

The Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash
Parshat HaShavua
Yeshivat Har Etzion

This parasha series is dedicated
in memory of Michael Jotkowitz, z"l.

PARASHAT BEREISHIT

The Story of Creation

By Rav Tamir Granot

I. Introduction

The story of Creation, as we know it from Chapter 1 of Sefer Bereishit, is one of the most delicate parshi'ot in the entire Torah. The weighty philosophical and theological issues that it raises, the proximity that it offers to the secrets of the origins of the universe, with all its mystery and fascination, and – perhaps more than anything else – the numerous, profound exegetical difficulties that the study of this chapter entails – all of these have made this story an endless source of inspiration for commentary throughout the generations. Just a glance at a Chumash Mikra'ot Gedolot and how many pages, in relation to other chapters in the Torah, are devoted to a few verses of Chapter 1 in Bereishit is sufficient evidence of its exegetical and religious importance.

In this shiur we shall try to understand the significance of the story of Creation (Chapter 1) as arising from a careful analysis of the literal text. Before we begin, the following three brief comments are in order:

- a. Although the Torah devotes an entire chapter to the description of the Creation, there is still much more that is hidden than is revealed. The "act of Creation" that our Sages prohibited from being taught in a public forum refers – if we understand it literally – to this chapter itself. The text contains many mysteries; some manifest, others hidden.
- b. Nevertheless, we find it difficult to identify with the approach maintaining that this chapter is meant simply as a general instruction, telling us that God is the Creator and Ruler of the world, and therefore His commandments should be observed (as Professor Leibowitz proposed), or that it means to establish the idea of God's ownership of the world and hence our right to the Land of Israel (as Rashi explains on verse 1). Since the Torah elaborates somewhat beyond these fundamental axioms, there must be lessons for us to learn from its more detailed descriptions. And even if there is an esoteric dimension, the Torah was not given only to mystics or philosophers; we need to understand what the text means on the literal level.

c. It should be noted at the outset that some of the points that will be raised here are discussed by the early commentators. The scope of the shiur does not allow for an indication of each source; our contribution to the discussion is mainly in the conclusion.

II. Order and Structure in the Story of Creation - Terms

What is the Torah's main purpose in its description of the Creation? I believe that the answer to this question is quite simple, and it arises from a simple reading of the chapter. Chapter 1 establishes the internal order of Creation, dividing it into different sections. This order is the result of the hierarchical relationships described in the verses and the internal division of the creations, as presented in the Torah. The establishment of the division of the creations and their order is of religious and moral significance, as will become apparent further on in this shiur and in the shiur on Parashat Noach.

How is the order of the story of Creation affected on the literary level? The Torah makes use of:

- different verbs indicating creation (such as "va-yivra" [b-r-a], "va-ya'as" [a-s-h])
- a recurring formula that serves to create divisions (such as "God saw that it was good")
- division into days.

A number of "creative" verbs are used in the story: "b-d-l"; "a-s-h"; "a-m-r"; "k-r-a"; "y-tz-a"; "b-r-kh" [1]. A review of these verbs reveals that they appear in a precise order, with precise significance, and that they are very important for our understanding of the story. Moreover, the various verbs also facilitate various internal divisions of the Creation and of the creations.

The two most well-known possibilities for dividing the story into stages are the division into seven (in accordance with the days) and the division into ten (in accordance with the Divine utterances, as proposed by the Sages in the Mishna). The former is based upon the formulaic model of "It was evening and it was morning of the X day"; the latter is based on the recurrence of the verb "a-m-r" (to say).

A certain tension exists between the two possibilities. These are two typological numbers, representing two approaches to counting: by seven or by ten. Which is correct? Which is primary, which secondary? Later on we shall see that there are other possibilities, and we shall examine the relationships between them.

Before embarking on our detailed discussion, let us review the entire chapter, highlighting the terms and verbs related to the act of creation.

- (1) In the beginning God CREATED (b-r-a) the heavens and the earth.
- (2) And the earth was formless and void, with darkness over the face of the deep, and God's wind hovered over the face of the water.
- (3) And God SAID (a-m-r), "Let there be light" – and there was light.
- (4) And God saw the light, that it was good, and God DIVIDED (b-d-l) between the light and the darkness.
- (5) And God CALLED (k-r-a) the light "day", and the darkness He called "night"; and there was evening and there was morning – one day.

(6)And God said (a-m-r), "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, that it may divide water from water".

(7)And God MADE (a-s-h) the firmament, and He DIVIDED (b-d-l) between the water that was below the firmament and the water that was above the firmament, and it was so.

(8)And God CALLED (k-r-a) the firmament "heaven"; and it was evening and it was morning – a second day.

(9)And God SAID (a-m-r), "Let the water that is below the firmament BE GATHERED to a single place, that the ground may appear" – and it was so.

(10)And God CALLED (k-r-a) the ground "land", and the gathering of water He called "seas", and God saw that it was good.

(11)And God SAID (a-m-r), "Let the land bring forth grass, seed-bearing herbs, fruit trees bearing fruit after their own kind, whose seeds are within them – upon the land" – and it was so.

(12)The land brought forth grass, seed-bearing herbs after their own kind, and trees bearing fruit, whose seeds were within them, of their own kind, and God saw that it was good.

(13)It was evening and it was morning – a third day.

(14)And God SAID (a-m-r), "Let there be lights in the firmament of the sky, to DIVIDE (b-d-l) between day and night, that they may be for signs and for seasons and for days and for years,

(15)And that they may be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light to the land" – and it was so.

(16)God MADE (a-s-h) the two great lights – the great light to rule over the day, and the small light to rule over the night, and the stars.

(17)And God placed them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light to the land,

(18)And to rule over the day and the night, and to divide between light and darkness. And God saw that it was good.

(19)And it was evening and it was morning, a fourth day.

(20)And God SAID (a-m-r), "Let the water swarm abundantly with living creatures, and let birds fly above the land across the firmament of the heaven".

(21)And God CREATED (b-r-a) the great reptiles and every living creature that moves, which the water brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind, and God saw that it was good.

(22)And God BLESSED (b-r-kh) them, saying: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds multiply in the land".

(23)And it was evening and it was morning – a fifth day.

(24)And God SAID (a-m-r): "Let the land bring forth living creatures after their kind – beasts and creeping things and animals of the ground after their kind" – and it was so.

(25)And God MADE (a-s-h) the animals of the ground after their kind, and the beasts after their kind, and all the creeping things of the land after their kind, and God saw that it was good.

(26)And God SAID (a-m-r): "LET US MAKE (a-s-h) man IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS, THAT HE MAY RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA AND THE BIRDS OF THE SKY AND THE BEASTS AND ALL THE LAND, AND ALL THE CREEPING THINGS THAT CREEP UPON THE LAND".

(27)AND GOD CREATED (b-r-a) MAN IN HIS IMAGE; IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM, MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM.

(28)AND GOD BLESSED (b-r-kh) THEM AND GOD SAID (a-m-r) TO THEM: BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY, AND FILL THE LAND AND CONQUER IT, AND RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA AND THE BIRDS OF THE SKY AND ALL THE CREATURES THAT CREEP UPON THE LAND.

(29)AND GOD SAID (a-m-r): BEHOLD, I HAVE GIVEN YOU ALL THE SEED-BEARING HERBS THAT ARE UPON THE FACE OF THE LAND, AND ALL THE FRUIT-BEARING TREES – THEY SHALL BE FOOD FOR YOU,

(30)AND FOR ALL THE CREATURES OF THE LAND, AND FOR ALL THE BIRDS OF THE SKY, AND FOR ALL THE CREEPING THINGS UPON THE LAND THAT HAVE LIFE – GREEN HERBS FOR FOOD" – AND IT WAS SO.

(31)And God saw all that He had done, and behold – it was very good; and it was evening and it was morning – a sixth day.

(2:1)Then WERE COMPLETED (k-l-h) THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, AND ALL THEIR HOSTS

(2)AND GOD COMPLETED (k-l-h) ON THE SEVENTH DAY HIS WORK WHICH HE HAD DONE,

AND HE RESTED (sh-b-t) ON THE SEVENTH DAY FROM ALL HIS WORK WHICH HE HAD DONE

(3)AND GOD BLESSED (b-r-kh) THE SEVENTH DAY AND SANCTIFIED (k-d-sh) IT FOR ON IT HE RESTED (sh-b-t) FROM ALL HIS WORK WHICH GOD HAD CREATED, TO DO.

Let us begin by noting several points that are immediately apparent, on the linguistic level:

a. There are "creative" terms that appear ONLY during the first three days: these are "He called" (k-r-a) and the root "b-d-l" (to separate). Admittedly, we do find the root "b-d-l" appearing at the beginning of the fourth day, in the division "between the light and the darkness," but both its location (close to the preceding unit) and its content (a division between the light and the darkness) suggest that it should be considered a complement to the first day, rather than as a separate development belonging to the following days.

b. God "calls" (i.e., gives names to:(
-light and darkness (on the first day(
-the firmament (second day(
-the dry land and the gathering of water (third day(
i.e. – one "naming" per day.

Furthermore, God "divides" between:

-light and darkness (and day and night, accordingly(
-the water that it beneath the firmament and that which it above it
-the water of the sea and the dry land

In the third instance, the term that is used is not "b-d-l" (dividing) but rather "k-v-h" (gathering), but the meaning is the same. Thus it immediately becomes apparent that the "dividing" and the "calling" go together: that which God divides, or separates, He then calls by its name. Separation creates identity, and this is completed, complemented and/or signified by giving it a name. The names are in accordance with the days - Day 1: day and night; Day 2: heaven; Day 3: land and seas.

Attention should be paid to another important point. Even before the name is given, there already exists a word with a similar meaning, since the formulation is always "God called A – "B"."

What, then, is the difference between the first title - "A" – and the new title, "B"? (For example, what is the difference between "ground," as the old title, and "land," as the new one?)

We may propose that the first title does not give the object its own, essential identity, but rather defines it in relation to its opposite. For example, "darkness" means absence of light; "ground" means a place where water is dried up and absent; "firmament" denotes the form of the action – "stretching the land upon the water" (from Hallel). The new name that God gives refers to the new creation itself. The ground is LAND. LAND is not only a place that is not sea; it is a new entity, with its own essence and purpose. The same applies to "heaven" or "day" and "night," each of which represents a new, independent quality.

c. The creative terms "made" (a-s-h) and "blessed" (b-r-kh) appear only in the LATTER THREE DAYS. In the latter three days the Creation is characterized not by acts of separation (b-d-l), but rather by acts of "making." There is likewise no "calling" – not because there is no need for a name, but rather because here naming is achieved in a different way. "Man" (adam) has a name, given to him at the time of his creation: "Let us make man." Later on this is simply reiterated: "He called them man on the day of their creation" [2]. The animals have no names, but they are given names later on, by man; hence, here in the Divine Creation their naming is missing.

d. We find three instances of "making" (a-s-h): the lights (fourth day); the creatures of the earth (sixth day), and man ("let us make man" – sixth day). There are also three "blessings": the blessing to the birds and the fish (fifth day), the blessing to man (sixth day), and the blessing of Shabbat – on Shabbat.

In summary, thus far, we may say that the number three is of great significance in the organization of the Creation. All of the "creative" terms come in groups of three, so as to create a three-fold division: k-r-a, b-d-l, a-s-h, b-r-kh, and b-r-a (which we have yet to discuss.)

e. So far, we have seen that with respect to the various creative terms, the Creation can be divided into two parts: the first three days, and the last three days. The terms "b-r-a" ("created") and "a-m-r" ("said") are different from the other terms in that they appear both in the first days and in the last days. I.e., they have nothing to do with the division of Creation into two parts.

The root "b-r-a," as noted, is mentioned three times:

- heaven and earth (Day 1)
- the great reptiles (Day 5)
- man (Day 6)

We propose that the term "b-r-a" refers, in each verse, to its direct object as well as to all that follows. In other words, "He created the great reptiles" – and also all the living creatures and all the beasts of the land, up until the next "creation" that stands on its own: man. This is

borne out by the first of the creations. "God created (b-r-a) the heavens and the earth." But on the first day we read nothing about the creation of the land (earth); nor on the second day. Only on the third day are we told, "God called the ground 'land.'" In other words, we have a heading, a general title, followed by a detailed listing which includes all that is created under the heading of "the heaven and the earth," including Day 3 as well as Day 4, whose creations are components of the heaven: "God placed them in the firmament of the heaven". Only after the completion of the heaven and the earth does the text indicate – on Day 5 – the next creation (using the verb b-r-a): the animals. And when this creation is concluded on Day 6, the creation of man begins.

Hence, there are three creations:

- The creation of the bare universe – heaven and earth
- The creation of the animal kingdom
- The creation of man.

Plants, for example, are not an independent creation, and neither are the sun and moon. We shall discuss this further, below.

f. The term "said" (a-m-r) is mentioned in each of the days of Creation, sometimes more than once. Our Sages assert that "the world was created with ten utterances (ma'amarot)". The question is how these are to be counted, for it is possible to reach a total of 11 utterances, or to consider some instances as secondary and thereby to arrive at a total of only 9. In any event, it is clear that most of the utterances are concentrated in two days – the third and the sixth.

On the third day: "God said – let the water be gathered" and "God said – let the land bring forth grass."

On the sixth day: "God said – let the land bring forth living things" and "God said – let us make man," followed by another two utterances: "He said to them: be fruitful and multiply, and rule...", and "He said: ...behold, I have given you all the herbs..." The latter two utterances are different in that they involve no new creation, but rather convey only an instruction or establishment of a law of nature. Hence they may be counted either jointly or separately, or left out of the count altogether.

Clearly, then, there is a disparity between the division into utterances and the division into days, and we must investigate the significance of this. If it is the Divine utterances that are meant to divide up the Creation, there should be a special utterance for each day. If, on the other hand, it is the days that divide and categorize the Creation, then there would appear to be no need for an additional utterance for the plants or the creation of man.

III. The Various Sections/Stages of Creation

Let us now try to clarify the conclusions that arise from the analysis presented above:

a. The story of the Creation is characterized by a clear division between the first three days, in which there is "dividing" and "calling," and the last three days, in which there is "making" and "blessing." During the first three days, God creates the heaven and the earth – i.e., time and space, and in the latter three days He fills them. At the end of the story of Creation we read: "The heavens and the earth and all of their hosts were completed." This is an accurate and precise summary of the Creation: during the first three days God created "the heaven and

the earth," and during the latter three days He created "all of their hosts" – the hosts of the heavens (the lights) and the hosts of the earth (animals.)

The creation of time and space during the first three days is not a creation of fundamentally new essences, but rather an act of division within an existing entity or reality. This entity is called "tohu va-vohu - formlessness and void." The formlessness and void is space without time and without dimension. On the first day, time is created. The second day adds the dimension of depth or height (heaven and earth), while the third day introduces area – i.e., the dimension of breadth. Thus the creation of heaven and earth is complete, including both time and three-dimensional space. Here a difficulty arises: why is the creation of the plant kingdom mentioned as part of the creation of space, i.e., part of the third day, rather than as part of its "filling" on the fifth or sixth day? We shall come back to this question later on.

During the latter three days, God fills in time and space in accordance with the appropriate correlatives ("their hosts"). On the fourth day He fills time by means of the lights. On the fifth day God fills the dimensions of height and depth, i.e., birds and fish. On the sixth day He fills the horizontal plane by creating animals and man.

A point for further contemplation: this view of Creation shows how the number seven arises as the fundamental pattern of creation. Seven is a complex number, not a simple one. In other words, it represents not an elementary unit, but rather a complete total. What is it comprised of? In light of our analysis above, we may now assert that it is composed of
) 3 (first days) + 3 (latter days) + 1 (Shabbat.)

The number three is likewise complex rather than simple: it is composed of $2 + 1$. We have seen that the "1" here is time, while the "2" represent space. Admittedly, one may ask why the dimensions of length and breadth are counted together here as a single unit, while in fact they are two different dimensions. To this we may answer that what we are attempting to do here is to understand what the Torah is teaching us, and this is what we deduce from a first glance. Closer inspection reveals that the Torah also addresses the two-dimensional nature of area, for there are two creations on the land, corresponding to the two dimensions. The division between the land and the seas is the creation of the longitudinal line (hinted to in the word "yikavu – to be gathered"; the word "kav" means "a line"). The plants represent latitudinal lines. The boundary between land and sea is the only place where a clearly longitudinal, one-dimensional line is created. In relation to this other longitudinal and latitudinal lines can be arranged – and this is achieved by means of the reality of the plant kingdom.

According to kabbalistic tradition, too, this is the basis of the number 7. There are 6 sides (the six Sefirot) + 1 – "Malkhut" (kingship). The six are composed of two groups: "Chesed," "Gevura" and "Tifferet" – above, and then "Netzach," "Hod" and "Yesod" – below. The former represent principles, the basis. The latter represent their channels of influence. Each set of three in turn is composed of two (for example, the contrasting "Chesed" and "Gevura") and one ("Tifferet"). Finally, there is "Malkhut", corresponding to Shabbat – the "Shabbat Queen" (Shabbat Malkheta) [3.]

b. Let us return to the terms used in Creation: the creation of the "host" of the world is described by the verb "a-s-h". God "makes" the lights, the animals, and man. And this "making" is joined by "blessing." Why is blessing given, at Creation, only to the fish, the birds and man, and finally to Shabbat? Why is there no blessing, for example, to the

inanimate world, or to the plant kingdom? The answer to this is that blessing is required where the Divine "making" is not perfect and final, but rather potential. When the lights were created, they were perfect as they were. There was nothing left to do to complete them. Likewise the plant kingdom: even if the plants need rain and time, they are created perfect. Mankind, on the other hand, was created as only two individuals. In other words, mankind existed in potential. From here we may infer that the same applies to the birds and the fish – i.e., they too were created as an individual pair of male and female, requiring the blessing of "being fruitful and multiplying." Strong support for this is to be found in the formulation, "and it was so," which is repeated often throughout the story. If we review Chapter 1 again, we find that this formula appears in every instance of a Divine utterance. Thus, "God said, "let there be... and it was so." On the first day, we read, "God said: Let there be light," and immediately thereafter – "there was light." What is the significance of this wording? God said – and the thing was, as He had said, in its most complete and perfect form. Only in two places is this formula missing: on the fifth day, with the creation of the birds and the fish, and on the sixth day, with the creation of man. Why is this so? Were these creations not just as God had said? The answer arises from what we have already said concerning the term "He blessed": the thing did exist, but it was not complete; its perfect manifestation existed only in potential. There was a beginning of its creation, but not the end. Hence the continuation of the "making" cannot be described using the formula "it was so"; rather, the formula must point towards the future: "He blessed"....

A point for further contemplation: We propose that the blessing of Shabbat likewise arises from the non-concrete character of its creation. It is not a closed, defined entity, but rather the opposite – possibility, opportunity. Shabbat is time that has the potential for sanctity. It is a vessel for light, not the light itself. Hence, there is perhaps a third possibility that we may add in between the two raised by some chassidim when they asked their Rav whether the customs of Shabbat are a result of its inherent sanctity, or whether by practicing them (in the original question – wearing a shtreimel and eating cholent) we come to feel its sanctity. To our view, Shabbat has the potential for sanctity; it is a vessel – as the kabbalists put it, "it is the source of blessing". It is the source of sanctity and blessing for everything else, if it is filled with light.

c. Let us now review again, in an orderly fashion, the question of the division of Creation:

.1The pattern of the first division is into two: "heaven and earth" on one hand (first three days), and "their hosts" on the other (latter three days.)

.2The pattern of the secondary division is into three parts, in accordance with the verb "b-r-a." According to this principle, the division is between the inanimate world (including the plant kingdom), the animal kingdom, and man. The host of the heaven, belonging – in terms of their status – to the inanimate world, are counted here as part of the first group, while according to the previous division they were part of the second group. The first group, characterized by its "potential" nature, included them within the framework of the things that fill reality. The second division, establishing the essential status of the categories of creation, consigns them to the inanimate world, representing a lower level. This is a very important metaphysical assertion. After all, Greek metaphysics – inter alia – regarded the constellations (hosts of the heaven) as entities with a higher, more spiritual status than that of man. Chapter 1 of Sefer Bereishit teaches otherwise. The use of the term "b-r-a" in the transition between one category or status of creation and the next, means that there is no continuity between them. While the creation of land is the revelation of that which was concealed in the previous

stage, and plants then arise from the earth, animals cannot develop from the inanimate world. Even the widely accepted theory of evolution has trouble with this issue. The Torah adopts the verb "b-r-a" in order to express the "jump," the qualitative leap, from one stage to the next. To our humble view, the textual use of the term "b-r-a" does not imply creation ex nihilo, as some of the early commentators maintain. Creation is not the innovation of something out of nothing; rather, it is the innovation of something that, left to natural causality, has no possibility of arising out of what existed prior to it. The inanimate world in its entirety belongs, according to the Torah, to the same ontological plane. The animal world is a different, completely separate level, characterized by life. And the world of man is likewise a completely independent level. Man is also alive, but he is "in our image; in our likeness," and therefore he cannot possibly develop or mutate from the preceding level – that of the animal kingdom.

.3Finally – the Torah divides Creation by days and by utterances. The lack of overlap between these divisions is noticeable, as we have mentioned, on the third day and on the sixth day, and we questioned the reason for this. We now propose as follows: if there are two aspects of Creation that are created on the same day, but which require two separate Divine utterances, then we must conclude that in one respect they are part of the same category – they have similar essences – but in another respect they are separate and distinct. This dual status or relationship is expressed in the two different forms of division. Let us now look more closely at these "complex" creations.

a. The land, and with it the plant kingdom, were created on the same day, but with two separate utterances. Hence, in one respect they share the same status and essence, while in another respect they are separate and distinct from one another. Here it is clear that in functional terms there is an enormous difference between these two things: plants, after all, are not just a living environment, as the land is; it is not just the surface upon which animals live, but rather are also a source of food. God's words on the sixth day leave no room for doubt in this regard: "Behold, I have given all the green herbs..." But the other aspect tells us that the plant kingdom is in fact to be considered the same as the inanimate world, and we shall discuss this further below.

b. Animals and man: these are likewise created on the same day, but with two separate utterances. The reason for their appearance on the same day is that both are living creatures; this gives them some measure of equality. The animal kingdom, according to Chapter 1 of Sefer Bereishit, is an end in itself and hence worthy of honor – i.e., of life and protection. Animals were not created for man's sake – for (at this stage) man is forbidden to eat them. In other words, man and animals together are the purpose of the creation of the world. Admittedly, man is destined for rulership: "... and rule over it, and have dominion..." This destiny arises from his being created "in the image of God." The characteristic and destiny of rulership is the principle significance of creation in God's image, according to the literal text. This, of course, represents a separate, special level that is accorded only to man – and hence the reason for a separate utterance. Man's superiority does not entail the value and status of animals becoming purely "instrumental," but it does establish an internal hierarchy within the animal kingdom.

We shall conclude our discussion of the relationship between the days and the utterances with a comment as to the status of the two last "utterances." These, as mentioned, are not followed by some Divine action, but rather contain a blessing or commandment. Previously, the formulation was always, "God said: Let there be..." (or "let the waters gather") – i.e.,

creation. Finally, on the sixth day, we read: "God said to them: Be fruitful and multiply....," and then "God said: Behold, I have given you... all vegetation... it shall be for you for food, and for all the creatures of the land...." Do these utterances belong to the category of those with which the world was created, or are they merely command and blessing? The commentaries (including on the Mishna) are divided in this regard, but we believe that there is a clear proof favoring one side of this controversy.

The first "God said" is formulated in the second person, in the imperative: God instructs the man and woman as to what they must do. The command is to be fruitful and to rule and conquer the natural world. There are partners in dialogue here; a "you" that is standing before the Divine "I." The second "God said," concerning eating plants, is also formulated in the second person: "Behold, I have given YOU," but it contains no instruction for the future; rather, it is a declarative sentence referring to the past: "Behold, I HAVE GIVEN you all the plants...." The second part of this utterance also includes the third person: God has also given the plants as food for "all the creatures of the earth, and all the birds of the heaven." The transition to the third person would seem to suggest that concerning animals there is no religious or moral law; it is simply a law of nature. The Divine statement changes from a demand into a fact. Hence, it does not reflect an expectation of fulfillment by the listener, as in the command to man; rather, it is self-fulfilling. The proof of this is that at the end of the same verse, we find the decisive formula – "And it was so." In other words, God's statement that animals would eat vegetation came to be. And as to our question (whether this is an utterance that is part of the Creation, or a command/blessing): it is one of the utterances by which the world was created. The first statement, in which man and woman are commanded, contains no "it was so." The reason, as we have explained, is that on one hand this is a blessing – exclusively potential, while on the other hand it is dependent upon man – i.e., exclusively a demand [4.]

IV. Interim Conclusion

We have attempted here to touch on some of the key issues in understanding the chapter of Creation. Clearly, not all the questions are addressed here; there is certainly much to learn on each of the points that are raised here, and much more besides. We would like to emphasize two fundamental points:

- a. We briefly discussed the question of the status of animals in relation to man and in-and-of-themselves. Since the status of this category of Creation is formulated here in absolute, ontological terms, it is difficult to understand what happens after the Flood, when the status of animals changes, and they are permitted as food. This change requires another look at what is described here, on the sixth day of Creation.
- b. We also addressed the question of the status of plants in Creation. Plants are not part of the "host" (filling) of the world; rather, they are part of the framework, the infrastructure – for they appear on the third day. This is somewhat surprising. Does the plant kingdom have a different status from that of the inanimate world? And for what reason it is created on the third day? We shall address these questions next week, in our shiur on Parashat Noach.

Notes:

[1]For the meantime we shall ignore Chapter 2 and its different description of Creation. According to classical exegesis, Chapter 2 contains no fundamental innovation beyond what

we learn from Chapter 1; it is meant mainly to elaborate on the creation of man on the sixth day. According to modern exegesis, Chapter 2 represents a parallel, different description. Clearly, though, the focus of Chapter 2 is man rather than Creation as a whole, and the crux of our understanding of the universe in general is still to be found in Chapter 1. Either way, it is important that we understand Chapter 1 in its own right, especially since Chapter 9 (which we shall address in our shiur on Parashat Noach) is – linguistically and thematically - a continuation of Chapter 1 and not Chapter 2.

[2]It is interesting to note that in the case of man, there is no prior name that is replaced; rather, the name indicates what he is: "Let us make man." In other words, the text is not talking about something whose role or essence changed, but rather about a completely new innovation, whose whole essence is "man." See below.

[3]See also Sefer Yetzira, Bereishit, discussing the ten Sefirot, corresponding to the ten utterances. Compare with what we have proposed here. Ramban notes this connection in his commentary on the first Divine utterance.

[4]Attention should also be paid to what we read on the fifth day: "God blessed them [the fish and the birds], SAYING: Be fruitful and multiply...." Here, there is no appeal to another party in the second person, as we read concerning man: "God said TO THEM..."; rather, a blessing is bestowed upon them. Does the "saying" here imply that the utterance is part of the Creation? In order to reach a total of ten utterances, we must conclude that it is – but this still requires further explanation.

Translated by Kaeren Fish