND IT WAS SO.

To all the beasts of (hayyat) the earth. *Hayyah* here includes *behemah*. **in which there is a breath of life (nefesh hayyah).** The breath of all living creatures; see above v. 20.

every green plant (yerek esev). “Greenness of a plant,” that is, a green plant, as below (3:24), *lahat ha-herev* (“flash of the sword”), a sword that flashes. Also, *ratsui le-rov ehav* (at the end of Esther), “accepted by the multitude of his brethren,” or “accepted by his many brethren.”

Now God gave man every vegetation provided with seed and every fruit tree, while to the other animals He gave only “green plants,” which grow without cultivation. The meaning is that man has the intelligence to cultivate that other animals lack. It should not be inferred from here, as Grotius thought, that the fruit of trees was forbidden to the animals, nor as Clericus thought, that Moses was not speaking precisely. Indeed, the language is quite precise; God did not

put the other animals in charge of the seeds and the fruit of the trees, because He did not give them the intelligence to cultivate and plant in any place they wanted, as He did give to man.

One might ask why the eating of meat was not mentioned in connection with man or the beasts. Many have believed that the slaughtering of animals was not permitted before the Flood, but this is most unlikely, since man by his nature, his physical structure, and the design of his teeth is equipped to eat both vegetation and meat alike. If the Creator had not wanted man to eat meat, He would not have fashioned his body to be equipped for it. My opinion is that the permission to eat meat was included in the expression “Rule over the fish of the sea,” etc.; for after Noah had been told (below, 9:2), “And all of the beasts of the earth. . . will be frightened and terrified of you. . . [they] are given into your power,” he was told explicitly, “Any living creeping thing will be yours to feed upon.” Adam [had already been given such permission but] did not have to be told so specifically, while Noah, because he had to be warned against the shedding of human blood, was first told that he was not forbidden to slaughter animals.

Moreover, the command “Rule over the fish of the sea” is clear proof that the killing of animals is permitted, for how could man rule over the fish without their leaving the water and dying? It cannot mean only that man may extract oil from dead fish or use their teeth, because one does not “rule over” a thing by using it after it dies, but by ruling it when it is alive and deciding whether to enslave it or put it to death. The remark in Sanhedrin 59b, that [R. Ahava] “drove [a coach by means of] a sea-goat and a *shibbuta* [two species of fish],” deals only with an extraordinary occurrence.¹⁰

My student Shalom Simeon Modena responds (today, 23 Tammuz 5625 [1865]) that there is no complete proof from here that man was permitted to eat meat, for the intention of the command “Rule over the fish of the sea” may well have been that man was to rule the animals to prevent them from ruling over him and harming him, and that man was permitted to kill them to save himself, but not to eat them. Thus, without having the fish actually serving man and doing his labor, man is called their “ruler” because he can overpower them. I say, however, that the root *radah* (“to rule”) is never found in this sense, but means subjugation and authority to force others to one’s will and pleasure, as in:

- “You must not rule over (*tirdeh*) him [a slave] with harshness”; “You must not permit him to rule over him (*yirdennu*) with harshness” (Lev. 25:43, 53);

10. Luzzatto refers to a Talmudic discussion in which the idea is advanced that “Rule over the fish” does indeed mean only that man was to use fish for labor and not for consumption.

- “Your haters will rule over (*ve-radu*) you” (*ibid.*, 26:17);
- “For he had dominion (*ki hu rodeh*) over all the region this side of the River” [I Kings 5:4];
- “May he have dominion (*ve-yerd*) also from sea to sea” [Ps. 72:8].

All these examples mean authority to extract labor. Now it seems to me that the Holy One, blessed is He, did not want to tell man explicitly that he was free to kill living things, so as not to accustom his hands to shed blood, and so He told him only that he would “rule” over all animals. The dispensation to kill for food is thus to be inferred from the context. After the Flood, however, when the land had become full of injustice, when every mortal thing had become depraved and the shedding of blood had increased, God then specified to Noah and his children that they were free to kill animals for food but not to kill one another, except to kill murderers.

1:31. GOD SAW THAT ALL THAT HE HAD MADE WAS VERY GOOD. SO THERE WAS AN EVENING, AND THERE WAS A MORNING, (THAT IS) THE SIXTH DAY.

God saw that all . . . was very good. There was only that which He wanted and in the quantity He wanted. All this is to impress upon us that there is nothing against His will, that there is no power against His power, that He is One and there is no other. The meaning is not, however, that everything is good and that there is no evil. Evil does indeed exist, but only in accordance with His wise decree, for He created the lesser evil for the sake of the greater good. Everything, then, was “very good” and in conformance with His wise decree. There was nothing that He wished for that came to be as a different thing against His will. God takes with one hand and gives with the other, to teach us His Oneness and the unity of all creation, the single work of one Creator, with each of its parts complementing the other. The more one increases his investigation and his knowledge of the secrets of nature, the more one realizes that this is true, and that the word of our God will stand forever.

the sixth day (yom ha-shishi). The sixth day, with the definite article, this being the last of the days of creation. The form is equivalent to *ha-yom ha-shishi*; similarly, *yom ha-shevi'i* (below, 2:3); *ish ha-Yisre'eli* (Lev. 24:10).

2:1. THUS THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AND ALL THEIR HOST [THAT WHICH IS IN THEM] WERE COMPLETED.

were completed. A general statement following the particulars, as if to say, “With this, the heaven, etc., were completed.”

and all their host (tseva'am). The stars are called the “host of heaven,” but here *tseva'am* refers to the heaven and earth together, that is, everything in the heaven and everything in the earth. It seems that *tsava* (“host”) denotes a group

of things that relate to one common thing; here, the word means a group of all existing things relating to the heaven and earth.

2:2. GOD, HAVING FINISHED ON THE SEVENTH DAY THE WORK THAT HE DID, CEASED ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL THE WORK HE HAD DONE.

God, having finished (va-yekhal), etc. The beginning of the verse is connected with the end: because He had already finished His work on the seventh day, He therefore rested on the seventh day. The word *va-yekhal* is in the plural; there are many other examples of this usage.

In the so-called Septuagint and also in the Samaritan Torah, it says “the sixth day,” but Clericus has already pointed out that this is only an emendation, as the Rabbis said in the Talmud (Megillah 9a). If it had originally been written, “God, having finished on the sixth day,” it would never have occurred to anyone to emend it to “having finished on the seventh day,” but conversely, if it were originally written “on the seventh day,” this would obviously be difficult for the masses to understand, and so they [the Samaritans and the authors of the Septuagint] emended it to “the sixth.” This is a cardinal rule relating to the variant readings found in the Samaritan Torah: they are all emendations made by their scholars in their meager understanding, as was so expertly explained by the scholar Gesenius in his book *De Pentateuchi Samaritani origine et indole et auctoritate* [“Of the origin, nature, and authority of the Samaritan Pentateuch”] (Halle, 1815). Even the scholar [Giovanni Battista Bernardo] De Rossi, who was sometimes led astray by the Samaritan text and who did not understand as much as Gesenius did, nevertheless generally wrote in accordance with the following:

Any language and its age has anomalies and alternate forms; the sacred authors did not all or always write grammatically. Hence, an anomalous reading is not lightly to be rejected. Indeed, anomalous readings are for the most part more genuine. It is easiest for a scribe to substitute a regular form for an anomaly; to substitute an anomaly for a regular form is hardest. (*Variae lectiones*, vol. I, Prolegomenon, part II, sec. 38, 39.)

ceased (va-yishbot). The term *shevitah* does not mean “rest,” but cessation from labor.

2:3. GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND SANCTIFIED IT, FOR ON IT HE CEASED FROM ALL HIS WORK WHICH GOD HAD CREATED AND MADE.

God blessed. He gave it a special quality above the other days.

and sanctified it. He willed that this day be set aside for the honor of God and the prohibition of labor. Of course, the seventh day is not distinct by nature

from the other days except in relation to the waxing and waning of the moon, and even these phenomena are not exactly restricted to seven-day periods, because the [lunar] month is 29 [days], 12 [hours], and 793 [*halakim* long],¹ not 28 days that can be exactly divided into quarters of seven. Consequently, the matter of the “seventh day” was mentioned only as an introduction to the *mitsvah* of the Sabbath; indeed, the “six days” of creation themselves were mentioned only for this purpose, as I have stated above at 1:5.

that God had created and made (*asher bara Elohim la'asot*). He ceased creating and making (so Nachmanides and Mendelssohn).

2:4. THIS IS THE ORIGIN OF THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH, WHEN THEY WERE CREATED, (THAT IS) WHEN THE LORD GOD MADE EARTH AND HEAVEN.

This is the origin (*elleh toledot*). This which has been stated above (Rashi). That which has been stated up to here is the story of the origin of the heaven and earth. The origin, or beginning of existence, is called *toledet*, as in, “Before the mountains were brought forth (*yulladu*)” (Ps. 90:2).

Many later scholars (preceded by the author of *Ma'aseh Adonai* [R. Eliezer ben Elijah Ashkenazi]) say that “This is the origin” refers to what follows. This is a mistake, because below nothing is mentioned of the heaven, so how could it say, “This is the origin of the heaven”? The function of this verse is to connect the following section with the preceding one, and it serves as clear evidence that the one who wrote from this point and below also wrote from this point and above, not as those who say that Moses collected several scrolls and copied them in his book.

when. . . made (*be-yom asot*). This is the explication of “when they were created.” The word *be-yom* [lit. “on the day of”] signifies “the time of” (see below at v. 17).

the Lord God (*YHVH Elohim*). The meaning of *Elohim* is as I have explained (above, 1:1)—Master of all the forces. The term was originally applied to the many deities the peoples worshipped, and so it is often found in its “profane” sense [i.e. “gods”].

The Tetragrammaton, however, is found only as the proper name of the One God Whom Israel worships. The formation of this name has been said to derive from the root *hayah* (“to be”), which appears in Aramaic and occasionally in Hebrew as *havah*. According to Rashbam (on Ex. 3:15), its meaning is *yihyeh* (“he will be”), that is to say, “eternal,” because He calls Himself *Ehyeh*

1. Shadal is referring to the mean “synodic” month, or lunation. One *helek* equals 3 1/3 seconds; thus 793 *halakim* equal 44 minutes and 3 1/3 seconds.

(“I will be”) (Ex. 3:14, 15), and so we say of Him, “He will be”—*Yihyeh* or *Yeheveh*.

This is essentially the opinion of Ibn Ezra, who wrote (on Ex. 15:2), “Because the word *ehyeh* is commonly spoken, the *yod* had to be exchanged for a *vav* in the Name.” That is to say, if God had been called *Yihyeh* based on the name *Ehyeh*, the word would have been interchanged with the very common word *yihyeh* (“he will be”), and so the [second] *yod* in the Holy Name was changed to a *vav*. Others say that the name is a composite of *hayah hoveh ve-yihyeh* (“He was, He is, He will be”).

However, if this name denotes eternity, it is hard to understand why it was not used for other gods who were believed by their worshippers to be eternal, and also why it was not used in the account of the creation. In my opinion, God is called *Elohim* with reference to His might and His mastery of nature and all the forces, but He is called by the Tetragrammaton in the sense of His being worshipped by the people; this is why there was no reason to call Him by this name before the creation of humankind. But why are other gods not called by this name?

In my opinion, the principal meaning of the name is “Worker of Good and Evil,” that is to say, everything comes from His hand, both good and evil. This encapsulates the idea of the Unity of God, meaning that beside Him there is no cause of good or evil. For this reason, this name is never used for a god who is not One.

But how does this name express this meaning? In my opinion, it is composed of two names. The first is *Yah*, meaning Worker of Good, for this name is never found in connection with evil. Even in the verses “The Lord (*Yah*) has surely punished me” (Ps. 118) and “Happy is the man whom the Lord (*Yah*) instructs [lit. “punishes”]” (Ps. 94), the intention is that the punishments are for man’s good, not his evil. I think the word *yah* or *yahu* derives from the sound of a cry for joy and astonishment over a great goodness. The word *vah* (*wah*) or *hovah*, on the other hand, is a cry of trouble or calamity, like *vai* (“woe”). Thus the Tetragrammaton, composed of these two names, means Worker of Good and Evil. See my comment on Ex. 6:2, 3.²

As for the pronunciation of this name, there is no doubt that throughout the First Temple period and at the beginning of the Second Temple period it was read as it was written, for we can see how many men’s names were com-

2. There, in explanation of God’s pronouncement to Moses—“I am the Lord (*YHVH*). I showed Myself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Omnipotent (*El Shaddai*); but as that which my name ‘the Lord’ signifies, I did not make Myself known to them”—Luzzatto says that (1) God wanted Israel to know that both good and evil came from His hand, that all the nations might fear Him, and (2) God had never related to the patriarchs as the Worker of Good and Evil, since He had never dealt evil to them as He had done to their oppressed descendants.

posed of it: *Yehonatan, Yehoyada, Yehoshafat, Yehoram, Yehoahaz, Ahazyahu, Hizkiyahu, Yeshayahu, Yirmeyahu*; besides, if they did not read it, why would they write it? But it seems that during the Second Temple period the Rabbis decreed that the name was not to be read as it was written, perhaps because they saw that the people were transgressing the Third Commandment and taking God's name in vain. They decreed that the name of *adnut* ["lordship," i.e. *Adonai*] should be read in its place. We see that even in the so-called Septuagint it is always translated *Kyrios*, and in the Latin translation *Dominus* [both meaning "Lord"], and so also in what has survived of the work of Origen called the Hexapla, in which he wrote the Hebrew text in Greek characters alongside the Greek translation, we always see written [the Greek transliteration of] *Adonai*.

The Masoretic vocalizers, too, read the name of *adnut*. We see the following:

(1) They placed a *dagesh* in the letters כפח occurring after the Name [thus indicating that the vowel sound preceding those letters must have been -ai, not -ah], e.g. בה בנדר (Hosea 5:7); ובה בטהור (Ps. 26:1); ואני בה בטהור (Ps. 31:7).

(2) They vocalized the letters וכל, which appear as prefixes to the Name with a *patah* and not a *hirek* [thus indicating that the first syllable of the Name was read A-].

(3) They vocalized the letter *mem*, which appears as a prefix with a *tseireh* and not a *hirek* [indicating the same thing].

(4) They did not vocalize the Name itself in the same way in every place, but sometimes vocalized it in the manner of אֱלֹהִים, and this was done when the name of *adnut* proper precedes or follows it (*Adonai YHVH, YHVH Adonai*). They did so in order to avoid reading a single name twice consecutively where it was not repeated in the written text; if it had been their intention that the Name be read as written, they would have had no reason to change its vocalization.

Many have investigated the question of how the Name as written was pronounced, and what its proper vocalization was. According to what I have written as to the form and composition of the Name, it seems to me that the vocalization indicated in most places [i.e. *sheva-holem-kamats*] is the true original vocalization, for the long *kamats* sound of *Yah* was shortened through frequent repetition of the word to a *sheva* sound, as is shown by *Yehonatan* and similar names. In my opinion, this was in fact the purpose of the vocalizers in giving the *yod* a *sheva*, because if they had intended only to follow the vocalization of the name of *adnut*, why would they not have given the *yod* a *hataf patah* [the first vowel of *Adonai*], just as they gave it a *hataf segol* when the Name was to be pronounced *Elohim*? Therefore I say that their intention was indeed to have the name read in the manner of *adnut*, but at the same time they preserved its original pronunciation, which was known to them by tradition.

2:5. NO SHRUB OF THE FIELD WAS YET IN THE EARTH, NOR DID ANY VEGETATION OF THE FIELD GROW YET; FOR THE LORD GOD HAD NOT CAUSED IT TO RAIN UPON THE EARTH

WHILE NO MAN EXISTED TO WORK THE SOIL.

any vegetation of the field. Before the Torah introduces the details of the creation of man, which is the main subject, it says that after God had said, "Let the land produce grass," etc., the plants did not sprout and grow as they do now, but the earth merely produced the roots of all kinds of vegetation. They did not grow, for God did not cause rain to fall until He created man, and this is to show the extent of His affection for the human race.

shrub (שִׁיחַ). The Heb. apparently means a small tree, and the idea conveyed is that there were not yet any large trees or even small ones; as the Rabbis said, they stayed "at the entrance of the ground" until the sixth day [Hullin 60b], or in other words, their roots were created but they did not sprout. In Syriac, שִׁיחַ means "germinated, sprouted, flourished," and שִׁיחַ means "shrub."

No. . . yet, nor. . . yet (terem). The Heb. means "not yet" (Rashi, Mendelssohn, Rosenmueller, Gesenius).

while no man existed. Nor was there a man to work the soil and to irrigate it with water from the rivers.

to work (la'avod) the soil. Cf. "to cultivate it (*le'ovdah*) and to guard it," said below (v. 15) before Adam's sin.

2:6. (BUT) A MOISTURE ROSE FROM THE EARTH AND WATERED ALL THE SURFACE OF THE SOIL.

(But) a moisture (ve-ed). This does not mean, as some commentators have explained it, a cloud of vapor rising in the air, but rather a moisture that came up to the surface of the earth and watered the ground with a constant dampness (*Melekhet Mahashevet*). See my comment in *Bikkurei Ha-Ittim* 5589 [1828], p. 119.³ There I also explained the difference between *ereis* ("earth," "land") and *adamah* ("soil," "ground"). The term *erets* includes the entire breadth and depth of the world, but the term *adamah* includes only the visible surface that is cultivated and produces bread (I have since found this distinction also in the book *Ha-Rekhassim Le-Vik'ah*). [For this reason the blessing *bore peri ha-adamah* is not said over the fruits of trees, because trees extend their roots deeply into the earth, and so it is written (Deut. 28:42), "All your trees, and the produce of your soil."]⁴

3. There Shadal expresses the view that the *ed* ("moisture") arose from the "belly" of the earth, which was still moist, "for it was only on that same day that the waters had been separated from it. The moisture, being lighter than the dry earth, rose up. . . to the surface of the soil and watered it."

4. This sentence appeared in brackets in the original edition.

The reason this moisture is mentioned is to indicate that even though no rain fell and no seeds sprouted, God's Providence was such that the earth should be slightly damp, so that the seeds and roots should not die but survive until the creation of man and the fall of the rain.

2:7. THE LORD GOD FORMED MAN WITH EARTH (TAKEN) FROM THE SOIL, AND HE BREATHED INTO HIS FACE THE BREATH OF LIFE; THUS DID MAN BECOME A LIVING ANIMAL.

formed. Having recorded how the earth was a wasteland before the creation of man, the Torah records his creation.

and breathed into his face the breath of life (va-yippah be-apav nishmat hayyim). The idea of *neshimah* as "breath" was well known in the language of the Rabbis, as in Bereshit Rabbah, ch. 14: "For each breath (*neshimah*) a man breathes, he must praise his Creator," and in the Talmud (Sukkah 26b): *shitin nishmei* ("sixty respirations"). In biblical Hebrew as well as we find (Is. 42:14) *eshom v-esh'af yahad* ("I will gasp and pant together"); *eshom* (from the root *nasham*) denotes exhalation and *esh'af* denotes inhalation.

The word *neshamah* (like *nefesh* and *ruah*) [all translatable as "soul"] originally meant the exhalation of air from the lungs, and this is the meaning of the verse, "Cease from man, though his breath (*neshamah*) be in his nostrils, for in what is he to be accounted of?" (Is. 2:22)—as Rashi explains, "All his life and his strength depend upon his breath (*nishmat appo*, more correctly *neshimat appo*), a fleeting breath (*ruah*)," etc. Later the word was transferred to mean the intellectual entity that lives forever, also called *ruah* and *nefesh*, and this is the meaning of the verse *ki ruah mi-le-fanai ya'atof u-neshamot ani asiti* (Is. 57:16)—"the spirit that wraps (*otef*) and clothes itself with their bodies (for the body is like a garment of the soul) is from Me, and it is I Who created the souls" (Kimhi, Abravanel, and Clericus). The plural form *neshamot* is not found in all of Scriptures except for this verse.

Animals, too, are said to have the "breath of life" (*nishmat hayyim*), and so it is said (below, 7:22), "All these [animals] that had the breath of life (*nishmat ruah hayyim*) in their faces, from among all those that lived on the dry land, died." There is no reason to distinguish between *nishmat hayyim* and *nishmat ruah hayyim*; we find (Ps. 18:16), "At Your rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of Your nostrils (*mi-nishmat ruah appekha*)"; and so it is clear that *nishmat ruah* means only the air exhaled from the nostrils. The great distinction the Torah does make, however, between man and beast lies in its statement that the power of breath and life in man was given to him with the breath of the Holy One, blessed is He; this is not at all recorded of the animals, concerning which it is merely said, "Let the earth give forth living things of various species"; "God made the wild beasts of various species."

The substance of the *neshamah* is beyond the understanding of man in this world, and so the Torah did not speak of it expressly. It tells us only that it was God Who breathed into man the breath of life; that man's vitality does not come from the ground but is a Divine thing that God breathed into him; that when man dies, his soul does not return to the dust but "returns to God Who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). It is also said, "If He gather to Himself his spirit and his breath (*ruho ve-nishmato*)" (Job 34:14)—in other words, the Holy One, blessed is He, gathers to Himself man's spirit because it came from God and to Him it will return. So also (ibid., 27:3), "The spirit (*ruah*) of God is in my nostrils"; "The breath of (*nishmat*) the Almighty gives them understanding" (ibid., 32:8); "The breath of (*nishmat*) the Almighty has given me life" (ibid., 33:4). We see, then, that Job attributes man's breath and vitality and intelligence to the breath and spirit of God.

thus did man become a living animal (nefesh hayyah). Other living creatures are also called *nefesh hayyah*, but man's superiority lies in the fact that he became a *nefesh hayyah* through the breath of the Holy One, blessed is He, and not through physical formation alone.

into his face (be-appav). This word does not mean "nostrils," but "face," as in the Aramaic *anpin*, and so also below (31:19), "With the sweat of your face (*appekha*) you will eat bread." So also the idiom "to bow one's face (*appayim*) to the ground," and so (I Sam. 25:23), "And she fell on her face before (*le-appei*) David," where *le-appei* is the equivalent of *li-fenei* ("before," lit. "to the face of"). Thus the word *kelappei* ("towards" or "against") was formed from *ki-le-appei* in Rabbinic Hebrew. The air, of course, enters and leaves through the face; that is, through the mouth and nose.

2:8. THE LORD GOD PLANTED A GARDEN IN EDEN, TO THE EAST, AND IN IT HE PLACED THE MAN WHOM HE HAD FORMED.

The Lord God planted, etc. Having stated that God did not cause rain to fall on the earth prior to the existence of man, the Torah says that before He created him, He prepared him a good and blessed abode, with four rivers to water it. Throughout the rest of the earth, the moisture preserved the vegetation from dying, but in the Garden of Eden the rivers watered and caused to flourish every fine and goodly tree.

planted. As in, "Like aloes that the Lord has planted" (Num. 24:6); "The cedars of Lebanon that He has planted" (Ps. 104:16)—not literally planting but causing to flourish.

Eden. Those who say that this is the name of a country seem to be correct, as it says below (4:16), "Cain . . . lived in the land of Nod, to the east of Eden." This, moreover, is the land mentioned in Isaiah and Ezekiel:

- “Have their gods delivered those nations which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Retsef, and the children of Eden who were in Telassar?” (Is. 37:12, also II Kings 19:12);
- “Haran, and Kanne, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba. . .” (Ezek. 27:23);
- “And I will break the bar of Damascus and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven, and him who holds the sceptre from the house of Eden. . .” (Amos 1:5).

According to Bishop Huet, the land of Eden was “at the bed of the Euphrates and Tigris, where together they flow to the south of Babylonia.” According to Clericus, it was part of the land of Aram (Syria), and so it would seem from the words of Amos quoted above, unless many places were called by that name (which is not unlikely), and “Eden” is to be distinguished from “the house of Eden.” According to Johann David Michaelis, the land of Eden “was that area which today is called Armenia, Ghilan, Dailem, and Chorasán, and it extended from the Euphrates and Tigris all the way to the Araxes and the Oxum.”

to the East (mi-kedem). Toward the eastern part of the world, in the view of the inhabitants of the land of Israel and its environs, and the desert in which Israel was in the time of Moses. It is established that Aram is called *Kedem*, since it is east of the land of Israel, as are Babylonia and the rest of Asia. Otherwise, “to the East” means “the eastern part of Eden,” as per Rashi and others.

2:9. THE LORD GOD CAUSED TO SPROUT FROM THE SOIL EVERY TREE LOVELY TO SEE AND GOOD TO EAT. THERE WAS ALSO IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GARDEN THE TREE OF LIFE, AND THE TREE OF DISCERNING GOOD AND EVIL.

caused to sprout from the soil. From the soil of the garden (Rashi), for the verse ends, “There was also in the middle of the garden the tree of life. . .,” which shows that it was not referring to the soil in general.

the tree of life, and the tree of discerning good and evil. Such were the names of these two trees, as God told Adam.

2:10. A RIVER CAME OUT OF EDEN TO WATER THE GARDEN, AND FROM THERE IT DIVIDED AND FORMED FOUR HEADS.

A river came out (yotse) of Eden. There is no way to determine whether this means that it still comes out now [because the verb is literally in the present tense], or whether the verb should be rendered as in the Targum, *havah nafik* (“used to come out”), meaning that in the time of Moses it no longer did so. This would conform with the opinion of some of the modern scholars who say that the site of Eden is now a sea.

to water the garden. This is mentioned to describe for us the extent to which the garden was lacking in nothing, for it did not even need rain water.

and from there it divided, etc. This tells of the great size of the river, because four rivers, some of them famous for their size, came out of it.

heads (rashim, It. capi). The commentators render this according to the Targum, *reishet neharin* (“heads of rivers”). In my opinion, this is an equivalent of “parts,” as in, “And he divided the men into three companies (*rashim*)” (Judges 7:16). So also in other languages, a part is called a “head” ([Latin] *caput*, [It.] *capo*).

In the opinion of Clericus and others before him, one cannot infer from here that these four rivers had one source, because perhaps the rivers originated from beyond Eden, joined together at one place in Eden, and from there came out and separated again.

2:11. THE NAME OF THE ONE IS PISHON; IT IS THAT WHICH GOES ABOUT THROUGH THE ENTIRE COUNTRY OF HAVILAH, WHERE THE GOLD IS.

The name of the one is Pishon. According to Michaelis and Rosenmueller, this is Ara [Aras] or Araxis [Araxes], which the ancients called Phasis.⁵ It comes out of northern Armenia, joins with the river Kur [Kura], and empties into the Caspian Sea. According to Bochart, the Pishon is a branch of the Euphrates, and according to Clericus it is the Chrysorroa (from the [Greek] word for “gold”), which comes out of Damascus. Gesenius says that it is the Indus; Josephus Flavius [*Antiquities* 1.38, 39] wrote that it was the Ganges. Rashi, Saadiah Gaon, and Nachmanides said that it was the Nile, and this is the opinion of the Samaritans.

In my opinion, if the Nile had been intended, it would not have said “The name of the one” but rather “The first is Pishon,” parallel to the verse, “And the fourth river is the Euphrates,” where the word “name” is not used because that river was known to Israel (as Rashi suggested in saying that the Euphrates was mentioned “in reference to the land of Israel,” i.e. that it was known as one of the borders of the land). Moreover, the Nile would certainly have been known to those who came out of Egypt.

the land of Havilah. According to Bochart, this is in Arabia near Catipha and Bahare, from which come precious stones. According to Clericus, this land is close to the land of Israel, as it is written (I Sam. 15:17), “And Saul smote Amalek from Havilah until the approach to Shur.” It should be noted that two persons named Havilah are recorded below (ch. 10), one among the children of

5. This identification is incorrect. The Phasis (now called the Rion, or Rioni) is another river in the same region, flowing in the opposite direction into the Black Sea.

Cush and the other among the children of Yoktan. There are those who say that this land is the country of Colchis, which was famous among the ancients for its gold and which is now called Mingrelia.⁶ According to Michaelis and Rosenmueller, there was a people called Chevalissis near the river Araxis that took its name from Havilah; in the Russian language, too, the Caspian Sea is called *Chevalinskoie More*. According to Gesenius, the land is India.

which goes about (sovev). It does not surround, but passes back and forth through the land (Clericus and Rosenmueller).

2:12. THE GOLD OF THAT LAND IS EXCELLENT. THERE ALSO IS PEARL AND ONYX STONE.

The gold of that land is excellent, etc. I have not found any reason why these things are recorded; apparently, they are an embellishment added because a land near Eden is being referred to.

excellent (tov). In many places we find *tov* [lit. "good"] to mean "beautiful." **There also is pearl (ha-bedolah).** Clericus and Rosenmueller say that this is "bdellium," which is resin. This was Josephus Flavius' opinion, and Symmachus, Aquila, Theodotion, and Jerome translated it this way. However, as Gesenius wrote, resin is not so precious a material that it should be mentioned along with gold and onyx stone. According to Saadiah Gaon and R. Jonah [ibn Janah], followed by Bochart, *bedolah* is "pearl," and this is apparently correct. It was properly not called "stone," as the onyx was, because pearl is not a stone.

and onyx stone (ve-even ha-shoham). According to Onkelos, the Jerusalem Targum, and the Syriac and Arabic translations, this is the stone called *beryllus* (beryl), but according to Josephus and Jerome, it is sardonyx or onyx.

2:13. THE NAME OF THE SECOND RIVER IS GIHON: IT IS THAT WHICH GOES ABOUT THROUGH THE ENTIRE LAND OF CUSH.

Gihon. Clericus says that this is the Orontes is Syria; according to Michaelis and Rosenmueller, it is the Oxus in Tartary, now called the Abi-Amu [Amu Darya] and called Gihon by the Arabs. This is no proof, because many rivers are called "Gihon" in Arabic and Persian, for the name has the meaning of "coming forth," as in, "The river will thrust (*yagiah*) some food in his mouth" (Job 40:23); "But You are He Who took me out (*gohi*) of the womb" (Ps. 22:10). In Jerusalem, too, we find a Gihon, which is the Shiloah (see I Kings 1:33).

6. According to the Greek legend, Jason sought the Golden Fleece in Colchis. This land, now part of the Republic of Georgia, was centered about the above-mentioned river Phasis.

On the other hand, according to Josephus Flavius, followed by many of the early Christian commentators as well as Joseph Kimhi and Gesenius, the Gihon is the Nile, and he [Gesenius] cites as proof Ben Sira 24:27, "It floods, like light (כָּאֵר), with knowledge; like the Gihon at vintage time." He says that the word כָּאֵר is equivalent to כְּיָאֵר (*ka-ye'or*, "like the Nile"), as in Amos 8:8 ["It shall all rise up like the River (כָּאֵר); and it shall overflow and sink down like the River (כְּיָאֵר) of Egypt"].⁷ He adds that perhaps the Nile was called Gihon where it flowed through Cush, and was called *Ye'or* or *Shihor* where it flowed through Egypt.

2:14. THE NAME OF THE THIRD RIVER IS HIDDEKEL [TIGRIS]: IT IS THAT WHICH RUNS TO THE EAST OF ASSYRIA. AND THE FOURTH RIVER IS THE EUPHRATES.

Hiddekel. In Aramaic *Diglat*, with the initial *het* omitted and the *kof* changed to a *gimmel*. It is the Tigris, and this is known from the books of the ancients. **which runs to the east of Assyria.** The Tigris runs to the east of Babylonia and to the west of the rest of Assyria. Apparently (as per Gesenius) Moses used the name "Assyria" to refer to that part of the land closest to the land of Israel, which is Babylonia and its environs. The name Assyria is sometimes used for the land of the Chaldeans. Gesenius also says that our [style of Hebrew] writing is called "Assyrian script" because it accompanied us out of "Assyria," i.e. Babylonia.

the Euphrates. This river was known to them, and was called in Hebrew *Ha-Nahar*, "the River," or *Ha-Nahar Ha-Gadol*, "the Great River." The term *Ever Ha-Nahar* ["across the River"] refers to the land beyond the Euphrates (Mesopotamia), which lies between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris.

2:15. THE LORD GOD TOOK THE MAN AND PLACED HIM IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN, TO CULTIVATE IT AND GUARD IT.

to cultivate it and guard it (le'ovdah u-leshomrah). The Heb. [חָזַק] suffixes are feminine, because although the word *gan* ("garden") itself is never feminine, the feminine forms *gannah* and *gannot* do occur.

to cultivate it. With sowing and planting, light work that does not involve "the sweat of the face."

and guard it. From animals and wild beasts, so that its produce should be his own. It is as if God had told him to cultivate it and enjoy its benefits.

7. In the Anchor Bible version of Ben Sira, כָּאֵר is translated as "like the Nile," a note says that כְּיָאֵר is a "false" reading, and a comment states that the Septuagint in Jer. 2:18 likewise identifies the Gihon with the Nile.

2:16. THE LORD GOD COMMANDED THE MAN, SAYING, "OF ALL THE TREES OF THE GARDEN YOU MAY EAT."

The Lord God commanded the man (va-yetsav al ha-adam). A term of *tsivui* (command) connected to the commandee with the preposition *al* is a negative command, as in:

- "And [you] commanded *al* the prophets, saying, Prophesy not" (Amos 2:12);
- "I will also command *al* the clouds that they drop no rain upon it" (Is. 5:6);
- "For Mordecai had charged her (*aleha*) that she should not tell" (Esther 2:10)

(Ibn Ezra). Sometimes, however, the command refers not to the commandee but to the one who occasioned the command and who benefits from it, as in:

- "Pharaoh assigned him (*va-yetsav alav*) some men" (below, 12:20), meaning that Pharaoh commanded men for the good of Abraham;
- "Go to your house, and I will give charge concerning you (*atsavveh alayikh*)" (II Sam. 14:8);
- "And [she] gave him a message for (*va-tetsavvehu al*) Mordecai" (Esther 4:5).

In these instances it is obvious that the preposition *al* does not denote restraint or prohibition.

you may eat (akhol tokhel, lit. "you shall eat"). As much as you wish. This is the way of the Torah with negative commandments—to start with what is permitted, as in, "Six days you shall [i.e. may] work. . . But the seventh day is the Sabbath. . . you shall do no work" [Ex. 20:9, 10]; "And six years you shall [i.e. may] sow your fields. . . and in the seventh you shall leave it uncultivated" (Ex. 23:10, 11).

2:17. "BUT OF THE TREE OF DISCERNING GOOD AND EVIL DO NOT EAT, FOR WHEN YOU EAT OF IT YOU MUST DIE."

But of the tree (u-me-ets) of discerning. . . do not eat (lo tokhal mimmennu). The [untranslated] word *mimmennu* ("of it") is repetitious and is added for emphasis, as below [v. 23], "This one (*zot*) should be called Ishah [woman], for from Ish [man] she (*zot*) was taken." *you must die.* This is to be understood literally.⁸ One cannot infer from here

8. Unlike the view of Symmachus, cited by Hertz (*Pentateuch*, p. 8), according to which the phrase means, "You shall become mortal."

that if he had not sinned, he would not have died. If he had not sinned, he would indeed have died, for death is a part of the nature of the human body, as it is written [below, 3:19], "Earth you are, and to the earth you shall return." When Adam sinned, his sentence was instant death, but his penalty was alleviated and he did not die immediately, for he sinned not out of an evil intention, but because of the folly of listening to his wife, who in folly had listened to the serpent's temptation. Therefore God said to Adam [in sentencing him], "Because you gave heed to your wife. . ."

2:18. THE LORD GOD SAID, "IT IS NOT GOOD FOR THE MAN TO BE ALONE; I WILL MAKE HIM A HELPER CORRESPONDING TO HIM."

It is not good for the man to be alone. The intention is not to say that God changed His mind, but rather to alert us to the precious quality of matrimony. For this reason, the Holy One, blessed is He, intentionally left the man for an hour without a wife and then introduced her, so that she should be dear to him, as he would feel incomplete without her. In this way future generations, too, would learn that it is not good for a man to be alone.

My student, R. Igel, adds that this phrase means to say only that the Creator's intention had not yet been completed with the creation of man. After the creation of each thing it is written, "And God saw that this was good," i.e. that His will was done, but here His will had not yet been done, for it had never been His intention for man to be alone.

a helper corresponding to him (ezer ke-negdo). In my opinion, the term *ke-neged* is used here as it is in Rabbinic Hebrew, as in, "In relation to (*ke-neged*) four sons the Torah speaks." The term *ezer ke-negdo* means a helper relating to him and befitting his needs. Rosenmueller and others interpreted *negdo* (lit. "opposite him") as "that which is in front of him," i.e. the genital organs, but this is an error.

2:19. THE LORD GOD, HAVING FORMED FROM THE GROUND ALL THE WILD BEASTS, AND ALL THE FLYING CREATURES OF THE HEAVEN, BROUGHT THEM TO THE MAN, SO THAT HE MIGHT DECIDE HOW HE WOULD NAME THEM; AND WHATEVER NAME THE MAN WOULD IMPOSE UPON EACH LIVING BEING—THAT WOULD BE ITS NAME.

having formed, etc. This is connected to the latter part of the verse; after he created them, He brought them to the man.

so that he might decide how he would name them (lir'ot mah yikra lo). So that the man might "see" (*yir'eh*) what he would call them (Sforno). *Yir'eh* (lit. "will see") means to conclude or decide, as in, "Now advise, and see (*u-re'eh*) what answer I shall return to him that sent me" (II Sam. 24:13). The

purpose of the calling of names was that man should be master over the animals (see above at 1:5).

so that he might decide (lit. "to decide"). Often the infinitive refers back to a person who is not the subject of the phrase. These are some examples:

- "These all wait upon You, that You may give [lit. "to give"] them their food in due season" (Ps. 104:28), where the subject "You" must be supplied;
- "[The Lord God] placed him [the man] in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and guard it" (above, v. 15), i.e. that *the man* should cultivate and guard it;
- "The proverbs of Solomon. . . to know wisdom and instruction, to perceive. . . to receive," etc. (Prov. 1:1, 2), i.e. that *the reader* should know, perceive, and receive;
- "[And they put him in custody,] so that it might be declared [lit. "to declare"] to them by order of the Lord (how he should be treated)" (Lev. 24:12), i.e. that Moses should declare to them;
- "[And when a woman approach any beast] and it lie [lit. "to lie"] with her" (ibid., 20:16);⁹
- "[From my very altar] you shall pull him away, so that he may die [lit. "to die"]" (Ex. 21:14).¹⁰

and whatever name the man would impose (yikra). In my opinion, the future [i.e. imperfect] tense of the Hebrew is to be taken literally, this phrase is connected to the one preceeding it, i.e. God brought the animals to the man so that he could name them, and whatever he would call them would be their names. This is contrary to Onkelos' translation *ve-khol di havah karei leh adam* (in the past tense).

and whatever name the man would impose upon each living being (ve-khol asher yikra lo ha-adam nefesh hayyah). This is a difficult expression; *nefesh hayyah* is to be taken as an amplification of the object *lo*, on the model of *va-tir'ehu et ha-yeled* [lit. "and she saw him, the child"] (Ex. 2:6) (Ibn Ezra), and also *asher anokhi noten lahem li-vene'i Yisrael* ("to them, to the children of Israel") (Josh. 1:2). The word *kol* ("each") was omitted before *nefesh hayyah* to avoid repeating the word *kol* ("whatever") at the beginning of the phrase *ve-khol asher yikra lo*.

9. However, Shadal's Italian translation of this phrase is *per farsene coprire*, "to cover herself with it"

10. Nehama Leibowitz, in her comment on Gen. 9:16 (*Studies in Bereshit*, p. 89), expressed the view that the verses cited here by Shadal from Genesis and Psalms fail to support his contention.

2:20. THE MAN NAMED ALL THE ANIMALS AND THE FLYING CREATURES OF THE HEAVEN, AND ALL THE WILD BEASTS; BUT FOR ADAM HE DID NOT FIND ANY HELPER CORRESPONDING TO HIM.

but for Adam. For himself. His name [which means "man"] is mentioned to show that he did not find a helper resembling him according to his nature as a human being.

he did not find any helper, etc. If he had, he could have taken it as a helper, for when God brought the animals to him, He intended to have him rule over and make use of them, as I have explained in connection with the concept of naming things.

2:21. THE LORD GOD CAUSED A SLUMBER TO FALL UPON THE MAN, SO THAT HE SLEPT; AND HE TOOK ONE OF HIS RIBS, AND CLOSED UP THE PLACE WITH FLESH.

and closed up the place with flesh (va-yisgor basar tahtenna). The root *sagar* ("to close") refers not only to the place that is closed, but to the thing enclosed within it, for example, *va-tissager Miriam* ("And Miriam was enclosed"—Num. 12:15).

In the books of Plato it is stated that man was created an *androgynos* and that God afterwards separated the male from the female; similar to this is the homiletical statement that man was created *du partsufin* ("two-faced"), an idea not hinted of in the Torah (Clericus).¹¹

2:22. THE LORD CONSTRUCTED, FROM THE RIB THAT HE TOOK FROM THE MAN, A WOMAN, AND HE BROUGHT HER TO THE MAN.

constructed, from the rib. . . a woman (va-yiven. . . et ha-tsela. . . le-ishah). This word order is customary in Hebrew [i.e. verb/old object/new object], as in, "And Gideon made of this an ephod (*va-ya'as oto Gid'on le-efod*)" (Judges 8:27). Sometimes the new object appears without the prefix *lamed*: *va-yivneh et ha-avanim mizbe'ah* [instead of *le-mizbe'ah*] (I Kings 18:32).

2:23. AND THE MAN SAID, "THIS ONE FINALLY IS BONE OF MY BONES AND FLESH OF MY FLESH; THIS ONE SHOULD BE CALLED ISHAH [WOMAN], FOR FROM ISH [MAN] SHE WAS TAKEN."

11. In Eruvin 18a, this statement is supported by the ambiguous verse (below, 5:2), "Male and female He created them."