With Rashi’s commentary, Targum Onkelos, Haftaros and commentary anthologized from Classic Rabbinic Texts and the works of the Lubavitcher Rebbe

Compiled and Adapted by
Rabbi Chaim Miller
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bereishis</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noach</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lech Lecha</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayeira</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chayei Sarah</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toldos</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayeitzei</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayishlach</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayeishev</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikeitz</td>
<td>285</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayigash</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vayechi</td>
<td>339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haftaros</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What can a Torah commentator living in our times possibly add to two thousand years of Rabbinic scholarship? He might attempt to interpret the Torah as it relates to modern times. He may reorganize the thoughts of his predecessors, rendering them more accessible to his own generation. Or, he might attempt to innovate gems of profundity, lifting the Torah student to new horizons of inspiration.

In his commentaries to the Torah, the Lubavitcher Rebbe demonstrates all of these qualities. His words have highlighted the relevance of ancient teachings to a generation which faced the uneasy task of acclimatizing to postwar life in the western world. His voice was heard by Torah scholars, Chasidim and non-Chasidim, women, children, and even non-Jews. He skillfully articulated Talmud, Midrash, Halacha, and Chasidic teachings, bringing depth and warmth to a vast variety of Torah subjects. His vast body of over one hundred published works demonstrates expertise in virtually every field of specialized Torah study, including Bible, Talmud, Midrash, Jewish Philosophy, Mussar, Kabalah and Chasidic teachings. His most famous work, bearing the deceptively unsophisticated title of Likutei Sichos (“Selected Sermons”), cites literally thousands of different sources in exhaustive footnotes throughout its thirty nine volumes.

However, one particular area of the Rebbe’s Torah writings which stands out, perhaps more than all others, as being truly original are his talks on Rashi’s commentary to the Torah – colloquially referred to as “Rashi Sichos.” It is on these studies that the current work has been predominantly based.

The “Rashi Sicha”

Rashi—an acronym for Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105)—authored what is considered to be the most fundamental of Rabbinic commentaries on the Bible and Talmud. His commentary on the Torah was the first Hebrew book to be printed (in Rome c. 1470), and is appended to all standard editions of the Chumash.

Rashi’s commentary is considered to be basic to the understanding of the text of Chumash, and has been the subject of numerous volumes of “supercommentary,” which attempt to explain the precise reasoning behind each of Rashi’s comments. Most prominent of the supercommentators include Rabbi Yehudah Loewe, (the “Maharal” of Prague, 1512-1609), Rabbi R’ Eliyahu Mizrachi (1450-1525) and R’ David ben Shmuel HaLevi (1586-1667, author of Taz, a major commentary on the Shulchan Aruch). These are a mere few
of over one hundred published works of supercommentary on Rashi’s commentary to the Torah.

In 1964, shortly after the passing of his mother, the Rebbe began to devote a portion of his regular public talks to developing an innovative approach to the study of Rashi’s commentary to the Torah. This continued on a regular basis until 1988, by which time over 800 such talks had been delivered, recorded and published.

The Rebbe argued that Rashi’s commentary was written to be understood by a small child who is studying scripture for the first time. This assertion is based on Rashi’s own words, that “I only come to explain the simple meaning of scripture” (Rashi to Bereishis 3:8). Thus, any explanation of Rashi’s words which would require a knowledge of Talmud or Midrash is immediately rejected, for the child who is beginning a study of scripture has not yet learned these texts. In fact, a solution based on a later verse, or a later comment of Rashi is also unacceptable, for we can presume that Rashi expected his reader to know no more than what he has already learned.

Thus, while the classic supercommentators interpreted Rashi through the lens of Talmudic and Midrashic literature, the Rebbe contended that this was not Rashi’s true intention. Rather, each line of Rashi’s monumental commentary is to be understood with two basic tools: a.) Simple logic, basic enough for a five-year-old to appreciate. b.) A knowledge of the verses and Rashi’s comments up to this point.

But somehow, the simple answers are the hardest to find. One intellectual feat which is difficult for the scholar is simplicity, and the greater the scholar the harder he finds it to embrace the simple logic of a child.

The Rebbe, however, despite having achieved mastery in so many areas of Torah study (and academic excellence), never lost the ability to relate to ordinary people. It was once said of the Rebbe that, “His mind is that of a great genius, and yet he believes with the simple faith of a small child.” This too is reflected in the Rebbe’s talks, for after challenging the greatest commentators on their “own ground” of Talmudic agility, he then proceeds to offer an answer that even a small child could have thought of, if he would have applied his mind with sufficient effort.

Being simple and “obvious” in nature, the Rebbe’s solutions are extremely convincing. This quality is enhanced by his technique of analyzing the precise phraseology of Rashi meticulously, explaining the necessity for each sentence, word, and often, letter.

Obviously, a thorough analysis of the method and system of the Rashi Sichos is far beyond the scope of this short introduction, and much has already been written on the subject.¹

The current work is a humble attempt to generate further interest in the study of these fascinating talks among a broader audience. Since each Parsha of the Torah has been the subject of approximately sixteen such talks, they collectively cover a vast range of major issues in each of the 53 Parshiyos of the Torah. Thus, when placed alongside each other, they form a formidable body of Torah commentary.

¹. Klalei Rashi (“Principles of Rashi [Study]) by Rabbi Tuvia Bloy (expanded edition 1991, Kehos Publication Society) cites some 389 (!) principles for the study of Rashi which are innovated in Likutei Sichos. See also Chumash Peshuto Shel Mikrah by Rabbi Avraham Zayentz (published by the author in 2001).
Understandably, the entire project has been carried out with considerable trepidation. To provide the reader with the full text of the Chumash in Hebrew and English, together with the fundamental texts of Rashi and Onkelos, leaves little room in which to compact the Sichos. Add to that the fact that the Rebbe’s Sichos do not lend themselves to simplification or translation. Each Sicha is truly a work of art – where countless details and ideas coexist harmoniously – and, like any work of art, as soon as a few details are compromised the entire structure is weakened. In order to be explained in English, many ideas need to be amplified and clarified, leaving no space for many other beautiful and inspiring comments found within the Sicha.

In all of his edited talks, the Rebbe cross-referenced his own ideas to those of the classic commentators, indicating clearly that he did not wish his own ideas to be perceived in isolation of the Rabbinic scholarship which preceded. Therefore, in order to remain loyal to his directive it has proved crucial to include a digest of “classic commentaries” to the Torah, on each issue which is addressed within the Sichos. However, in this edition the “classic commentaries” and the Sichos have been kept distinct (but cross-referenced) for the sake of clarity. This also means that the Chumash together with the “classic commentaries” can be appreciated separately, as a complete work in itself.

Finally, numerous ideas from the Rebbe’s vast body of Chasidic teachings and practical directives have been included on the page (in shaded boxes), under the headings “Sparks of Chasidus” (Chasidic insights) and “The Last Word” (Practical directives). The main body of the text (entitled “Toras Menachem”) is based predominantly on the Rebbe’s Rashi Sichos which, as argued above, is the most fundamental contribution of the Rebbe to the study of Chumash.

Despite the fact that this volume proudly bears the Rebbe’s name, its contents were not checked by him personally, though every effort has been made to be loyal to the original source. At the end of each explanation a reference has been provided for the reader to research the topic further. Our words here are intended as no more that a “taste” in order to tempt the reader to open up the Sicha itself, or ask his teacher to study it with him. While we have taken every precaution to be loyal to the original ideas, it is inevitable that the adaptation here will not retain the impact and character of the original. Thus, we urge the reader not to judge the Rebbe’s sichos from what is presented here. This is merely an extremely diluted sample which is intended to encourage further study of a fascinating and enlightening original text.

**Further notes on Translation and Adaptation**

In addition to the Hebrew texts of Chumash, Rashi and Onkelos, the English texts are divided into seven sections: a.) English translation of the Chumash. b.) “Classic Questions” c.) Summary of the mitzvos found in each Parsha according to the Sefer haChinuch. d.) Commentaries of the Rebbe, divided into four parts: i.) Toras Menachem (explanations at the simple level of Torah interpretation), ii.) Sparks of Chasidus, iii.) The Last Word (practical insights), iv.) Explanations of the name of each Parsha.
In his “Bible Unauthorized,” Moose highlights the pitfalls of translating the Chumash into English:

“Even the most perfect literal translation would not truly represent the Bible. It was not composed in such a way as to permit a literal translation.

The original text of the Bible, particularly of the Pentateuch, is in reality no more than a shorthand text, but so cleverly composed that it makes sense even in its shorthand form, while its full meaning is discernable only by making use of the keys incorporated in it through a code of many signs, elaborated for that purpose...

A literal translation is thus out of the question if one is to understand the true meaning of the Bible. The correct way to understand the Bible is to give each verse in its shorthand text, and then give the traditional commentary...”

To address the above problem, numerous comments have been included within the current translation. All the comments are based on Rashi’s commentary to the Torah, which is the foremost of all rabbinic commentaries.

Until recent years, an English translation of Chumash according to Rashi’s commentary was not available. The translations which did remain loyal to classic rabbinic interpretation adopted a “pluralistic” approach, following whichever commentator provided the most straightforward or aesthetically satisfying interpretation to each verse.

Recently, a number of translations have emerged that are loyal to Rashi, including those of Goldberg, Moore, Herczeg and Scherman. However, all these works have chosen to draw only from Rashi’s shorter and less elaborate comments. Presumably this is based on a presumption that Rashi’s commentary is a mixture of literal interpretation together with longer, midrashic insights and parables, the latter of which could be omitted in a plain translation.

A cornerstone of the Rebbe’s analysis is that all of Rashi’s words are essential to a basic understanding of the text. Therefore, if Rashi on occasion makes a seemingly elaborate comment, or cites a midrashic teaching, this in no way represents a temporary deviation from his remit to “explain the simple meaning of scripture.” Rather, each comment, however elaborate it may be, is required in order to understand the literal meaning of scripture.

Therefore, in the current translation—which is entirely new—we have attempted to incorporate many more of Rashi’s comments than in previous works. Ideas from Rashi have

---

2. In the Beginning—The Bible Unauthorized by A. H. Moose (pp. 23-24, 28). First published in 1942. Revised edition by David Sternlight Ph.D., published by Thirty Seven Books, 2001. This work was promoted by the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe (see his Igros Kodesh vol. 7, p. 399).
8. See Klalei Rashi chap. 1.
been placed in brackets to distinguish them from the words of scripture.

Obviously it has not been possible to include all of Rashi’s comments in a translation, but it is hoped that the numerous additional comments which have been added will give the reader a greater appreciation of the Chumash as it has been learned classically for hundreds of years.

The translation itself has been written in a contemporary style, attempting to make the words of Torah relevant to the modern reader. Nevertheless, every attempt has been made to remain loyal to scripture. Unlike Kaplan⁹, we have not omitted awkward words or abandoned translation for idiom. However, we have also rejected the opposite extreme exemplified by Scherman⁷, where the precise sequence of words within each verse is preserved, and loyalty to original Hebrew grammar has led to abnormal English usage.

In addition, the text has been punctuated and paragraphed at the discretion of the translator, following the precedent of Kaplan and Scherman. Headings have been inserted within the English translation, to focus the attention of the reader, in a similar fashion to Kaplan. Practical mitzvos have been “bulleted” to highlight their significance.

**CLASSIC QUESTIONS**

Due to limitations of space and for the sake of clarity the following guidelines were followed:

a.) The issues discussed are limited to those which are analyzed in the Sichos adapted within “Toras Menachem.”

b.) The commentators quoted are usually those cited in the original Sichos.

c.) The commentators’ words are paraphrased, rather than translated (with the exception of Rashi’s words, which are usually translated).

d.) The commentators are depicted as “debating” a particular “Classic Question.” However, in most cases this “debate” is somewhat artificial, since each commentator will invariably be discussing a range of issues in the original text from which the comment cited here will be a tiny portion.

e.) Sometimes, the ideas are arranged so that one commentator appears to “pick up” where the previous comment finished, which may not be the case in the original.

f.) Each commentator is depicted as answering a particular “Classic Question,” though, in the original, he may not have been addressing this question directly.

**TORAS MENACHEM**

Only a small fraction of the Rebbe’s published teachings were actually penned by the Rebbe himself. The vast majority of his works are transcripts of public talks which were transcribed by Chasidim (hanachos¹⁰). A significant number of these talks were

---


¹⁰. These have been collected and published in two major works: *Sichos Kodesh* (50 volumes), containing public talks from the years 5710-5741 (1950-1981), published in 1985-7, and *Hisvaduyos*, containing public talks from the years 5742-5752 (1982-1992), published by Va’ad Hanachos Belahak (43 volumes).
reconstructed by a team of scholars, with numerous cross-references to classic rabbinic texts, and edited extensively by the Rebbe for publication (Likutei Sichos\textsuperscript{11} and Sefer Hasichos\textsuperscript{12}). The Sicha has a distinct style, described succinctly by Solomon\textsuperscript{13}:

“The genre of edited Sicha usually comprised inaugural questions and explorations of themes, tentative hypotheses, subsequent redefinition and restatement of the Sicha’s central concern, and a critical elucidation of the subject matter under analysis, thus facilitating the resolution of initial dilemmas.”

The introductory sections of a Sicha (the “inaugural questions and explorations of themes”) are often extremely complicated. The Rebbe may ask as many as ten or fifteen sequential questions, each accompanied by numerous proofs and logical substantiation. Often, these questions focus on hairsplitting details (described by Sacks\textsuperscript{14} as “microscopic tensions”) within the phraseology of source texts. In the light of such an intellectually demanding introduction, some effort is required to appreciate the “tentative hypotheses” which follow.

To reduce the level of complexity, most English adaptations have focussed on delivering only the “critical elucidation” which lies at the heart of a Sicha. This however, diminishes the impact of the ideas substantially, as the solution is no longer seen to resolve a host of “initial dilemmas.” Thus, Solomon\textsuperscript{15} criticizes such adaptations as being “skeletal.”

In this edition, we have attempted to preserve, to a considerable extent, the “explorations of themes” and analysis which occurs at the beginning of a Sicha. In order to simplify matters, sources which are cited in the Sicha have been recorded separately in the section entitled “Classic Questions.” This enables the reader to first familiarize himself with the rabbinic debate which is to be discussed in the Sicha, enabling the Sicha to be adapted in a more succinct form.

Nevertheless, numerous questions, hypotheses and their solutions have been omitted for the sake of brevity and clarity. Thus, the reader should bear in mind that the English adaptation contains but a few ideas which have been extracted from a Sicha which, hopefully, form a self-contained argument in themselves. Obviously, the adaptations differ in style tremendously from the original Sichos and, besides the omissions, the sequence of arguments has often been edited to be compatible with the format of this work.

Nevertheless, all the ideas contained in this work are to be found in the Rebbe’s published works. The editor has taken extreme care not to add arguments of his own. On a few rare occasions a brief note or cross-reference has been added, delineated clearly by square brackets.

A final note of importance: In addition to drawing from Likutei Sichos, we have also

\textsuperscript{11} Published by Va’ad Lehafatzas Sichos between 1962 and 2001 (39 volumes).
\textsuperscript{12} Containing talks from 5747-5752, published by Va’ad Lehafatzas Sichos in 12 volumes.
\textsuperscript{13} Educational Teachings of Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson by Aryeh Solomon (Jason Aronson 2000), page 25.
\textsuperscript{14} Torah Studies by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom and British Commonwealth. Published by Lubavitch Foundation UK (1986).
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. p. 324.
referred considerably to *hanachos*, transcripts of the Rebbe’s talks which he did not edit (see note 10 above).

Although these *hanachos* were not edited by the Rebbe, they remain the only extant source of many of his teachings on *Rashi*, and we have relied on them considerably. This decision was largely based on the Rebbe’s own words to a volume of *hanachos* of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe (Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn) which he published in 1946:

> “Those who transcribed the sichos were veteran chasidim to whom every word and utterance of their Rebbe was holy to them. There is no doubt that they made every possible effort to preserve the wording of their teacher, not to add to or detract from it. While it is possible that, due to the length of the Sicha etc., they erred in transcribing some words...generally speaking, the content is certainly accurate.”

**Sparks of Chasidus**

There is a tradition that, in addition to explaining Chumash at the literal level, *Rashi’s* commentary to the Torah contains allusions to mystical concepts. Thus, virtually every one of the Rebbe’s *“Rashi Sichos”* climaxes in a mystical interpretation based on the teachings of Kabalah and Chasidus. Under the heading of “Sparks of Chasidus” many of these ideas have been included, though they are considerably adapted to be suitable for a reader who has no grounding in Kabalah or Chasidus. Many insights have also been culled from other talks and chasidic discourses of the Rebbe.

**The Last Word**

A further hallmark of the Rebbe’s teachings is a strong emphasis on the practical application of Torah concepts in everyday contemporary life. The Rebbe stated repeatedly that the Hebrew word “Torah” is etymologically connected to the word “Hora’ah,” meaning instruction. According to the Rebbe, no discussion—however sublime it may be—should remain totally academic.

In this vein, we have included many practical insights that are to be found in the Sichos. Once again, limitations of space have forced these ideas to be selected and condensed.

**The Name of the Parsha**

On a regular basis, the Rebbe would refer to the significance of the name of each Parsha, and explain how the name reflects the content of the entire Parsha. Ideas sampled from these sichos have been included at the beginning of each Parsha.

---

19. See *Likutei Sichos* vol. 5, p. 57.
LIST OF MITZVOS

As an additional aid, a summary of all the mitzvos to be found in each Parsha has been included at the end of each Parsha. The reader should note however that the precise division of these mitzvos is an issue of contention among the commentators. We have followed the system of Sefer Hachinuch, since his codification follows the sequence of the weekly parsha.

HAFTAROS

The text of the Haftaros has been translated according to the interpretation of Metzudos, a pair of commentaries (Metzudas Tziyon and Metzudas David) by Rabbi Yechiel Hillel Altschuler (eighteenth century), which stresses the plain meaning of the text. In a similar vein to our translation to Chumash, numerous small annotations have been included (in brackets) within the translation, to assist the reader in appreciating the text according to its classic, rabbinic interpretation.

At present, we have only included the text of the Haftaros according to Chabad custom. We have also made no reference to the vast body of rabbinic commentary on the Haftaros (with the exception of Metzudos), nor have we attempted to incorporate any of the Rebbe’s teachings on the Haftaros.

NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION

We have followed the transliteration system of Dr. Binyamin Kaplan (Tulane University in New Orleans, L.A.), which has been employed recently in a number of Lubavitch publications:

1. Words with a final hei are spelled with a final “h.”
2. “Ei” (the vowel-sound in “weight”) is used for tzeirei.
3. “Ai” is used for the vowel sound in the word “tide.”
4. An apostrophe is used between consecutive vowel sounds, as in “mo’eid.”
5. An “e” is used for a vocalized sheva, e.g. “bemeizid,” not “b’meizid.”
6. “A” is used for kamatz.
7. “O” is used for cholam.
8. “I” is used for chirik.
9. “F” is preferred to “ph.”
10. Doubling of consonants is avoided.
11. “S” is used for saf.
12. “Ch” is used for chaf and ches.

Where it was felt appropriate, various exceptions have been made to the above rules.
**Vowels and Cantillation Marks**

In this edition, the vowels and cantillation marks in the Hebrew text of the Chumash have been edited to be consistent with accurate source-texts. We have followed three sources: 1) Chumash “Torah Temimah”; 2) The well-known “Koren” Tanach; 3) Tanach according to the Aleppo Codex and other manuscripts, edited by Mordechai Breuer (published by Mosad Harav Kook).

When these texts differ, we have followed the majority, unless there was another source (Minchas Shai or similar) that supported the minority version. When Chumash Torah Temimah is contradicted by the other texts and the difference is significant, we indicate one version inside the Chumash, and the other by a footnote.

The above applies for all variations in vowels or cantillation marks, with the exception of meseg (a vertical line under a letter, usually used to denote a secondary accent). Regarding meseg, the following guidelines have been adopted:

1.) A regular “light” meseg, occurring in any open syllable not immediately followed by the primary accent or by another meseg, is printed in every applicable case, and also on the last available syllable, even if there is an available syllable on the previous word (as in 1, unlike 3).

2.) A meseg before hei or ches in words with the roots h-y-h and ch-y-h is likewise printed in every case (as in 1), even in nouns containing these roots (as in 3).

3.) A meseg before two identical letters, the first vocalized with a sheva, is also universally used (as in 1), except for words where the masoretes considered the sheva to be silent (as evidenced by 3).

4.) A meseg in a closed unaccented syllable containing a tenuah gedolah (large vowel) is also always used (following 1), except where using it would require removing a regular light meseg immediately preceding it (found in 3).

5.) A meseg in a closed syllable (known as “keveidah,” heavy) is used based on its occurrence in 3 (unlike 1).

6.) A meseg in an open syllable following the accent is used only if there is more than one source.

7.) A meseg is used on the word “vaihi” if it is accented with a pashta, or hyphenated to the next word.

8.) A meseg before a guttural at the end of a word – follows 3.

9.) Meseg together with sheva – follows 3.

**Hebrew Text of Rashi’s Commentary**

The Hebrew text of Rashi’s commentary to the Torah has been prepared according to the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s directives, printed in Chumash Shai Lamora, Jerusalem 5763:
a.) The publisher should not deviate from the common text of Rashi’s commentary which is to be found in Chumashim that have been widely used in recent generations. Textual variants should be included only in footnotes.

b.) The fact that Rashi does not usually cite sources for his comments was intentional. Therefore, no references (other than those made by Rashi himself) should be included in the body of the text.

c.) While Rashi did not include punctuation marks etc., their inclusion by the publisher may, perhaps, be justified.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the following people:

Mr. Shmuel Dubosky, for his sustained and dedicated efforts in the editing and critical evaluation of this work; Rabbi Moshe Levin for checking the accuracy of the commentaries and editing the text; Rabbi Mendel Sufrin for checking the accuracy of the English translation of the Chumash. Rabbi Hillel Blesofsky and Mrs. Y. Homnick for checking and proofreading; Rabbi Shmuel Rabin, for editing the vowels and cantillation marks of the Hebrew text.

Rabbi Mordechai Sufrin, Rabbi Shalom Osdoba, Rabbi Heschel Greenberg, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Greenberg, Rabbi Uri Kaploun, Rabbi Daniel Levy for their assistance.

My wife, Chani, for her constant encouragement and emergency proofreading.

My parents and parents-in-law for supporting all my endeavors.

Those who were formative in my education and development are too many to list here, although I would like to make a special mention of my mashpia, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok (“Fitzy”) Lipskier, of blessed memory, whose inspiration I live with on a daily basis.

The patron of this edition is Rabbi Meyer Gutnick, who has graciously accepted upon himself the labor and expense of publishing and distributing this work. May this merit be a source of eternal blessing for him and his family.

May we soon merit the true and complete redemption, when all the Jewish people will be free to observe God’s commands and study His Torah.

Rabbi Chaim Miller

20 Menachem Av 5764
Cantillation Marks / תוספות הנקראים

[Hebrew text]
The person who is called to the Torah takes hold of the handles of the Sefer Torah with his tallis¹, unrolls the Sefer Torah and, with his tallis (or the belt of the Torah) touches the beginning and end² of the reading. The scroll is then closed, he turns slightly to the right and says:

ברוך אתה יי הצבור.

The congregation responds:

ברוך אתה יי הצבור לעלום ורע.

The person called to the Torah continues:

ברוך אתה יי הצבור לעלום ורע.

ברוך אתה יי האלוהים מלך עולומם, אשר ברך בנו

השליחנים, חדשים את התורה. ברוך אתה יי

ברוך המתרח.

The person called to the Torah now reads along with the reader in an undertone.

After the reading is complete, the person called to the Torah touches the end and the beginning³ of the reading with his tallis (or belt of the Sefer Torah) and kisses it. He then closes the scroll, turns slightly to the right and says:

ברוך אתה יי האלוהים מלך עולומם, אשר ברך בנו

התרח עולומם,нные עולום נשמת בראוננו. ברוך אתה

לך, נשמת המתרח.

After the reading is complete, the person called to the Torah stays at the bimah until the next reading is concluded (or, if it is the last reading, until the Torah is raised).

---

1. Sefer Haminhagim. According to the Rebbe’s personal custom, the handles are held directly, without the tallis in between.
2. Sefer Haminhagim. According to the Rebbe’s personal custom, the tallis is used to touch the beginning, the end and then the beginning of the reading again.
3. Sefer Haminhagim. According to the Rebbe’s personal custom, the tallis is used to touch the end, the beginning and then the end of the reading again.
In the early years of his leadership, the Alter Rebbe declared publicly:

“We have to live with the times!”

Through his brother, the Maharil, the senior chasidim discovered that the Rebbe meant that one should live with the Parsha of the week, and the particular Parsha of the day. One should not only study the weekly Parsha, but live with it.

(Hayom Yom, Cheshvan 2)
Why does the Torah begin with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, beis (ב), and not the first letter, alef (א)?

The Jerusalem Talmud suggests that alef would be an inappropriate beginning, since it is the first letter of the word arirah, meaning “cursing.” Beis, on the other hand, begins the word bracha, meaning “blessing” (Chagigah 2:1).

But surely there are many positive words in Hebrew that begin with an alef, and many negative words that begin with a beis? Why should beis be identified with “blessing” in particular?

The fact that the Torah begins with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, beis, indicates that reading the text is actually the second phase of Torah study. Before a person even looks at the first verse of the Torah, he needs to prepare himself for the experience that he is about to undergo.

Basically, Torah study is somewhat of a paradox. On the one hand, it is a mitzvah that connects a person to God and—as with any mitzvah—the person needs to be aware of this fact to achieve a full “connection.” On the other hand, if a person actually thinks about God while he is studying Torah, he will not be able to concentrate on the subject at hand.

The solution to this problem is through preparation. Before even opening the book, a person should take a few moments to reflect that he is about to study God’s wisdom that has been “condensed” into a humanly intelligible form. He is about to bind his mind into a total union with God.

Of course, when he actually studies the Torah, he will not be able to meditate on this fact, since he will be concentrating on the text. Therefore, it is crucial that a person has the correct intentions before he begins.

And that is why the Torah begins with a beis, to hint to its reader that study is only the second phase of this mitzvah.

Through studying Torah with the appropriate preparations blessings will come into a person’s life. Thus, the Jerusalem Talmud taught that the beis at the beginning of the Torah stands for bracha—blessing.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 15, pp. 1ff; ibid. p. 326)
Why does the Torah begin with the creation of the world? (v.1)

**Rashi:** Rabbi Yitzchak said: Surely, the Torah should have begun from the words, “This month shall be for you...” (Shemos 12:2), the first commandment which the Jewish people were given. Why does it begin with “In the beginning?”

The reason is [conveyed by the verse]: “He declared to His people the power of His works in order to give them the inheritance of the nations” (Psalms 111:6), i.e., if the nations of the world will say to the Jewish people, “You are robbers, for you seized the land of the seven nations” (32:33). How could the account of creation be included at the end of the book of Shemos? These stories seem superfluous.

**Nachalas Ya’akov:** Rashi was not suggesting that the section from Bereishis until “This month shall be for you...” should not be written at all. Rather, his question was: Why did the Torah begin with discursive narrative rather than with its primary content, the mitzvos? The account of creation, together with all the stories that follow it could have been included at the end of the Chumash, or in a separate book.

**What is Troubling Rashi? (v. 1)**

**Sifsei Chachamim** writes that Rashi was troubled by the inclusion of stories in the Torah, which is primarily a code of mitzvos. However, it is difficult to accept that this was the only point troubling Rashi, since there are many other stories written throughout the Torah whose necessity he does not challenge. Therefore, the inclusion of a story does not appear to be a “problem” which requires explanation.

One could argue [as Nachalas Ya’akov does] that Rashi was not troubled by the actual inclusion of these stories, but rather, he was concerned why the Torah should begin with narrative, rather than with its primary content, the mitzvos. The account of creation and other stories should have been included at a later point in the Chumash.

But if this indeed is Rashi’s question, then what is his answer? According to Rashi, the account of creation was written here, at the beginning of the Torah, to answer a potential challenge from non-Jewish nations that the Land of Israel was unlawfully possessed. Our response to the nations—that the land was given to us by its Creator—would be equally valid wherever it was recorded in the Torah; the fact that it was recorded at the beginning is not crucial to the argument. So, if Rashi was merely questioning the position in which the account of creation was included [as Nachalas Ya’akov argues], then he does not appear to have provided us with a solution.

**Further Questions on Rashi**

a.) Rashi suggests that the Torah should have begun from the words, “This month shall be for you” (Shemos 12:2), because it is the first mitzvah. However, in the book of Bereishis there are no fewer than three mitzvos recorded: the mitzvah of having children (1:28), the mitzvah of circumcision (17:10), and the prohibition against eating the sciatic nerve (32:33). How could Rashi suggest that the Torah should have only begun with Shemos chapter 12, omitting the above mitzvos?

b.) According to the seven Noachide laws which are binding on non-Jews, robbery is prohibited. Yet, we do not find that any nation was punished for conquering another because it was an act of robbery. On what basis could the nations challenge the Jewish people that “You are robbers, for you seized the land of the seven nations?”
CREATION: THE FIRST DAY—LIGHT & DARKNESS

In the beginning of God’s creation of the heavens* and the earth (and their contents), when the earth was astoundingly desolate, darkness was on the surface of the deep (waters that covered the land), and the (throne of) God’s glory hovered over the water (at the command of God’s) breath.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why was the world created? (v. 1)

Rashi: The word Bereishis is crying out for a Midrashic interpretation: Bereishis means “two beginnings” (2:4), suggesting that God created the world for the sake of the Torah which is called, “the beginning of His way” (Prov. 8:22), and for the sake of the Jewish people who are called, “the first of His grain” (Jer. 2:3).

Maskil LeDavid: Since the verse employs the singular (“in the beginning”) from where did Rashi conclude that there are two beginnings, the Torah and the Jewish people?

However, Rashi is referring to the Jewish people as they are learning and observing the Torah, i.e. as they form two parts of one greater whole.

The Explanation

The Torah contains the collected teachings given to the Jewish people. Since the Jewish people first assumed their current national character through the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, Rashi was troubled, “Surely, the Torah should have begun from the words, ‘This month shall be for you...’ i.e. the first commandment which the Jewish people were given.” The stories before the period of the Exodus did not occur to members of the Jewish nation, so why are they recorded in the Torah, which is a text of instruction for Jews? They could have been recorded in a separate book, or handed down orally, but they should not have been included in a text of instructions which is specifically addressed to members of the Jewish nation.

Even the mitzvos which are recorded in the book of Bereishis were not given to the Jewish people, but rather to Avraham and his family etc. Thus, our obligation to circumcise and to refrain from eating the sciatic nerve comes from Sinai, and not from God’s words to Avraham etc.*

Rashi answers that the stories which predate the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah were recorded as a proof to the nations of the world that the land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people:

According to both Noachide Law and Jewish Law, land acquired as a result of military conquest is not considered to be stolen property (see Shulchan Aruch Admor HaAzein, Orach Chayim 649:10). Therefore, the nations of the world could not possibly accuse the Jewish people of being “robbers” merely due to the fact that they seized the land of Canaan.

Rather, the nations’ complaint is that the Jewish people have transformed the land permanently to be an essentially Jewish one, precluding any nation from identifying it as their own at any future time. Even if the land will be conquered by another nation, it will remain the “Land of Israel” and Jewish people will refer to it as their own, perceiving the loss of the land as a temporary “exile.” For after Jewish conquest and inhabitation, the land became a holy, uniquely Jewish land at its very essence, remaining associated with the Jewish people forever.

The Last Word

According to Rashi (v. 1) the book of Bereishis was written to provide a response to the non-Jewish nations about our claim to the Land of Israel. However, it appears far-fetched to suggest that the entire book of Bereishis, and all the passages up to chapter 12 of Shemos, were written merely to answer a question that might be posed by non-Jews!

In truth, there is an extremely powerful message in these words for Jewish people, a lesson so profound that Rashi deemed it appropriate to form the “introduction” to his commentary.

Namely, despite the fact that the Jewish people are but a tiny minority, the Torah gives us the strength not to be intimidated by the nations of the world. At the very outset of Torah study, the Jew learns that he will be able to defend himself from the criticism of non-Jews, and observe the mitzvos proudly, with the full awareness that God created the world for this very purpose (see Rashi to v. 1 at top of page).

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Bereishis 5741)

Sparks of Chasidus

• “In the beginning... the earth was astoundingly desolate.”
  God’s plan is that a home should be made for Him in the lowest realms (Midrash Tanchuma, Naso 16). Therefore, the world began with utter desolation—the lowest of all existence—into which light, Torah and the Jewish people were then added.

• “The (throne of) God’s glory hovered over the water (at the command of God’s) breath.” Our sages said that this “breath” refers to the “spirit of Mashiach” (Bereishis Rabah 2:4, 8:1). From this we see that the concept of Mashiach is even more primal than that of light, for the “spirit of Mashiach” (v. 2) preceded the creation of light (v. 3).

• “The (throne of) God’s glory hovered.” Kabalah teaches that the purpose of creation is to elevate 288 Godly sparks which are trapped in the physical world. This number is hinted to by the word ה”מר ("hovered") which contains the letters פ”ד, equaling 288.

(Based on Sefer Hasichos 5751, p. 63; ibid. p. 804; ibid 5752, p. 459)

* See Sichas Shabbos Nitzavim 5745, ch. 25. ** Although the Torah does not repeat the prohibition of eating the sciatic nerve after the Jewish people assumed a national identity, it nevertheless comes from Sinai. Thus, if the book of Bereishis was omitted—as Rashi suggests—details of these mitzvos would have been included at some later point.
CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why did God separate the light from the darkness? (v. 4)

RASHI: Here too, we need the words of the Midrash: He saw that it was not proper for the wicked to use it, so He separated it for the righteous in the future.

According to its literal meaning, the explanation of the verse is as follows: He saw that it was good, and it was not fitting that it (the light) and darkness should function in a jumble, so He assigned for one its boundary by day, and for the other one its boundary by night.

Rashi: Verse 2 states that, “darkness was on the surface of the deep (waters that covered the land),” and then, in verse 3, light is created. Surely then, God had already distinguished the light from the darkness, so why does verse 4 state, “God separated the light from the darkness”?

To answer this problem, Rashi writes “we need the words of the Midrash,” and explains that the additional “separation” in verse 4 refers to God separating the light for the righteous in the future.

Light & Darkness (v. 4)

Bartenura writes that Rashi cites the Midrash in his commentary to verse 4, in order to explain why the Torah states, “God separated the light from the darkness,” a detail which seems to have already occurred in verses 2 and 3.

However, Bartenura fails to explain why Rashi chose to cite the Midrashic interpretation before he explains the verse at the literal level. Surely Rashi should have written the straightforward explanation first, before citing the more esoteric words of the Midrash?

Rashi’s Problem

Rashi was troubled why the verse states, “God said, ‘Let there be light!’—and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and God separated...” The term “the light” appears to be superfluous here, as the verse could have stated more simply, “God saw that it was good.”

This led Rashi to the conclusion that, here in verse 4, God must have perceived some additional “good” quality within the light which was not yet apparent in verse 3. Therefore, in addition to telling us that “there was light” (v. 3), the Torah adds here that “God saw that the light was good” (v. 4), suggesting that within the light an especially good quality was to be found.

Toras Menachem

This could cause the non-Jewish nations to complain, “You are robbers!” For by conquering the Land of Israel, the Jewish people “robbed” all the nations of the world from ever identifying themselves as a robber! For by conquering the Land of Israel, the Jewish people cannot have the unique identity that it retained even after the Jewish people were exiled from it.

The Jewish people can thus reply, “The whole earth belongs to God. He created it and granted it to whomever was deemed fit in His eyes!” I.e. the very same Divine will caused both events.

God’s intention was that the Jewish people should acquire a non-Jewish land and transform it into a holy land, the Land of Israel. Therefore, He first gave it to the nations, and then He told the Jewish people to conquer it.

In the final analysis, we see that Rashi has explained the necessity for the narrative up to Shemos chapter 12. All this information is required to explain how God intended the Land of Israel for the Jewish people at the very outset of Creation (Parshas Bereishis), and yet He first gave it to the nations (see Noach 10:5, Lech Lecha 12:6 and Rashi ibid.). In order to explain the lengthy delay which occurred before the Jewish people received the land, the Torah describes the “Covenant of the Parts” where Avraham was told that his descendants would be exiled for hundreds of years (15:13). The remaining part of the book of Bereishis is thus required to explain how this occurred in actuality, i.e. how Avraham’s descendants went down into Egypt and were enslaved. Then we read finally, at the beginning of the book of Shemos, how the exile ended and the Jewish people left Egypt to receive the Torah and conquer the Land of Israel.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 5, pp. 1ff; Sichas Shabbos Bereishis 5726)
3 God said, “Let there be light!”—and there was light.

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

It became evening and it became morning—one day.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why does the verse write, “one day” and not “the first day”? (v. 5)

RASHI: To fit in with the context of the chapter, the verse should have stated, “the first day,” as is written regarding the other days: “second,” “third,” “fourth.” Why did Scripture write “one”?

Because God was alone in His world, since the angels were not created until the second day. This is explained in Bereishis Rabah (3:8).

TORAS MENACHEM

In other words, the light contained two qualities: a.) Its natural property of illumination; b.) A deeper aspect of “goodness.” Rashi explains that God separated out the latter from the former, to be reserved for the righteous in the future.

We have thus answered Bartenura’s question (why the Torah needs to repeat the separation of the light in verse 4), for the separation here refers to a separation within the light itself; and clearly, this information is not conveyed by verses 2 and 3.

Furthermore, we have also explained why the Midrashic interpretation is so crucial at the literal level (such that Rashi cites it first), since only the Midrashic interpretation explains how an actual “separation” took place within a single entity. According to the plain meaning however—that God separated the times of light from the times of darkness (see Rashi)—the verse is speaking more of an “allocation” or “redistribution,” rather than a genuine “separation.”

WHY WAS GOD ALONE ON THE FIRST DAY?

Based on the above, we can explain a difficulty with Rashi’s comment to verse 5. The verse states, “It became evening and it became morning, one day.” Rashi questions why the Torah employs the expression “one day,” rather than saying “the first day,” and he answers that this alludes to the Midrashic teaching that God was totally “alone in His world” on that day.

This begs the question: Since God had already created light on the first day, then surely He was not alone, since He was accompanied by His first creation: the light. Why does Rashi write that God was “alone in His world.”

The answer to this problem is to be found in the nature of light: It was explained above that the light which was created on the first day

Sparks of Chasidus

Why did God create light first of all, only then to hide it? (see Rashi to v. 4)

Because the ultimate purpose of Creation is that God’s presence should be revealed in the lowest realms (Midrash Tanchumah, Naso 16), therefore, at the very outset of Creation God made a “mission statement” declaring what the ultimate purpose of the world should be—revelation; like an architect (so to speak) who draws up plans before constructing a building.

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe)

* See Sichas Shabbos Bereishis 5743, ch. 36.
creation, how every entity that exists is, in essence, totally one with God.

b.) An inner, deeper “good” that was separated out.

The inner quality of the light had the effect of revealing the purpose of everything that existed was totally one with Him.

(Tanya, Sha’ar Hayichud Veha’emunah, chap. 1)
THE SECOND DAY—SEPARATION OF WATERS

1:6  
God said, "Let the firmament (materialize) between the waters, and let it separate between (the upper) waters and (the lower) waters."

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

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

THE THIRD DAY—LAND & VEGETATION

1:9  
God said, "Let the water that is below the skies gather into one location, and let the dry land appear!"—and that is what happened.

10 God called the dry land “earth,” and He called the gathering of the waters “seas.” God saw that (the work of the second and third days) was good.

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

God saw that it was good.

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

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why did God call the firmament “skies” (v. 8)

Rashi: The Hebrew word for “skies,” שמים, is a combination of different words: ים (“bear water”), ים (“there is water”), ים (“fire and water”). He mixed them together and made the skies from them (See “The Last Word” below).

TORAS MENACHEM

The Last Word

The Four Elements

During the first three days of Creation, God distinguished the four elements: earth (v. 9-10), water (v. 6-7), air (alluded to by the word שמים in v. 2) and fire (see Rashi to v. 8). In the following letter, this concept is reconciled with the view of Science that there are over 100 elements:

“Modern chemistry does not recognize over one hundred basic elements but a considerably fewer number if matter is to be reduced to its basic components or particles. For the so-called elements themselves are made up of atoms, which are the smallest particles into which an element can be divided and yet retain its properties and characteristics, but the atoms themselves are further made up of smaller particles, such as electrons, protons, neutrons.

“Thus the answer to your question lies in the proper definition of the terms under discussion. For as indicated above, the so-called element is not the basic particle matter. Even the term ‘atom’ which originally meant something invisible, is an archaism now employed only for convenience, as it no longer corresponds to its original meaning. Similarly when we speak of an individual as being an element of society this does not mean that the individual himself is not composite.

“This should be born in mind when we consider the term Yesodoth in the Zohar, Midrash Rabba, Kabbalah, etc. and of course, in the Tanya and other Chabad sources. This does not mean something which under normal circumstances is indivisible or unchangeable, [everything that exists in the world.] I might also mention that there is another school of thought that conceives these four Yesodoth, not in their physical aspects, but rather qualitatively, this is to say, ‘fire’ in the sense of the properties of heat and dryness; ‘water’, in the sense of coolness and humidity.”

(Excerpt from a letter written by the Rebbe)
When were the luminaries created? (v. 14)

Rashi: They were created on the first day, and on the fourth day, He commanded them to be suspended in the sky.

Similarly, all the creations of the skies and the earth were created on the first day, and each one was fixed in its proper place on the day that was decreed upon it. Verse 1 is thus to be read, “In the beginning of God’s creation of the skies and the earth and their contents.”

God’s Method of Creating the World (v. 14)

Rashi explains (v. 14) that everything was created on the first day, and merely “fixed” on subsequent days. From this it follows that God’s utterances were only made on the subsequent days where it was necessary to change various details of the creation. Those details which did not need to be changed were thus not “mentioned” by God in His utterances.

This explains why, for example, God did not say, “Let there be fire,” since the nature of fire did not change after creation. This is in contrast to “earth” which was mentioned (on the second day and third day) since its nature changed when it began to emerge from the water and sprout vegetation.

One might ask: since the above concept is crucial to our understanding of the creation story, why did Rashi not mention it at the beginning of his commentary when he describes the events of the first day?

The reason why Rashi only mentions this concept here for the first time is because there has been no indication in scripture up to this point that the entire creation was already in existence on the first day. God said, “Let there be light... Let the earth be covered, etc.” The nature of fire did not change after creation. This is in contrast to “earth” which was mentioned (on the second day and third day) since its nature changed when it began to emerge from the water and sprout vegetation.

That is to say, verse 14 forces us to reconsider our understanding of verse 1. Initially we presumed that only skies and earth were created on the first day and the other details were added later; but on reading verse 14 we realize that God also created “their contents” on the first day, and merely fixed them in place during the rest of the week.

(Cited from Sichos Shabbos Bereishis 5734, Likutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 469)
God said, “The luminaries shall be positioned in the firmament of the skies to separate between the day and the night! They will serve as omens (of bad events, when there is an eclipse, and will determine the time of the Jewish) festivals, (and the sun and moon will define) the days and years! They will (also) act as luminaries in the firmament of the skies to shed light upon the earth!” —and that is what happened.

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

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

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

You touch upon the question of whether the sun revolves around the earth or vice versa, in view of the fact that you heard from a college student that “the truth is that the earth revolves around the sun.” It greatly surprises me that, according to your letter, the student declared that science has resolved that the earth revolves around the sun. The surprising thing is that a person making such a declaration would be about one half a century behind the times inssofar as the position of modern science is concerned. For it is approximately one half a century ago that the theory of Relativity was expounded, which was accepted by all scientists as the basis for all the branches of science. One of the basic elements of this theory is that when two bodies in space are in motion relative to one another (actually the theory was initiated on the basis of the movements of stars, planets, the earth, etc.), science declares with “absolute certainty” that from the scientific point of view, both possibilities are equally valid, namely that the earth revolves around the sun, or the sun revolves around the earth.

An essential point in the above conclusion is that it is not based on a lack of more definitive knowledge, but this is the inevitable conclusion based upon the present position of science, namely that in principle it is impossible that it could be scientifically proven which of the two, the sun or the earth, revolves around the other.

Needless to say, any particular scientist, like any individual, is entitled to his own opinion as to which alternative he prefers, or that he simply is inclined to believe in one rather than in the other. However, this is only an expression of a personal preference which any individual human being is entitled to. But it would not be true to say that science has resolved the question in favor of one school of thought against the other. To be sure, there were scientists who made such declarations over one half century ago, as mentioned above, and this provides at least some explanation why the textbooks in the elementary schools have still retained that outdated position. However, it is surprising that a college student, who has already passed through high school and has entered college, and should therefore have some knowledge of the theory of Relativity, should attribute to science such an unscientific and obsolete statement.

To sum up the above, it is clear that where one says that it is possible to be a scientist and accept the idea that the sun revolves around the earth, and another one says that science rejects this idea (I emphasize the word science, as distinct from scientist, as a human being—no more, as mentioned above)—the first one has both his feet firmly on a modern scientific foundation, while the second one appears to have remained in the world and time of Copernicus.

(Excerpted from a letter written by the Rebbe on 23rd of Elul, 5723 [1962].)
What is the unique quality of the fifth day? (v. 20-23)

Talmud: Anybody born on the fifth day of the week will have a tendency to be kind, because fish and birds were created on this day and fish and birds do not need to work hard for their sustenance, but are fed purely by the kindness of God (Shabbos 156a and Rashi ibid.).
21 God created the large sea fish, all the creeping living creatures that the waters produced in swarms, according to their species, and all the winged birds according to their species.

God saw that it was good.

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

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

THE SIXTH DAY—ANIMALS & MAN

1:24 God said, “Let the earth produce living creatures according to their (various) species, cattle, creeping things and wild animals of the earth according to their (various) species!”—and that is what happened.

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

God saw that it was good.

26 God (consulted the Heavenly Court and) said, “Let us make man (Adam) in our mold, (intellectually endowed) like us, and (if he is worthy) let him rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the skies, over the cattle, over all the earth and over all the creatures that creep on the earth!”

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

28 God blessed them. God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth! (Let the man be responsible for) taking control of it! Rule over the fish of the sea, the birds of the skies and over all the wild animals that move upon the earth!”

THE LAST WORD

“BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY” (v. 28)

The first mitzvah in the Torah is to be fruitful and multiply (v. 28). To rear a child, to initiate him or her into the Jewish faith, to educate children in Torah and mitzvos—this is true nachas (satisfaction). Being childless, no matter how much freedom it allows, is no comparison.

One who fears that he will not be able to cope financially unless he uses birth control is assuming that he succeeds through his own efforts alone. True, Torah requires that man work to provide for his family, but it is a primary tenet of Judaism that all success comes from God, that His blessings give sustenance and not one’s own efforts alone. It is God who provides for all of His creatures; another mouth will not overburden Him.

Our Sages also explain that Mashiach will not come until all the souls have descended into this world (Yevamos 62a). Through having children the time of his coming is hastened. May it be speedily in our days.

(Tichas Shabbos Parshas Naso 5740, Rosh Chodesh Shevat 5741)
**CLASSIC QUESTIONS**

- **What were Adam and Chava allowed to eat?** (v. 29-30)

  **Rashi:** The Torah states that vegetable matter should be food, “for you, for all the wild animals etc.” (v. 29-30). I.e. [the Torah] equated cattle and the animals to man regarding the food that they were permitted to eat. He did not allow Adam and his wife to kill a creature and to eat its flesh. They were only permitted to eat the vegetation, as were the animals.

  Later, He permitted the sons of Noach to eat flesh, as it is written (9:3): “Every creeping thing that is alive, etc.” Like the green herbs, which I permitted to the first man, I have given you everything.

  (Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 25, p. 10ff.)

- **The Diet of Man and the Animals (v. 29-30)**

  **Rashi** writes, “The Torah equated cattle and the animals to man regarding the food that they were permitted to eat,” that they were only allowed to eat vegetation, and not meat.

  The following points, however, remain to be clarified:

  a.) **Rashi’s commentary to the Torah was written to explain the simple meaning of scripture, i.e. information which is crucial for a basic understanding of the verses. What question is Rashi answering?**

  b.) The Torah states explicitly, that “I have hereby given you every plant...and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit! They shall be food for you” (v. 29-30). From the fact that God makes no mention of meat, it is obvious that man was required to be a vegetarian. Why does Rashi feel it necessary to prove this by comparing man to animals?

  c.) **What exactly is meant by the comparison, “The Torah equated cattle and the animals to man regarding the food that they were permitted to eat”?**

  d.) **Rashi** writes that, “He did not allow Adam and his wife to kill a creature and to eat its flesh,” which suggests that they were allowed to eat meat from an animal that died by itself, or was killed by another animal. What led **Rashi** to this conclusion?

- **The Explanation**

  On reading verses 29 and 30, **Rashi** was troubled by two questions:

  a.) **Of what relevance is the diet of Adam and Chava to the account of the creation of the world?**

  b.) **Why did God inform Adam and Chava about the diet of the animals?**

  Due to the force of these questions, **Rashi** came to the conclusion that the Torah could not merely be teaching us some details of dietary laws that pertain to man and animals (as the commentators suggest—see “Classic Questions”). Rather, the Torah clarifies here the importance and priority of man above the other creations:
29 God said, “I have hereby given you every plant that reproduces by seed that is upon the surface of the entire earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit! They shall be food for you, for all the wild animals of the earth, for all the birds of the skies, and for everything which moves upon the earth that is alive! The food (for humans and animals) shall be plant vegetation (only)!”—and that is what happened.

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

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

The Seventh Day—God Rests from Work

The skies, the earth and all their numerous components were completed.

On the seventh day, God completed His work that He had made. On the seventh day, He rested from all His work that He had done.

Classic Questions

When did God finish working? (v. 2)

Rashi: Rabbi Shimon said: A man of flesh and blood, who cannot judge his times and his moments, must add some time from the week to Shabbos. God, who can judge His times and His moments, entered a hairsbreadth into Shabbos, and it appeared as if He completed the work on that day.

Another explanation: What was the world lacking? Rest. When Shabbos came, rest came. The work was completed and finished.

Chizkuni: The verse states that God only finished working on Shabbos, which seems to suggest that some of the work was carried out on Shabbos itself. However, in truth, it only appeared that God finished the work on Shabbos. For on Friday it was not yet clear whether God had finished working, or whether He was going to do more work the following day. Only on Shabbos did it become apparent that God had finished working.

Ibn Ezra: Thus, the verse should not be translated, “On the seventh day, God finished his work,” but rather, “By the seventh day, God finished his work.”

Sforno: God actually finished work at the beginning of the seventh day, but He only worked for an infinitesimally small moment, as our Sages expressed with the term “with a hairsbreadth.”

Did God work on Shabbos? (v. 2)

Rashi’s comment to verse 2 appears to contradict itself. First he writes that God’s work activities “entered a hairsbreadth into Shabbos,” which suggests that, for a miniscule amount of time, God was actually working on Shabbos [c.f. Sforno]. But then, Rashi states that it only “appeared as if He completed the work on that day” [c.f. Chizkuni].

Both of these interpretations are difficult to accept since:

a.) How could God possibly work on Shabbos, even for a fraction of the day, when work is prohibited the entire day?

b.) If God only appeared to work on Shabbos, then why does the Torah state that “on the seventh day, God completed His work,” when in truth He completed it on the sixth day?

Rashi’s First Interpretation

The Torah appears to be extremely ambiguous about the precise point when the creation was completed. First we read that on the sixth day, “God saw everything that He had made...The skies, the earth and all their multitudes were completed” (1:31-2:1). But then, the Torah continues that it was only “on the seventh day” that “God completed His work that He had made” (v. 2).

So, when did God actually finish, on the sixth day or the seventh?

To answer this question, Rashi cites the teaching of Rabbi Shimon, that God can perform acts with such extreme precision that he is able to enter a hairsbreadth into Shabbos, “entering” to do work without actually transgressing Shabbos. This explains why the Torah states, “on the seventh day, God completed His work that He had made,” (despite the fact that “the skies, the earth and all their multitudes were completed,” on
the sixth day), because God did in fact carry out a small amount of work on the seventh day. Nevertheless, it was such a miniscule amount of work that it did not constitute a desecration of Shabbos.

To illustrate this point Rashi described it as a “hairsbreadth” of work, since a single hair is virtually imperceptible on its own, and only becomes noticeable when combined with other hairs. Similarly, the work that God did on Shabbos was so minuscule it was totally imperceptible.

Nevertheless, Rashi writes that it still “appeared as if He completed the work on that day”—despite the fact that only a minuscule amount of work was done on the seventh day—since, technically speaking, the work was finished then.

**Rashi’s Second Interpretation**

In the final analysis however, the above explanation is not completely satisfying since:

a.) The verse, “on the seventh day, God completed His work that He had made” is rendered somewhat non-literally, to read, “in the first few moments of the seventh day, God completed his work, etc.”

b.) The above statement still contradicts the declaration in verses 1:31 and 2:1 that, “God saw everything that He had made...The skies, the earth and all their multitudes were completed,” already on the sixth day.

Therefore, Rashi brought a second explanation: “What was the world lacking? Rest. When Shabbos came, rest came. The work was completed and finished.” I.e. the creation of the world was indeed complete on the sixth day, and the only additional “creation” that was added on the seventh day was “rest.”

However, this interpretation is rather difficult to accept since, at the literal level, “rest” is not a type of creation or work, but rather, the absence of work. It is thus inconsistent with the verse which states, “On the seventh day, God completed His work that He had made,” for it turns out that God did not do any real work on the seventh day.

Since this interpretation is less plausible than the first, Rashi cited it last.

**WHAT WORK DID GOD DO?**

Returning to the first interpretation of Rashi, we are left with the question: What work did God do for that momentary instant of time during the first Shabbos of creation? And why was it not considered to be a transgression of Shabbos?

On the sixth day God created only man and the animals. In chapter 3, verse 8, Rashi writes that Adam and Chava sinned during the tenth hour of the day, from which it is obvious that they must have been created before this time. Thus, in the remaining period of the day God would have been completing His other work of that day; creating the animals (which He had begun before the creation of man), “establishing their form and stature”(Rashi to 1:25). Therefore, we can presume that the “hairsbreadth” of work during Shabbos signified the completion of the animal kingdom.

Since the work done on Shabbos was merely the **completion** of acts carried out during the week, it was not considered to be a desecration of Shabbos.

One might ask: One of the forbidden types of work on Shabbos is **makeh bepatish**, completing the formation of an object with a final blow of the hammer. From this we see that even the completion of work is forbidden on Shabbos, so how could God complete His formation of the animals on Shabbos?

It could be argued that a person is only liable for **makeh bepatish** when...
3 God blessed the seventh day (that a double portion of manna should descend in its honor) and He sanctified it (that no manna should descend on Shabbos itself), because on that (day) God rested from all His work that He had created, (for the remaining work which was left) to be done (on Shabbos, He carried out on Friday instead, by doubling His workload).

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

 DETAILS OF THE CREATION OF MAN & WOMAN

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

3 (The vegetation had only germinated within the ground, but) none of the trees of the field were yet (sprouting) on the (surface of the) earth, nor had any vegetation of the field yet grown, because God, Almighty God, had not brought rain upon the earth (since) there was no man to (appreciate the rain and) work the soil.

6 (God caused) a mist to ascend from the earth (moistening the clouds in order to) soak the entire

C L A S S I C Q U E S T I O N S

● Why had God not sent rain? (v. 5)
  RASHI: He had not caused it to rain, because there was no man to work the soil, and no one recognized the benefit of rain. But when man came and recognized that it is a necessity for the world, he prayed for it. Then rain came down, and the trees and the herbs sprouted (See “Sparks of Chasidus”).

T O R A S M E N A C H E M

Why did God deem it necessary to continue working all the way up to Shabbos, and even to extend His work by a hairsbreadth into Shabbos? What was gained by this feat of precision?

God was teaching a lesson to mankind about the preciousness of time. So long as a person has the opportunity to carry out his Divinely ordained mission in this world, he should utilize every moment in order to realize its fullest potential, pushing every allocation of time to its utmost limits.

Alternatively: a person might bemoan the fact that we are living in such a spiritually desensitized generation. Gone are the days of the prophets and Talmudic sages, when the Jewish people served God with the utmost fervor! What could our lowly generation possibly achieve beyond the accomplishments of our ancestors?

The answer to this question can be derived from God’s conduct when creating the world. Just like we see that every moment was precious to God, to the extent that he continued working to the very last opportunity—likewise the final work of the very last generations is of paramount importance. (Likutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 24ff.)

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why had God not sent rain? (v. 5)

RASHI: He had not caused it to rain, because there was no man to work the soil, and no one recognized the benefit of rain. But when man came and recognized that it is a necessity for the world, he prayed for it. Then rain came down, and the trees and the herbs sprouted (See “Sparks of Chasidus”).

T ORAS M E N A C HEM

Why did God deem it necessary to continue working all the way up to Shabbos, and even to extend His work by a hairsbreadth into Shabbos? What was gained by this feat of precision?

God was teaching a lesson to mankind about the preciousness of time. So long as a person has the opportunity to carry out his Divinely ordained mission in this world, he should utilize every moment in order to realize its fullest potential, pushing every allocation of time to its utmost limits.

Alternatively: a person might bemoan the fact that we are living in such a spiritually desensitized generation. Gone are the days of the prophets and Talmudic sages, when the Jewish people served God with the utmost fervor! What could our lowly generation possibly achieve beyond the accomplishments of our ancestors?

The answer to this question can be derived from God’s conduct when creating the world. Just like we see that every moment was precious to God, to the extent that he continued working to the very last opportunity—likewise the final work of the very last generations is of paramount importance. (Likutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 24ff.)

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why had God not sent rain? (v. 5)

RASHI: He had not caused it to rain, because there was no man to work the soil, and no one recognized the benefit of rain. But when man came and recognized that it is a necessity for the world, he prayed for it. Then rain came down, and the trees and the herbs sprouted (See “Sparks of Chasidus”).

T ORAS M E N A C HEM

Why did God deem it necessary to continue working all the way up to Shabbos, and even to extend His work by a hairsbreadth into Shabbos? What was gained by this feat of precision?

God was teaching a lesson to mankind about the preciousness of time. So long as a person has the opportunity to carry out his Divinely ordained mission in this world, he should utilize every moment in order to realize its fullest potential, pushing every allocation of time to its utmost limits.

Alternatively: a person might bemoan the fact that we are living in such a spiritually desensitized generation. Gone are the days of the prophets and Talmudic sages, when the Jewish people served God with the utmost fervor! What could our lowly generation possibly achieve beyond the accomplishments of our ancestors?

The answer to this question can be derived from God’s conduct when creating the world. Just like we see that every moment was precious to God, to the extent that he continued working to the very last opportunity—likewise the final work of the very last generations is of paramount importance. (Likutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 24ff.)

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why had God not sent rain? (v. 5)

RASHI: He had not caused it to rain, because there was no man to work the soil, and no one recognized the benefit of rain. But when man came and recognized that it is a necessity for the world, he prayed for it. Then rain came down, and the trees and the herbs sprouted (See “Sparks of Chasidus”).

T ORAS M E N A C HEM

Why did God deem it necessary to continue working all the way up to Shabbos, and even to extend His work by a hairsbreadth into Shabbos? What was gained by this feat of precision?

God was teaching a lesson to mankind about the preciousness of time. So long as a person has the opportunity to carry out his Divinely ordained mission in this world, he should utilize every moment in order to realize its fullest potential, pushing every allocation of time to its utmost limits.

Alternatively: a person might bemoan the fact that we are living in such a spiritually desensitized generation. Gone are the days of the prophets and Talmudic sages, when the Jewish people served God with the utmost fervor! What could our lowly generation possibly achieve beyond the accomplishments of our ancestors?

The answer to this question can be derived from God’s conduct when creating the world. Just like we see that every moment was precious to God, to the extent that he continued working to the very last opportunity—likewise the final work of the very last generations is of paramount importance. (Likutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 24ff.)

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

Why had God not sent rain? (v. 5)

RASHI: He had not caused it to rain, because there was no man to work the soil, and no one recognized the benefit of rain. But when man came and recognized that it is a necessity for the world, he prayed for it. Then rain came down, and the trees and the herbs sprouted (See “Sparks of Chasidus”).

T ORAS M E N A C HEM

Why did God deem it necessary to continue working all the way up to Shabbos, and even to extend His work by a hairsbreadth into Shabbos? What was gained by this feat of precision?

God was teaching a lesson to mankind about the preciousness of time. So long as a person has the opportunity to carry out his Divinely ordained mission in this world, he should utilize every moment in order to realize its fullest potential, pushing every allocation of time to its utmost limits.

Alternatively: a person might bemoan the fact that we are living in such a spiritually desensitized generation. Gone are the days of the prophets and Talmudic sages, when the Jewish people served God with the utmost fervor! What could our lowly generation possibly achieve beyond the accomplishments of our ancestors?

The answer to this question can be derived from God’s conduct when creating the world. Just like we see that every moment was precious to God, to the extent that he continued working to the very last opportunity—likewise the final work of the very last generations is of paramount importance. (Likutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 24ff.)
How was man formed? (v. 7)

**RASHI:** God gathered soil from the entire earth from all four directions, so that wherever man would die, the earth would accept him, so that he would be able to endure. In this way man would recognize the kindness which God really was, and then He placed him in the haven of the Garden.

**Another explanation:** God took soil from the place of which it is said, “You shall make Me an altar of earth” (Shemos 20:21), to symbolize that it [the earth of the altar] should be an atonement for him, so that he would be able to endure.

**When did God create the Garden of Eden? (v. 8)**

**TALMUD:** Seven things were [intended to be] created before the creation of the world: Torah, Teshuvah, the Garden of Eden, Mashiach, Gehinom, God’s throne of glory, the Holy Temple and the name of Mashiach (Pesachim 54a; Nedarim 39b).

**MIDRASH:** Man was created on the sixth day of creation, and the Garden of Eden on the third day (Bereishis Rabah ch. 15).

Why didn’t God create man in the Garden of Eden? (v. 8)

**CHIZKUNI:** Because then man would have thought that the entire world was as beautiful as the Garden of Eden. Therefore, God first created man outside the Garden, to see how unpleasant the world really was, and then He placed him in the haven of the Garden.

**RADAK:** In this way man would recognize the kindness which God performed for him by placing him in the Garden.

TORAS MENACHEM

It does appear therefore that God “transgressed” a rabbinic law by carrying out part of a creative act on Shabbos.

However, in the final analysis, God did not transgress Shabbos at all. For the rabbinic prohibition of performing half a creative act on Shabbos only applies when each half is a significant proportion of the total act. In our case however, God only performed a miniscule portion of the act on Shabbos (a hairsbreadth), and was thus totally “excepted.” (Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 24ff.)
surface of the ground (so that man should be created from moist earth). 7 God, Almighty God, formed man out of soil from (the four corners of) the Earth. He blew into his nostrils a living soul, and man became a living, (thinking and speaking) being.

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

10 A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it separated and became the source of four riverheads. 11 The name of one is Pishon (the Nile), which surrounds the entire land of Chavilah, where there is gold. 12 The gold of that land is good. Crystal and onyx (are found) there. 13 The name of the second river is Gichon, which surrounds the entire land of Kush. 14 The name of the third river is

---

**CLASSIC QUESTIONS**

- Why did the four rivers receive their names? (v. 10-14)

  **Rashi:** Pishon is the Nile, the river of Egypt. Because its waters are blessed, and they rise and water the land, it is called Pishon, as in the verse, “and their riders shall increase” (Habakkuk 1:8). Another explanation: It is called Pishon because it causes flax to grow, as is stated in reference to Egypt, “And those who work at flax shall be ashamed” (Isaiah 19:9).

  Gichon flowed and roared, and its roaring was very great, as in the verse: “If an ox gores (יהב)” (Shemos 21:28), for he gores and roars while going along.

  Chidekel received its name because its waters are sharp and light.

  Pras received its name because its waters are fruitful and increase abundantly, and make people healthy. It is the most important of all the rivers because it is mentioned in conjunction with the Land of Israel.

---

**TORAS MENACHEM**

1. Why does Rashi not explain why Adam was created outside the Garden of Eden, only to be brought there later? (c.f. Chizkuni, Radak)

2. In his second interpretation regarding how man was formed, Rashi writes that man was created on the site of the Altar. This is a fifteen-day journey by foot to the Euphrates River (see Mishnah, Tannim 1:3), which is in the proximity of the Garden of Eden (see v. 14). Why does Rashi not make any mention of Adam’s miraculous transportation to the Garden of Eden, where he covered a journey of fifteen days within one day?

---

**Sparks of Chasidus**

“He Blew into his Nostrils a Living Soul” (v. 7)

- God created the world with Divine “speech.” Man’s soul however, was “blown” by God into his body (v. 7). When a person blows, he exhales from deep within his body. This analogy illustrates that the soul contains a deeper aspect of Divinity than the rest of the world, since it was “blown” out from God’s “innards” (so to speak) rather than the more effortless method of speech.

- In the case of animals (and plants) God created the soul and body together as a single unit. In creating man though, God first created a lifeless body into which He later infused a “soul of life.” This is because the soul of man is so high in comparison to the body that it could not be formed as a single unit. Rather, a separate act of God was required to achieve the remarkable union between them.

(Based on Tanya ch. 2; Sefer Hama’amim 5714, p. 126)

---

**Names of the Four Rivers (v. 10-14)**

Why did Rashi feel the need to explain the significance behind the name of each river (cited in verses 10-14)? Rashi does not explain every name that is mentioned in the Torah, so presumably when he does offer an explanation it must be for a specific reason. What could that be in our case?

Rashi was troubled by the following question: since man had only just been created, and there were no other people around to talk to in any case, what is the point of naming the rivers? Surely a name is only required to communicate with another person?

Thus, on reading the verse, “A river flowed out of Eden to water the Garden, and from there it separated” (v. 10), Rashi came to the conclusion that the Torah must be adding these details about the various rivers, to stress the greatness of the Garden of Eden. Therefore he explains how each of the names enhances the Torah’s praise of the Garden of Eden, indicating how four mighty rivers arose from this sublime location.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Bereishis 5729)
CLASSIC QUESTIONS

How did God bring man to the Garden of Eden? (v. 15)

Rashi: God enticed him with pleasant words and persuaded him to enter.

Gur Aryeh: Why would man need to be convinced to enter such a wonderful place as the Garden of Eden? Because man did not know how great the Garden of Eden was and he needed to be informed by God. Thus, the “pleasant words” with which God convinced man to enter were merely a description of the garden.

Why was it “not good” for man to be alone? (v. 18)

Rashi: Because people might say, “There are two dominions! God alone rules over the upper worlds and He has no partner, and man is the sole ruler of the lower worlds, and he has no partner.”

Why was woman created “opposite” man? (v. 18)

Rashi: If he is worthy, she will be a helpmate. If he is not worthy, she will be against him, to fight him.

Tora menachem

Man’s Entry into the Garden of Eden (v. 15)

Rashi writes that God persuaded Adam to enter the Garden of Eden with “pleasant words.” But why did he need to be persuaded to enter the garden, which was the most desirable of all places in the world? [See Gur Aryeh].

The answer to this question is to be found at the end of the verse, “God...settled him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate it and to guard it,” i.e. he was placed there to carry out a Divine mission. Adam was sensitive to the awesome responsibility that carrying out God’s command entailed, so he was reluctant to enter. Consequently, it was necessary for God to persuade him with “pleasant words,” describing the pleasant quality of Divine service.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Bereishis 5745)

The Need for Man’s Partner (v. 18)

Even a child who is studying Chumash for the first time understands that his father depends on the assistance and moral support of his mother. Consequently, when he reads verse 15, “It is not good that man is alone. I will make him a helpmate opposite him,” the matter is self-understood. What forced Rashi to conclude that the Torah is speaking here of an ideological fear that “people might say, ‘There are two dominions,’” when he could have written more simply that man needs the physical and emotional support of a partner?

The Explanation

If the Torah was informing us here that woman was created to provide support for man, the verse would have stated, “It is not good for man to be alone” (לא אשת אך מארח לו). In fact, however, the Torah...
Chidekel, which flows to the east of Ashur (Assyria), and the fourth river is Pras (Euphrates).

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

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

17 God, Almighty God, said, “It is not good that man is alone. I will make him a helpmate opposite him.”

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

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

● How did Adam know the names of the animals? (v. 19-20)

Minchah Be'lah: A Hebrew name indicates an entity’s essential qualities. In his great wisdom, Adam was able to discern the correct name for each species upon observing its nature.

Shaloh: Adam’s wisdom here was that merely through seeing the physical animal he was able to determine its spiritual source.

● Did Adam name the fish too? (v. 19)

Midrash: Yes. Even though the Torah makes no mention of the fact, Adam actually named the fish (Midrash Chaser Veyatir).

Chizkuni: No. If God had brought the fish out of the sea to Adam, they would have died.

TORAS MENACHEM

God’s Solution

However, even after the creation of woman this problem seems to remain since, in the final analysis, man was created alone, and remained that way for a period of time before he was joined by woman. Couldn’t that give the impression that man is some type of god?

This problem is solved by Rashi’s second comment that, “If he is worthy, she will be a helpmate. If he is not worthy, she will be against him, to fight him.” I.e. man will always be dependent on the support of woman to the extent that (if he is not worthy) they will fight with each other. Since he will constantly feel dependent on another, and he will be aware of the potential conflict that could arise with his partner at any moment, it will surely be fixed in man’s mind that he is not a self-sufficient being.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 5, p. 20)

Naming of the Animals (v. 19-20)

The naming of the animals by Adam could be understood in one of two ways:

a.) It was for the benefit of man, enabling him to distinguish one species from another.

b.) It was for the benefit of the creatures being named. (This is because a Hebrew name indicates an entity’s spiritual source (see Shaloh), so by calling each species by its correct name Adam illuminated the animal’s spiritual source within its physical body).

It could be argued that this, in fact, is the basis of the dispute between the Midrash and Chizkuni as to whether Adam named the fish:

Chizkuni understood that the naming was for the benefit of man. Thus, there was no need to name the fish which are not observable by man, as they inhabit the sea and die as soon as they leave the water.

The Midrash understood that the naming was for the benefit of the creatures being named. Consequently, the Midrash came to the conclusion that Adam would have named the fish too, as it was for their benefit to do so.
An Alternative Argument

Alternatively, it could be argued that both the Midrash and Chizkuni agreed that Adam named the animals for their own benefit. Rather, they differed over the more subtle implications of the naming process:

The story of Adam naming the animals is recorded at a significant junction in the Chumash. Up to this point we have read solely about the creation of the world; and from here onwards we begin to read about the efforts—and transient failings—of man, to carry out God’s will in the world, in order to “cultivate it and to guard it.”

The question therefore arises: At which side of the “junction” does the account of Adam’s naming of the species fall? Does this naming represent the completion of the creative process, where each living entity was finally assigned its own name? Or are we reading here of the first act of Divine service by man? Let us discuss each of these two avenues:

a.) Naming as an act of creation

The creation process witnessed the differentiation of primordial matter into different materials and creatures, i.e. a transition from unity (Godliness) to multiplicity (creation). The act of naming was the final stage of bringing multiplicity to the world, as each general category of animals became distinguished into specific species. Since multiplicity conceals God’s presence—for in truth there is nothing but the one God—the process of naming the species endowed them with a greater sensation of individuality and separateness from God.

In this respect, there is a distinction between aquatic life and land animals. Fish die as soon as they leave their natural habitat of water, since they are more self-sufficient and independent. Land animals, on the other hand, became distinguished into specific species. Since multiplicity conceals God’s presence, the act of naming the species endowed them with a greater sensation of individuality and separateness from God.
20 Man named all the cattle and the birds of the skies and all the beasts of the field (and saw that each had a male and female counterpart). Man, however, did not find any helpmate opposite him (so he complained to God).

21 God, Almighty God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon man, and he slept. He took (a piece from) one of his sides, and He sealed the flesh in its place. 22 God, Almighty God, built the side that He had taken from man into a woman, and He brought her to man. 23 Man said, “(After searching amongst all the animals and failing,) this time (I have found the) bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh. This shall be called ‘ishah’ (woman) because she was taken from ‘ish’ (man).” 24 Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother, and cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh (through their children).

**The Sin of the Tree of Knowledge**

2:25 They were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed (since they had no evil inclination, but their nakedness aroused the interest of the serpent).

3 1 The serpent was cunning, more than all the beasts of the field that God, Almighty God, had made. It said to the woman, “Did God perhaps say, ‘You shall not eat of any of the trees of the garden’?”

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

**Toras Menachem**

Fish, by contrast, show the underlying unity of creation to a greater degree, for as soon as they are separated from their “source,” they die. This is a physical expression of the spiritual reality that no entity is independent of God.

According to the above approach—that the naming of the animals was for the sake of increasing multiplicity—there was no need to name the fish, since multiplicity is not particularly pronounced in aquatic life. Thus Chizkuni, who adopted the approach that the fish were not named by Adam, alluded to the above reasoning with the words, “If God would have brought the fish out of the sea to Adam they would have died.”

b.) Naming as an act of Divine service.

According to the second approach above, that man’s naming of the animals was the first act of Divine service, it follows that the naming must have accomplished the purpose of all Divine service—to make the world more subservient to God. This was achieved through the naming, which connected the spiritual source of each creature with its existence on the physical plane.

This concurs with the view of the Midrash that the fish were named too, since all creatures would benefit from such a spiritual revelation

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 35, p. 1ff)

**Sparks of Chasidus**

Three points require clarification:

a.) Why did God not want man to “be like God knowing good and evil” (v. 5)? Surely, God is utterly benevolent, and He would want His creations to share some of His exalted wisdom? After all, man was created in the image of God.

b.) Even if man sinned, why could he not eat from the Tree of Life and live forever (v. 22)? Surely if man would “stretch out his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat (from it, and he will be able to) live forever” (ibid.), it would eliminate the “death” that was imposed by the sin?

c.) The fact that man was expelled from the Garden of Eden is understood, since he abused his right to remain there by eating from the tree. But why was Adam then told to “cultivate the earth” (v. 23)?

God did not want man to become aware of the concept of evil, because man is unable to remain totally aloof from things that he comes to understand. Man’s nature is to inquire, to empathize and to interact. When he encounters a new phenomenon, he wonders how it might affect his life. He begins to measure the idea according to the established norms of his conscious existence, and he allows his emotions to explore the new entity to see if he has discovered a new “love” or a new “hate.” In short, when a person encounters something utterly new, he investigates it with the totality of his personality. From that point on, the concept leaves an indelible mark on his life.

So, God was aware that if man was to come to “know evil,” the results would be disastrous, for in the process of his exploratory investigations, man would inevitably become attached to it.

(continued on page 23)
When did the Sin of the Tree of Knowledge occur? (v. 8)

Rashi: The verse states that they heard God’s voice in the “direction of the day.” This refers to the direction in which the sun sets, which is the west. For towards evening the sun is in the west, and they of the day.” This refers to the direction in which the sun sets, which was not necessarily the intention of the Talmud.

Talmud: The day on which Adam was created consisted of twelve hours. During the first hour his dust was gathered; the second hour was judged and the twelfth hour he was banished from the Garden of Eden and went on his way (Sanhedrin 38b).

Classic Questions

When did the Sin Occur? (v. 8)

Rashi’s commentary is not a mere anthology of Talmudic and Midrashic teachings. Rather, as Rashi declares himself, his commentary was written exclusively to: “explain the literal meaning of scripture” (comment to Bereishis 3:8). Consequently, when Rashi does cite a Talmudic teaching, it would be a mistake to presume that he is citing in the words in the same context that they are brought in the Talmud itself, for the Talmud does not confine itself exclusively to literal interpretations. In fact, the large body of Talmudic and Midrashic commentary to the Torah is predominantly allegorical and non-literal. Thus, even when Rashi uses a Talmudic phrase, he does so in the context of his own literalist commentary, which was not necessarily the intention of the Talmud.
4 The serpent said to the woman, “You will surely not die. 5 God (told you not to eat it, because He) knows that on the day that you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God (with the ability to create worlds and) knowing good and evil.”

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

7 The “eyes” (of the intellects) of both of them were opened, and they realized that they were naked (of mitzvos, having ignored the only command they had been given). They sewed together fig leaves (from the tree) and made themselves loincloths.

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

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

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

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

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

In our case, Rashi writes that man sinned “in the tenth hour,” which at first glance would seem to refer to the Talmudic teaching that he sinned in the tenth hour of the sixth day of creation (see Talmud). However, at the literal level of Torah interpretation to which Rashi always confines himself, it could not possibly be argued that man sinned on the sixth day, for a number of reasons:

a.) At the end of the sixth day, the Torah states, “God saw everything that He had made, and look! It was very good” (1:31). Now, if the sixth day had been witness to man’s sin which brought i.) death, ii.) the labor of childbirth and iii.) the toils of earning a living to the world (see v. 16-19, below), God would surely not have said, “It was very good”?

b.) It is reasonable to presume that Adam and Chava were of sufficiently strong moral caliber not to have stumbled in sin as soon as they were created, and the serpent would surely have taken some time to persuade Chava to eat from the tree. So at the literal level, it is extremely unlikely that all the events described here in chapter three occurred in the space of a few hours.

c.) Furthermore, the story is recorded after the story of creation has been completed, and Rashi gives no indication that it occurred beforehand, on the sixth day.

Thus, when man sinned and became attached to evil, two major problems arose:

a.) If man were now to live forever, he would cause evil to be perpetuated eternally. For since he had now incorporated evil into his system, eternal life would provide an “eternal host” for man’s newly found parasite. Therefore, God decreed that man must die, and prevented him from eating from the Tree of Life which would return him to his previous, immortal status.

b.) A further, more serious problem was how to correct the event which had occurred. The boundaries between good and evil had become blurred and man found himself attracted to two mutually exclusive forces. His sin had generated cosmic repercussions in the upper realms, causing good and evil to coalesce, resulting in a corrupted spirituality which had penetrated the entire universe, right down to the physical world.

The solution: “God, Almighty God, sent him out of the Garden of Eden, to cultivate the earth from which he had been taken” (v. 23).

Man had mixed good and evil throughout the spiritual and physical worlds, so he was sent out to correct the damage that he had caused. Since evil had penetrated the actual earth, man was given the task of refining the entire world. By performing the appropriate action with each “piece” of physicality, he would set free the kernel of good within it, allowing it to return to its holy source. To correct the world which he had profaned, man was required to “pick up the pieces”—literally—by separating with his own hands the good and evil which he had caused to be mixed together.

(Based on Torah Ohr Sc 16; Toras Chaim Bereishis 30a ff)
13 God, Almighty God, said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent misled me, and I ate.”

14 God, Almighty God, said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you are (now) cursed more than all the cattle and more than all the wild animals of the field! You (will have your legs cut off so that you) shall walk on your belly, and you shall eat soil all the days of your life! I shall place hatred between you and between the woman (you desired), and between your descendants and between her descendants. (Man) will crush you (on the) head, and you will bite his heel.”

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

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

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

20 The man named his wife Chava, because she was the mother of all life.

21 God, Almighty God, made for Adam and for his wife skin-tight garments (alternatively: garments of animal skins), and He clothed them.

**Expulsion from the Garden of Eden**

3:22

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

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

Thus, when Rashi encountered the Talmudic teaching that Adam and Chava sinned during the afternoon of the sixth day, he accepted the first premise (that they sinned in the afternoon), for this is indicated by scripture in verse 8; but he rejected the second premise that they sinned on the sixth day, which is not indicated in scripture at all, and on the contrary, is incompatible with a literal rendering of the verses.

Instead, Rashi understood that the sin took place at some later date.

(Based on Sichas Shabbos Bereishis 5749)
Who said, “I have acquired a man (as a partner) with God”? (v. 1)

Tikunei Zohar: This was said by Adam (99b).

Vilna Ga’on: There must a printing mistake in the Tikunei Zohar, as it is clearly implicit from the Torah that Chava said these words.

What kind of offering did Kayin Bring? (v. 3)

Rashi: He brought from the poorest crops. The Midrash says that it was flax seed. (An alternative explanation: from whatever fruit came to hand neither good nor choice).

Mizrahi: One is forced to conclude that he brought the poorest of his crops, otherwise it is difficult to understand why God rejected the offering.

Sicile Chachamim: Rashi brings the Midrash that Kayin’s offering was flax-seed because he is troubled why the verse says “fruit of the land” rather than the more simple expression, “he brought an offering from the land.”

The term “fruit” of the earth implies that it was a fruit similar to the land. The only species which could be termed both “fruit” and “of the land” is flax, because: a.) The Talmud teaches that any species whose stem does not disintegrate in the winter (such as flax) is termed “of the earth” (Brabchos 40a). b.) It is also referred to as a fruit in the verse, “and she hid them in the stalks of flax” (Joshua 6:26), where flax is referred to as an eitz (fruit tree).

Gur Aryeh: If Kayin was attempting to express gratitude to God by bringing an offering, why would he intentionally choose his poorest produce? Kayin recognized that his power rested with the Ayin Hara (evil eye), and so he brought a poor offering in an attempt to strengthen this evil power. But God, who is good, turned to Hevel’s offering.

Why did Hevel not endeavor to bring a better species, such as an ox? He also felt the need to compete with Kayin, so he brought a sheep, which produces wool that is an alternative to flax.

Bachaye: Hevel brought the most inferior type of cattle, demonstrating his lack of interest in worldly matters.
Kayin and Hevel

The man knew his wife Chava (before the sin), and she conceived and bore Kayin (together with a twin girl. When he was born) she said, “I have acquired (‘KaNisi’) a man (as a partner) with God.” She gave birth again to his brother Hevel (together with two twin girls).

Hevel was a shepherd of flocks (because he did not want to work with the land, which was cursed), and Kayin was a worker of the land.

It was at the end of (a number of) days, that Kayin brought some of the (worst) fruit of the land as an offering to God. Hevel also offered from the firstborn of his flocks, from their fattest ones.

God turned to Hevel and to his offering (and it was consumed by a fire from heaven), but to Kayin and to his offering He did not turn. Kayin became very angry, and his face was dejected.

God said to Kayin, “Why are you angry, and why is your face dejected?” Surely, if you improve yourself you will be forgiven? If you do not improve yourself, however, then (your) sin is crouching (in wait) at the entrance (of your grave. The evil inclination) is longing (to entice you), but you can rule over it (if you want).”

Kayin (started an argument) with Hevel his brother (to find a pretext to kill him). Then, when they were in the field, Kayin assaulted Hevel his brother and killed him.

God said to Kayin, “Where is Hevel your brother?” He said, “I don’t know. Am I my brother’s guardian?”

(Toras Menachem)

Who Named Kayin (v. 1)

The Vilna Ga’on argues that it was Chava who said, “I have acquired a man with God,” upon Kayin’s birth (and our text of the Tikunei Zohar which states that Adam said these words is incorrect).

However, this assertion is problematic, since the entire section in the

Sparks of Chasidus

Clearly, both Kayin and Hevel wished to thank God and make a statement of His absolute unity with their offerings (v. 3-4), but it seems that they differed in their understanding of the term “unity.” Kayin understood that God’s unity is totally beyond the multiplicity found in the world. Thus, he picked the best of all species (flax), indicative of God’s greatness; but he paid no attention to the quality of the species, bringing the worst produce that he could find (Rashi to v. 3). He presumed that giving credence to the possibility of better and worse produce is not an appropriate offering to God, Who is totally beyond any distinction between “better” and “worse.”

However, his presumption was mistaken, as the ultimate expression of God’s unity is to show how He is One, within the multiplicity of the world. i.e. that every detail of creation, while it may be divided into better and worse, can nevertheless be elevated to God. Thus, Hevel was correct in understanding that the multiplicity of the world must be given credence, and so he was careful to offer the best of his chosen species.

(Tikunei Zohar speaks of Adam (and not Chava). It would thus appear that the text itself (which attributes the statement to Adam) is correct.

Nevertheless, we are left with the problem that according to Hebrew grammar the verse tells us that Chava said, “I have acquired a man (as a partner) with God,” when Kayin was born.

This could be resolved by a statement of Da’as Zekeinim, “from my teacher of blessed memory, I heard that their custom was that the man named the first child and the woman the second” (comm. to Bereishis 38:5). Thus, in our case, the Torah relates that Chava suggested the name Kayin, on the basis that “I have acquired (kanisi) a man with God,” and the Tikunei Zohar informs us of Adam’s approval, which finalized the name.

Kayin’s Offering (v. 3)

Sifsei Chachamim writes that Rashi was troubled by the rather elaborate expression, “fruit of the land.”

However, it appears unlikely that the term “fruit of the land” would trouble Rashi, as it is a commonplace expression of the Torah, e.g., “You shall take of the first of all the fruit of the land” (Devarim 26:2), and similarly, “I have brought the first fruits of the land” (ibid. 10). Thus, Rashi would not be bothered why the Torah used this expression.

Rashi’s Three comments

According to the first interpretation of Rashi that Kayin brought the worst fruits, it is difficult to understand why the Torah made no mention whatsoever of such an important detail.

Furthermore (as Gur Aryeh asks), Kayin surely brought the offering to show gratitude to God, so why would he bring from the worst produce? And, having offered the worst of his produce why would he have been so surprised when it was rejected by God, to the extent that, “Kayin became
very angry, and his face was dejected” [v 5]? Surely, there must have been some (mistaken) logic on the part of Kayin as to why God should have accepted the worst produce?

To answer these problems Rashi brings two further explanations: a.) It was flax-seed, and b.) It was whatever fruit came to hand. Let us examine these two interpretations in order.

The student of Rashi has learned already of the significance of flax. When the Torah describes how a river went out from Eden and divided into four, the verse states, "The name of one was [flax] grow." (Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 15, pp. 20-26)

Obviously, if a river is named after a product, it must be highly regarded. So from this comment of Rashi we can understand that although Kayin brought the worst flax, he nevertheless brought the worst of one of the best types of produce. Clearly, he understood that the most important element of the offering was the species, and in that respect he picked the best. Only, within that species itself, he brought the worst available. Hevel, on the other hand, did not endeavor to bring the best species (he only brought sheep, not oxen), but within that species he brought the very best: "firstborn" and "the fattest ones."

However, it still remains somewhat of a question why Kayin did not bring the best flax, if indeed he was trying to bring only the very best?

Thus (in many editions of Rashi) a further interpretation is brought, that Kayin merely brought whatever came to hand, neither the best nor the worst. According to this understanding, there is no question at all why Kayin would have been upset that God rejected his offering. However, it remains problematic why God indeed rejected the offering. Thus Rashi places this interpretation last, as it is the most troublesome.

Tomas Menachem

We can learn from all the above the extent to which hiddur (enhancement of a) mitzvah is important. Despite the fact that Kayin brought an offering from a highly-regarded species, nevertheless, since he did not take care to bring the best flax available (a hiddur within a hiddur) his actions were considered sinful.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 26)
Kayin was the first person to do teshuvah (return; repentance). Thus, God set him as an example for all future Ba’alei Teshuvah (penitents) (Bereishis Rabah 22:12-13; Midrash Tehillim 100).

Kayin’s teshuvah consisted of three practical phases:

a.) Confession. Kayin declared to God, “My sin is too great to bear” (v. 13). The Torah then states that, “Kayin left God’s presence” (v. 16), on which the Midrash comments that Kayin was rejoicing that his confession had been accepted by God (Bereishis Rabah ibid.).

b.) Exile. Rambam writes that one of the routes of teshuvah is for a person to send himself into exile, for this generates a spirit of humility within a person (Hilchos Teshuvah, 2:4). Thus we find that Kayin, “dwelt in the land of the wanderers” (v. 16).

c.) Rebound into Positive Action. There is a tremendous temptation for the Ba’al Teshuvah to remain low-spirited for the rest of his days. The mere thought of his past deeds, which cannot be erased from his mind, is sufficient to give him feelings of inferiority. Obviously, in the midst of such a mood he will find it difficult to be active within the world, being plagued by the eternal question, “Who am I to carry out a holy activity like this?”

Consequently, the challenge of the Ba’al Teshuvah is that when his teshuvah is complete, he must propel himself “outwards” into the world. He must free himself from his feelings of inferiority, and start to contribute constructively to the world in the most expansive manner possible.

Thus, we find that after doing teshuvah, Kayin propelled himself back into the world: a.) He fathered a son. b.) He built a city—an ambitious project aimed at repairing the world that he had damaged. And, furthermore, c.) “He named the city after his son’s name, Chanoch” (v. 17). I.e. Not only did he free himself from feelings of inferiority, he actually went to the opposite extreme and publicized his achievements boldly to the entire world.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 35, pp. 7-9)
and claimed that it was the form of such-and-such a star which had
these prophets made known a form which he had invented himself,
containing its form, in order that all people—including women,
Almighty had commanded them to serve such-and-such a star, to
did not deny the existence of God by saying that only such-and-such
of a king....This is the fundamental basis of idolatry....However, they

How did people come to worship idols? (v. 26)

RAMBAM: In the days of Enosh, people made a serious mistake, and
the counsel of the wise people degenerated into foolishness....Their
mistaken reasoning was that since God created the skies and spheres
as part of nature, and placed them on high, giving them dignity, and
since they (the skies and spheres) are servants who serve Him, it
would be appropriate to laud, glorify and honor them. [They argued
that] it is the will of the Almighty for man to make great and to dignify
those who make God great and honor Him, in the same way that a
king wants to honor the servants who serve him—such is the honor
of a king....This is the fundamental basis of idolatry....However, they
did not deny the existence of God by saying that only such-and-such
a star exists....

After some time, prophets of falsehood arose, and said that the
Almighty had commanded them to serve such-and-such a star, to
bring sacrifices to it, to offer libations to it and to build a temple
containing its form, in order that all people—including women,
children and ignoramuses—will be able to bow down to it. Each of
these prophets made known a form which he had invented himself,
and claimed that it was the form of such-and-such a star which had
bore Yaval. He was the father of nomadic cattle rearing. 21 His brother’s name was Yuval. He was the father of those who play harp and flute (for idol worship). 22 Tzilah also gave birth, to Tuval-Kayin, who would sharpen all crafting tools for copper and iron (making weapons). Tuval-Kayin’s sister was Na’amah.

Lemech (accidentally killed Kayin and Tuval-Kayin, and his wives separated from him. He) said to his wives, “Adah and Tzilah, listen to my voice (and accept me back)! Wives of Lemech, incline your ears to my words! (Did) I slay a man by wounding (him intentionally), or a child by hitting (him intentionally)?

If Kayin (who killed intentionally) was avenged after seven generations, then Lemech (who killed unintentionally) shall be (avenged after) seventy-seven (generations)!”

Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son. She named him Sheis, (saying), “For God has given (‘shas’) me another seed, instead of Hevel, for Kayin killed him.” Sheis also fathered a son, and he named him Enosh.

Then, (God’s Name) became profaned, by (people) calling (humans and idols) by the Name of God.

CLASSIC QUESTIONS

The Beginnings of Idol Worship (v. 26)

Rambam describes the evolution of idolatry throughout the ages. But although very interesting to read, this passage would appear to belong better in a history book. Rambam’s Mishneh Torah is a strictly halachic text (as Rambam himself writes in his introduction to the work) so we can presume that all the information conveyed here has a strong halachic connotation, which is crucial to an understanding of the prohibition of worshipping idols.

In addition, there are a number of difficulties with Rambam’s description:

Rambam omits here the fact that Adam HaRishon, the first man, was commanded by God that neither he nor his descendants should worship idols (See above, p. 19, “The Last Word” to 2:16). How could he omit such a crucial point?

Furthermore, why does Rambam call idolatry a “mistake” (“In the days of Enosh, people made a serious mistake...Their mistaken reasoning was...”)? Surely, this idol worship was much more than a mere “mistake”? It was a grave sin, a rebellion against God and an act of total heresy!

The Explanation

Rambam is teaching us here that idol worship, albeit a very practical prohibition, is based on a philosophical misjudgment, a “mistake.” Therefore, in order that a person should not come to actually worship an idol, it is insufficient for him to practice mere restraint. Rather, he must understand the false concepts on which idolatry is based.

Thus, he describes at length what the mistake actually was, why it is unfounded and how one mistake led to another. Only through understanding this mistake can a person have a firm basis that will protect him from the temptation to worship idols.

Consequently, it would have made no sense to mention that Adam HaRishon was commanded not to worship idols, for the whole purpose of this passage of Rambam is to teach us that first and foremost a person must come to the logical conclusion that God did not hand over any free choice to heavenly spheres, and that they are merely like “an axe in the hand of a lumberjack.”

SPARKS OF CHASIDUS

Hasidic teachings explain that not only is there no deity or power other than God, but in fact, there is no true existence at all besides God. The fact that we see a physical world is only due to our inability to see the Godly energy which enlivens it. In truth however, we are totally absorbed within the absolute oneness of God. (See Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Achdus Havayah ch. 3)
ויהי אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים ברא
אלוהים ברא ברא וברא אלהים אלוהים בра
This is the account of Adam’s offspring:

On the day that God created man (he fathered children). He created him with a resemblance to God. He created them male and female, and He blessed them. He named them man (Adam) on the day they were created.

3 Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and he fathered (a son) resembling him and with his form, and he named him Sheis. After he had fathered Sheis, Adam lived for eight hundred years and he fathered sons and daughters. Adam lived a total of nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.

6 Sheis lived one hundred and five years, and then he fathered Enosh. After he had fathered Enosh, Sheis lived eight hundred and seven years, and he fathered sons and daughters. Sheis lived a total of nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.

9 Enosh lived ninety years, and then he fathered Keinan. After he had fathered Keinan, Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years, and he fathered sons and daughters. Enosh lived a total of nine hundred and five years, and he died.

12 Keinan lived seventy years, and then he fathered Mahalaleil. After he had fathered Mahalaleil, Keinan lived eight hundred and forty years, and he fathered sons and daughters. Keinan lived a total of nine hundred and ten years, and he died.

15 Mahalaleil lived sixty-five years, and then he fathered Yared. After he had fathered Yared, Mahalaleil lived eight hundred and thirty years, and he fathered sons and daughters. Mahalaleil lived a total of eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died.

18 Yared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and then he fathered Chanoch. After he had fathered Chanoch, Yared lived eight hundred years, and he fathered sons and daughters. Yared lived a total of nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died.

21 Chanoch lived sixty-five years, and he fathered Mesushalach. After he had fathered Mesushalach, Chanoch followed God for three hundred years, and he fathered sons and daughters. Chanoch lived a total of three hundred and sixty-five years.

Sparks of Chasidus

The “Generations of man” are all descended from Adam’s son Sheis, whereas the descendants of Kayin died out (Rashi 4:24). Sheis thus represents man’s quality of building and propagating the world (tikun). Kayin on the other hand, is indicative of man’s tendency to struggle within himself, toiling with his own darker side in a search for personal perfection (tohu). Sheis was world-orientated; Kayin was self-orientated.

Which is the correct approach?

Presumably, Sheis was correct, since we see that the descendants of Sheis prevailed whereas those of Kayin did not (See Rashi to v. 24). However, the outward, world-orientated approach of Sheis was not entirely correct. For even a person whose goals are to cultivate the world around him still needs to strive for personal perfection in his own life. His worldliness needs to be tempered with inwardness; his productivity coupled with piety.

So, even Sheis—the pioneer of all civilization—had a descendant, Chanoch, who was a total isolationist. In fact Chanoch was so detached from the world that he would have become corrupted with the slightest exposure to humanity, so God acted mercifully and took him away before his time (See Rashi to v. 24). And yet he was a descendent of Sheis, the founder of humanity!

But this, precisely, is the point. The quality of Sheis within us—the outwardness and the ambition—should harbor within it the quality of Chanoch—inwardness and piety. We should study Torah expansively, aiming to acquire vast amounts of knowledge, but at least occasionally we should study Torah without any ulterior motive at all. We should observe the mitzvos to make ourselves better people, but sometimes we should do a mitzvah simply because it is God’s will. In that way, we ensure that the Sheis within us gives birth to the occasional Chanoch.

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 35, p. 7ff.)
God saved him by taking him away before his time), and he was no longer (around), for God had taken him.

25 Mesushalach lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and he fathered Lemech. 26 After he had fathered Lemech, Mesushalach lived seven hundred and eighty-two years, and he fathered sons and daughters. 27 Mesushalach lived a total of nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died.

28 Lemech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and he fathered a son (from whom the whole world was built). 29 He named him Noach, saying, “This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands from the ground, which God has cursed” (because he was to invent agricultural tools). 30 After he had fathered Noach, Lemech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and he fathered sons and daughters. 31 Lemech lived a total of seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.

32 (After) Noach was five hundred years old, Noach fathered Sheim, Cham, and Yafes.

Moral Corruption of Man

T
hen, when man began to multiply upon the face of the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of nobility (violated) the daughters of (common) people when they were beautifying themselves (for their weddings). They took for themselves wives from whomever they chose (even married women, men and animals).

3 God said, “My Spirit will not remain in conflict over (whether to destroy) man for a long time! Furthermore, he is (only) flesh (and yet he does not humble himself before Me! I will give him) one hundred and twenty years to live (and if he does not repent, I will destroy him with a flood)!”

4 There were giants on the earth in the days of (Enosh and Kayin), and also afterwards (when they witnessed a flood that destroyed a third of the world), when the sons of the nobles (who were giants) would (violate) the daughters of (common) people, and they would bear (giant) children for them. They were the greatest (rebels of all) men who ever existed, men who were (mentioned above) by name(s which hinted to their later destruction).

5 God saw that man’s wickedness on earth was increasing, and every thought which came from his heart throughout the day was purely evil. 6 God was consoled (by the fact) that He had made man upon the earth (and not in heaven, where he would have caused the angels to rebel. God decided) in His heart (to cause man) pain.
GOD’S DECREE AGAINST MANKIND (V. 7)

Onkelos renders a straightforward translation of verse 7: “God said, “I will obliterate \((\text{v}^\text{ג} \text{j}^\text{ם} \text{n}^\text{ת})\) man from the face of the earth... because I regret \((\text{ז}^\text{ה} \text{T}^\text{י} \text{n}^\text{ג} \text{ו} \text{j}^\text{ב} \text{ו} \text{b})\) the fact that I created him.”

Rashi, however, appears to offer a non-literal translation, “I will wash away man from the face of the earth... because I have been reckoning what to do about the fact that I created him.”

Why did Rashi not render \(\text{v}^\text{ג} \text{j}^\text{ם} \text{n}^\text{ת}\) as “I will obliterate,” as it is usually translated, and \(\text{ז}^\text{ה} \text{T}^\text{י} \text{n}^\text{ג} \text{ו} \text{j}^\text{ב} \text{ו} \text{b}\) as “I regret”?

THE EXPLANATION

If one translates verse 7 literally (like Onkelos), that God planned to obliterate mankind, one will immediately be struck that reality testifies otherwise. Since we are still here to read the story, and there is no evidence that God retracted His plan, it is inconceivable that He actually intended to destroy mankind. Furthermore, in the very next verse we read that, “Noach found favor in the eyes of God,” which introduces us to the following account of how Noach and his family were saved by God. Obviously then, God did not decide to “obliterate” mankind.

Therefore, Rashi came to the conclusion that in our verse \(\text{v}^\text{ג} \text{j}^\text{ם} \text{n}^\text{ת}\) could not be understood in its usual translation (obliterate), but rather, it is to be rendered, “I will wash away.” I.e. God decreed that He would bring a flood upon mankind, but this did not preclude the possibility of individuals being saved in the ark.

Similarly, Rashi rejected the interpretation that God regretted creating man, as we see that He did indeed allow man’s existence to continue through Noach and his family. Therefore, Rashi was forced to adopt a slightly unusual translation, “I have been reckoning what to do about the fact that I created him.”

DID GOD CHANGE HIS MIND?

One problem with this explanation is that it appears to contradict an earlier comment of Rashi. On verse 6, Rashi writes (in his second interpretation), “God’s thoughts of mercy were transformed to judgment,” from which it appears that God indeed regretted creating man. How does this correlate with Rashi’s stance, as explained above, that God could not possibly have regretted making man since we see that man continues to exist?
7 God said, “I will wash away man, whom I created, from upon the face of the earth, man as well as cattle, creeping things and birds of the skies, for I have reckoned (what to do) about (the fact that) I made them.”

8 But Noach found favor in the eyes of God.

THE HAFTARAH FOR BEREISHIS IS ON PAGE 368. THE HAFTARAH FOR EREV ROSH CHODESH IS ON PAGE 394.

The solution to this problem lies in the distinction between Divine “thought,” and Divine “speech.” In verse 6, “God’s thoughts of mercy were transformed to judgment,” i.e. He did indeed regret making man, but only in thought. However, in verse 7, “God said, ‘I will wash away man etc.” From this we see that God was indeed harboring some regret to Himself (in “thought”) about creating man, but when He finally issued His decree in “speech,” the harshness of the plan was softened to exclude those who would be saved in the Ark, from which mankind could be reconstructed.

This begs the question: what finally caused God to soften his decree? This point is answered by the end of the verse itself, “because I have been reckoning what to do about the fact that I created him.” I.e. the fact that man was created by God Himself (“I created him”), eventually led God to have mercy on His own handiwork.

(T Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 27ff.)

**TORAS MENACHEM**

The Last Word

From God’s reaction to the corruption of mankind, we can learn two powerful lessons in everyday life:

a.) God thought about destroying mankind, but He only issued His decree verbally after He had softened His anger. This teaches us how important it is to speak positively about other people. If God himself refrained from committing negative thoughts to speech, then all the more so should we be careful not to speak badly about others.

Our Sages taught that Lashon Hara (gossip) harms 1.) The gossiper, 2.) The listener and 3.) The one about whom the gossip is spoken (see Arachin 15b). Now it is easy to understand why the gossiper and listener suffer, since they participated in the sin. But why should the subject of the gossip suffer? After all, he was not even present at the time!

The answer lies in the fact that speech is a revelation of something that was previously hidden (in thought). Therefore, by speaking badly about another person it actually causes that person’s bad traits to be more pronounced in the world, which could lead him to be the subject of a heavenly decree of punishment. Thus, it is bad speech that can harm another (and not thoughts, that remain hidden), which teaches us how careful a person should be with the words he utters about another.

b.) God “reckoned” what to do with man, but He did not come to any firm resolution, even in thought. This teaches us that even when we see a person do something bad, we should not come to any firm conclusion about the merit of his actions, even in thought (and certainly not in speech). For if God, who is all-knowing and never makes mistakes, still took time to “ponder” and “reckon” His harsh thoughts about man, then we, who are capable of easily misjudging another, should certainly not condemn another even in thought. Rather, we should always endeavor to “judge every person favorably” (Avos 1:5).

(Based on Likutei Sichos vol. 15, p. 31ff.)
Parshas Bereishis contains 1 positive mitzvah.

1. To be fruitful and multiply [1:28]
Haftaroos

הפתראות
The person who was called up for Maftir says the following before reading the Haftarah:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְ하ֹוָא הַאֲלָהָגָג מֶלֶךְ הָעָלֹם אָשֶׁר בָּטָה
בִּכְרֵי אֵמוֹר פִּלְפֵלָהוּ נְגַמֵר בְּדַבְרֵיהֶן הָנֵאָמֵר
נַעַמָּה בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָֹוָא הַמְּנוֹרָה בְּתֹוָרָה וְפָשָׁת
עֲבַדְוִי וְעֵדְךָ בֶּן בָּנֵי יִשֵּׁרְאֵל יַעַשְׂנֵי הָאָמָה וְזַכֵּר

After the Haftarah the following blessings are recited:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָֹוא אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעָלֹם צָרִיךְ צְרִיךְ חָכָם גָּבִרּוֹת חָכִים
הָאָמָה וְעַשְׂנֵי, חָמְרֵי וּמִשְׁפָּרֹת שִׁבַּל דִּבְרֵי אָמָה וְזַכֵּר
נָאֲלָם אַתָּה אוֹתָה יְהוָֹוא אֱלֹהֵינוּ נְגוֹמַנְיִים בְּבִרְדוֹת וּבְחָרִים
וְדֶרֶךְ אוֹתָה יְהוָֹוא אֱלֹהֵינוּ לֹא יְשֻׁב לִכְמָה כִּי אָל
מֶלֶךְ יְאָמֵר וְהָרֵם אַתָּה כְּלָל בְּנֵי יִשְׁרָאֵל
בְּכָל בִּבְרֵי

d'והו על צניע כה הנה בטין הנה, ה'מעלה נשיא וה'תחיה חכמה ימל זמן בקוך,
ויהי השם בקוך

שַׁפַּלְוָהוּ, יְהוָֹוא אֱלֹהֵינוּ נְגוֹמַנְיִים עָבְדוּ, ה'מלכים
בְּכָל דִּי מִשְׁפָּר, בָּלְכָהוּ גֶּרֶם וּנְיָל לֶבֶנֶּה
עַלֹו בִּמְאַיִל לֹא יָשָׁב וְהָאָלֶל לֹא יְבַדְּלוּ שָׁאֲרֵי אָדָם
כָּבֹדוּ כִּי בָּשָׁם קָדוֹשׁ נִשְׁבּוּת אֵל שְּלֵה יִכְבֶּה דְרִי
לֹאֵל פָּדֵי. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָֹוא מֶלֶךְ רָוִּי.
On fast days end here. On Shabbos (including Shabbos Chol HaMo’ed) continue:

על התורה בעלא הלכות בעלא הכהנים בעלא הכהנים לפי הלומדים, לפי הכהנים ולפי הלומדים.

על התורה בעלא הלכות בעלא הלומדים ובעלא הכהנים בעלא הלומדים, לפי הלומדים ופי הכהנים ויוכלו כלים

On Shabbos Chol HaMo’ed Succos add: המשטר (ודרשה)

On a Festival, and Shabbos that coincides with a Festival continue here:

על התורה בעלא הלכות בעלא הכהנים (על יום השבת тоже

Shemini Atzeres / Simchas Torah | Succos | Shavuos | Pesach

(on Shabbos) | (on Shabbos) | (on Shabbos |

Shabbos)

On Rosh Hashanah continue here:

על התורה בעלא הלכות בעלא הכהנים (על יום השבת тоже

(on Shabbos) |

On Yom Kippur continue here:
42:5 This was said by the Almighty God, Who Created the heavens and stretched them out (like a tent), Who laid out the earth and made (all types of vegetation) grow from it, Who gives a soul to the people upon it, and a spirit to the (other creatures) who walk upon it:

6 “I am God. (What) I have said about you, (Mashiach, through the prophets,) is true (and everlasting)! I will hold your hand (to help you overcome every obstacle). I will guard you, and give you (the might to bring) the covenant of (Torah to My) people, (in order) to enlighten the (eyes of the) nations (about God), 7 to (open) eyes that have blinded (themselves not to see the work of God), to release (the Jewish people—who are) prisoners—from (their) captivity, and those who dwell in darkness from (their) imprisonment.

8 “I am God—that is My Name. I will no (longer allow the nations to diminish) My honor (by worshiping) other (gods, as they have done until now! No longer will) graven images (be given) My praise.”

9 The first (prophecies which I prophesized about Sanchairiv) have (already) occurred. I (will) tell (you) new ones (about the final redemption). I will (now) let you hear (what is going to happen) before (these events) unfold:

10 (When the Final Redemption comes, they will) sing a new song to God, and His praise (will be heard) from the ends of the earth. Those who navigate the seas, and (the creatures that live) in it (will praise God. Even) the islands (themselves) and their inhabitants (will praise God. 11 The whole) desert, together with its cities and villages (which are) inhabited by (the people of) Kedar, will raise (their voices in song). Those who live on stone peaks will sing—shouts (of joy will be heard) from the mountaintops. 12 (With their mouths) they will ascribe glory to God, and they will tell of His praises in the islands.

13 God will go out (to rescue the Jewish people), aroused with zeal (for His people) like a man of war. He will shout and cry out against His enemies, and He will overcome (them).

14 (Says God), “I have kept quiet for all this time (that the nations have persecuted My people). I have been silent (and) I have restrained Myself. (But now) I will scream like a woman in childbirth (to destroy them). I will obliterate them and swallow them up all together. 15 I will destroy mountains and valleys, and I will dry out all their grass. I will make rivers into (dry

Haftarah of Parshas Bereishis

This Haftarah praises God as Creator of Heaven and earth, similar to the Parshah which describes the creation of Heaven and earth by God.

The Haftarah opens with a description of how God will liberate the Jewish people from exile, and how the entire world will praise God after the final redemption arrives (42:5-12).

God promises to destroy the nations that have persecuted the Jewish people, and lead the people to their Land (13-17). He criticizes the Jewish people for being metaphorically “blind” and “deaf” to Torah and mitzvos (18-21) and laments over their sorry state during exile (22-25). Finally, the prophet repeats God’s promise to redeem them, just as He redeemed them from Egypt (43:1-10).

8. יִנָּהָּ לִי לְָּאֶלֶּא יִלָּהָּרָד - I will not give My glory to another. When a Jew sins, he causes energy from his soul to be “spilled” into the domain of evil, which is known as the “other side.” Nevertheless, only the peripheral layers of the soul could be involved in such an activity; the inner core of the soul always remains loyal to God. Thus, God says: I will not give My glory—the essence of the soul—to another, to the “other side” (Likutei Sichos vol.5, pp. 410-11).
and desolate) islands, and I will dry up their bodies of water.”

16. “I will walk (the Jewish people to their Land) on a way that they did not know (as if they were) blind. I will lead them on a path they did not know. I will turn the darkness (of an unknown path) into light before them. (I will make) crooked paths straight (for them). I have (already) done such things (previously, when they came out of Egypt), so I will (surely) not forsake them (in the future).”

17. “(Then) those who trust in graven images will turn backwards, (being) embarrassed with (great) shame. (That will be the fate of) those who say to the molten idols: ‘you are our god.’”

18. “(You, O Israel,) who are deaf (towards My words) and blind (towards My commandments, now listen and) look to see (the goodness that is awaiting you! I call all of you blind, even the righteous ones who serve Me, for) who is (really) blind if not one who serves Me, (and who knows how corrupt people are, yet he does not attempt to correct them? Who is) deaf if not the one who I (grace with wisdom and) send (to teach the people, and yet he pretends not to hear their evil actions, failing to correct them)? Who is as blind as a servant of God (who turns a blind eye to his people)? Who is as perfect (in himself but does not reprimand others)? Who is as blind if not the one who I (grace with wisdom and) send (to teach the people, and yet he pretends not to hear their evil actions, failing to correct them)? Who is (really) blind if not one who serves Me, (and who knows how corrupt people are, yet he does not attempt to correct them? Who is) deaf if not the one who I (grace with wisdom and) send (to teach the people, and yet he pretends not to hear their evil actions, failing to correct them)? Who is as blind as a person who is perfect (in himself but does not reprimand others)? Who is as blind as a servant of God (who turns a blind eye to his people)?”

19. “You are our god.”

20. “(That will be the fate of) those who say to the molten images: ‘you are our god.’”

21. “Who among you will pay attention to this, listen, and hear from now on (what will establish him in the end)?

22. This people is looted and trampled. All their young men are dejected and and hidden in prisons. They are prey with no one to rescue them (from being looted); trampled with no one to say, “Return them (so they will be trampled no more).”

23. Who handed Ya’akov over to be trampled and Israel to looters? Was it not God, against Whom we have sinned? (For the Jewish people) did not desire His ways or obey His Torah, so He poured out (His) anger, His wrath and the might of war upon them. It blazed around very basic level (see Rambam, Laws of Torah Study 2:7). The fact that the same verse is employed in both cases means that they are connected: the sublime spiritual loftiness of very advanced Torah scholars is shared in some measure by even the most basic exercise of Torah study (Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 5717, par. 7).

24. The main reason why God wants (such people, is not for their own merits, but) in order for (them to make another person) righteous, (and in order) for him to increase and strengthen (the) Torah (knowledge of others).”

Chabad* and Sefardic communities conclude here. Ashkenazic communities continue:

21. “To increase and strengthen Torah. The Talmud connects this verse with the highest level of Torah study, that which is carried out purely for the sake of expanding the body of Torah wisdom itself (see Chulin 66b). On the other hand, this verse is also employed in connection with the Torah study of young children, which is clearly at a

*While the Chabad custom is to finish the Haftarah with verse 21, in a leap year the Rebbe followed the custom of saying the extended Haftarah (according to Ashkenazic custom), finishing with 43:10. However, the Rebbe indicated that this was a personal directive that he had received from the Previous Rebbe and was not to be copied by others (See Sichas Shabbos Parshas Bereishis 5714, 5717, 5725 and 5744).
Who created you, O Ya’akov, and formed you, O Israel. Rendered literally, the verse states, “This is what God says: ‘Ya’akov created you; Yisra’el formed you.’” On this, the Midrash expounds: “God said to his world, ‘World of mine! World of mine! I will tell you who created you and formed you. Ya’akov created you; Yisra’el formed you’” (Vayikra Rabah 36:4 and Maharzu ibid.). In other words, being that the purpose of creation is that the mitzvos should be performed by the Jewish people (“Ya’akov”; “Yisra’el”), the world’s very existence is attributed to them. The verse further explains that this takes place on two levels. The lower level of “Ya’akov” represents the simple observance of mitzvos whose merit ensures the existence of the world’s physical matter (“Ya’akov who created you”). In the merit of the higher level of mitzvos observance signified by Yisra’el, the world is given its form (”who formed you Yisra’el’”) (s.v. ha-ba’im 5743).

5-6. ...I will bring your children from the east etc. With regard to the east and west, scripture uses the expressions: “I will bring...and gather...,“ indicating that God is informing the Jewish people how He will unite them when the Redemption arrives. But in reference to the north and south God addresses the compass points, saying to them “Give (Me the Jewish people who are scattered there),’ and to the south, ‘Don’t hold them back!’ Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth,” (Jer 1:14) all (the Jewish people) who bear My Name, who (were made) for My glory. I have (already) created, fashioned and made (all that is necessary for their redemption in order to), free the (exiled) people—who are blind though they have eyes, and deaf though they have ears.

Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north: “Give (Me the Jewish people who are scattered there),” and to the south, ‘Don’t hold them back!’ Bring My sons from afar and My daughters from the ends of the earth,” all (the Jewish people) who bear My Name, who (were made) for My glory. I have (already) created, fashioned and made (all that is necessary for their redemption in order to), free the (exiled) people—who are blind though they have eyes, and deaf though they have ears.

Even if all the nations gathered together and all the peoples assembled, who among them (could) declare (future events like) this, or announce to us (that they had predicted) past events? (If so), let them produce their witnesses and be proven correct, such that those who hear them will say that it is true. 10 “You are my witnesses,” says God, “My servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe in Me, and understand that I am He before whom no god was created, and after whom none will exist.”

43:1. בּוּדַּק בֶּאֶרֶץ וְשַׁלְם בַּשָּׁם—Who created you, O Ya’akov, and formed you, O Israel. Rendered literally, the verse states, “This is what God says: ‘Ya’akov created you; Yisra’el formed you.’” On this, the Midrash expounds: “God said to his world, ‘World of mine! World of mine! I will tell you who created you and formed you. Ya’akov created you; Yisra’el formed you’” (Vayikra Rabah 36:4 and Maharzu ibid.). In other words, being that the purpose of creation is that the mitzvos should be performed by the Jewish people (“Ya’akov”; “Yisra’el”), the world’s very existence is attributed to them. The verse further explains that this takes place on two levels. The lower level of “Ya’akov” represents the simple observance of mitzvos whose merit ensures the existence of the world’s physical matter (“Ya’akov who created you”). In the merit of the higher level of mitzvos observance signified by Yisra’el, the world is given its form (”who formed you Yisra’el’”) (s.v. ha-ba’im 5743).

5-6. ...I will bring your children from the east etc. With regard to the east and west, scripture uses the expressions: “I will bring...and gather...,“ indicating that God is informing the Jewish people how He will unite them when the Redemption arrives. But in reference to the north and south God addresses the compass points, saying to them “Give (Me the Jewish people who are scattered there),” and, “Don’t hold them back.” Of these latter two directions, the north is given the stronger instruction, to become a “giver,” i.e. a force which actively contributes to the Redemption, whereas the south is merely told not to interfere with or prevent the redemptive process—“Don’t hold them back.” This indicates the uniqueness of the Future Redemption: Even the north—which represents the forces of evil, “From the north, evil will venture forth” (Jer 1:14)—will be transformed into a positive force (Likutei Sichos vol. 4, p. 1065).

10. You are my witnesses—You are my witnesses. Witnesses are only required to establish facts that have been concealed. Thus, as God’s “witnesses,” our task is to reveal the hidden identity of this physical world, demonstrating how every detail points to the presence of God (Hisvaduyos 5745, vol. 3, p. 1566).

*Ya’akov’s change of name to Yisra’el represented a spiritual elevation—see Rashi to Bereishis 32:29; Arizal, Sha’ar ha-Pesukim, Vayishlach 32, 29; Pardes, Sha’ar 23; Etz Chaim, Sha’ar 3. chap. 2; Torah Ohr, Vayeitzei 21a; Likutei Torah, Balak 70b.