

Introduction to Parsha #1: B'reshit¹

READINGS: ***Torah B'reshit:*** **Genesis 1:1 - 6:8**
 Haftarah: **Isaiah 42:5 - 43:10**
 B'rit Chadasha: **John 1:1-18**



***And the hovering of the Breath-like Manifestation of God
caused a fluttering effect upon the Face of the Deep.***

[Genesis 1:2]

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is the Avot [the Prayer of the Fathers]

B'reshit – In the context of a shaking [traditionally, 'In the beginning'] ... ***bara Elohim*** - the Creator cut/carved/separated out [traditionally, 'God created'] ... ***et ha-shamayim*** - the Heavens ... ***v'et ha-aretz*** - and the earth. **Genesis 1:1.**

Awake, O Sleepers – there is a sound filling the air! It is like the sound of many waters – or like a mighty rushing wind – or a little of both. Something ... or is it someONE ... is stirring the primeval Deep, rousing it, animating it, activating it. A vortex is forming. Human beings all over the world are being drawn into its turbulent flow. A great throng of witnesses is being mustered. A new cycle of seasons is beginning – and that means it is once again time for the greatest story human ears have ever heard to be told.

About the Author

The author of this story – and the teller of this tale - is none other than the Creator of the Universe. After all, this story is about HIM, the world He has created for us and the other species of living creatures to live in, and His Grand Design of Ecosystem Management. Hush now, the Ultimate Rabbi is about to step onto the stage and introduce Himself. Oh, what an opening number He has in store for us!

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He has been writing verses to this song, and humming its tune, forever – for eons. He has waited a long, long time for this moment.

For you see, His eyes are wide open. He knows exactly what He is getting Himself – and the Hosts of Heaven - into. He knows that there will be many heartbreaking seasons of ‘worse’ and relatively few sweet times of ‘better’. But He is not deterred. His mind has conceived a Beautiful Plan – a way to make all things beautiful, however ugly they present themselves, and to bring about good from even the darkest, most troubling seasons of ‘worse’. His heart is filled with a noble theme. His tongue is the pen of a ready writer. The curtain is opening. Places, everyone – it is time! The most compelling of all epic ballads of love is about to be sung. *Sh'ma* – turn your attention, affection, and reverent devotion – to the Majestic, Beautiful Voice that has been whispering your name in the night since the day of your conception!

First Words – Setting the Scene and the Tone

Shhhh! The Minstrel is approaching the dais. His face is aglow. His eyes are smiling. His lips purse, form the first syllable of the great tale. The first words of any great story – and this is the greatest of all - set both the scene and the tone for all the action sequences to come. The opening number of a great opera establish the mood.

Buh, He says. It is the prefix representing the Hebrew preposition English speakers think of as ‘in’, ‘on’, or ‘upon’. He has our attention. Our minds run through a million scenarios. *In ... on ... upon ...* WHAT? What is the foundation – the epicenter – the genesis - of it all? The minstrel does not us wondering for long. After a brief pause for effect, He follows the opening *buh* with the power-packed Hebrew word - ‘*reshit*’ (pronounced *ruh-SHEET*’).

The mood has been set. The silence has been broken. The words of the great story have begun to flow. Let us savor them – and the mood and tone they are meant to convey - one by one.

B’reshit – in/on/out of a *great shaking*. Feel the power. Tremble in reverential fear. Catch the passion. Feel *the* raw creative energy from Heaven coming your way, impacting everything about you – and about your world. Let that energy – and its potential for good - begin to awaken that which has been dormant and incubating in you.

Bara Elohim – and Elohim ‘created’. Do you see a character – the MAIN CHARACTER OF ALL MAIN CHARACTERS – making His grand entrance on the stage? And what is He doing? He is not sitting. He is not pining. He is not

raging. He is not pondering ‘theology’ or sociology. He is full of energy. He is full of action. He has a plan – and He is working that plan with great passion. He is ‘bara’-ing – creating in the manner of an artisan. Do you sense the *skill*, the *artistry*, and the *power* of the Ultimate Design/Build Craftsman setting about His work? Do you sense His brilliance – indeed artistry? Do you sense His goodness? Do you sense His patience – and His immaculate *attention to detail*?

Et ha-shamayim v’et ha-aretz – the scene is set. Rest assured, the Master will make everything beautiful ... in its appointed time!

The scroll that Moshe ghost-wrote for the Holy One as directed [See **Exodus 14:4; Deuteronomy 31:9**] is about to be unsealed and unwound – and its secrets are about to be revealed. *V’ha-aretz hayetah tohu vavohu* – out of chaos will come *order*; out of vanity will come *purpose, meaning, and understanding*; out of death-realm silence will come the *true tone* of a *Beautiful, Transformative, Life-giving Voice*; and out of thick, oppressive darkness, will pulse wave after wave of pure, quickening, and energizing *light*.

Vayomer Elohim – and the Creator spoke The opening act of the greatest scripted drama ever written is about to begin! Let the sweetest of all epic love stories unfold! I hope you are ready, Dear Ones – we are in for quite the adventure!

Let the Ancient Scroll Speak! Let Moshe’s Song of Creation’s Origin, Purpose, and Destiny Be Sung!

The first notes of the Master’s ‘*Sheva Yomim*’ (*seven days*) Symphony have played. The Protagonist has stepped onto the stage. Smiling, He is about to open an eternal portal of revelation to all who dare try their hand at interpreting the delicious combination of ancient Hebrew consonants that Moshe, His human ‘ghostwriter’, inscribed on the scroll. Sages and rabbis will soon be marveling over the various layers of and levels of interpretation application each line presents. Atheists will scoff. Agnostics will agonize over scandalously unanswered questions. Hard-hearted theologians will rush away to ivory towers to engage in debates. God-fearers will sit in awe. Star-struck lovers of the Holy One, on the other hand, will approach the text humbly, meditate on what is written therein, and let it gradually transform them from glory to glory. For lovers of the Holy One, you see, Torah is more than mere words on a scroll; for lovers of the Holy One Torah is a Beloved friend’s self-portrait, autobiography, and love letter, all rolled into one.

***From Whence – And From Whom –
Does This Revelation Stream Emanate?***

Who wrote the Torah? Be careful now - how you choose to answer this question

will, in large part, determine how deep the impact the matters contained within the scroll is going to be on your life.

Whoever you think responsible for the authorship of the ancient scroll, this much is clear to all but the coarsest fool: *The Holy One is eternal; but Creation – at least as we know it - is not.* Creation as we know it had a *point of beginning* – after which followed a *significant season of beginnings*. *B'reshit*, the first section of the Holy One's Wisdom, Revelation, and Instruction Manual for Mankind, focuses the reader's attention on *that point of beginning* and chronicles the most critical events of the *significant season of beginnings* as they unfolded.

No human being has any idea how much 'earth time' has passed since either the Creator whispered '**Yehi Ohr**' – i.e. 'Light, BE!' Theories abound; but that is all they are – just theories. No scientist was around to observe or analyze any of the things revealed in the parsha of beginnings. No historian was there to record any of the events. The Holy One – Who wrote the script and oversaw the process - is the sole custodian of the information being conveyed. The great Revelation Download we call 'Torah' pulls back the curtain just a little bit, to reveal a small portion of the mystery – that portion which is all mortal men can or need to know. But oh, what majesty the Holy One has packed into that portion!

What Is this Thing Called 'Torah' - and What is it All About?

Imagine for a moment that you are an *Invisible, Incorporeal, Immortal, and Infinite Being* - the Creator of the Universe. Imagine that the crown jewel of your creation – mankind – has been horribly corrupted by ingesting the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and as a result suffers from a serious form of spiritual *amnesia*. He has forgotten Who You are, so he has also forgotten who *he is*, where *he came from*, and for that matter, *why he is even here*. He is not completely sure of Your existence. He is totally ignorant of Your Majesty, Your beauty, or Your glory. He is blind to Your motives. He has lost all awareness of the goodness of Your Character, the glorious plans you have for him, or the great love you feel for him. Imagine that You want to reach out to him, but know that because of the pitiful state he is in He can neither see You, nor feel Your Presence, nor even recognize Your Voice. Imagine that the lethal virus that masquerades in the fallen world as the '*knowledge of good and evil*' has reduced the operating capacity of his mind to a fraction of what You designed into it.

If you were the Creator, how would You choose to re-introduce Yourself to fallen, fractured, and fragmented man? How would You re-introduce Your Grand Plan of redemption for him and for Creation? How would You choose to awaken him to Your love? How would you choose to reveal to him Your wisdom? Your

goodness? How would You choose to introduce him to the pathways he will need to follow to get back in touch with His Identity, His Mission, and His Destiny? The Holy One has chosen to do these by writing to all men *the greatest love letter that has ever been written* - the magnificent letter the world has come to call ‘Torah’. And He has chosen to begin His love letter to mankind with *B’reshit*, the *pasha of grand introductions*.

Welcome to the study of Torah² - the Creator’s instruction manual for life on earth. As the Psalmist said:

*The Torah of the Holy One is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the Holy One is sure, making wise the simple.
The statutes of the Holy One are right, rejoicing the heart;*

The commandment of the Holy One is pure, enlightening the eyes.
[Psalm 19:7-8]

Understand at the outset of these studies, therefore, that this series is not by any means intended to be just a ‘Bible Study’. This is not a review of ancient history, much less a course on ancient religion. The purposes of our studies in Torah are subsumed into the Creator’s Purpose in writing it – *i.e.* to awaken each of us from amnesia and reconnect us to the Rock from Which we were hewn. The purpose of the Torah – and conversely of these Torah studies – is not to teach us tidbits of doctrine, but is instead to inspire us to step out of the unclean, mundane, and profane realms of ordinary life and embrace the glorious role we were created to play in the redemption of the world.

Ring in the New – With a Season of Fresh Introductions

For some, the kind of approach to a Biblical Lifestyle and Intended Impact Focus that this series of studies entails may be new, unfamiliar, and even a little uncomfortable. For others it may be like slipping into a well-worn pair of slippers and walking out on the lawn to get the newspaper. For all of us, however, the Book of Genesis invites us to embrace a *season of awakenings*. As we begin the exploration of Torah’s amazing revelation fountains again – or for the first time - we will do well to realize that no matter how many times we have ‘been here before’ and how much we may have learned in the past, we have in reality comprehended only a small fraction of Torah’s essence. Torah is *inexhaustible*. It is *a well of living water with no beginning and with no end*. And we still have *a hangover from the juice of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. We will never comprehend or understand even the truths plainly evident on the

² Torah means teaching, instruction and/or specific directions for a journey. When using the word Torah with a capital ‘T’, in these studies, the writer is referring to the first five books of the Bible – the books known to most English speakers as *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*.

surface of Torah - much less mine all the wisdom and prophetic insights hidden in layers under the surface of the words we read. Nevertheless we are undaunted. The love story of the Creator of the Universe has captured our hearts – and our fallen minds will just have to catch up as best they can.

May each of us begin the Great Journey through Torah again with the determination to make our portion of understanding in the year that has just dawned sweeter, greater, and more significant than in any prior year. May our prayer be that whatever we have learned from or concerning the Bible before, the Holy One will make it fresh and new – and put it in proper perspective – as He takes us deeper and deeper into the precious gold mine of eternal Truth and Practical Wisdom!

Let us not be content with yesterday's manna. Let us *press on!* Let us *press in!* Let us seek – and find and embrace - a new vein of gold each day this year! Let the revelation of all previous years we have studied merely whet our appetite for more.

Once More ... With Feeling!

This is the appointed time for the sons of Adam to once again breathe in Torah's intoxicating fragrance, to drink deeply of its nourishing waters, and to begin again to dance to its perfect rhythm. Torah's sweet melody is still calling for lovers of the Great Bridegroom King of Heaven to *awaken*, to *lift up the head*, to *arise from the ordinary and mundane*, and to *come away with the Lover of our Souls*. The Tree of Life at the center of the Creator's beautiful Garden of Delight wafts its fragrance and sings its siren song every year at this season.

We are not alone in our quest. The study of Torah has gone on for centuries – indeed for millennia. Scholars and sages, theologians and truth-seekers, prophets and princes and kings - not to mention millions upon millions of common men, women, and children like us - have poured over its ancient texts. Its depths and nuances have been probed in Hebrew, and Greek, and Spanish, and German, and English and a hundred other languages, decade after decade after decade, by the best and brightest minds on earth. No library on earth could contain even a tenth of what has been written regarding the truths it contains. The Torah of the Holy One is a treasure trove that has been mined by the wisest and the most devout people that have ever walked the earth; yet it remains as fresh as a virgin rain forest.

When it comes to learning Torah, you see, *we are all perpetual 'beginners*. We are all infants. The most mature of us is at best the equivalent of a toddler. If we should live 100 years – or 1,000, for that matter – we will remain just beginners.

Though the text never changes, layers of meaning are constantly emerging, and ‘new’ realms of revelation are constantly manifesting. Like children in a candy store we grab all the sweetness we can hold – all the while knowing there is much, much more we have not even seen, much less laid hold of.

And so we approach Torah not as *scholars*, not as *theologians*, not as ‘*experts in the law*’, but as *little children*. We approach the Torah of God as *wide-eyed innocents*, with gaping mouths, and with a sense of delicious overwhelm. And when the last strains of Deuteronomy begin to fade, and our tired minds and physical bodies would have us clap politely for the band, and sit the next one out to catch our breath, our childlike spirits will have none of it. For we find that with the opening lines of *B’reshit*, each year, no matter how our physical bodies protest our spirits deliriously declare to the Holy One: “*Once more! Oh, yes, yes, yes! Once more ... with feeling!*” The harps and lyres and timbrels of all generations joyfully play along.

The Unique Challenge Presented by the Torah

As stated above, this is not going to be just a friendly little garden variety Bible study. The study of the Holy One’s instruction manual for life on planet earth is strategically designed by His infinite Mind to function as nothing less than a *consciousness-altering, life-changing immersion in an ancient river of revelation*. Torah is Divine Energy. It changes everything – and everyone – it touches. It *releases creativity*. It *opens fountains of joy*. It *imparts wisdom*. It *restores hope*. It *fosters peace*. And it *awakens the heart and soul of man to the truest, noblest, most holy form of love*. From its opening parsha the Torah will *challenge us, judge us, and change us forever*.

Every one of Torah’s parshot has been jam-packed by the Master Writer with mysteries mortal men cannot – however much we study or pray – even come close to comprehending. Take parsha *B’reshit*, from which our studies will be taken this week, for instance. The compelling revelations found in this parsha do not square with any doctrine or theology – Jewish, Christian or otherwise – which the mind of man has ever devised. If you read this parsha carefully, and pay close attention to what is actually said in it, I dare say it will confound your theology – whatever it may be – and will leave you with many, many more questions than answers. Torah *does that* to people. That, I suspect, is the whole idea. That is the primary reason why the Holy One gave the Torah to us in the rather unorthodox and question-provoking form He did. The Holy One did not, you see, create men and women to be *theologians* who can figure Him out, put Him in a tidy little box, remake Him in their own image, and treat Him like a genie that grants their selfish wishes. The Holy One created human beings to be like *little children*, gazing up at

Him with wide-eyed wonder. He created us to trust Him with child-like confidence - to always expect Him to know and steer us into what is best, what is *true*, and *wise*, and *right* and *just* and *good* - and to likewise tell us what is, and how to steer clear of, the opposite of those things. And the Holy One created us, as well, to be like the *Serafim* surrounding His Throne – spiritually aware and sensitive beings who cannot help but fall down before Him in worship, then rise to blurt out words of awe and admiration and praise, then run to do His Will, then fall down before Him in worship, then rise to blurt out words of awe and admiration and praise, then run to do His Will, then fall down before Him in worship, then ... oh well, you get the picture, don't you?

The writer of the book of Hebrews expressed it this way:

*The word of the Holy One is alive, and [constantly] active.
More powerful than a two-edged sword,
It penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit,
joints and marrow;
It judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*
[Hebrews 4:12]

Human beings who are separated from the Holy One tend to like things arranged in nice little packages, neatly sorted into classifications and categories, and clearly labeled in ways that allow us to apply our human intelligence, logic and sense of morality. Torah absolutely refuses to cooperate with, much less encourage, this human inclination. Torah *confounds our intellect* continuously, and *frustrates our quest to reduce it to doctrines and theological principles* at every turn.

He who seeks to derive doctrines or theological principles from the study of Torah is, thus, the ultimate Don Quixote, tilting futilely at windmills. Plot, and strategize, and thrash all you will – I have news for you: *The windmills always win*. We do not, cannot, will not ever, *master* Torah. Quite the contrary - *Torah inevitably masters us*. That is what it is for. Torah, you see, is the *holiness of the Creator of the Universe presented to us in ever-present, ever inspiring and empowering, written form*.

A Few of the Introductions of Parsha B'reshit

Are you ready to start the adventure? If so, be prepared, this week, to be taken outside the convention we know as 'time' and to be shown the miracle of Creation from two perspectives - one prior to the advent of Messiah on earth, and one subsequent to that advent. In this week's parsha Torah will give us that unique opportunity. Let's take just a short look at what lies ahead for us this week.

1. An Introduction to the Rock From Which We Were Hewn

The first grand introduction of parsha *B'reshit* – and of all Torah – is the introduction of our Creator Himself. How He chooses to introduce Himself into the consciousness of man is significant. He does not choose to introduce Himself by using the four-letter Name that He will reveal to Moshe in the generation of the Exodus. He chooses instead to introduce Himself to us simply as '*Elohim*'. This is a proper noun in its masculine plural form – which in Hebrew, when employed to describe a singular entity, denotes the ultimate or superlative form of the thing being described. The singular noun *el*, from which *Elohim* is derived, means strong, mighty *hero*. The Torah is, after all, at essence a grand love story. The hero of this story is the Holy One – the Greatest, awe-inspiring, worship-worthy Hero of all time.

Classically a hero is strong, wise, courageous, passionate, dedicated to his people, whether they deserve it or not, skilled in many crafts, not the least of which are inspiring men and engaging in warfare. A hero excels in both noble qualities, beauty, and benevolence. Heroes specialize in actions that relieve the oppressed, break bondages, and inspire awe, gratitude, and emulation.

Do you know the Creator of the Universe as a hero, Dear Reader? Do you see Him as beautiful, mighty, benevolent, awe-inspiring, worship-worthy, and passionately dedicated to you? It is not enough for Him to be the strong, mighty hero of Creation and/or the species called mankind; He longs to become *your personal hero* as well!

2. An Introduction to the Dynamic Worldview of Torah

The six chapters known as parsha *B'reshit* contain the story of *primeval events*, of the period human beings think of as 'the beginnings'. Written from the perspective of the Godhead and the Hebraic mindset of Moshe [Moses] the Torah neither argues for the existence of God nor admits of any other theory of genesis than the mind of God. *In the Beginning, God ...* is stated in the Torah not as some theory or a possibility, but as incontrovertible reality. It is an essential part of the framework of 'givens' under which mankind was created to operate.

The worldview of Torah is a worldview that begins and ends with Elohim the Ultimate Hero – and with complete assurance that *His Words are all-powerful*, that *His Will is all-important*, and that *His ways are all just*. The worldview of Torah has complete, childlike confidence that His plans are all perfect, and that we mortals are absolutely privileged just to be invited along for the ride. The worldview of the Torah is that every man, woman or child should be overwhelmed with gratitude at the opportunity our Creator offers us to partner with Him – as the

weaker partner in a covenant relationship - in fulfilling His Magnificent Plan for the Creation which He designed in perfect wisdom, and over which He both presides as a righteous King and Judge, and faithfully labors as a Perfect Priest and Intercessor.

3. *An Introduction to the Two Primary Themes of Torah*

The *central theme* of the Torah, and indeed all of Scripture, is *the rule and reign of God over all created things*. Torah wants us to view the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov as nothing less than the Sovereign Lord over the universe. And it wants us to therefore accept His Will as the ultimate and most powerful, as well as most beneficial, force that has ever existed or will ever exist.

The *secondary theme* of the Torah is that there is a special place of blessing - a garden of delight - ordained by God for occupancy by the descendants of the man Avraham. This special garden is a stage of sorts – a stage upon which the Holy One's Divine Passion Play is acted out according to a Script written before the foundation of the world. Through the acting out of this script the Holy One's Will – *i.e. that eternal energy source through Avraham and his seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed* - is fulfilled. A distinct people of the Holy One who represent Him in His holiness and in His mercy, is, you see, the outworking of the divine plan which began with Creation.

These two primary themes are going to be very obvious in the first book of Torah, *B'reshit* [which Westerners call 'Genesis'] – a book which shows God not only creating the world, but calling forth from that world, unto Himself, a people [including gentiles such as Elazar, servant of Avraham, who bind themselves to serve Him] who become clearly distinguishable from others as every aspect of and event in their lives is penetrated by a clear and constant plan of divine government.

4. The Two Most Common Reactions Human Beings Have to the Torah

There are two primary responses of human beings to the power of Torah. Some men wisely surrender early on. The eternal spirit part of them awakens and activates, and they plunge into the revelation stream of Torah headlong. Other men, alas, take the opposite approach. They struggle against the current. They respond in the flesh and/or the pseudo-intellect. They kick against the pricks. They stubbornly ignore verses – or even whole chapters of the revelation – in order to cling to their illusion of intelligence. They refuse to consider anything beyond the precarious house of cards they call 'systematic theology'.

Which of these responses will you make to Torah this year?

Welcome to ‘Creation Week’, Creation Protocols, and the Creation Song!

The first thing to which the Divine Author of Torah introduces us in the opening parsha is not a list of do’s and don’ts. What we are introduced to instead is a stunningly beautiful *song* – a magnificent poetic description of ‘Creation Week’ – i.e. the ‘seven-day’ period in which the universe as we know it, and we as a specially favored and highly exalted species, came into existence. Through the verses and flowing choruses of this song Torah will encourage us to eavesdrop upon conversations in Heaven relative to the great ‘Design-and-build’ plan of the Holy One for the Creation of the universe. Torah will then introduce us to the life-changing concept of human responsibility to ‘sanctify time’ – confronting us right from the outset with the *Shabbat* [Sabbath] - a regularly recurring, Divinely ordained interval of time radiating supreme blessedness, rest, and peace which we must choose to either receive and enjoy as the free gift that it is, or resist, reject, and/or attempt to redefine on our own terms. The Sabbath, you see, is both the ultimate *destination* of Creation and the ultimate *challenge* for man.

We will also be given a front-row seat to watch the first man and woman in history interact with God. We will first see them in a blissful state of intimate commune with the Creator in a well-watered garden of delight. We will, however, very soon see the man and woman do the unthinkable, abandoning their communion with God in favor of a tryst with one of the creatures the Holy One created to be ruled by man, namely the Serpent. We will also see the righteous – yet amazingly merciful and redemptive – judgment of God on the man and the woman for this course of conduct. We will see the man and woman sent forth from the garden into the world - much as Israel was subsequently sent out of the Land into *Diaspora*.

We will rejoice at the *first births* to occur on our planet. But we will also gasp in horror as we witness the *first murder*. We will then cringe in response to the proliferation of evil by the offspring of the two disobedient first born, whose perversions will lead to the Holy One’s selection of a man named *Noach* [English shorthand rendition, Noah] to rescue His beloved Creation – and the species of mankind - from the horror of rampant sin.

With the inspiration of the Holy One we will be called upon to consider, and meditate upon, and take counsel from, the prophetic implications of each of these events. So let us begin. The Torah scroll has introduced both the Protagonist of the Great Drama [*Elohim*] and the setting for all the action [*our universe*]. with the following familiar words:

B'reshit
In reshit

bara Elohim
God created

et ha-shamayim v'et ha-eretz
the heavens and the earth.
[Genesis 1:1]

The opening phrase, *b'reshit*, establishes the context and sets the tone for all the mysteries we will study this week. We have been taught to translate this phrase as 'in the beginning'. But all of us know full well, if we just think about it, that this translation is woefully inadequate if not totally incorrect. There is, of course, and can be, no 'beginning' and no 'end' with a Divine Being our English Bibles call "God". "God", as our English Bibles call Him, is *eternal*. He pre-existed, and will always exist. From His perspective – which is precisely the perspective from which Torah is trying to teach us to view the world - what happened in Genesis 1:1 was not the *beginning*, any more than what will happen in the closing chapters of Revelation is the 'end'. We must acknowledge from the outset, therefore, that to accept the translation of *b'reshit* as 'in the beginning' is thus to surrender to a Greek, humanistic mindset. It is to put earth and humankind on the throne of significance – a place where only the Holy One belongs. so forgive me if I refuse to surrender, or accept 'in the beginning' as an accurate translation. I believe, you see, the text says much more than 'in the beginning' can ever describe. Allow me, if you will, to confront the Hebraic mindset of the text, and to wrestle with the Hand that holds the curtain that shrouds the mystery.

A Closer Look at The Hebrew Word 'Reshit'

It is believed that the verb root from which the word *reshit*³ comes means to shake, or to tremble⁴. If we were to apply that word picture to the text of Genesis 1:1 we might say: "In shaking⁵, God created ..." or "in trembling, God created ..." Is it possible that the events of Genesis were wrought out of eternity by the Holy One purposely causing a *shaking* of the eternal elements of the realm in which He alone exists? Is it possible that the Holy One is the 'big-banger' behind a 'big bang' bigger and more encompassing in scope than any astronomer or evolutionist could have ever dreamed – a 'big bang' that would make supernovas and starbursts and the collisions of vast galaxies look like child's play in comparison? Is it possible the Almighty shook *Himself*, and brought forth the physical things about which we

³ The b' of *b'reshit* is a prefix meaning 'in' or 'from'.

⁴ See Gesenius' Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament, p. 751, discussing Hebrew the unused Hebrew verb root *resh*, *alef*, *shin*.

⁵ The Hebrew language has a definite article [something that corresponds to the English word 'the' as a modifier]. It is a *hey* ['h' sound] prefix, usually pronounced 'ha'. There is no *hey* prefix before *reshit* [else it would read *b'hareshit*]; hence I do not translate *b'reshit* as 'in the shaking' or 'in the trembling'.

read in Genesis? Consider the ramifications of that, Dear Reader. Meditate on how the Autumn wind shakes the leaves of a tree. Ponder how a chill causes your body to tremble. Contemplate how a tremor of the earth sends heavy objects crashing to the ground and buckles concrete. It comes, then it goes. But in the wake of the shaking everything appears to change. And then all is as it was again. So it was in Genesis 1:1. And so it will be in Revelation 22:20. I do not know- or aspire to know - anyone who could wrap a theology around that. How about you?

Your Mission, Should You Choose To Accept It ...

I challenge you this week to not just read the first 6 chapters of Genesis but to *marvel at the Creation story, and at Creation itself* - for both speak of the majesty of our King. I exhort you this week to set out on a quest to learn why it was that the Holy One chose the creature called man as the 'crown jewel' of Creation. Ponder why the first man was placed on the earth. Meditate concerning what man's real purpose and destiny here is. Then prayerfully consider what that means for you – and for your purpose and destiny here on earth at such a time as this. And I adjure you to stop this week and listen carefully - listen to see if you can hear the sound of Creation groaning, groaning as a woman in travail, calling out for the shining forth of sons of the Holy One - sons who live in a garden of delight, in unity with the Godhead, with Torah as their form of government - sons who radiate the nature of the Holy One, and shine forth as a beacon to all the world.

I hope you can hear that sound, Dear Reader. Because the one Creation is groaning for, and calling forth - is YOU! Awaken, O Sleeper! Arise, and shine! You are not 'just here'. You are here *for a purpose*. Stop *being like everyone around you*. Stop *thinking like the society around you thinks*. Stop *being who others think you should be*. Accept no role model but the Holy One. Embrace no way of life but the one laid out for you in Torah. Be who you were *created* to be.

Let the Great Drama of Created Order Begin!

The stage is dark. There is no visible movement. There is no discernible action. Nothing makes sense. Nothing flows. Nothing grows. Nothing lives.

But then – the unthinkable happens! The Immaculate Protagonist of the story speaks two Hebrew words: "***Yehi Ohr***"! Western minds have interpreted these words with the English language approximation of '*Let there be light!*' But what was spoken by the Immaculate Protagonist was not a request - it was an empowerment. It was a creative brush stroke that danced across and introduced vibrant color to the empty canvas.

Suddenly, even as the words were being spoken, Creation responded. The energy of the Voice combined with the creative power of the words caused atoms to

reform, and molecules to realign. *Ohr* "was" – and it was EVERYWHERE. It touched - and forever changed - the Heavens. And it touched - and forever empowered - the earth. It was so very good. And it still is.

Introduction to this Week's Haftarah

Isaiah 42:5 - 43:10

Koh-amar ha-El Adonai - Thus says God - the Holy One ... ***borei ha-shamayim v'noteihem*** - Who cut/carved/separated out the heavens and stretched them forth **Isaiah 42:5a.**

The traditional Haftarah reading the sages selected to correspond with parsha *B'reshit* is taken from the writings of *Ha-Navi Yeshayahu* [the prophet Isaiah]. The prophet declares the last days' Word of the Holy One over both the people He has called to serve as Earthly ambassadors of His Heavenly Kingdom and His glorious but corrupted Creation. Concerning the Covenant People the Holy One declares:

*I, the Holy One, have called You in righteousness,
and I will **hold Your hand**; I will **keep/cherish/keep watch over You**
and **give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles***

[Isaiah 42:6]

A light to the Gentiles? You mean the ones who hate us blame us for all the world's ills, and keep trying to either force us to accept their destructive ways or kill us? Yes, those are exactly who He intends to raise us up as a light for.

How will He do it? He tells us. He will use us '*to open blind eyes*'. Think about that one for a few moments! And using us to open blind eyes is not all He promises to do. He also promises to use us as His instruments to '*bring out prisoners from the prison, those who sit in darkness from the dungeon*'. It is going to be quite a ride for people of the Covenant in the end of days, Beloved! But look at the next set of promises the Holy One makes:

*Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name; You are Mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.
When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,
Nor shall the flame scorch you.*

*Since you are precious and honored in My sight,
and because I love you, I will give men in exchange for you,
and people in exchange for your life.
Do not be afraid, 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 them up',
and to the South 'Do not hold them back'.*

[Isaiah 43:1-2, 5-6]

We were born for such a time as this. Let's not miss it for the world!

Then turning His attention to His Glorious but corrupted Creation the Holy One says:

*I will lay waste the mountains and hills and dry up all their vegetation;
I will turn rivers into islands and dry up the pools.
'I will lead the blind by ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them;
I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth.
These are the things I will do ...*

[Isaiah 42:15-16]

If you will receive it, these 'Creation' passages speak of a future winding down of that which was "wound up" by the Holy One in the days we study in this week's readings from the Torah - the stunning *Season of Creative Expression* that brought the world as we know it into existence.

As we start a new year of immersing ourselves in the Holy One's Torah, let us be alert and prepared for whatever the Holy One our God releases over the earth in this historic hour.

A Brief Look at the Apostolic Writings Selected for This Week

John 1:1-18

In the context of a shaking [KJV: in the beginning'] the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1.

I have selected John 1:1-18 from the Apostolic Writings of Yeshua's *talmidim* [i.e. students, disciples, apprentices] to supplement parsha *B'reshit's* Torah and Haftarah readings. These 18 verses provide for us an amplified summary of beginnings written from the perspective of a man we in the Western world have come to call 'John'.

The scribe employed by the Holy One to write John 1:1-18 was not an Englishman, and the name by which his family and Yeshua knew him was most definitely not 'John'. He did not speak or write in King James English – which of course did not even exist as a language when he lived. The writer of John 1:1-18 was a Hebrew, raised speaking Hebrew in connection with matters relating to religion. The name by which he was known was *Yochanan*. A Torah observant fisherman from a good Hebrew family, he was chosen from the foundation of the world to *encounter and walk the earth with the Messiah, the Living Torah, to become His 'beloved disciple', and to learn from Him – and pass on to us - some of the deepest secrets of creation.*

How Yochanan's name became transformed over the centuries by English-speakers into the more familiar 'John' is a suspicious mystery. The fact that we

only have a record of the truths Yochanan learned and wrote for us in Greek-language manuscripts [the Greek language was a hated ‘foreign tongue’ to Hebrews of his day] translated from the original by who-knows-who, with who knows what agenda, is a tremendous misfortune.

When we in 21st Century America read verses from the account of Yochanan in English translations are twice removed from the real thought-process and meaning of Yochanan. Yochanan thought and spoke and wrote like a Hebrew, using Hebrew concepts. We do not have his actual Hebrew words. Much was lost when they were translated into Greek. Centuries later, when the Greek words the original translator had chosen to approximate what Yochanan had tried to tell us were translated into English, we lost even more. We now have revelation ‘twice removed’.

An example of what I mean is found in the opening words of the account. We read the opening phrase in English, after two translations, as: *In the beginning was the Word ...* Consider however that “*Word*” has to us both Anglo/American cultural and Christian theological connotations that would have been totally foreign to Yochanan, and which necessarily distort his message. Even if we go back to the Greek word ‘*Logos*’, which our English Bibles render as “*Word*”, we do not get back to anything within Yochanan’s spiritual frame of reference.

Realistically we must understand that what Yochanan was trying to communicate to us was ‘*in the beginning*’ was neither ‘*Word*’ nor ‘*Logos*’ – but was the Hebrew “*Ha-D’var*”. *Ha-D’var* means *the substantive, prophetically empowered word that transforms*. Yochanan would have said: “*B’reshit Ha-D’var!* Let’s see what a difference that one little correction would make in our understanding of what Yochanan was being told by the Spirit of God to record for us. If we substituted ‘the *D’var*’ – the Hebrew concept – for ‘*Logos*’ or ‘*Word*’, we would read:

*In the shaking was the D’var, and the D’var was with the Holy One,
and the D’var was one with the Holy One,
The D’var and the Holy One were one together from the beginning.*

Wow! Now if we understood ‘*in the beginning*’ from the Hebrew concept of ‘*B’reshit ...*’, and if we understood ‘*one*’ [what Yochanan tells us the *D’var* and “*God*” were] from the Hebrew concept of *echad*, and if we understood ‘*God*’ from the Hebrew concept *Elohim*, and if you understood that the spirit of the prophetic word that transforms is the testimony of Yeshua [Revelation 19:10] ... well, you begin to get the idea, don’t you? There is a vast realm of awesome revelation hidden for us in the Torah. Let’s spend the coming year engaged in a higher level of sorting through that treasure trove than ever before!

Shavua Tov! [Have a wonderful week]
and **Shanah Tovah** [Have a wonderful year]!

The Rabbi's son

Amidah Prayer Focus for Week of Parsha B'reshit

Avot – The Prayer of the Fathers

Baruch Atah Adonai

Blessed are You, O Holy One

eloheinu v'elohai avoteinu

Our God, and God of our fathers

Elohai Avraham Elohai Yitzchak v'elohai Ya'akov

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob

Ha-El ha-gadol, ha-gibor

The great, mighty God

v'han'ro El-Elyon gomel chasodim tovim

awesome, supreme God -Who bestows good things upon those He loves

v'konai ha-kol

and Who creates all things

v'zachar chasdai avot

Who remembers our ancestors' acts of covenant love

u'mayvi goel livnei v'nayhem

and Who brings a Redeemer to their children's children

l'ma'an sh'mo b'ahavo

for the sake of His Name, and out of love

Melech ezer u'moshiach u'mogan

O King, Helper, Messiah/Savior, and Shield/Defender

Baruch Atah Adonai Mogen Avraham

Blessed are You, O Holy One, Guardian of Abraham