

GENESIS

CHAPTER I

BERESHITH

1. R. Oshaya commenced [his exposition thus]: *Then I was by Him, as a nursling* (amon); *and I was daily all delight* (Prov. VIII, 30). 'Amon' means tutor; 'amon' means covered; 'amon' means hidden¹; and some say, 'amon' means great. 'Amon' is a tutor, as you read, *As an omen* (nursing-father) *carrieth the sucking child* (Num. XI, 12). 'Amon' means covered, as in the verse, *Ha'emunim* (they that were clad—i.e. covered) *in scarlet* (Lam. IV, 5). 'Amon' means hidden, as in the verse, *And he concealed* (omen)² *Hadassah* (Est. II, 7). 'Amon' means great, as in the verse, *Art thou better than No-amon* (Nah. III, 8)? which is rendered, *Art thou better than Alexandria the Great, that is situate among the rivers?*³ Another interpretation: 'amon' is a workman (*uman*). The Torah declares: 'I was the working tool of the Holy One, blessed be He.' In human practice, when a mortal king builds a palace, he builds it not with his own skill but with the skill of an architect. The architect moreover does not build it out of his head, but employs plans and diagrams to know how to arrange the chambers and the wicket doors. Thus God consulted the Torah and created the world, while the Torah declares, *IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED* (I, 1), *BEGINNING* referring to the Torah, as in the verse, *The Lord made me as the beginning of His way* (Prov. VIII, 22).⁴

¹ The speaker is the Torah (Wisdom) personified, referring to the pre-Creation era. The Torah was with God as with a tutor, reared, as it were, by the Almighty (this is similar to E.V.); it was also covered up and hidden. This may mean that the laws of the Torah were unknown until the Revelation at Sinai, while some of them remained 'hidden' even then, i.e. their reasons are not known. ² E.V. 'brought up'. The Midrash understands it to mean that Mordecai concealed her from the public gaze. ³ Translation of the second half of the verse.

⁴ Here too the speaker is the Torah. Thus the verse is translated: By means of the 'beginning', sc. the Torah, God created, etc.

5.¹ R. Huna quoted in Bar Kappara's name: *Let the lying lips be dumb*—te'alamnah (Ps. xxxi, 19): this means, Let them be bound, made dumb, and silenced. 'Let them be bound,' as in the verse, *For, behold, we were binding sheaves*—me'allemin allumim (Gen. xxxvii, 7); 'Let them be made dumb,' as you read, *Or who made a man dumb*—illem (Ex. iv, 11); while 'Let them be silenced' is its literal meaning. *Which speak* 'athak (E.V. 'arrogantly') *against the righteous* (Ps. loc. cit.), meaning, [which speak] against [the will of] the Righteous One, who is the Life of all worlds, on matters which He has withheld (*he'etik*) from His creatures.² *With pride* (*ib.*)! in order to boast and say, 'I discourse on the Creation narrative!' *And contempt* (*ib.*): to think that he contemns My Glory! For R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: Whoever elevates himself at the cost of his fellow man's degradation has no share in the World to Come. How much the more then [when it is done at the expense of] the glory of God! And what is written after it? *Oh how abundant is Thy goodness, which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee* (*ib.* 20). Said Rab: Let him³ have nought of Thine abundant goodness.⁴ In human practice, when an earthly monarch builds a palace on a site of sewers, dunghills, and garbage, if one says, 'This palace is built on a site of sewers, dunghills, and garbage,' does he not discredit it? Thus, whoever comes to say that this world was created out of *tohu* and *bohu*⁵ and darkness, does he not indeed impair [God's glory]? R. Huna said in Bar Kappara's name: If the matter were not written, it would be impossible to say it, viz., G O D C R E A T E D

¹ The Midrash here is in some disorder. The passages that follow are sections 5 and 6 in cur. edd., but are placed here in Th.'s ed.

² Sc. the mysteries of Creation, which were regarded as a subject of esoteric teaching fit for the very select few only.

³ Who irreverently disseminates esoteric teaching, and so is not of 'them that fear Thee'.

⁴ Lit. 'nought in "Oh how abundant is Thy goodness".'

⁵ E.V. (in Gen. i, 2) 'unformed and void'. Here, however, they are regarded, together with darkness, as forms of matter which according to some who deny *creatio ex nihilo* was God's raw material in the creation of the world. The object of the Midrash here is to refute that view.

HEAVEN AND EARTH; out of what? Out of NOW THE EARTH WAS TOHU AND BOHU (I, 2).¹

6. R. Judah b. Simon quoted: *And He revealeth the deep and secret things*—mesatratha (Dan. II, 22). 'The deep things' are the Gehenna, as it is written, *But he knoweth not that the shades are there; that in the depths of the nether world are her guests* (Prov. IX, 18). 'And secret things' refers to the garden of Eden, as it is written, *And for a refuge and for a covert* (le-mistor), etc. (Isa. IV, 6).² Another interpretation: 'And He revealeth the deep things' refers to the deeds of the wicked, as it is written, *Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord* (ib. XXIX, 15). *He knoweth what is in the darkness* (Dan. loc. cit.): this too refers to the deeds of the wicked, as it is written, *And their works are in the darkness* (Isa. loc. cit.). *And the light dwelleth with Him* (Dan. loc. cit.) refers to the deeds of the righteous, as it is written, *Light is sown for the righteous* (Ps. XCVII, 11). R. Abba of Serungayya³ said: 'And the light dwelleth with him'⁴ alludes to the royal Messiah. R. Judah b. R. Simon said: From the commencement of the world's creation 'He revealeth the deep things,' etc.,⁵ for it is written, IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN, but it is not explained how. Where then is it explained? Elsewhere: *That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain* (Isa. XL, 22); AND THE EARTH, which is likewise not explained. Where is that explained? Elsewhere: *For He saith to the snow: Fall thou on the earth*, etc. (Job XXXVII, 6). AND GOD SAID: LET THERE BE LIGHT (I, 3), and the manner of this, too, is not explained. Where is it explained? Elsewhere: *Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment* (Ps. CIV, 2).

¹ God first created *tohu* and *bohu*, and out of these He created the world. But this is not to be taught publicly (Y.T.).

² *Covert* is understood to mean the Garden of Eden.

³ A place near Tiberias.

⁴ With a small *h*, in view of his interpretation.

⁵ He reveals to the prophets matters in connection with the Creation which were hidden and unknown heretofore; 'E.J. and Th.

7. R. Isaac commenced with, *The beginning of Thy word is truth; and all Thy righteous ordinance endureth for ever* (Ps. cxix, 160). Said R. Isaac: From the very commencement of the world's creation, '*The beginning of Thy word is truth.*' Thus, IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED [corroborates the statement,] *But the Lord God is the true God* (Jer. x, 10).¹ Therefore '*And all Thy righteous ordinance endureth for ever* (Ps. *loc. cit.*). For in regard to every single decree which Thou dost promulgate concerning Thy creatures, they affirm the righteousness of Thy judgment and accept it with faith. And no person can dispute and maintain that two powers gave the Torah or two powers created the world. For '*And the Gods spake*' is not written here, but, *And God spake all these words* (Ex. xx, 1)²; *In the beginning the Gods created* is not written here, but IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED.³

2.⁴ R. Joshua of Siknin⁵ quoted in R. Levi's name: *He hath declared to His people the power of His works, in giving them the heritage of the nations* (Ps. cxi, 6). Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, reveal to Israel what was created on the first day and on the second day, etc.? So that the nations of the world might not taunt Israel and say to them: 'Surely ye are a nation of robbers: think of that!' But Israel can retort: 'And do ye not hold yours as spoil, for surely *The Caphtorim, that came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead* (Deut. ii, 23)! The world and the fullness thereof belong to God. When He wished, He gave it to you; and when He wished, He took

¹ Rashi and 'E.J.: The opening statement of the Bible thus proclaims the truth that the Lord is God, and there is none beside Him, for it is He alone who created the world. Mah. *Elohim* (God) is His attribute as a God of justice, and the opening verse of the Bible, IN THE BEGINNING *ELOHIM* CREATED, is an assertion that He created the world on the basis of justice and truth.

² This is the verse which introduces Revelation.

³ The point is that though *Elohim* (God) is plural in form, the accompanying verb is always in the singular. This passage is directed against the Gnostics; v. Graetz, *History of the Jews* (Eng. trans.), vol. II, pp. 377 seq.

⁴ Cf. p. 2, n. 1. ⁵ North of Jotapata in Galilee.

it from you and gave it to us.' Hence it is written, '*In giving them the heritage of the nations, He hath declared to His people the power of His works*': He declared the beginning to them, viz., IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED, etc.

3. R. Tanhuma commenced with: *For Thou art great, and doest wondrous things*, etc. (Ps. LXXXVI, 10). R. Tanhum b. R. Hiyya said: If a gourd has a hole even as small as the eye of a needle, all its air escapes; yet though man is formed with many cavities and orifices, his breath does not escape through them. Who achieved this? *Thou God alone (ib.)*.

When were the angels created? R. Johanan said: They were created on the second day, as it is written, *Who layest the beams of Thine upper chambers in the waters* (Ps. CIV, 3), followed by, *Who makest the spirits Thine angels (ib. 4)*.¹ R. Hanina said: They were created on the fifth day, for it is written, *And let fowl fly above the earth* (Gen. I, 20),² and it is written, *And with twain he did fly* (Isa. VI, 2).³ R. Luliani b. Tabri⁴ said in R. Isaac's name: Whether we accept the view of R. Hanina or that of R. Johanan, all agree that none were created on the first day, lest you should say, Michael stretched [the world] in the south and Gabriel in the north, while the Holy One, blessed be He, measured it in the middle; but *I am the Lord, that maketh all things; that stretched forth the heavens alone; that spread abroad the earth by Myself—me-itti (ib. XLIV, 24): mi itti* (who was with Me) is written: who was associated with Me in the creation of the world? Ordinarily, a mortal king is honoured in his realm and the great men of the realm are honoured with him. Wherefore? Because they bear the burden [of state] with him.

¹ The former verse is interpreted as a poetic description of the dividing of the upper from the nether waters, which took place on the second day (Gen. I, 6-8); and on the same day He created the angels, as is shown by the latter verse. ² This was on the fifth day.

³ Thus angels too fall within the category of beings that fly, and were created on the same day as all flying creatures.

⁴ I.e. Julianus b. Tiberius.

The Holy One, blessed be He, however, is not so, but He alone created His world, He alone is glorified in His universe. R. Tanhuma quoted: '*For Thou art great and doest wondrous things.*' Wherefore?¹ Because '*Thou God art alone*': Thou alone didst create the world. Hence, IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED.

4. IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED. Six things preceded the creation of the world; some of them were actually created, while the creation of the others was already contemplated.² The Torah and the Throne of Glory were created. The Torah, for it is written, *The Lord made me as the beginning of His way, prior to His works of old* (Prov. VIII, 22).³ The Throne of Glory, as it is written, *Thy throne is established of old*, etc. (Ps. XCIII, 2). The creation of the Patriarchs was contemplated, for it is written, *I saw your fathers as the first-ripe in the fig-tree at her first season* (Hos. IX, 10).⁴ [The creation of] Israel was contemplated, as it is written, *Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast gotten aforetime* (Ps. LXXIV, 2). [The creation of] the Temple was contemplated, for it is written, *Thou throne of glory, on high from the beginning, the place of our sanctuary* (Jer. XVII, 12). The name of Messiah was contemplated, for it is written, *His name existeth ere the sun* (Ps. LXXII, 17). R. Ahabah b. R. Ze'ira said: Repentance too, as it is written, *Before the mountains were brought forth*, etc. (*ib.* xc, 2), and from that very moment, *Thou turnest man to contrition, and sayest: Repent, ye children of men* (*ib.* 3). I still do not know which was first, whether the Torah preceded the Throne of Glory or the Throne of Glory preceded the Torah. Said R. Abba b. Kahana: The Torah preceded the Throne of Glory, for it says, '*The Lord made me as the beginning of His way, ere His works of old,*' which means, ere that whereof it is written, '*Thy throne is established of old.*'

¹ I.e. wherein does His greatness lie?

² And, generally speaking, contemplation and decision are identical and simultaneous with God. ³ The speaker is the Torah personified, and '*works of old*' means the Creation.

⁴ 'I saw' is probably interpreted 'I approve', i.e. I decided to create them.

R. Huna, reporting R. Jeremiah in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac, said: The intention to create Israel preceded everything else. This may be illustrated thus: A king was married to a certain lady, and had no son by her. On one occasion the king was found going through the market-place and giving orders: 'Take this ink, inkwell, and pen for my son,' at which people remarked: 'He has no son: what does he want with ink and pen? Strange indeed!' Subsequently they concluded: 'The king is an astrologer, and has actually foreseen that he is destined to beget a son!' Thus, had not the Holy One, blessed be He, foreseen that after twenty-six generations¹ Israel would receive the Torah, He would not have written therein, *Command the children of Israel!*²

R. Banayah said: The world and the fullness thereof were created only for the sake of the Torah: *The Lord for the sake of wisdom* [i.e. the Torah] *founded the earth* (Prov. III, 19). R. Berekiah said: For the sake of Moses: *And He saw the beginning* [i.e. the Creation]³ *for Himself, for there a portion of a ruler* [sc. Moses] *was reserved* (Deut. XXXIII, 21).⁴

R. Huna said in R. Mattenah's name: The world was created for the sake of three things: *hallah*, tithes, and first-fruits, as it is said, IN THE BEGINNING (BERESHITH) GOD CREATED. Now *reshith* alludes to *hallah*, for it is written, *Of the first* (reshith) *of your dough* (Num. xv, 20); again, *reshith* alludes to tithes, for it is written, *The first-fruits* (reshith) *of thy corn* (Deut. XVIII, 4); and finally, *reshith* alludes to first-fruits, for it is written, *The choicest* (reshith) *first-fruits of thy land*, etc. (Ex. XXIII, 19).⁵

8. R. Menahem and R. Joshua b. Levi said in the name of R. Levi⁶: A builder requires six things: water, earth,

¹ Viz., 10 from Adam to Noah; 10 from Noah to Abraham (Aboth v, 2), and then Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, and Moses, making twenty-six in all. ² E.g. Num. XXVIII, 2. ³ E.V. 'And he chose a first part.'

⁴ I.e. God created the world for the sake of Moses who was to be born in it. ⁵ Hence the verse is translated: For the sake of (the preposition *א* can have that meaning) *reshith* God created heaven and earth.

⁶ Bacher is inclined to read: R. Joshua of Siknin in the name of R. Levi.

timber, stones, canes, and iron. And even if you say, He is wealthy and does not need canes,¹ yet he surely requires a measuring rod, as it is written, *And a measuring reed in his hand* (Ezek. XL, 3). Thus the Torah preceded [the creation of the world] by these six things,² viz., *kedem* ('the first'), *me-'az* ('of old'), *me-'olam* ('from everlasting'), *me-rosh* ('from the beginning'), and *mi-lekadmin* ('or ever'), which counts as two.³

9. A certain philosopher asked R. Gamaliel, saying to him: 'Your God was indeed a great artist, but surely He found good materials which assisted Him?'⁴ 'What are they,' said he to him? '*Tohu, bohu*, darkness, water, wind (*ruah*), and the deep,' replied he. 'Woe to that man,' he exclaimed. 'The term "creation" is used by Scripture in connection with all of them.' *Tohu* and *bohu*: *I make peace and create evil* (Isa. XLV, 7)⁵; darkness: *I form the light, and create darkness* (*ib.*); water: *Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that are above the heavens* (Ps. CXLVIII, 4)—wherefore? *For He commanded, and they were created* (*ib.* 5); wind: *For, lo, He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind* (Amos IV, 13); the depths: *When there were no depths, I was brought forth* (Prov. VIII, 24).⁶

¹ The word probably means bamboos or reeds which were only used in poor houses.

² The idea is that six expressions of precedence are employed in reference to the Torah (Y.T. and 'E.J.).

³ This is an allusion to Prov. VIII, 22 f: *The Lord made me* (sc. the Torah) . . . *the first* (*kedem*) *of His works of old* (*me-'az*). *I was set up from everlasting* (*me-'olam*), *from the beginning* (*me-rosh*), *or ever* (*mi-kadme* = *mi-liqadmin* in Aramaic) *the earth was*. *Qadme* is plural in form.

⁴ He believed that God had created the world, but maintained (in the form of a question) that He had used primeval matter, which was eternal.

⁵ By *tohu* and *bohu* the philosopher meant primeval matter, without form. Thereupon R. Gamaliel quoted: *I make shalom* (that which is whole, i.e. what contains both matter and form) and evil, i.e. that which is defective, consisting of matter only without form. Thus that too was created. V. Husik, *A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy*, pp. xxix f. Perhaps too this is an allusion to the view that matter is a source of evil.

⁶ Since at one time there were no depths, God must have created them.

10. IN THE BEGINNING (BE-RESHITH) GOD CREATED. R. Jonah said in R. Levi's name: Why was the world created with a *beth*?¹ Just as the *beth* is closed at the sides but open in front, so you are not permitted to investigate what is above and what is below, what is before and what is behind.² Bar Kappara quoted: *For ask now of the days past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth* (Deut. iv, 32): you may speculate from the day that days were created, but you may not speculate on what was before that. *And from one end of heaven unto the other (ib.)* you may investigate, but you may not investigate what was before this. R. Judah b. Pazzi lectured on the Creation story, in accordance with this interpretation of Bar Kappara.³

Why was it created with a *beth*? To teach you that there are two worlds.⁴ Another interpretation: why with a *beth*? Because it connotes blessing (*berakah*).⁵ And why not with an *alef*?⁶ Because it connotes cursing.⁷ Another interpretation: Why not with an *alef*? In order not to provide a justification for heretics to plead, 'How can the world endure, seeing that it was created with the language of cursing?'⁸ Hence the Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'Lo, I will create it with the language of blessing, and would that it may stand!' Another interpretation: why with a *beth*? Just as a *beth* has two projecting points, one pointing upward and the other backward,⁹ so when we ask it, 'Who

¹ ב is the first letter: בראשית.

² Tosaf. in Hag. 11a s.v. יכול explains that this may refer either to space or to time, or to both space and time.

³ I.e. since the beginning of the Creation. Thus one may actually study or lecture (v. Hag. 11b) on the Creation itself.

⁴ *Beth* (ב) has the numerical value of two.

⁵ *Beth* is the first letter of the word *berakah* (ברכה).

⁶ The first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

⁷ *Alef* (א) is the first letter of *arur* (ארור), cursed.

⁸ Cf. Aboth v, 1, where it is stated that the wicked destroy the world. But they would have been able to plead that it could not endure in any case.

⁹ This refers to the two *taggin* ('daggers') on the top of the *beth*, thus ז: one points upwards and the other backwards. The edd. read: and one below, at the back; this would refer to the backward projection of the *beth*, whereby it differs from the *kaf*, thus: *beth* ב, *kaf* כ.

created thee?' it intimates with its upward point, 'He who is above created me.' And if we ask further, 'What is His name?' it intimates to us with its back point: 'The Lord is His name.'¹ R. Leazar² b. Abinah said in R. Aḥa's name: For twenty-six generations³ the *alef* complained before the Holy One, blessed be He, pleading before Him: 'Sovereign of the Universe! I am the first of the letters, yet Thou didst not create Thy world with me!' God answered: 'The world and its fullness were created for the sake of the Torah alone. To-morrow, when I come to reveal My Torah at Sinai, I will commence with none but thee: *I* (anoki)⁴ *am the Lord your God*' (Ex. xx, 2). Bar Ḥuṭah said: Why is it called *alef*? Because it denotes the sum of a thousand, viz. *The word which He commanded for a thousand* (elef)⁵ generations (Ps. cv, 8).⁶

11. R. Simon said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: *Manẓapak*⁷ is a Mosaic *halachah* from Sinai.⁸ R. Jeremiah said in the name of R. Ḥiyya b. Abba: They are what the *ṣofim* [i.e. Seers] instituted.⁹ It once happened on a stormy day that the Sages did not attend the House of Assembly [i.e. the Academy]. Some children were there and they said, 'Come and let us study [the letters instituted by] the Seers. Why are there two forms for *mem*, *nun*, *ṣade*, *peh*, and *kaf*?¹⁰ It teaches [that the Torah was transmitted]

¹ J. Ḥag. *ad loc.* reads: א' is His name, *adon* (אדון) is His name. Thus the backward projection points back to the *alef*, standing for אדון. But Yalkuṭ reads: 'the Lord is One (אחד) is His name; i.e. it points back to א, which is numerically one.

² More familiarly known as 'Eleazar', but these Palestinian forms are retained in the translation. Edd. R. Eleazar b. Ḥanina.

³ V. p. 7, n. 1. ⁴ אני. ⁵ Heb. אֶלֶף.

⁶ Mah. interprets: He (God) agreed (i.e. contemplated) to give the Torah for a thousand (*elef*) generations; v. *infra*, xxviii, 4, and Ḥag. 13b bottom *seq.* V. also S.S. R., p. 243, n. 3.

⁷ This is a mnemonic: i.e. the letters מנצפכ. These have different forms when they come at the end of a word, viz. מן; נן; צן; כן. v. Shab. 104a and notes *ad loc.* in Sonc. ed.

⁸ The double forms were then instituted.

⁹ Hence the mnemonical form *manẓapak*, connected with *ṣofim*, instead of *kamanpak*, following the order of the Hebrew letters.

¹⁰ Lit. 'why is it written *mem mem*, *nun nun*, etc.?

from utterance to utterance, from Faithful to faithful, from Righteous to righteous, from mouth to mouth, and from hand to hand. (From utterance to utterance—from the utterance of the Holy One, blessed be He, to the utterance of Moses. From Faithful to faithful—from the Almighty, who is designated, "God, faithful King," to Moses, who is designated faithful, as it is written, *He* [sc. Moses] *is faithful* (E.V. "trusted") *in all My house* (Num. XII, 7). From Righteous to righteous—from God, who is designated righteous, as it is written, *The Lord is righteous in all His ways* (Ps. CXLV, 17), to Moses who is designated righteous, as it is written, *He executed the righteousness of the Lord* (Deut. XXXIII, 21).¹ From mouth to mouth—from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, to the mouth of Moses. From hand to hand:)² from the hand of the Holy One, blessed be He, to the hand of Moses.' The scholars noted them, and they grew to be great sages in Israel; some say that they were R. Eliezer, R. Joshua, and R. Akiba.³ They applied to them the verse, *Even a child is known by his doings*, etc. (Prov. XX, 11).

12. IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED. R. Judah said in the name of Akilas⁴: Him it is fitting to designate God. In human practice an earthly king is honoured in his realm even before he has built them public baths or provided them with private baths.⁵ (Simeon b. 'Azzai quoted: *And Thy condescension* [modesty] *hath made me great* (II Sam. XXII, 36). A human being states his name first and then his title, thus: So-and-so the Prefect, So-and-so of whatever title it may be.⁶) But the Holy One,

¹ The verse (v. first half, which mentions *the ruler*) is understood to refer to Moses. ² The bracketed passage is added from various MSS.

³ In the corresponding passage in J. Meg. I R. Akiba is omitted; apparently with reason, since he was a pupil of R. Eliezer and R. Joshua, and began his studies at an advanced age (v. Ned. 50a). Radal, however, justifies the inclusion of his name.

⁴ The famous proselyte who translated the Bible into Greek, and who was said to be a relation by marriage to Hadrian; v. *Ḳ.E.* s.v. Aquila.

⁵ Or perhaps: or bestowed gifts upon them.

⁶ Thus his name comes first and then his claim to greatness in the form of the title he bears, which testifies to his achievements.

blessed be He, is not so, for He recorded His name only after creating the requirements of His universe: **IN THE BEGINNING CREATED, and then GOD.**

13. R. Simeon b. Yohai taught: How do we know that one must not declare '[I vow this] to the Lord as a burnt-offering,' 'to the Lord as a meal-offering,' 'to the Lord as a peace-offering'; but must declare: '[This be] a burnt-offering to the Lord,' 'a meal-offering to the Lord,' 'a peace-offering to the Lord'? Because it is stated: *When any man of you bringeth an offering unto the Lord* (Lev. 1, 2).¹ Now you can surely argue from this: If when one is going to dedicate [a sacrifice] the Torah directs, Let him cause the Divine Name to be related to nought but the sacrifice², then they who revile, blaspheme, and engage in idolatry, will surely be blotted out from the world!

THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH. The Rabbis said: Mortal man builds an edifice, and if he succeeds according to his intentions, he can widen it as the building rises;³ but if not, he must broaden it below and narrow it at the top. The Holy One, blessed be He, is not so, however; He built *the* heaven, i.e. the heaven which he originally contemplated, and *the* earth, viz. the earth which He originally contemplated.⁴ R. Huna said in the name of R. Eliezer, the son of R. Jose the Galilean: Even those whereof it is written, *For, behold, I create new heavens* (Isa. LXV, 17), have been created long ago, since the six days of Creation, as it is written, *For as the new heavens . . . remain before Me* (ib. LXVI, 22): not 'new' is written here, but '*the new*'.⁵

For the actual reason v. Ned. 10a. ² I.e. God's name must be mentioned only *after* the sacrifice. ³ Only if it turns out as strong as he planned it can the upper portions be broader than the lower.

⁴ He had no need to modify His original designs. This explains the use of the definite art. 'the', for otherwise, since these were new creations, Scripture should have written, 'God created heaven and earth.'

⁵ The def. art. implies the specific new heavens, viz. those created aforetime. 'E.J.: it intimates therefore that the new heavens are already created, but only potentially, i.e. in God's thought. Mah. explains it differently.

14. **ETH THE HEAVENS AND ETH THE EARTH.**¹ R. Ishmael asked R. Akiba: 'Since you have studied twenty-two years under Nahum of Gimzo,² [who formulated the principle that] *ak* (save that) and *raḵ* (except) are limitations, while *eth* and *gam* (also) are extensions,³ [tell me], what of the *eth* written here?' Said he to him: 'If it stated, "In the beginning God created heaven and earth," we might have maintained that heaven and earth too are divine powers.'⁴ Thereupon he cited to him, *For it is no empty thing from you* (Deut. xxxii, 47), and if it is empty, it is so on your account,⁵ because you are unable to interpret it [rightly]. No: **ETH THE HEAVENS** is to include the sun and moon, the stars and planets; **WE - ETH THE EARTH** is to include trees, herbage, and the Garden of Eden.⁶

15. **THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH.** Beth Shammai maintain: The heaven was first created; while Beth Hillel hold: The earth was first created. In the view of Beth Shammai this is parallel to the case of a king who first made his throne and then his footstool, for it is written, *The heaven is My Throne, and the earth is My footstool* (Isa. lxvi, 1). On the view of Beth Hillel this is to be compared to a king who builds a palace; after building the nether portion he builds the upper, for it is written, *In the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven* (Gen. ii, 4). R. Judah b. R. Ilai said: This supports Beth Hillel, viz. *Of old Thou didst lay the foundations of the earth*, which is followed by, *And the heavens are the work of Thy hands* (Ps. cii, 26). R. Ḥanin said: From the very text which [apparently] supports Beth Shammai,⁷ Beth Hillel refute them, viz. *And the earth was* (Gen. i, 2), meaning

¹ *Eth* is the sign of the acc. ² A town in Judea. By a play on words this name is frequently connected with *gam zu*, 'this too,' because whatever happened Nahum would say, 'This too shall be for good' (v. Ta'an. 21a).

³ Which extend and add to the verse.

⁴ I.e. without the sign of the accusative they might be regarded as nominatives and additional subjects of 'created', or ('E.J.) as in apposition to 'God'. ⁵ The *ו* of *והוא* may be causative: if you find it empty, it is through your own fault (Mah.).

⁶ V. Hag. 12a where this is repeated with some variations. ⁷ Viz. our text, in which heaven comes first.

that it had already existed [before heaven].¹ R. Johanan, reporting the Sages, said: As regards creation, heaven was first; as regards completion, earth was first. Said R. Tanhuma: I will state the grounds [of this opinion]: as regards creation heaven was first, as it is written, *IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVEN*; whereas in respect of completion earth took precedence, for it is written, *In the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven*. R. Simeon observed: I am amazed that the fathers of the world² engage in controversy over this matter, for surely both were created [simultaneously] like a pot and its lid, [as it is written], *When I call unto them* [sc. heaven and earth], *they stand up together* (Isa. XLVIII, 13). R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon observed: If my father's view is right, why is the earth sometimes given precedence over the heaven, and sometimes heaven over earth? In fact it teaches that they are equal to each other.³

Everywhere Abraham is mentioned before Isaac, and Isaac before Jacob; yet in one place it says, *Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob, and also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham* (Lev. XXVI, 42): this teaches that the three are on a par.

Everywhere Moses is mentioned before Aaron, yet in one place it says, *These are that Aaron and Moses* (Ex. VI, 26): this teaches that they are on a par.

Everywhere Joshua is mentioned before Caleb, yet in one place it says, *save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun* (Num. XXXII, 12): this teaches that they are on a par.

Everywhere a father's honour is mentioned before the mother's honour, but in one place it says, *Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father* (Lev. XIX, 3): this teaches that both are on a par.

¹ Translating *hayyethah* as a pluperfect: had been.

² The Sages, so called because by virtue of their teachings they were as spiritual fathers to all.

³ But has no bearing on precedence. Others, however, regard this as a confirmation: if it is as my father states, it is right that they are not always mentioned in the same order, and the verse teaches that they are of equal importance precisely because neither took precedence of the other.

CHAPTER II (BERESHITH)

1. NOW THE EARTH WAS UNFORMED AND VOID, AND DARKNESS WAS UPON THE FACE OF THE DEEP; AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD HOVERED OVER THE FACE OF THE WATERS (I, 2). R. Berekiah quoted: *Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right* (Prov. XX, 11). Said R. Berekiah: While she [the earth] was as yet immature [in her infancy], she produced thorns; and so the prophet was one day destined to prophesy of her, *I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was waste and void* (Jer. IV, 23).

2. NOW THE EARTH WAS TOHU E.V. 'UNFORMED', etc. R. Abbahu and R. Judah b. R. Simon [gave the following illustrations]. R. Abbahu said: This may be compared to the case of a king who bought two slaves on the same bill of sale and at the same price. One he ordered to be supported at the public expense, while the other he ordered to toil for his bread. The latter sat bewildered and astonished¹: 'Both of us were bought at the same price,' exclaimed he, 'yet he is supported from the treasury whilst I have to gain my bread by my toil!' Thus the earth sat bewildered and astonished, saying, 'The celestial beings [sc. the angels] and the terrestrial ones [sc. man] were created at the same time: yet the celestial beings are fed by the radiance of the *Shechinah*, whereas the terrestrial beings, if they do not toil, do not eat. Strange it is indeed!' R. Judah b. R. Simon said: Compare this case to a king who bought two bondmaids, both on the same bill of sale and at the same price. One he commanded not to stir out from the palace, while for the other he decreed banishment. The latter sat bewildered and astonished. 'Both of us were bought on the same bill of sale, and at the same price,' she exclaimed, 'yet she does not stir from the palace while against me he has decreed

¹ The words are connected with *tohu* and *bohu*,—his mind not being able to formulate a reason and void of all understanding for the grounds of his treatment.