

## The Gospel of Creation According to Wisdom

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth:

The principle act of God in the Biblical narrative is the creation of the heavens and the earth. The term ברא *bará* is a verbal root meaning 'he created'. This term is used in the act of creating the heavens and the earth, all living creatures, and humanity (male and female).<sup>1</sup> The objects of this verb throughout the Bible are dynamic in nature and fundamental in the foregoing narratives.

The heavens השמים is a term which stems from a verbal root meaning 'to be lofty'. The word is in the plural form and tradition holds that there are seven heavens. The heavens are described as being the place of God's Throne, His angels, the Kingdom, the Celestial Bodies, Laws and Principalities, the Firmament, and the Air.<sup>2</sup> Heaven is said to have pillars<sup>3</sup> and refers to the system through which God reveals Himself to His creation.<sup>4</sup>

The earth הארץ is from a verbal root meaning 'to be firm'. The earth refers to the dwelling place of man,<sup>5</sup> the place of judgment,<sup>6</sup> and the place of opposing conditions.<sup>7</sup> It is the arena in which man and God interact. The earth is the foundation upon which the pillars of the heavens stand,<sup>8</sup> and tradition provides an equal amount of earths to heaven even though the term is in the singular form throughout the Bible. The Qur'an does specify a similar number of earths and heavens.<sup>9</sup>

The creation of the heavens and the earth reveal the environment through which God and the creature have a relationship. The numerical expressions of the heavens and the earth is relevant when appreciated that the earth is the place from which all things multiply and that heaven is the place through which all things advance.<sup>10</sup> With each ascension into the subsequent heaven there is a similar earth from which to multiply again and in turn ascend from. Also with each day there is a renewed heaven and a renewed earth, each unique within its own station. In effect the essential meaning of the verse is that God created an environment in which there must be change and progress.

Genesis 1:1

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Gen. 1:1, 21,

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 11:4; Gen. 28:12, Mark 12:25; Dan. 2:44, Matt. 13

<sup>3</sup> Job 26:11; cf. Prov. 9:1, Ps. 136:5

<sup>4</sup> Jer. 51:15-16; Dan. 2:28; Ps. 19:1, 103:19, 119:89

<sup>5</sup> Eccl. 5:2

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 105:7

<sup>7</sup> Is. 24:20

<sup>8</sup> Ps. 104:5

<sup>9</sup> Qur'an 65:12

<sup>10</sup> Is. 45:18; 2 Cor. 12:2

והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על־פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על־פני המים:  
And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was upon the face of the  
abyss; and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

The subject here is the earth, and the terms תהו 'formless' and בהו 'void' describe the state of the earth after being created. This describes something very significant about the earth. First the earth is called formless and this formlessness is given a face revealed as darkness. Darkness is described as wickedness, ignorance, and emptiness.<sup>11</sup> So the appearance of the earth in its natural state is darkness. This 'formless and void' state is something inherent within the earth and continuously present and repetitive. In Jeremiah's lamentation for Judah he states, "My people are foolish, they have not known Me; they are silly children, and they have no understanding: they are wise to commit evil, but they have no knowledge to do good deeds. I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was formless and void; and the heavens were without lights."<sup>12</sup>

The term 'void' is often linked with a lack of understanding and ignorance.<sup>13</sup> For Joseph however, this deep chasm was a blessing as it provided a vast area to develop.<sup>14</sup> It is in this state that the earth is without any organization and empty of knowledge and virtue, yet full of potential.

The 'Spirit of God' refers to the power or force with which God develops His creation. In one sense it represents the willpower of God, the initial stage of Divine Action. There are many aspects of the Spirit but the Spirit is One.<sup>15</sup> There is the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, of Counsel and Might, and the Spirit of Knowledge and Truth.<sup>16</sup> The Spirit is something that ascends and descends, moves about and is still, and fills up and empties. Literally it is the רוח breath or wind of God that reveals His power to interact with His creation. It is the generative influence upon the universe.

Nothing in creation is without purpose. Everything that exists was brought forth for a reason. This purpose and reason is the influence through which all things come into existence. Having a need for something generates a willful power to design something useful. Nothing that is useful came into existence by accident. All things have been created to be useful and follow the pattern conceived by the need for it. The spirit is not the object itself, nor is it the pattern of the object, but it is the exigency for the object. It is the creative impulse exerted upon the living universe; it is essential willpower.

The Spirit of God 'was hovering over the face of the waters'. The term מרחפת is a verbal noun indicating a place of intermittent movement with the sense of floating. Here it appears the face of the abyss is also described as the 'face of waters'. It is a depiction of watery commotion; if you could imagine a vast empty sea with waves crashing about aimlessly. Waters are defined as voices, peoples, nations and tongues throughout the Bible.<sup>17</sup> People are defined here as 'water' because at this stage in creation they share the attributes of chaos and malevolence. The earth

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<sup>11</sup> 1 Sam. 2:9; Job 12:22, Ps. 18:28; Zeph. 1:15; see also Miller's Works. Vol 1. Pg.28 (darkness)

<sup>12</sup> Jer. 4:22-23

<sup>13</sup> Prov. 7:7, 10:13, 11:12, 12:11, 24:30-31;

<sup>14</sup> Gen. 49:22-26, Deut. 33:13-17

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor. 12:1-11

<sup>16</sup> Is. 11:2

<sup>17</sup> Ps. 18:11-17, 23:2, 29:3, 46:3, 69:1,14, 73:1-12, 74:13,14, 77:16, 93:4, 107:20-26, 124:5, 144:7, Prov. 18:14, 25:25, 30:4, Is. 5:30, 11:9, 17:12-13, 32:20, 43:2,20-21, 48:21(1 Cor. 10:1-4); Jer. 17:13; Rev. 17:15, 19:6

and the inhabitants of the earth become the object that the Spirit of God interacts with. Though at this point there is no interaction between the Spirit and the earth. This reveals the formlessness and the darkness of the void that persists within the creation of God without the involvement of the Spirit. It is also indicative of the distinction between the Spirit and creation. The Spirit of God is the elixir through which the earth is changed, it suffers no alteration in itself but acts as the catalyst for the alterations in creation.

Understanding the process of creation in this manner inculcates each soul into the beginning of the process allowing for the proper development of the soul within the revealed scheme of creation. This revelation is far more compelling than a simple narrative about the material universe as it places the initiate at the focal point of the story. As the narration continues a relationship with the Spirit is revealed through a specific method of development: In the beginning creation is separate from God, ignorant, wicked, and empty; yet in the end there is a living, breathing, walking and talking relationship with God. The ensuing stages represent a developing conscious relationship with the Spirit.

## Genesis 1:2

ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי־אור:

And God says, "Let there be Light", and there was light.

God speaks for the first time and brings 'Light' into existence. This is the beginning of God's relationship with His creation. Until this moment creation was without organization and empty. It was very dark and chaotic. This is the state of separation from God, and the Words of God initiate a relationship with the creation as light enables it to see. At this point there is nothing to see but the Spirit of God and itself, the earth. It is an awakening. An awakening that is wonderful and serene, yet powerful. Powerful enough to create separation within the creation.<sup>18</sup>

The term אָמַר means to speak, say, command, or declare something. It is revealing that the words spoken by God commence the relationship between the Spirit of God and the earth. As before they were separate, here they are united. Where there was darkness, now there is light, and the earth can now behold the Spirit of God that is hovering over the earth. This light is not the light of the solar system. It is the Light of God which is Universal and encompasses all created things. It is 'Light upon light'.<sup>19</sup>

Light represents God in one sense, and in other ways knowledge and understanding, righteousness and the Torah (ie. the law), the Faithful and the path of the Just, and as a garment worn by the Lord. It also represents the personification of the Word of God.<sup>20</sup> These are the manifestations of Light that appear when God speaks and which He uses to establish this relationship with His creation. These manifestations precede, initiate, and necessitate change and evolution within the creation. Without light the earth is without form and void, covered with darkness.

## Genesis 1:3

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<sup>18</sup> Suráh of the Temple, 6-7

<sup>19</sup> Qur'án 24:35

<sup>20</sup> Ps. 27:1, 37:6, 97:11, 104:2, 148:3; Prov. 4:18, 6:23; Is. 30:26; Matt. 5:14; Jn. 1:1-18, 5:35, 8:12; 1 Jn. 1:5; Rev. 18:1, 21:23

וירא אלהים את־האור כִּי־טוב ויבדל אלהים בין האור ובין החשך:  
And God sees that the Light is good and God makes a distinction between the light and the darkness.

Here the distinction between the light and the darkness is made. The Light is called 'Good' and the darkness, though not termed 'Bad' specifically, is separated from that goodness. Darkness is simply the absence of light. The light is positive existence, whereas the darkness is negative existence. The significance of this verse is the continuous existence of both the light and the darkness within the creation. The whole of creation is not illuminated by this 'Light'. Only those who hear the Voice of God through the light see the Spirit of God. The rest of creation remains in the state of darkness, without the knowledge and understanding the light brings. So the distinction is made between those who recognize the light and those who are heedless of it.

Genesis 1:4

ויקרא אלהים | לאור יום ולחשך קרא לילה ויהי־ערב ויהי־בקר יום אחד:  
And God calls the Light 'Day' and the Darkness He called 'Night', and it was the evening and it was the morning of the first day.

Here the light and the darkness are given designations. The Light is called יום 'Day' and the Darkness is called לילה 'Night'. Those who see the light are called 'Children of the Light' or 'Children of the Day' and are not of the Night nor of the Darkness.<sup>21</sup> God is most certainly making a distinction between His creatures in these verses and the contributors to the Scriptures certainly understood this distinction in this manner. There is a scheme to creation being revealed: the object of the scheme is the soul of man and the subject which is acting upon the object is the Spirit and Word of God. When God speaks there is a distinction made between those who hear and see the Voice and Spirit of God verses those who do not. Those two groups are given designations, and in that designation is revealed the Judgment of God.

The term יום means 'day' in Hebrew and it is the generic term for any day of the week. Its use here however cannot be understood as a literal twenty-four hour day as the reckoning of literal time is not a part of this scheme. There are other scriptural methods of reckoning these 'Days' as a thousand years or as one day equal to one year.<sup>22</sup> These are prophetic methods and used when referring to certain prophecies about the Manifestations of God. What is being revealed is the method through which God enlightens His creation. The revolutions of the evenings and mornings in the scheme of creation are dependent upon the persistence of the light and the darkness which are not bound through linear time. The divisions of the days relative to creation are caused by the procession and the recession of the Universal Light, not the light of the solar system.

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<sup>21</sup> 1 Thess 5:5

<sup>22</sup>Ps. 90:4, 2 Pet. 3:8; Numb. 14:34, Eze. 4:6

The first day of creation reveals the primary and essential nature of the scheme which is the separation between the wickedly ignorant and the righteously wise. It is the initial stage of the faithful, the ability to recognize the Spirit of God. From this foundation the soul progresses from the state of ignorance of God unto the knowledge of God. It is the first dimension of the universe, the point at which existence becomes meaningful.

Genesis 1:5

ויאמר אלהים יהי רקיע בתוך המים ויהי מבדיל בין מים למים:

And God says, "Let there be an Expanse in the midst of the waters, and let there be a separation between the waters and the waters."

When God speaks a second time He creates a partition between the waters of the earth. The term רקיע is from a verbal root which means 'to strike or expand'. It is relatively understood to be the atmosphere itself and by implication the upward limits of the earth. The term בתוך literally means to cut through the middle of something, or bisect something. Not only are the waters being separated here, but there is an uncrossable barrier that is placed between the two bodies of water, the expanse or firmament. The expanse is a place where the waters do not cross and are separated from one another.

Genesis 1:6

ויעש אלהים את־הרקיע ויבדל בין המים אשר מתחת לרקיע ובין המים אשר מעל לרקיע ויהי־כן:

And God effects the Expanse and makes a distinction between the waters that are below the Expanse, and between the waters that are above the Expanse. And it was so.

First the expanse was brought forth by the Word of God. Here God does something to effect and change the expanse which in turn changes the waters of the earth. The term עשה used here literally means to do something or make something, but it has the sense of effecting change in something which is the subject of this verse. The expanse is what causes the separation of the waters, and the separation is below and above the expanse. After the separation the waters change and become distinct from one another.

There is a pattern emerging from the consecutive days of creation. First God creates something through His Word, then does something to His creation to bring about change, progress, and growth. There is always separation, and one of the two groups ascend while the other remains below and is either not effected by the change or made worse by the change. On the first day there was darkness, then there was light; on the second day there is waters below, and waters above.

As the light on day one created an awakening for the earth, the expanse on day two initiates a cleansing process, purifying the waters and creating two worlds: the world below and the world above. This purification process is the trial of those who are awakened by the light.<sup>23</sup> Those who are effected by the light, which is the knowledge of God, become the expanse above the waters of the earth.<sup>24</sup> The Word of God purifies the soul, releases it from the depths of darkness, and it ascends into the atmosphere of the love of God.<sup>25</sup> This is the first death, the

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<sup>23</sup> Ps. 18

<sup>24</sup> Dan. 12:3

<sup>25</sup> Prov. 30:5; 1 Pet. 1:22-23, 3:8-22

death of the natural order of things. The second life is spiritual and purified from the wickedness, ignorance, and emptiness of the natural state of creation.

This process of purification is often celebrated as a baptism. After the enlightenment of God awakens in the soul there is a baptism by the Spirit. The emergence in water symbolizes the purification of the body, mind, and spirit. The initiate, purified from the sins and errors of the natural world, is accepted into brotherhood of the Faith.

Genesis 1:7

ויקרא אלהים לרקיע שמים ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום שני:

And God calls the Expanse 'Heavens', and it was evening and it was morning of the second day.

The Expanse is given the name Heavens. This Hebrew word for the heavens שמים is always in the plural form, even when the context is singular. The heavens represent all things that are above the waters of the deep, and from the perspective of the earth everything is above. The Expanse is that which separates that which is below from that which is above. It is a partition, a dividing line between two conditions, albeit those conditions which are above have multiple aspects. That is the reality behind the plurality of the heavens.

The first heaven is the air or the atmosphere surrounding the earth. It is a symbol of life and truth as it represents the breathable air. Idols and graven images are often cited as falsehood and referred to as dead because there is no breath of life in them, that is, they do not breathe air.<sup>26</sup> Those awakened by the light and raised up into the first heaven are as the air of the earth. They reveal the handiwork of God to the earth.<sup>27</sup> These rise up at the recognition of the Word of God to meet the Lord in the air creating a fellowship.<sup>28</sup>

The Expanse is the second dimension to the universe, the partition between the two types of water throughout all creation. One type of water is pleasant and sweet, and the other is bitter and salty. These do not mix with each other. This is also recognizable through people. There are those who have a divine atmosphere to them, and those who have a profane and irritable nature to them. The difference between them is the effect the Word of God has on them. The same as the conditions that this second day represents. The waters below remain unchanged, dark and chaotic, while the waters above transform into a requisite structure.

Genesis 1:8

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<sup>26</sup> Jer. 10:14; Qur'án 21:51-67

<sup>27</sup> Ps. 19:1

<sup>28</sup> Jer. 10:13; ;Is. 60:8; 1 Thess. 5:16-17; Heb. 12:1

