

In the Beginning...

By

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B'rashith bara Elohim... (בראשית ברא אלהים) these are the first three words of the Book of Genesis in the Hebrew Scriptures. These three words have a far more profound meaning than the simple English translation of: "In the beginning God created . . ." Many people take a rather literal view and interpretation of these words, and all of the words which follow.

Historically, we find almost exactly the same statement made in the Babylonian texts dated about 2700 BCE. Here it says, "When the gods in their assembly had created . . ." There is substantial evidence that these texts date even further back into the nation of Sumer, now seen as the first true urban civilization in the west. When the Babylonians conquered the Sumerians they borrowed almost everything from the Sumerians. This indicates that these texts are not Hebrew at all but from much older sources . . . as is much of the Bible.

Recently, researchers have found that Genesis was *not* the first written book of the Hebrew Scriptures, but a somewhat later addition. Historically, we see that the prophet Ezra (c. 400 BCE) had taken the then known books of Scripture and translated them from the difficult Aramaic into the more common Hebrew of his time. What he changed we will never know, nor do we have any idea what was also changed by some over-zealous scribe as he copied the texts. It is possibly due to this early history that there were no less than *four different* versions of the Scriptures until the end of the first century CE when it was decided upon the Masoretic Texts as the "correct" texts.

What does this all have to do with the original discussion?

To begin with, an historical perspective is important in understanding the thinking of the people. For the writings reflect their thinking and their thinking reflects their consciousness. It is a psychological fact that consciousness reflects the belief system of an individual.

This final selection of the Masoretic Texts as the "correct" texts for Scripture was done for several reasons: 1) The Masoretic Texts have the vowel marks and, hence, the pronunciation of the words was easier. Prior to the Masoretic Texts there were no vowel marks used and a single word could have any number of meanings even within the context in which it was placed.¹ Needless to say, the Masoretic Texts made lateral interpretations easier, discourse a bit more difficult and a deeper understanding and knowledge of the texts was left only to a few; 2) The Masoretic Texts combined the Jahwist's, Priest's, Elohist's, Deuteronomist's and their Redactor's versions of the Scriptures into one; and 3) The Masoretic Texts, the rewriting of which took several centuries, were a code and only those with an understanding of that code could break it and know what was actually being said. These reasons led the revisionists of the Scripture to place in the Bible what we now have.

B'rashith bara Elohim . . . is the beginning. It is the beginning of the first book of the Bible. It is the beginning of the code of understanding. Once you begin to understand the concept of the code then it is easy to understand why there are contradictions and some rather horrendous tales in the Bible. You can also see why some verses make no apparent sense in the context in which they are placed.

The word *rashith* (ראשית) means a beginning or the first in a series of events. It is

¹ Even today, when the rabbis and other scholars discuss the Scriptures, the vowel marks are generally not even considered and *all* possible meanings are taken into account.

always used in the poetic, literary, or figurative sense rather than in a conversational sense. The term (ha-) thecheloth (התחלת) usually refers to something at the beginning in conversation or general writing.

Rashith comes from the common Semitic root word *rash* (ראש) which means a head or the beginning. This refers to a main principle or main thing: that which is closest to the original source.

If we add to the root word, the word *shith* (שית) which means to put or set, we can see the construction of the word *rashith* (ראשית). Its meaning becomes clearer. The beginning of anything is the first thing which is set down or put down. It is the main principle closest to the source which is set down or put into motion.

Contained further in the word *rashith* is the word *ash* (אש) meaning fire. In *rash* (ראש) we have the head. In the head we have the brain. The brain is the beginning; the place where the principles for our existence are contained and learned. The head, then, is the place where the fire for the creation of our own personal universe is contained.

The implication derived from the word *rashith* is that the beginning of all existence comes from the head or the mind. All that exists on any level, visible or invisible, began as awareness within the mind. Whether beyond all human comprehension or by a human being, all existence begins with the awareness to create. This awareness comes from that which is closest to the source--consciousness! For we cannot think a thought until we are aware of the potential of that thought. *Rashith* refers to consciousness. Consciousness can be considered the original intent of the thinker.

We see placed in front of the word *rashith* the letter *beth* (ב). *Beth* (בית) literally means a house, a receptacle or a building intended for dwelling. Among other meanings are a wife, as well as sexual intercourse. Aside from its verbal meanings, the letter *beth* has been attributed certain properties. These properties include: 1) It is the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet and, in this position, represents duality;² 2) It represents a container or a receptacle--that which holds something; and 3) *Beth* represents a blessing (ברכה). According to the tradition, when the letter *beth* (ב) begins a line of text or a book, all which follows that line is blessed.

B'rashith (בראשית) indicates, then, that the beginnings of all existence are blessed. Whenever we become conscious of the potential of a thought, we bless it. That thought will first assume a mental form. From there it can become a physical actuality. Our consciousness creates, our thoughts adapt that creation to our existing experiences.

We will also see that the original intent of creation was to set a "house" or place up where The Universe might "dwell." Those things which inhabit that dwelling place are receptacles and parts of The Universe and are designed to have the experience of The Universe as much as possible. In other words, we are all sons and daughters of The Universe.

We also have contained within *b'rashith* the word meaning to create. That word is *bara* (ברא). Its Semitic root stretches back to the Phoenician *ha-bara* (הברא) and the Assyrian *baru* (ברו) both of which mean to create, fashion, or shape. If we take *bara* (to create) and attach to it *shith* (to put or set) we can see that creation is a fashioning or shaping and containing of something in our mind. From our mental set we create our physical experiences. Even on the Universal level, it was a mental set which created the potential for what we are experiencing as our existence.

² Notice the alternative meaning of wife.

Bara (ברא), as just mentioned, means to create, to shape, to hollow out, or to *think* out. When we create we are actually shaping with our mind. We think things into actuality. Just as the Macrocosm appears to be a great thought, so also is our whole personal universe (microcosm) a series of thoughts brought into existence by our thinking.

Also within the word *bara* is the word *bar* (בר) meaning a son or offspring. The importance of a male child in more primitive societies cannot be taken lightly. The male could do the hard work and help to defend the property. He was also fertile much longer than the female and could produce offspring for many years. Hence, the implication of maleness in the word *bara*--to create.

If there is an implication of maleness in the word *bara*, there must be an indication of femaleness. For we must remember that creation proceeds through the union of the male and female.

All we need do to find the femaleness is to look at the *beth* (ב) in *b'rashith*. *Beth* means a receptacle or container or a house --- and even a wife. Although the Hebrew spelling of *beth* is *bith* (בית), it has been spelled as *bth* (בת). In this spelling it means a daughter or a maiden. So, what can be seen here is that within the first two words of the Book of Genesis are indicators of duality --- of maleness and femaleness and, hence, creation.

The third word in this trinity is *Elohim* (אלהים) which is translated as God. It is most appropriately translated in the ancient Babylonian texts as an assembly for the word means *rulers, judges, princes, divine ones, gods* and is even used to indicate *angels* or *messengers*. However, usually the word *Elohim* is used to refer to the Unity of God. It was understood by those in the inner temples that there was only one god and all of the other gods were but aspects of that One. This was one of the great secrets of the ancient temple mysteries.

The word *Elohim*, by the way, is an indicator that the narrative comes from the Elohist texts.

In the name *Elohim* we have the divine name of *El* (אל - AL). This is the name most often used in the Bible for God, the Tetragrammaton, the Sacred Four letters (יהוה), or Jahweh. The name *El* like *Adonai* (אדוני), *Eheyeh* (אהיה) and *Elohim* are all euphemisms for Jahweh (יהוה), a name of apparent pre-Phoenician origin. We also find the name *El* used as endings for many names in the Bible. *Samuel*, *Lemuel*, *Israel*, and *Daniel* are some examples.

To the Canaanites, *El* (𐎎𐎍), their major god, was called the "Father of years" for he regulated all life. To the Phoenicians *El* was the supreme god and called the "Father of men." This indicates the respect that the Semitic peoples had for *El* for he was worshipped by virtually *all* Semitic tribes.

El means "god." Among its other meanings is to say, state, or cry out. It is an article of negation³, a preposition denoting motion, either physical or mental, toward something, or as a metaphor meaning concerning or in regard to. From this we can see that the main indicator of the word *el* is that of motion of some sort⁴ which begins with a statement. Consequently, the divine name *El*, "God," refers to that which never is but is constantly becoming. It is constantly becoming because we are constantly saying what we want to have in our life.

El is one of those interesting Hebrew words which is both masculine *and* feminine. It is a

³ See the Hebrew word *ain* (אין).

⁴ When you're going toward something, you're going away from something else. In other words, the motion toward something is a negation of what you're going away from.

masculine word with a feminine root. To add to that, the ending of *-him* is a masculine ending. So, *Elohim* contains within it a duality.

Let us look at the name *Elohim*. It is a combination word as well. It is made up of the word *El* (god) and *-(o)him* (אֱלֹהִים-), to make a noise. What we see in the verses following is that The Universal creates when it begins to make a noise or a statement (i.e. "Let there be light!"). Hence, when the words of creation are uttered, creation begins.

Creation is achieved via words. It is an ancient belief that words have power. Each letter in each word has its own particular property. Just as it was believed that having a name with a prefix or suffix of a deity's name (i.e. *Daniel*, *Tut-anhk-amun*, *Amen-ho-tep*, *Elijah*) attached one's self to that god and, hence, assumed the power and/or protection of that god. It was also believed that each letter of each word, and also the word itself, had power. This is the reason that every one of the mystery religions' inner temples had a "sacred tongue." That sacred tongue was not in actuality a spoken language but thought itself. How much more sacred, closer to the source, can anyone get than creative thought?

The code does not end here. There is more to the understanding of these three words than has been mentioned --- although this might seem like a lot to many people

As we have seen, each letter has potency thus empowering each word with its own uniqueness. It has been said that God created the world by using the alphabet.⁵ This becomes quite obvious if you consider the fact that all physical objects have names and all of the names are words made up of letters. In essence, then, all things that we perceive as physical objects were initially mental concepts *before* they become actualities. They do not become physical things until they are named. Hence, God created the world by naming all that s/he had created and it became what we were familiar with as the visible objective universe. Each letter, then, represents some aspect of creation.

Today's modern English alphabet has lost a lot of its potency when it lost its associations to physical objects. Although some of this has been preserved in the study of numerology. When combined into words these letters (concepts and processes) then become important power combinations which represent states of consciousness or states of being.

Again, the first word of our word trinity, is *b'rashith*. It is made up of *beth*, *rash*, *aleph*, *shin*, *yud* and *thau*. The names of the letters mean, in order: house, head, ox, hand, and a mark (generally a T-shaped cross). It must be understood that these letters, any letters for that matter, are archetypes or symbols of universal patterns. We come into trouble when we mistake the objects represented by these symbols for the original patterns themselves or the actual intent of the Thinker.

The letter *beth* beginning a line of text, as we have seen, is a blessing. It is a symbol of blessing and creation. It represents duality and the fact that duality creates.

The word *beth* means a house. It symbolizes the bodies, vehicles or habitations of the soul or spiritual energy on all levels of existence. Within the duality we have the habitation or house for the energy that is to become through creation. It is this blessing which begins the creative processes. As an example, when a husband and wife bless each other with love they combine their energies and form a new life or energy. This new energy is then the housing for the future energy that will be.

The letter *rash* symbolizes a choice. The choice is between greatness or degradation: heaven or hell; and other dualities. This could be equated on the universal level to the choice

⁵ This idea was seen in Phoenician writings about 1000 years before there was an Israel or Judea.

between staying with the Unity, defined by some as God, or breaking from that Unity to become a visible entity. It is the idea of God, or that portion of God which we are, becoming man.

Rash means a head. It represents the mind which constricts its perceptions. For it is through what we perceive that we become attached to the world. The ancients called the world "maya" or illusion. What this means is that all that we perceive as physical reality is an illusion. Our perceptions and perceptual senses slow down and trap "time." This creates the illusion of stability. The choice is for us as human beings to either become attached to physical actuality and its illusion of permanence or to let it go so that we can experience The Universal. For as we loose these attachments we draw ourselves closer to The Source.

Aleph is the symbol of divine unity. This is the first letter of the divine names *El*, *Elohim*, *Adonai*, and *Eheyeh* in Hebrew. These names all represent aspects of that Divine Unity for they are all used in place of the Tetragrammaton, which is Unity itself.

Aleph means an ox or a bull. It represents the Divine Matrix of forms and qualities on the spiritual level being reflected in the lower levels. It must be remembered that what is the original intent or pattern on the spiritual level slows down from level-to-level and is reflected on each level from the level above.

Shin symbolizes Divine Power. For it is this power which began creation. Creation is also corruption for the original intent of the creator was perfect but as it began to slow down to a physical reality it became corrupted by the funneling which it proceeded through. It then became less and less of the perfect thought of the Thinker.

Shin means a tooth. The symbol of the tooth represents the power of the uttered word. If you will remember, it was through the utterances (i.e. "Let there be light!" etc.) that the world was created. Whether you have considered it or not, it is through our utterances, our words, that we create and stabilize our world. A child has no understanding of the world which s/he senses until it is told what everything is. Without words to stabilize our world everything would be totally confusing.

Yud is the symbol of creation. This can be understood easily from its meaning of hand. For our mind conceptualizes but it is our hand which molds that conceptualization into something which approximates that conceptualization.

The meaning of *yud* as a hand symbolizes the action, the will and the directive principle of existence. This principle, through the active willing of the thinker, creates. Thought without action equals nothing. Thought must be coupled with more than intent. It must have action in order to bring something into existence.

Thau is symbolic of truth and perfection. In order for creation to proceed properly truth is necessary for creation depends upon truth. Everything that is created is true to its basic form and perfect for the state in which it is. It cannot be otherwise. It is as close to its original intent as this state of being or this level can permit. The original pattern is still contained within the thought of the thinker and what we have is the reflection of that pattern. This is one reason why this visible universe is called "maya": illusion.

The meaning of a mark or T-shaped cross for *thau* is quite appropriate. *Thau* symbolizes energy being fixed in matter. What we can understand from this symbol is that the energy has the original pattern but as it generates outward what we perceive is a reflection of that pattern slowed down. The energy is fixed within the physical form itself and that which we see is only slowed energy. But the true, perfect state of the energy is found only *within* the physical form itself and within the thought of the thinker. Some call that original form *spirit* or *soul*.

The meaning of *b'rashith* then can be stated as such: That which *housed* the original pattern becomes constricted by the *thought* of the creator and became a *reflection* of its original conceptualization. The *word* uttered begins to *mold* the pattern into a visible form which *fixes* it into a solid state.⁶

The word *bara* follows the meaning of the first part of *b'rashith*: The original pattern *housed* in the *thought* becomes a *reflection* of its original conceptualization.

The third word of this trinity is *Elohim*. It is spelled *aleph, lamed, heh, yud, mem*. The aleph and the yud have already been explained.

Lamed is the symbol of teaching and purpose. In order for creation to mean anything we must be able to learn from it. Hence, the purpose of creation is to learn. It has been said that life is a learning experience. It would be more aptly stated that all existence is a learning experience and that all things which we perceive are experiences or events and not objects. This is so because everything is in a state of becoming or, you might say, a state of re-creation.

Lamed means a whip or a goad. It symbolizes the prodding of energies into physical form. We can see that in order to learn we must have discipline. The meaning of a whip or goad shows that. In order for energy to take a physical form it must be prodded by the reflected pattern which the visible form contains. The discipline comes from the original pattern and from the limits placed upon the original pattern by its slowing down.

Heh is the symbol of divinity and specificity. In order for energy to become something it has to have a specific pattern from which to work. This pattern is in itself a form of energy. In other words, everything has divinity and perfection within it. All existences are forms of energy and that energy is also called God. How God becomes expressed is up to the original pattern of the intent of the original Thought and the Thinker.

Heh means a window. It represents the opening by which energy becomes matter. In order for energy to become matter it has to have a pattern by which it would mold itself into that which it is to become. Once this pattern has become conceptualized it leaves an opening in the Macrocosm through which it will take form. Physicists call this opening a *warp*. For wherever there is a warp in space (and time) there is gravity and wherever there is gravity there is mass and wherever there is mass there is a physical object.

The last letter is *mem*. It is the symbol of the revealed and the concealed. It is physical actuality and the energy of which it is composed. We can see the physical actuality but we do not see the energy of which it is comprised. The reason being that many people don't understand that the entire visible universe is nothing more than energy slowed down. As the physicist says, "All that we are is gravitationally trapped *light*."

The word *mem* means water. Water represents the source of manifestation. Just as life on this planet came out of the primordial seas, whatever is made manifest comes from the depths of the mind. In fact, the deeper mind had been represented by the symbol of water in the mystical traditions. Water also has been considered feminine in gender. Hence, the feminine aspect of *Elohim* is represented here again.

The divine name *Elohim*, then, has a meaning of and represents the unmanifested giving birth to the manifested through the action of willing it to be.

In essence, a meaning for *בראשית ברא אלהים* could be: In God's mind, the archetype

⁶ Compare this to John 1:1-5 in the Christian Texts. This book was written about 110 CE by *Gnostic Christians* and was used rather exclusively by them until around the end of the second century. At this time, when Irenaeus compiled the Christian Canon, he rewrote and watered-down the original to make it more acceptable.

for the Macrocosm began to reflect itself in the lower levels with the utterance of the words of creation. The unmanifested became the manifested through the Will of God --- and the microcosm became visible.

As you can plainly see through this brief explanation, which doesn't take into account of the use of Gematria or Sacred Numerology or any other mystical process used to understand the Scriptures, taking anything in the Scriptures literally is stripping it of its true meaning. This is one of the reasons that it is stated in the Hebrew Scriptures that one should not add to nor detract from the words (Deut. 4:2). Although, historically, when Ezra translated the texts from the Aramaic into the Hebrew, it was stated that the people heard things that they had never heard before. In fact, even in the Christian Scriptures there is a similar statement to that in Deuteronomy (Rev. 22:19). Further, this is why those who were involved in the revision of the Hebrew Scriptures in the first century stated: "He who translates a verse literally is a liar, and he who adds to it is a blasphemer." The true understanding comes through a knowledge of what is written *only* in its original tongue. Translating changes *every* word, adding to and detracting from its real meaning.