From Genesis

READING QUESTIONS

1. What surprising or unusual things do you notice about the creation accounts?
2. What three mandates or commands does God give to humans?
3. How do you interpret the story of how death came to be?
4. What is the covenant El Shaddai makes with Abram?
5. What do you think is important, from a religious point of view, about the story of the Passover and Exodus?
6. Why do you think the people are not allowed, upon penalty of death, on the mountain with Moses?
7. What sorts of things do the commandments given in Exodus and Leviticus regulate?
8. Select two commands from the Holiness Code in Leviticus and analyze them in terms of the historical and social situation they presuppose.
9. Why do you think the refrain "I am the Lord" is so frequently repeated?

Creation (Genesis 1–3)

1

When God began to create heaven and earth—[2]the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water—[3]God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. [4]God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. [5]God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day.

[6]God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate water from water." [7]God made the expanse, and it separated the water which was below the expanse from the water which was above the expanse. And it was so. [8]God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

Genesis 1–3 and the following selections (Genesis 17; Exodus 12:29–42, 14, 19, 20; Leviticus 19) are from *Tanakh, the Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 5748, 1988). Copyright © 1985 by the Jewish Publication Society. Reprinted by permission. Footnotes omitted.

9 God said, "Let the water below the sky be gathered
into one area, that the dry land may appear." And it was
so. 10 God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering
of waters He called Seas. And God saw that this was
good. 11 And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation:
seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth
that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. 12 The
earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of
every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the
seed in it. And God saw that this was good. 13 And there
was evening and there was morning, a third day.

14 God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the
sky to separate day from night; they shall serve as signs
for the set times—the days and the years; 15 and they
shall serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine
upon the earth." And it was so. 16 God made the two
great lights, the greater light to dominate the day and
the lesser light to dominate the night, and the stars.
17 And God set them in the expanse of the sky to shine
upon the earth, 18 to dominate the day and the night, and
to separate light from darkness. And God saw that this
was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morn-
ing, a fourth day.

20 God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of
living creatures, and birds that fly above the earth across
the expanse of the sky." 21 God created the great sea
monsters, and all the living creatures of every kind that
creep, which the waters brought forth in swarms, and all
the winged birds of every kind. And God saw that this
was good. 22 God blessed them, saying, "Be fertile and
increase, fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds in-
crease on the earth." 23 And there was evening and there
was morning, a fifth day.

24 God said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of
living creature: cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts
of every kind." And it was so. 25 God made wild beasts
of every kind and cattle of every kind, and all kinds of
creeping things of the earth. And God saw that this was
good. 26 And God said, "Let us make man in our image,
after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the
birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the
creeping things that creep on earth." 27 And God cre-
ated man in His image, in the image of God He created
him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed
them and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill
the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the
birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on
earth."

29 God said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant
that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-
bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food." 30 And to all
the animals on land, to all the birds of the sky, and to
everything that creeps on earth, in which there is the
breath of life, [I give] all the green plants for food." And
it was so. 31 And God saw all that He had made, and
found it very good. And there was evening and there
was morning, the sixth day.

2

The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their
array. 2 On the seventh day God finished the work that
He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day
from all the work that He had done. 3 And God blessed
the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God
ceased from all the work of creation that He had done.
4 Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were
created.

When the LORD God made earth and heaven—5 when
no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of
the field had yet sprouted, because the LORD God had
not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to
till the soil, 6 but a flow would well up from the ground
and water the whole surface of the earth—7 the LORD
God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew
into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a liv-
ing being.

8 The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the
east, and placed there the man He had formed. 9 And
from the ground the LORD God caused to grow every
tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food,
with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the
tree of knowledge of good and bad.

10 A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and
it then divides and becomes four branches. 11 The name
of the first is Pishon, the one that winds through the
whole land of Havilah, where the gold is. (12 The gold
of that land is good; bdellium is there, and lapis lazuli.)
13 The name of the second river is Gihon, the one that
winds through the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of
the third river is Tigris, the one that flows east of As-
shur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God took the man and placed him in the
garden of Eden, to till it and tend it. 16 And the LORD
God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the
garden you are free to eat; 17 but as for the tree of knowl-
edge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon
as you eat of it, you shall die."

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for man to be
alone; I will make a fitting helper for him." 19 And the
LORD God formed out of the earth all the wild beasts
and all the birds of the sky, and brought them to the

man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name. [20]And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found. [21]So the LORD God cast a deep sleep upon the man; and, while he slept, He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that spot. [22]And the LORD God fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man. [23]Then the man said,

"This one at last
Is bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh.
This one shall be called Woman,
For from man was she taken."

[24]Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh.

[25]The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame.

3

[1]Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" [2]The woman replied to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. [3]It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: 'You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.'" [4]And the serpent said to the woman, "You are not going to die, [5]but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like divine beings who know good and bad." [6]When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. [7]Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths.

[8]They heard the sound of the LORD God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. [9]The LORD God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" [10]He replied, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." [11]Then He asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?" [12]The man said, "The woman You put at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate." [13]And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done!" The woman replied, "The serpent duped me, and I ate." [14]Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you did this,
More cursed shall you be
Than all cattle
And all the wild beasts:
On your belly shall you crawl
And dirt shall you eat
All the days of your life.
[15]I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your offspring and hers;
They shall strike at your head,
And you shall strike at their heel."

[16]And to the woman He said,

"I will make most severe
Your pangs in childbearing;
In pain shall you bear children.
Yet your urge shall be for your husband,
And he shall rule over you."

[17]To Adam He said, "Because you did as your wife said and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,'

Cursed be the ground because of you;
By toil shall you eat of it
All the days of your life:
[18]Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you.
But your food shall be the grasses of the field;
[19]By the sweat of your brow
Shall you get bread to eat,
Until you return to the ground—
For from it you were taken.
For dust you are,
And to dust you shall return."

[20]The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. [21]And the LORD God made garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

[22]And the LORD God said, "Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!" [23]So the LORD God banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. [24]He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.

Covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17)

17

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk in My ways and be blameless. [2]I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will make you exceedingly numerous."

[3]Abram threw himself on his face; and God spoke to him further, [4]"As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You shall be the father of a multitude of nations. [5]And you shall no longer be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I make you the father of a multitude of nations. [6]I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you; and kings shall come forth from you. [7]I will maintain My covenant between Me and you, and your offspring to come, as an everlasting covenant throughout the ages, to be God to you and to your offspring to come. [8]I assign the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting holding. I will be their God."

[9]God further said to Abraham, "As for you, you and your offspring to come throughout the ages shall keep My covenant. [10]Such shall be the covenant between Me and you and your offspring to follow which you shall keep: every male among you shall be circumcised. [11]You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. [12]And throughout the generations, every male among you shall be circumcised at the age of eight days. As for the homeborn slave and the one bought from an outsider who is not of your offspring, [13]they must be circumcised, homeborn and purchased alike. Thus shall My covenant be marked in your flesh as an everlasting pact. [14]And if any male who is uncircumcised fails to circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his kin; he has broken My covenant."

[15]And God said to Abraham, "As for your wife Sarai, you shall not call her Sarai, but her name shall be Sarah. [16]I will bless her; indeed, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she shall give rise to nations; rulers of peoples shall issue from her." [17]Abraham threw himself on his face and laughed, as he said to himself, "Can a child be born to a man a hundred years old, or can Sarah bear a child at ninety?" [18]And Abraham said to God, "O that Ishmael might live by Your favor!" [19]God said, "Nevertheless, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac; and I will maintain My covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring to come. [20]As for Ishmael, I have heeded you. I hereby bless him. I will make him fertile and exceedingly numerous. He shall be the father of twelve chieftains, and I will make of him a great nation. [21]But My covenant I will maintain with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year." [22]And when He was done speaking with him, God was gone from Abraham.

[23]Then Abraham took his son Ishmael, and all his homeborn slaves and all those he had bought, every male in Abraham's household, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins on that very day, as God had spoken to him. [24]Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he circumcised the flesh of his foreskin, [25]and his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. [26]Thus Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on that very day; [27]and all his household, his homeborn slaves and those that had been bought from outsiders, were circumcised with him.

From Exodus

Passover and Exodus (Exodus 12:29–42, 14)

12

. . . [29]In the middle of the night the Lord struck down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh who sat on the throne to the first-born of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the first-born of the cattle. [30]And Pharaoh arose in the night, with all his courtiers and all the Egyptians—because there was a loud cry in Egypt; for there was no house where there was not someone dead. [31]He summoned Moses and Aaron in the night and said, "Up, depart from among my people, you and the Israelites with you! Go, worship the Lord as you said! [32]Take also your flocks and your herds, as you said, and begone! And may you bring a blessing upon me also!"

[33]The Egyptians urged the people on, impatient to have them leave the country, for they said, "We shall all be dead." [34]So the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading bowls wrapped in their cloaks upon their shoulders. [35]The Israelites had done Moses' bidding and borrowed from the Egyptians objects of silver and gold, and clothing. [36]And the Lord had dis-

posed the Egyptians favorably toward the people, and they let them have their request; thus they stripped the Egyptians.

37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children. 38 Moreover, a mixed multitude went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds. 39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough that they had taken out of Egypt, for it was not leavened, since they had been driven out of Egypt and could not delay; nor had they prepared any provisions for themselves.

40 The length of time that the Israelites lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years; 41 at the end of the four hundred and thirtieth year, to the very day, all the ranks of the LORD departed from the land of Epypt. 42 That was for the LORD a night of vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt; that same night is the LORD's, one of vigil for all the children of Israel throughout the ages. . . .

14

The LORD said to Moses: 2 Tell the Israelites to turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, before Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. 3 Pharaoh will say of the Israelites, "They are astray in the land; the wilderness has closed in on them." 4 Then I will stiffen Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them, that I may gain glory through Pharaoh and all his host; and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.

And they did so.

5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his courtiers had a change of heart about the people and said, "What is this we have done, releasing Israel from our service?" 6 He ordered his chariot and took his men with him; 7 he took six hundred of his picked chariots, and the rest of the chariots of Egypt, with officers in all of them. 8 The LORD stiffened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he gave chase to the Israelites. As the Israelites were departing defiantly, 9 the Egyptians gave chase to them, and all the chariot horses of Pharoah, his horsemen, and his warriors overtook them encamped by the sea, near Pi-hahiroth, before Baal-zephon.

10 As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites caught sight of the Egyptians advancing upon them. Greatly frightened, the Israelites cried out to the LORD. 11 And they said to Moses, "Was it for want of graves in Egypt that you brought us to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, taking us out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us be, and we will serve the Egyptians, for it is better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness'?" 13 But Moses said to the people, "Have no fear! Stand by, and witness the deliverance which the LORD will work for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you will never see again. 14 The LORD will battle for you; you hold your peace!"

15 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry out to Me? Tell the Israelites to go forward. 16 And you lift up your rod and hold out your arm over the sea and split it, so that the Israelites may march into the sea on dry ground. 17 And I will stiffen the hearts of the Egyptians so that they go in after them; and I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his warriors, his chariots and his horsemen. 18 Let the Egyptians know that I am LORD, when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

19 The angel of God, who had been going ahead of the Israelite army, now moved and followed behind them; and the pillar of cloud shifted from in front of them and took up a place behind them, 20 and it came between the army of the Egyptians and the army of Israel. Thus there was the cloud with the darkness, and it cast a spell upon the night, so that the one could not come near the other all through the night.

21 Then Moses held out his arm over the sea and the LORD drove back the sea with a strong east wind all that night, and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters were split, 22 and the Israelites went into the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left. 23 The Egyptians came in pursuit after them into the sea, all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and horsemen. 24 At the morning watch, the LORD looked down upon the Egyptian army from a pillar of fire and cloud, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. 25 He locked the wheels of their chariots so that they moved forward with difficulty. And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the Israelites, for the LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Hold out your arm over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians and upon their chariots and upon their horsemen." 27 Moses held out his arm over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal state, and the Egyptians fled at its approach. But the LORD hurled the Egyptians into the sea. 28 The waters turned back and covered the chariots and the horsemen—Pharaoh's entire army that followed them into the sea; not one of them remained. 29 But the Israelites had marched through the sea on dry ground, the waters forming a wall for them on their right and on their left.

30 Thus the LORD delivered Israel that day from the
Egyptians. Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the shore of
the sea. 31 And when Israel saw the wondrous power
which the LORD had wielded against the Egyptians, the
people feared the LORD; they had faith in the LORD and
His servant Moses.

MOSAIC COVENANT (EXODUS 19, 20)

19

On the third new moon after the Israelites had gone
forth from the land of Egypt, on that very day, they en-
tered the wilderness of Sinai. 2 Having journeyed from
Rephidim, they entered the wilderness of Sinai and en-
camped in the wilderness. Israel encamped there in front
of the mountain, 3 and Moses went up to God. The LORD
called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus shall
you say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children
of Israel: 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians,
how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me.
5 Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My
covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among
all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, 6 but you
shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'
These are the words that you shall speak to the children
of Israel.

7 Moses came and summoned the elders of the people
and put before them all that the LORD had commanded
him. 8 All the people answered as one, saying, "All that
the LORD has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought
back the people's words to the LORD. 9 And the LORD said
to Moses, "I will come to you in a thick cloud, in order
that the people may hear when I speak with you and so
trust you ever after." Then Moses reported the people's
words to the LORD, 10 and the LORD said to Moses, "Go
to the people and warn them to stay pure today and to-
morrow. Let them wash their clothes. 11 Let them be
ready for the third day; for on the third day the LORD
will come down, in the sight of all the people, on Mount
Sinai. 12 You shall set bounds for the people round about,
saying, 'Beware of going up the mountain or touching
the border of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be
put to death: 13 no hand shall touch him, but he shall be
either stoned or shot; beast or man, he shall not live.'
When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they may go
up on the mountain."

14 Moses came down from the mountain to the people
and warned the people to stay pure, and they washed
their clothes. 15 And he said to the people, "Be ready for
the third day: do not go near a woman."

16 On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thun-
der, and lightning, and a dense cloud upon the moun-
tain, and a very loud blast of the horn; and all the people
who were in the camp trembled. 17 Moses led the people
out of the camp toward God, and they took their places
at the foot of the mountain.

18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke, for the LORD
had come down upon it in fire; the smoke rose like the
smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled vio-
lently. 19 The blare of the horn grew louder and louder.
As Moses spoke, God answered him in thunder. 20 The
LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the
mountain, and the LORD called Moses to the top of
the mountain and Moses went up. 21 The LORD said to
Moses, "Go down, warn the people not to break through
to the LORD to gaze, lest many of them perish. 22 The
priests also, who come near the LORD, must stay pure,
lest the LORD break out against them." 23 But Moses said
to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Si-
nai, for You warned us saying, 'Set bounds about the
mountain and sanctify it.'" 24 So the LORD said to him,
"Go down, and come back together with Aaron; but let
not the priests or the people break through to come up
to the LORD, lest He break out against them." 25 And
Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

20

God spoke all these words, saying:

2 I the LORD am your God who brought you out of
the land of Egypt, the house of bondage: 3 You shall have
no other gods besides Me.

4 You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image,
or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the
earth below, or in the waters under the earth. 5 You shall
not bow down to them or serve them. For I the LORD
your God am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt
of the parents upon the children, upon the third and
upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me,
6 but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of
those who love Me and keep My commandments.

7 You shall not swear falsely by the name of the LORD
your God; for the LORD will not clear one who swears
falsely by His name.

8 Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. 9 Six
days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the sev-
enth day is a sabbath of the LORD your God: you shall
not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male
or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is
within your settlements. 11 For in six days the LORD made
heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He
rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed
the sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 Honor your father and your mother, that you may
long endure on the land that the LORD your God is as-
signing to you.
13 You shall not murder.
You shall not commit adultery.
You shall not steal.
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
14 You shall not covet your neighbor's house: you
shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or fe-
male slave, or his ox or his ass, or anything that is your
neighbor's.

15 All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning,
the blare of the horn and the mountain smoking; and
when the people saw it, they fell back and stood at a
distance. 16 "You speak to us," they said to Moses, "and
we will obey; but let not God speak to us, lest we die."
17 Moses answered the people, "Be not afraid; for God
has come only in order to test you, and in order that the
fear of Him may be ever with you, so that you do not go
astray." 18 So the people remained at a distance, while
Moses approached the thick cloud where God was.

19 The LORD said to Moses:
Thus shall you say to the Israelites: You yourselves
saw that I spoke to you from the very heavens: 20 With
Me, therefore, you shall not make any gods of silver, nor
shall you make for yourselves any gods of gold. 21 Make
for Me an altar of earth and sacrifice on it your burnt of-
ferings and your sacrifices of well-being, your sheep and
your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be
mentioned I will come to you and bless you. 22 And if
you make for Me an altar of stones, do not build it of
hewn stones; for by wielding your tool upon them you
have profaned them. 23 Do not ascend My altar by steps,
that your nakedness may not be exposed upon it.

From Leviticus

HOLINESS CODE (LEVITICUS 19)

19

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Speak to the whole
Israelite community and say to them:
You shall be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy.
3 You shall each revere his mother and his father, and
keep My sabbaths: I the LORD am your God.
4 Do not turn to idols or make molten gods for your-
selves: I the LORD am your God.
5 When you sacrifice an offering of well-being to the
LORD, sacrifice it so that it may be accepted on your be-
half. 6 It shall be eaten on the day you sacrifice it, or on
the day following; but what is left by the third day must
be consumed in fire. 7 If it should be eaten on the third
day, it is an offensive thing, it will not be acceptable.
8 And he who eats of it shall bear his guilt, for he has pro-
faned what is sacred to the LORD; that person shall be
cut off from his kin.
9 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall
not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather
the gleanings of your harvest. 10 You shall not pick your
vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard;
you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the
LORD am your God.
11 You shall not steal; you shall not deal deceitfully
or falsely with one another. 12 You shall not swear falsely
by My name, profaning the name of your God: I am
the LORD.
13 You shall not defraud your fellow. You shall not
commit robbery. The wages of a laborer shall not re-
main with you until morning.
14 You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling
block before the blind. You shall fear your God: I am the
LORD.
15 You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor
the poor or show deference to the rich; judge your kins-
man fairly. 16 Do not deal basely with your countrymen.
Do not profit by the blood of your fellow: I am the LORD.
17 You shall not hate your kinsfolk in your heart. Re-
prove your kinsman but incur no guilt because of him.
18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against
your countrymen. Love your fellow as yourself: I am the
LORD.
19 You shall observe My laws.
You shall not let your cattle mate with a different kind;
you shall not sow your field with two kinds of seed; you
shall not put on cloth from a mixture of two kinds of
material.
20 If a man has carnal relations with a woman who is
a slave and has been designated for another man, but has
not been redeemed or given her freedom, there shall be
an indemnity; they shall not, however, be put to death,
since she has not been freed. 21 But he must bring to the
entrance of the Tent of Meeting, as his guilt offering to
the LORD, a ram of guilt offering. 22 With the ram of
guilt offering the priest shall make expiation for him be-
fore the LORD for the sin that he committed; and the sin
that he committed will be forgiven him.

23 When you enter the land and plant any tree for food, you shall regard its fruit as forbidden. Three years it shall be forbidden for you, not to be eaten. 24 In the fourth year all its fruit shall be set aside for jubilation before the LORD; 25 and only in the fifth year may you use its fruit—that its yield to you may be increased: I the LORD am your God.

26 You shall not eat anything with its blood. You shall not practice divination or soothsaying. 27 You shall not round off the side-growth on your head, or destroy the side-growth of your beard. 28 You shall not make gashes in your flesh for the dead, or incise any marks on yourselves: I am the LORD.

29 Do not degrade your daughter and make her a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry and the land be filled with depravity. 30 You shall keep My sabbaths and venerate My sanctuary: I am the LORD.

31 Do not turn to ghosts and do not inquire of familiar spirits, to be defiled by them: I the LORD am your God.

32 You shall rise before the aged and show deference to the old; you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.

33 When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not wrong him. 34 The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I the LORD am your God.

35 You shall not falsify measures of length, weight, or capacity. 36 You shall have an honest balance, honest weights, an honest *ephah*, and an honest *hin*.

I the LORD am your God who freed you from the land of Egypt. 37 You shall faithfully observe all My laws and all My rules: I am the LORD.

10.2.2 Nevi'im (Prophets)

Prophets were spokespersons for God. They spoke out or forth the will of God as they understood it. They believed, as did many of the kings and people of Israel, that God called them to serve a special purpose. Their pronouncements on God's behalf were considered so important that many were recorded and included, along with the Torah books, in the *Tanakh*.

One of the greatest of the many prophetic books included in the *Tanakh* is the Book of Isaiah. In 722 B.C.E. the northern Kingdom of Israel fell to the Assyrians. Although the southern Kingdom of Judah survived until 586 B.C.E., the Assyrians threatened its existence. The prophet Isaiah was an advisor to King Ahaz and his successor, Hezekiah, both kings of Judah. His advice to both kings was to trust God for deliverance.

The Book of Isaiah consists of sixty-six chapters and is an anthology of prophetic writings from Isaiah's time through the Babylonian exile. Isaiah's own words can be found in chapters 1–11 and 28–32. Included below is chapter 1:1–28, in which Isaiah indicts the people of Judah, and chapter 6, which records Isaiah's call to be a prophet.

From Isaiah

READING QUESTIONS

1. In whose name does Isaiah speak?
2. What messages do you find in Isaiah's prophecies?
3. What kind of social and religious function do you think prophesies such as these served?
4. What are the main elements of Isaiah's call to be a prophet?
5. How do you interpret the message given in verses 9 and 10?

1

The prophecies of Isaiah son of Amoz, who prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,
For the LORD has spoken:
"I reared children and brought them up—
And they have rebelled against Me!
3 An ox knows its owner,
An ass its master's crib:
Israel does not know,
My people takes no thought."

4 Ah, sinful nation!
People laden with iniquity!
Brood of evildoers!
Depraved children!

Isaiah 1:1–28 and 6 from *Tanakh, the Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 5748, 1988). Copyright © 1985 by the Jewish Publication Society. Reprinted by permission. Footnotes omitted.

They have forsaken the LORD,
Spurned the Holy One of Israel,
Turned their backs [on Him].

5 Why do you seek further beatings,
That you continue to offend?
Every head is ailing,
And every heart is sick.
6 From head to foot
No spot is sound:
All bruises, and welts,
And festering sores—
Not pressed out, not bound up,
Not softened with oil.
7 Your land is a waste,
Your cities burnt down;
Before your eyes, the yield of your soil
Is consumed by strangers—
A wasteland as overthrown by strangers!
8 Fair Zion is left
Like a booth in a vineyard,
Like a hut in a cucumber field,
Like a city beleaguered.
9 Had not the LORD of Hosts
Left us some survivors,
We should be like Sodom,
Another Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD,
You chieftains of Sodom;
Give ear to our God's instruction,
You folk of Gomorrah!
11 "What need have I of all your sacrifices?"
Says the LORD.
"I am sated with burnt offerings of rams,
And suet of fatlings,
and blood of bulls;
And I have no delight
In lambs and he-goats.
12 That you come to appear before Me—
Who asked that of you?
Trample My courts
13 no more;
Bringing oblations is futile,
Incense is offensive to Me.
New moon and sabbath,
Proclaiming of solemnities,
Assemblies with iniquity,
I cannot abide.
14 Your new moons and fixed seasons
Fill Me with loathing;
They are become a burden to Me,
I cannot endure them.
15 And when you lift up your hands,
I will turn My eyes away from you;
Though you pray at length,
I will not listen.
Your hands are stained with crime—
16 Wash yourselves clean;
Put your evil doings
Away from My sight.
Cease to do evil;
17 Learn to do good.
Devote yourselves to justice;
Aid the wronged.
Uphold the rights of the orphan;
Defend the cause of the widow.

18 "Come, let us reach an understanding,
—says the LORD.
Be your sins like crimson,
They can turn snow-white;
Be they red as dyed wool,
They can become like fleece."
19 If, then, you agree and give heed,
You will eat the good things of the earth;
20 But if you refuse and disobey,
You will be devoured [by] the sword—
For it was the LORD who spoke.

21 Alas, she has become a harlot,
The faithful city
That was filled with justice,
Where righteousness dwelt—
But now murderers.
22 Your silver has turned to dross;
Your wine is cut with water.
23 Your rulers are rogues
And cronies of thieves,
Every one avid for presents
And greedy for gifts;
They do not judge the case of the orphan,
And the widow's cause never reaches them.

24 Assuredly, this is the declaration
Of the Sovereign, the LORD of Hosts,
The Mighty One of Israel:
"Ah, I will get satisfaction from My foes;
I will wreak vengeance on My enemies!
25 I will turn My hand against you,
And smelt out your dross as with lye,
And remove all your slag:
26 I will restore your magistrates as of old,
And your counselors as of yore.
After that you shall be called
City of Righteousness, Faithful City."

27 Zion shall be saved in the judgment;
Her repentant ones, in the retribution.
28 But rebels and sinners shall all be crushed,
And those who forsake the LORD shall perish. . . .

6

In the year that King Uzziah died, I beheld my Lord seated on a high and lofty throne; and the skirts of His robe filled the Temple. 2 Seraphs stood in attendance on Him. Each of them had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his legs, and with two he would fly.

3 And one would call to the other,
"Holy, holy, holy!
The LORD of Hosts!
His presence fills all the earth!"

4 The doorposts would shake at the sound of the one who called, and the House kept filling with smoke.
5 I cried,

"Woe is me; I am lost!
For I am a man of unclean lips
And I live among a people
of unclean lips;
Yet my own eyes have beheld
The King LORD of Hosts."

6 Then one of the seraphs flew over to me with a live coal, which he had taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. 7 He touched it to my lips and declared,

"Now that this has touched your lips,
Your guilt shall depart
And your sin be purged away."

8 Then I heard the voice of my Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me." 9 And He said, "Go, say to that people:

'Hear, indeed, but do not understand;
See, indeed, but do not grasp.'
10 Dull that people's mind,
Stop its ears,
And seal its eyes—
Lest, seeing with its eyes
And hearing with its ears,
It also grasp with its mind,
And repent and save itself."

11 I asked, "How long, my Lord?" And He replied:

"Till towns lie waste without inhabitants
And houses without people,
And the ground lies waste and desolate—
12 For the LORD will banish the population—
And deserted sites are many
In the midst of the land.

13 "But while a tenth part yet remains in it, it shall repent. It shall be ravaged like the terebinth and the oak, of which stumps are left even when they are felled: its stump shall be a holy seed."

10.2.3 Ketuvim (Writings)

Included among the books of the *Tanakh* are a collection called "Writings." One of the more interesting parts of this collection is a hymn book, or Psalter, called the Psalms. It includes some 150 songs and prayers written over a 600-year period, many during the Babylonian exile. Although we cannot be sure of the authorship of these songs, 73 are ascribed to King David.

Because it took so long for the Book of Psalms to reach its final form, it is very difficult for a modern scholar to decipher the origins, history, and use of the many different hymns. Scholars do know the whole Psalter in its final form is intended to be a manual of devotion and meditation encompassing, among other themes, confession (Psalm 51), lament (Psalm 3), adoration (Psalm 8), and praise (Psalm 150). It is also likely that many of the Psalms were composed for ceremonial use in the Jerusalem Temple.

Until the time of Josiah (640–609 B.C.E.), the ordinary people probably did not use the Jerusalem Temple for worship. It was a royal chapel, used by the monarchs and their households. Exactly which hymns and prayers were used in the royal ceremonies conducted at the temple is impossible to determine with certainty. Psalm 2 may have been David's inaugural hymn, and Psalms 24, 47, and 68 may have been composed for the occasion of bringing the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6). Psalm 44 could be used by a king prior to a battle, and Psalms 93 and 96–99 might have been used on the anniversary of the king's coronation or as part of a New Year's festival.

At one point the collection was framed by Psalm 1, which stresses the importance of delighting in the law (Torah), and Psalm 119, which is an elaborate meditation on the law in all of its aspects. This indicates one shift in the interpretation of the Psalter from an emphasis on the words of worshipers addressed to God to the word of God (Torah) addressed to worshipers. Although Psalm 119 may have once ended the Psalter, it now ends with a block of David hymns (138–145), followed by five *hallelujah* psalms. This shifts the interpretation once again from an empha-

sis on God's law to the life of King David, God's covenant with David, and David's life as the model of genuine piety.

Along with the Psalms, a book named Esther is included in the **Ketuvim.** It is one of two books in the *Tanakh* that focuses on the life of a Jewish heroine (Ruth is the other). Esther, we learn, is the queen of a Persian king named Ahasuerus (Xerxes I), one of the successors of King Cyrus who had allowed the Jews to return to Judah. King Ahasuerus does not know Esther is a Jew, so when Mordecai, her cousin, refuses to bow to Haman, a high official of his court, the king permits Haman to develop a plan to execute Mordecai and the Jews. Esther speaks to the king on behalf of the Jews, and they are spared. Poetic justice draws part of the story to a close as Haman is impaled on the stake he had prepared for Mordecai and the Jews are given the right to defend themselves.

The story of Esther is the basis for the Jewish feast Purim.

From Psalms

READING QUESTIONS

1. Assuming there was a cultic or ritual setting for Psalm 8, what do you think it might be?
2. How would you characterize the message of Psalm 23?
3. What message for the pious does Psalm 51 convey?
4. What do you think is the historical setting of Psalm 137?
5. Why do you think the story of Esther was preserved?

8

For the leader; on the *gittith*. A psalm of David.

2 O LORD, our Lord,
How majestic is Your name throughout the earth,
You who have covered the heavens with Your splendor!

3 From the mouths of infants and sucklings
You have founded strength on account of Your foes,
to put an end to enemy and avenger.
4 When I behold Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
the moon and stars that You set in place,
5 what is man that You have been mindful of him,
mortal man that You have taken note of him,
6 that You have made him little less than divine,
and adorned him with glory and majesty;
7 You have made him master over Your handiwork,
laying the world at his feet,
8 sheep and oxen, all of them,
and wild beasts, too;
9 the birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea,
whatever travels the paths of the seas.
10 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name
throughout the earth!

23

A psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd;
I lack nothing.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me to water in places of repose;
3 He renews my life;
He guides me in right paths
as befits His name.
4 Though I walk through a valley of deepest darkness,
I fear no harm, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me.

5 You spread a table for me in full view of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my drink is abundant.
6 Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for many long years.

51

For the leader. A psalm of David, 2 when Nathan the prophet came to him after he had come to Bathsheba.

3 Have mercy upon me, O God,
as befits Your faithfulness;
in keeping with Your abundant compassion,
blot out my transgressions.
4 Wash me thoroughly of my iniquity,
and purify me of my sin;
5 for I recognize my transgressions,
and am ever conscious of my sin.

Psalms 8, 23, 51, 137 and Esther 3–5:5a, 7) from *Tanakh, the Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 5748, 1988). Copyright © 1985 by the Jewish Publication Society. Reprinted by permission. Footnotes omitted.

6 Against You alone have I sinned,
and done what is evil in Your sight;
so You are just in Your sentence,
and right in Your judgment.
7 Indeed I was born with iniquity;
with sin my mother conceived me.
8 Indeed You desire truth about that which is hidden;
teach me wisdom about secret things.

9 Purge me with hyssop till I am pure;
wash me till I am whiter than snow.
10 Let me hear tidings of joy and gladness;
let the bones You have crushed exult.
11 Hide Your face from my sins;
blot out all my iniquities.
12 Fashion a pure heart for me, O God;
create in me a steadfast spirit.
13 Do not cast me out of Your presence,
or take Your holy spirit away from me.
14 Let me again rejoice in Your help;
let a vigorous spirit sustain me.
15 I will teach transgressors Your ways,
that sinners may return to You.

16 Save me from bloodguilt,
O God, God, my deliverer,
that I may sing forth Your beneficence.
17 O LORD, open my lips,
and let my mouth declare Your praise.
18 You do not want me to bring sacrifices;
You do not desire burnt offerings;
19 True sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit;
God, You will not despise
a contrite and crushed heart.

20 May it please You to make Zion prosper;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
21 Then You will want sacrifices offered in righteousness,
burnt and whole offerings;
then bulls will be offered on Your altar.

137

By the rivers of Babylon,
there we sat,
sat and wept,
as we thought of Zion.
2 There on the poplars
we hung up our lyres,
3 for our captors asked us there for songs,
our tormentors, for amusement,
"Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

4 How can we sing a song of the LORD
on alien soil?
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
let my right hand wither;
6 let my tongue stick to my palate
if I cease to think of you,
if I do not keep Jerusalem in memory
even at my happiest hour.

7 Remember, O LORD, against the Edomites
the day of Jerusalem's fall;
how they cried, "Strip her, strip her
to her very foundations!"
8 Fair Babylon, you predator,
a blessing on him who repays you in kind
what you have inflicted on us;
9 a blessing on him who seizes your babies
and dashes them against the rocks!

From Esther

3

Some time afterward, King Ahasuerus promoted Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite; he advanced him and seated him higher than any of his fellow officials. 2 All the king's courtiers in the palace gate knelt and bowed low to Haman, for such was the king's order concerning him; but Mordecai would not kneel or bow low. 3 Then the king's courtiers who were in the palace gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's order?" 4 When they spoke to him day after day and he would not listen to them, they told Haman, in order to see whether Mordecai's resolve would prevail; for he had explained to them that he was a Jew. 5 When Haman saw that Mordecai would not kneel or bow low to him, Haman was filled with rage. 6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone; having been told who Mordecai's people were, Haman plotted to do away with all the Jews, Mordecai's people, throughout the kingdom of Ahasuerus.

7 In the first month, that is, the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, *pur*—which means "the lot"—was cast before Haman concerning every day and every month, [until it fell on] the twelfth month, that is, the month of Adar. 8 Haman then said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people, scattered and dis-

persed among the other peoples in all the provinces of your realm, whose laws are different from those of any other people and who do not obey the king's laws; and it is not in Your Majesty's interest to tolerate them. [9]If it please Your Majesty, let an edict be drawn for their destruction, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver to the stewards for deposit in the royal treasury." [10]Thereupon the king removed his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the foe of the Jews. [11]And the king said, "The money and the people are yours to do with as you see fit."

[12]On the thirteenth day of the first month, the king's scribes were summoned and a decree was issued, as Haman directed, to the king's satraps, to the governors of every province, and to the officials of every people, to every province in its own script and to every people in its own language. The orders were issued in the name of King Ahasuerus and sealed with the king's signet. [13]Accordingly, written instructions were dispatched by couriers to all the king's provinces to destroy, massacre, and exterminate all the Jews, young and old, children and women, on a single day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month—that is, the month of Adar—and to plunder their possessions. [14]The text of the document was to the effect that a law should be proclaimed in every single province; it was to be publicly displayed to all the peoples, so that they might be ready for that day.

[15]The couriers went out posthaste on the royal mission, and the decree was proclaimed in the fortress Shushan. The king and Haman sat down to feast, but the city of Shushan was dumfounded.

4

When Mordecai learned all that had happened, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes. He went through the city, crying out loudly and bitterly, [2]until he came in front of the palace gate; for one could not enter the palace gate wearing sackcloth.—[3]Also, in every province that the king's command and decree reached, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing, and everybody lay in sackcloth and ashes.—[4]When Esther's maidens and eunuchs came and informed her, the queen was greatly agitated. She sent clothing for Mordecai to wear, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he refused. [5]Thereupon Esther summoned Hathach, one of the eunuchs whom the king had appointed to serve her, and sent him to Mordecai to learn the why and wherefore of it all. [6]Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square in front of the palace gate; [7]and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and all about the money that Haman had offered to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. [8]He also gave him the written text of the law that had been proclaimed in Shushan for their destruction. [He bade him] show it to Esther and inform her, and charge her to go to the king and to appeal to him and to plead with him for her people. [9]When Hathach came and delivered Mordecai's message to Esther, [10]Esther told Hathach to take back to Mordecai the following reply: [11]"All the king's courtiers and the people of the king's provinces know that if any person, man or woman, enters the king's presence in the inner court without having been summoned, there is but one law for him—that he be put to death. Only if the king extends the golden scepter to him may he live. Now I have not been summoned to visit the king for the last thirty days."

[12]When Mordecai was told what Esther had said, [13]Mordecai had this message delivered to Esther: "Do not imagine that you, of all the Jews, will escape with your life by being in the king's palace. [14]On the contrary, if you keep silent in this crisis, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another quarter, while you and your father's house will perish. And who knows, perhaps you have attained to royal position for just such a crisis." [15]Then Esther sent back this answer to Mordecai: [16]"Go, assemble all the Jews who live in Shushan, and fast in my behalf; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my maidens will observe the same fast. Then I shall go to the king, though it is contrary to the law; and if I am to perish, I shall perish!" [17]So Mordecai went about [the city] and did just as Esther had commanded him.

5

On the third day, Esther put on royal apparel and stood in the inner court of the king's palace, facing the king's palace, while the king was sitting on his royal throne in the throne room facing the entrance of the palace. [2]As soon as the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, she won his favor. The king extended to Esther the golden scepter which he had in his hand, and Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter. [3]"What troubles you, Queen Esther?" the king asked her. "And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be granted you." [4]"If it please Your Majesty," Esther replied, "let Your Majesty and Haman come today to the feast that I have prepared for him." [5]The king commanded, "Tell Haman to hurry and do Esther's bidding." . . .

7

So the king and Haman came to feast with Queen Esther. [2] On the second day, the king again asked Esther at the wine feast, "What is your wish, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what is your request? Even to half the kingdom, it shall be fulfilled." [3] Queen Esther replied: "If Your Majesty will do me the favor, and if it pleases Your Majesty, let my life be granted me as my wish, and my people as my request. [4] For we have been sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, massacred, and exterminated. Had we only been sold as bondmen and bondwomen, I would have kept silent; for the adversary is not worthy of the king's trouble."

[5] Thereupon King Ahasuerus demanded of Queen Esther, "Who is he and where is he who dared to do this?" [6] "The adversary and enemy," replied Esther, "is this evil Haman!" And Haman cringed in terror before the king and the queen. [7] The king, in his fury, left the wine feast for the palace garden, while Haman remained to plead with Queen Esther for his life; for he saw that the king had resolved to destroy him. [8] When the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet room, Haman was lying prostrate on the couch on which Esther reclined. "Does he mean," cried the king, "to ravish the queen in my own palace?" No sooner did these words leave the king's lips than Haman's face was covered. [9] Then Harbonah, one of the eunuchs in attendance on the king, said, "What is more, a stake is standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai—the man whose words saved the king." "Impale him on it!" the king ordered. [10] So they impaled Haman on the stake which he had put up for Mordecai, and the king's fury abated.

10.3 THE AGE OF DEFINITION (ca. 70–640 C.E.)

The first date of this formative period in the development of Judaism marks the destruction of the second temple by the Romans. The second date, 640, refers to the Arab conquest of the Near and Middle East and the establishment of Islam as the dominant religion.

During this period, Jewish faith faced serious problems. First, the second temple was lost and once again the Jews faced exile from Zion. Then Christianity, an offshoot of their own faith, became the official religion of the Roman Empire. The Jews now had to live in the world of Christendom. Then the Arab conquest pushed the Christians farther north (along with many Jews) and established yet another religion, Islam, in lands the Jews held sacred. How could God let all of this happen to his chosen people? How could it be explained? How can the faith survive without the land God promised?

Not only did it survive, adversity brought one of the greatest creative surges in Jewish history. This creative response started before 70, but its energy flowed into later times. The destruction of the temple in 70 only served to give it further urgency. Jewish thinkers studied Greek and Roman philosophy, applying what they learned to the interpretation of Jewish Scriptures. These scriptures had been translated into Greek around 250 B.C.E. and named the Septuagint. Religious communities such as the Therapeutae and the Essenes sprung up, awaiting what they took to be the last days of judgment when God would establish his people once and for all by destroying their enemies. Jewish groups called Pharisees and Sadducees debated such issues as the resurrection of the dead. And great bodies of written materials—the Mishnah and the Talmud—reported the wisdom of Jewish sages, or rabbis.

10.3.1 Creation of the Intelligible World

When the first temple was destroyed in 586 B.C.E., a large number of Jews fled to Egypt. After Alexander the Great conquered Egypt and established the city of Alexandria, it became a center of learning and commerce in the Mediterranean world. Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 B.C.E.–50 C.E.) was a Hellenized Jew who drank deeply at the well of Greek philosophy and science as well as Jewish lore and wisdom.

Philo believed that the truth of the Torah of Moses must coincide with the truth the Greek philosophers and scientists discovered. He developed the allegorical method of interpretation in order to show that buried in the Torah was an orderly and scientific account of the world and human life.

The Greek philosopher Plato (428–347 B.C.E.) had discovered that the visible world contained an order or pattern that the human mind, using logical and mathematical reasoning, could comprehend. It is as if the world in all of its ever-changing and seemingly chaotic splendor followed a hidden blueprint—a form or pattern that was unchanging and invariant. This intelligible pattern or, better, patterns, Plato called Forms. He believed they were discernible in

human language and by human reason. Hence they constituted a *logos*, a Greek word meaning both "word" and "reason."

When the Torah was translated into Greek, the word *logos* was used to translate the creative word of God spoken about in Genesis. Thus, when Philo read his Torah through Greek and Platonic glasses, he found revealed there the intelligible world of Platonic Forms. The visible world is made according to this intelligible pattern, and thus the myth (Greek *mythos* means "story") of creation revealed to Moses contains, when allegorically interpreted, a true scientific account of how the world came to be. Indeed, it even improves on Plato's account because Plato had no place to locate the intelligible Forms, but Moses did. They eternally abide in the Divine Mind. God thinks the world before he creates it.

The passage included below tells how Philo went about showing that the wisdom of the Jewish Moses is no less than the wisdom of the best minds of the Greek world. According to Philo, the Jews' stories and writings represent a divinely revealed truth because they contain the best teachings about the origin of the world the science of the day had to offer.

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA

On the Intelligible World

READING QUESTIONS

1. What is the intelligible world, and what role does it play in creation?
2. How does Philo deduce the doctrine of the Incorporeal Ideas from Genesis?
3. What is the "Logos," and what role does it play in creation?
4. Why do you think Philo uses the sexual metaphor of the Creator having intercourse with his knowledge?

From *Philo of Alexandria: The Contemplative Life, the Giants, and Selections*, translated by David Winston (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), pp. 99–102. Copyright © 1981 by David Winston. Reprinted by permission. Notes omitted.

The Intelligible World within the Divine Mind Compared to a Blueprint within the Architect's Mind

For God, being God, judged in advance that a beautiful copy would never be produced except from a beautiful pattern and that no sense object would be irreproachable that was not modeled after an archetypal and intelligible idea. So when he willed to create this visible world, he first formed the intelligible world, so that he might employ a pattern completely Godlike and incorporeal for the production of the corporeal world, a more recent image of one that was older, which was to comprise as many sensible kinds as there were intelligible ones in the other.

To say or to suppose that that world composed of the ideas is in some place is improper; but how it was put together we shall know if we closely attend to some similitude taken from our own world. When a city is being founded to satisfy the great ambition of some king or ruler who pretends to absolute power, and magnificent in his pride further embellishes his good fortune, there comes forward now and then some trained architect who, after observing the mild climate and convenient location of the site, first maps out in his own mind virtually all the parts of the city that is to be brought to completion, temples, gymnasia, town halls, marketplaces, harbors, docks, lanes, wall constructions, the erection of houses as well as public buildings. Accordingly, after having received in his soul, as in wax, the impressions of each of these objects, he carries in his mind the image of an intelligible city. Then, after awakening these images through his innate power of memory, and imprinting their stamp even further, like a good craftsman keeping his eye on the model, he begins to build the city of stones and timber, adapting the corporeal objects to each of the incorporeal ideas.

Similarly must we think about God. When he was minded to found the Great City, he first conceived the forms of its parts, out of which he put together the intelligible world, and, using that as a model, he also brought to completion the sensible world. As, then, the city prefigured in the architect's mind held no place externally but was stamped in the soul of the artisan, so too the intelligible world could have no other location than the Divine Logos, which established the world order. For what other place could there be for his powers sufficient to receive and contain, I say not all, but any of them whatever unmixed. (*Op.* 16–20)

The Intelligible World Is the Divine Logos in the Act of Creation

If one should wish to express it more baldly, he would say that the Intelligible World is nothing else than the

Divine Logos already in the act of building the cosmos, for the intelligible city is nothing else than the reasoning of the architect already intent on founding the city. This is Moses' teaching, not mine; for in his description of man's creation in the sequel he explicitly acknowledges that he was molded after the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Now if the part is an image of an image, and the whole form, this entire sensible world since it is greater than the human image, is a copy of the divine image, it is clear that the archetypal seal, which we declare to be the intelligible world, would be the very Logos of God. (*Op.* 24–25)

Creation of the Intelligible World

First, then, the Creator made an incorporeal heaven and an invisible earth and the Form of air and void. The one he named "darkness," since air is by nature black; the other, "abyss," for the void is very deep and immense. Next came the incorporeal essence of water and pneuma (breath), and topping them all in the seventh place, that of light, which, in its turn incorporeal, was an intelligible pattern of the sun and all the luminous stars that were to take shape across the heavens. (*Op.* 29)

Creation of Incorporeal Ideas Deduced from Genesis 2:4–5

Concluding the creation narrative he says by way of summary:

> This is the book of the genesis of heaven and earth, when they came into being, on the day on which God made the heaven and the earth and every green shrub of the field before it appeared upon the earth, and all grass of the field before it sprang up. (Gen. 2:4–5)

Is he not manifestly setting before us the incorporeal and intelligible ideas that are the seals of the sensible objects of creation? For before the earth greened, young verdure itself existed in the nature of things, and before grass sprang up in the field, an invisible grass existed. We must suppose that prior also to each of all the other objects judged by the senses, there existed the more ancient forms and measures through which all things that come into being are shaped and measured, for even if he has not gone through all things severally but only collectively, taking thought as much as any for brevity, the few things said constitute nonetheless patterns for the whole of nature, which without an incorporeal model accomplishes nothing in the world of sense. (*Op.* 129–130)

The Logos Used as an Instrument in Creating the World

Bezalel means, then, "in the shadow of God"; but God's shadow is his Logos, which he used as an instrument and thus created the world. This shadow and representation, as it were, is in turn the archetype of other things. For just as God is the Pattern of the Image, which was just named Shadow, so does the Image become the pattern of others, as Moses made clear at the beginning of the Law Code by saying, "And God made man after the Image of God" (Gen. 1:27); thus the Image had been modeled after God, but man after the Image, which had acquired the force of a pattern. (*LA* 3.96)

God Had Intercourse with His Knowledge and Begat Created Being

We should at once rightly say that the Craftsman who made this universe was at the same time the father of what was begotten, while the mother was the knowledge of its creator. With his knowledge God had intercourse, not in human fashion, and begat created being. Knowledge received the divine seed and with birth-throes bearing perfect fruit bore the only beloved and sense-perceptible Son, this world. Thus wisdom is represented by one of the divine chorus as speaking of herself in this manner: "God obtained me first of all his world and founded me before the ages" (Prov. 8:22). For all that has come to birth must inevitably be younger than the mother and nurse of the All. (*Ebr.* 30–31) . . .

10.3.2 Dead Sea Scrolls

A few miles south of Jericho, on the western shore of the Dead Sea, lies some ruins known as Khirbet Qumran. These ruins were the center of an ancient Jewish religious community. One day, some two thousand years ago, members of this community hastily climbed the nearby cliffs in order to hide their precious scrolls in eleven caves. No one came back to get them, and they remained undisturbed until 1947 when a Bedouin shepherd boy accidentally discovered them. The information contained in the scrolls has led scholars to revise much of their thinking about religion, politics, Judaism, and the beginnings of Christianity at the start of a new millennium that saw Philo busy at work in Alexandria, Jews rebelling against Roman rule of Judah, and messianic Zealots roaming the streets of Jerusalem prophesying the coming of the **Messiah**—the "anointed one" of Israel.

Although the Qumran community has been identified by some scholars with a Jewish group known as the **Essenes,** this name is not used in the manuscripts, now called the **Dead Sea Scrolls.** The members of this religious community believed they were preparing for the final battle between the forces of good and evil. Apparently gripped by "eschatological fever" (**eschatology** refers to the end times, or last

days, when God will establish his kingdom), they anticipated a decisive battle between the sons of light and the sons of darkness.

This theme of conflict between the forces of good and evil is as old as the human imagination and as recent as the latest Hollywood movie. This battle has a moral dimension that is fought over and over again whenever humans seek to do good but are tempted by evil. However, the members of the Qumran community thought it would be fought for the final time and that it would be a cosmic battle between truth and falsehood and a religious battle between purity and pollution.

The selection that follows, called "The Community Rule 1QS," was discovered in Cave 1. It is probably one of the oldest documents of the Qumran sect, originally written about 100 B.C.E. Apparently it was intended for the teachers or Masters of the community and contains statutes concerned with initiation into the sect and its common life and discipline, extracts from liturgical ceremonies, and a tract on the spirits of truth and falsehood. Below are parts III–IV dealing with entry into the covenant along with instruction about the two spirits.

Community Rule

READING QUESTIONS

1. How are the two spirits different?
2. What will happen "at the time of visitation"?
3. How do you think this sect might reconcile the strong emphasis on God's control and predestination with human freedom and responsibility?

The Master shall instruct all the sons of light and shall teach them the nature of all the children of men according to the kind of spirit which they possess, the signs identifying their works during their lifetime, their visitation for chastisement, and the time of their reward.

From the God of Knowledge comes all that is and shall be. Before ever they existed He established their whole design, and when, as ordained for them, they come into being, it is in accord with His glorious design that they accomplish their task without change. The laws of all things are in His hand and He provides them with all their needs.

He has created man to govern the world, and has appointed for him two spirits in which to walk until the time of His visitation: the spirits of truth and injustice. Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but those born of injustice spring from a source of darkness. All the children of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the ways of light, but all the children of injustice are ruled by the Angel of Darkness and walk in the ways of darkness.

The Angel of Darkness leads all the children of righteousness astray, and until his end, all their sin, iniquities, wickedness, and all their unlawful deeds are caused by his dominion in accordance with the mysteries of God. Every one of their chastisements, and every one of the seasons of their distress, shall be brought about by the rule of his persecution; for all his allotted spirits seek the overthrow of the sons of light.

But the God of Israel and His Angel of Truth will succour all the sons of light. For it is He who created the spirits of Light and Darkness and founded every action upon them and established every deed [upon] their [ways]. And He loves the one everlastingly and delights in its works for ever; but the counsel of the other He loathes and for ever hates its ways.

These are their ways in the world for the enlightenment of the heart of man, and that all the paths of true righteousness may be made straight before him, and that the fear of the laws of God may be instilled in his heart: a spirit of humility, patience, abundant charity, unending goodness, understanding, and intelligence; (a spirit of) mighty wisdom which trusts in all the deeds of God and leans on His great loving-kindness; a spirit of discernment in every purpose, of zeal for just laws, of holy intent with steadfastness of heart, of great charity towards all the sons of truth, of admirable purity which detests all unclean idols, of humble conduct sprung from an understanding of all things, and of faithful concealment of the mysteries of truth. These are the counsels of the spirit to the sons of truth in this world.

And as for the visitation of all who walk in this spirit, it shall be healing, great peace in a long life, and fruitfulness, together with every everlasting blessing and eternal joy in life without end, a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light.

But the ways of the spirit of falsehood are these: greed, and slackness in the search for righteousness, wickedness and lies, haughtiness and pride, falseness and deceit, cruelty and abundant evil, ill-temper and much folly and brazen insolence, abominable deeds (commit-

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From *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* by Geza Vermes, pp. 101–103. Published by Penguin Books. Reprinted by permission.

ted) in a spirit of lust, and ways of lewdness in the service of uncleanness, a blaspheming tongue, blindness of eye and dullness of ear, stiffness of neck and heaviness of heart, so that man walks in all the ways of darkness and guile.

And the visitation of all who walk in this spirit shall be a multitude of plagues by the hand of all the destroying angels, everlasting damnation by the avenging wrath of the fury of God, eternal torment and endless disgrace together with shameful extinction in the fire of the dark regions. The times of all their generations shall be spent in sorrowful mourning and in bitter misery and in calamities of darkness until they are destroyed without remnant or survivor.

The nature of all the children of men is ruled by these (two spirits), and during their life all the hosts of men have a portion of their divisions and walk in (both) their ways. And the whole reward for their deeds shall be, for everlasting ages, according to whether each man's portion in their two divisions is great or small. For God has established the spirits in equal measure until the final age, and has set everlasting hatred between their divisions. Truth abhors the works of injustice, and injustice hates all the ways of truth. And their struggle is fierce in all their arguments for they do not walk together.

But in the mysteries of His understanding, and in His glorious wisdom, God has ordained an end for injustice, and at the time of the visitation He will destroy it for ever. Then truth, which has wallowed in the ways of wickedness during the dominion of injustice until the appointed time of judgement, shall arise in the world for ever. God will then purify every deed of man with His truth; He will refine for Himself the human frame by rooting out all spirit of injustice from the bounds of his flesh. He will cleanse him of all wicked deeds with the spirit of holiness; like purifying waters He will shed upon him the spirit of truth (to cleanse him) of all abomination and injustice. And he shall be plunged into the spirit of purification that he may instruct the upright in the knowledge of the Most High and teach the wisdom of the sons of heaven to the perfect of way. [sic] For God has chosen them for an everlasting Covenant and all the glory of Adam shall be theirs. There shall be no more lies and all the works of injustice shall be put to shame.

Until now the spirits of truth and injustice struggle in the hearts of men and they walk in both wisdom and folly. According to his portion of truth so does a man hate injustice, and according to his inheritance in the realm of injustice so is he wicked and so hates truth. For God has established the two spirits in equal measure until the determined end, and until the Renewal, and He knows the reward of their deeds from all eternity. He has allotted them to the children of men that they may know good [and evil, and] that the destiny of all the living may be according to the spirit within [them at the time] of the visitation. . . .

10.3.3 Wisdom of the Fathers

The **Mishnah** is largely a collection of legal discussions about what kinds of law apply to what sorts of situations. It was produced around 200 C.E. and over the next 400 years the rabbis created two massive commentaries on the Mishnah, both called **Talmud**. (See Neusner's discussion of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds in Reading 10.1.)

Below you will find one of the best-known sections of the Mishnah called *Abot* (literally, "fathers"). This section is so important that medieval copies of the Talmud have *Abot* at the end of each of the six key divisions. The typical style of the Mishnah is dialogical debate and argument, but the *Abot* is different. It is a collection of proverbs that were not debated. Another title for *Abot* is "The Ethics of the Fathers." As early as the ninth century, Jews formally studied this ethics manual on Saturday afternoons during summer months. Eventually it was added to the Prayer Book.

Although Judaism traces its oral Torah back to Moses (as the transmission recital that opens the *Abot* indicates), the Mishnah and the Talmudic commentary on it are obviously the collected sayings of the rabbis. How could these collected opinions of sages count as divine law? Surely, Moses did not receive from God and orally transmit laws that have to do with situations that did not even exist in his day? Besides, it is obvious from reading the text that these laws emerged from often heated discussion, debate, and disagreements among the **rabbis**.

The selection from the *Baba Mezia*, one of the most famous sections of the Talmud, explains that the majority position held by those sages who carry the oral law becomes the law. This notion of majority rule allowed the debate and exploration to continue while ensuring closure at some point. What is remarkable about this discussion is the authority invested in majority rule. Neither miracles nor voices from heaven have greater authority than consensus among those who transmit the oral Torah.

The Talmudic rabbis discussed many religious and civil matters. Among these matters were, quite naturally, laws relating to marriage and family. The *Trac-*

tate Yebamot, from which our third selection comes, deals specifically with levirate marriage—the obligation of a man to marry his deceased brother's wife if he died childless. The discussion of levirate marriage takes place in the more general context of the obligation to have children, which stems from the biblical command to be "fruitful and multiply" (Gn 1:28). Interestingly, the Mishnah exempts women from this duty of procreation.

Women did not have equal status with men under Talmudic law. For example, only a husband could initiate a divorce. Women were expected to engage primarily in domestic activities and were not encouraged to study the Torah, although some did. No law forbids women from studying the Torah, but only men are commanded to do so. Nevertheless, at least one second-century woman, believed to have been married to the famous Rabbi Meir, became a renowned Torah scholar. Her name is Beruriah and documents containing her story go back to the third century. It is said that her scholarship was so great that she learned three hundred traditions from three hundred masters in a single day. However, in the eleventh century a story was introduced into the Beruriah tradition that recounts how she mocked the rabbinic attitude toward women, committed adultery with one of her husband's students, then killed herself causing her husband to flee in disgrace.

Mishnah and Talmud

READING QUESTIONS

1. What do you think is meant by the command to make a fence around the Torah? Why does the Torah need a fence?
2. Why do you think the *Abot* is regarded as so important?
3. In your opinion, why would the sages of Israel regard miracles as less important as sources of authority than the majority opinion of the rabbis?
4. What strikes you as most important about the Talmudic discussion of levirate marriage?

From *The Talmud: Selected Writings*, translated by Ben Zion Bokser (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), pp. 219–221, 184–185, 131–132. Copyright © 1989 by Baruch M. Bokser. Reprinted by permission.

1. Moses received the Torah at Sinai. He conveyed it to Joshua; Joshua to the elders; the elders to the prophets; and the prophets transmitted it to the men of the Great Assembly. The latter emphasized three principles: Be deliberate in judgment; raise up many disciples; and make a fence to safeguard the Torah.

2. Simeon the Just was of the last survivors of the Great Assembly. He used to say: The world rests on three foundations: the Torah; the divine service; and the practices of lovingkindness between man and man.

3. Antigonus of Soho received the tradition from him. He was accustomed to say: Be not like servants who serve their master because of the expected reward, but be like those who serve a master without expecting a reward; and let the fear of God be upon you.

4. Yose ben Yoezer of Zeredah and Yose ben Yohanan of Jerusalem received the tradition from them. Yose ben Yoezer of Zeredah said: Let your house be a gathering place for wise men; sit attentively at their feet, and drink of their words of wisdom with eagerness.

5. Yose ben Yohanan of Jerusalem said: Let your home be a place of hospitality to strangers; and make the poor welcome in your household; and do not indulge in gossip with women. This applies even with one's own wife, and surely so with another man's wife. The sages generalized from this: He who engages in profuse gossiping with women causes evil for himself and neglects the study of the Torah, and he will bring upon himself retributions in the hereafter.

6. Joshua ben Perahya and Nittai the Arbelite received the tradition from them. Joshua ben Perahya said: Get yourself a teacher; and acquire for yourself a companion; and judge all people favorably.

7. Nittai the Arbelite said: Avoid an evil neighbor; do not associate with the wicked; and do not surrender your faith in divine retribution.

8. Judah ben Tabbai and Simeon ben Shatah received the traditions from them. Judah ben Tabbai said: Let not the judge play the part of the counselor; when they leave after submitting to the court's decree, regard them both as guiltless.

9. Simeon ben Shatah said: Search the witnesses thoroughly and be cautious with your own words lest you give them an opening to false testimony.

10. Shemaya and Abtalyon received the traditions from them. Shemaya said: love work; hate domineering over others; and do not seek the intimacy of public officials.

11. Abtalyon said: Sages, be precise in your teachings. You may suffer exile to a place where heresy is ram-

pant, and your inexact language may lead your disciples astray, and they will lose their faith, thus leading to a desecration of the divine name.

12. Hillel and Shammai received the tradition from them. Hillel said: Be of the disciples of Aaron. Love peace and pursue peace; love your fellow creatures and bring them near to the Torah.

13. He also said: He who strives to exalt his name will in the end destroy his name; he who does not increase his knowledge decreases it; he who does not study has undermined his right to life; and he who makes unworthy use of the crown of the Torah will perish.

14. He also said: If I am not for myself who will be? But if I am for myself only, what am I? And if not now, when?

15. Shammai said: Set a fixed time for the study of the Torah; say little and do much; and greet every person with a cheerful countenance.

16. Rabban Gamaliel said: Provide yourself with a teacher, and extricate yourself from doubt; and do not habitually contribute your tithes by rough estimates.

17. Simeon his son said: All my life I was raised among scholars and I found that no virtue becomes a man more than silence; what is more essential is not study but practice; and in the wake of many words is sin.

18. Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel said: The world rests on three foundations: truth, justice, and peace. As it is written (Zech 8:16): "You shall administer truth, justice and peace within your gates."

[Mishnah, *Abot*, ch. 1]

The Talmud on Rabbinic Authority

We studied in the Mishnah (Eduyot 7:7) that if a pottery stove was cut into tiles, and cemented over with sand placed between the tiles, R. Eliezer declared it unsusceptible to ritual uncleanliness, while the other Sages declared it susceptible. This was the Akhnai Stove.

Why was it called Akhnai? Said R. Judah in the name of Samuel. They surrounded it with arguments as a snake winds its body around an object, and declared it unclean. It has been taught: On that day R. Eliezer marshaled every conceivable argument, but they did not accept them. Then he said: If the law is according to my views, let this carob tree prove it. There, upon the carob tree was thrust to a distance of a hundred cubits from its place, and some say four hundred. They replied to him: We adduce no evidence from a carob tree. Again he said to them: If the law is in accordance with my views, let the stream of water prove it, and at once the stream of water flowed in the opposite direction. But they said: We adduce no evidence from a stream of water. Again he said to them: If the law agrees with my views, let the walls of the academy prove it, and the walls of the academy began to bend and were about to fall. R. Joshua rebuked them, saying: If scholars argue on a point of law, what business is it of yours? The walls did not fall out of respect for R. Joshua, but they did not become straight again out of respect for R. Eliezer.

Thereupon he said: If the law is in accordance with my views, let them prove it from heaven. A heavenly voice came forth, saying: What have you against R. Eliezer? The law is as he propounds it in all instances. R. Joshua then stood up and quoted: "It is not in the heavens" (Dt 30:12). What did he mean by quoting: "It is not in the heavens?" Said R. Jeremiah: That the Torah has already been given at Sinai, and we pay no attention to heavenly voices, for You have written at Sinai in the Torah: "Incline after the majority" (Ex 23:2).

R. Nathan met the prophet Elijah and he asked him: What did the Holy One, praised be He, do at that time? He replied: He laughed, and He said: My children have won over me, my chlordane have won over me!

[Talmud, *Baba Mezia* 59a–59b]

The Talmud on Levirate Marriage

A person should not abstain from carrying out the obligation to "be fruitful and multiply" (Gn 1:28) unless he already has two chlordane. The Beit Shammai ruled: This means two sons, and the Beit Hillel ruled: A son and a daughter, because it is written: "Male and female He created them" (Gn 5:2). The duty of procreation applies to a man, but not to a woman. R. Yohanan b. Beroka said: Concerning both it is written: "And God blessed them and said to them: Be fruitful and multiply" (Gn 1:28). Mishnah 6:6

This means that if he has children he may abstain from the duty of procreation but he may not abstain from the duty of living with a wife. This supports the view of R. Nahman who reported a ruling in the name of Samuel, that even though a person has many children, he may not remain without a wife, as it is written: "It is not good for a man to be alone" (Gn 2:18). Others held the view that if he had children, he may abstain from the

duty of procreation and he may also abstain from the duty of living with a wife. Shall we say that this contradicts what was reported by R. Nahman in the name of Samuel? No. If he has no children, he is to marry a woman capable of having a child, but if he already has children, he may marry a woman who is incapable of having children.

Elsewhere it was taught: R. Nathan said: According to the Beit Shammai, a person satisfies the obligation to "be fruitful and multiply" if he has a son and a daughter, and according to the Beit Hillel if he has a son or a daughter. Said Rava: what is the reason for the view of the Beit Hillel? It is written: "He created it not to be a waste, He formed it to be inhabited" (Is 45:18), and [by having a son or a daughter] he has already contributed to making it a place of habitation.

It was stated: If a person had children while he was an idolater, and was later converted [to Judaism], R. Yohanan said that he has already fulfilled the duty of procreation but Resh Lakish said that he has not fulfilled it, because when a person is converted he is like a born-again child.

The Mishnah does not agree with the view of R. Joshua, for it was taught that R. Joshua stated: if a person married in his youth he is also to marry in his old age; if he had children in his youth, he is also to have children in his old age, for it is written: "Sow your seed in the morning and do not withdraw your hand in the evening, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that, or whether both alike will be good" (Eccl 11:6).

Said R. Tanhum in the name of R. Hanilai: A person who is without a wife is without joy, without blessing, without good. Without joy—as it is written: "You shall rejoice, you and your household" (Dt 14:26); without blessing—as it is written: "That a blessing may rest on your house" (Ez 44:30) ["house" in such a context has generally been interpreted to mean one's wife]; without good—as it is written: "It is not good for a man to be alone" (Gn 2:18). In Palestine they said: He is without Torah, and without protection [from the ravages of life]. Without Torah—as it is written: "In truth, I have no one to help me [a wife], and sound wisdom [Torah] is driven from me" (Jb 6:13); without protection—as it is written: "A woman protects a man" (Jer 31:22). R. b. Ila said: He is without peace—as it is written: "And you shall know that your tent [when presided over by one's wife] is at peace, and you will visit your habitation and you will not sin" (Jb 5:24).

Said R. Joshua b. Lévi: A person who knows his wife to be a God-fearing woman and he does not have marital relations with her is a sinner, as it is written: "And you shall visit your habitation [a euphemism for having relations with one's wife] and you will not sin."

The Rabbis taught: When one loves his wife as himself, and honors her more than himself, and trains his sons and daughters in the right path and arranges for their marriage at a young age—concerning such a person does the verse say: "And you shall know that your tent is at peace."

Said R. Eleazar: A man without a wife is not a complete man, as it is written: "Male and female created He them, and he called their name *adam*, 'man'" (Gn 5:2).

Turn away your eyes from the charms of another man's wife, lest you be trapped in her net. Do not join in fellowship with her husband, to drink with him wine and strong drink, for through the appearance of a beautiful woman have many been destroyed, and a mighty host are all her slain.

[Talmud, *Yebamot* 61b–64a]

10.4 THE AGE OF COGENCY (ca. 640–1800)

As Islam and Christianity tightened their temporal and spiritual power over large segments of the European, North African, Near Eastern, and Far Eastern world, Judaism survived in small pockets keeping the faith in the midst of persecutions and legal restrictions. The tradition of the dual Torah sustained the communities and set the norms for daily life. This is not to say that there were no dissenters—there were. The **Karaites,** for example, rejected the rabbinic conception of the dual Torah. Anan ben David (ca. 800), the founder of the Karaites, denied there was any oral Torah given by God to Moses at Sinai. According to him, there is only the written Torah and it is that by which the Jews should live. The so-called oral Torah of the rabbis amounts to human opinion, not divine law.

Rabbinic Judaism declared Karaites heretics and banned marriage to them. But they flourished among Middle Eastern Jews and in the Crimean area of Russia well into the twentieth century. During the invasion of the USSR from 1941 to 1944, the Germans classified Karaites as Gentiles and did not send them to the death camps.

Another challenge rabbinic Judaism faced came in 1648 when Sabbatai Zvi, a Jew from Smyrna, declared himself the Messiah. Great excitement arose in worldwide Jewry. Throughout 1665 Nathan of Gaza, a follower of Sabbatai Zvi, spread the news of his identity as the Messiah. Nathan's letters re-

ceived an enthusiastic response throughout the Jewish world.

Sabbatai eventually traveled to Turkey to convert the sultan and the whole of Islam, but ended up converting to Islam. This shocked the Jewish world, dashed the hopes of many, and caused rabbinic Judaism to declare **Sabbateanism** a heresy and Sabbatai Zvi a "false Messiah," yet many persisted in believing in him as the Messiah promised by God.

Karaitism and Sabbateanism so threatened the authority of rabbinic Judaism that they had to be resisted. However, the rabbis accommodated other movements by incorporating them into the dual Torah tradition. Among these were both philosophical and mystical movements.

10.4.1 Principles of Faith

The best-known and most important Jewish philosopher during this classical period of rabbinic cogency is Moses ben Maimon (1135–1204), better known as Maimonides. He was born in Cordoba, Spain, and his importance is signaled by the saying "from Moses to Moses there is none like Moses."

Maimonides' fame rests on his many accomplishments as a physician, a rabbinic leader, an expert in Jewish law, and a philosopher. A book he published in 1190 titled *Guide for the Perplexed* is a philosophical classic. In it he harmonized traditional Jewish belief with the philosophical and scientific thinking of his day. His "Thirteen Principles of Faith," which follow, almost constitute a Jewish orthodox creed.

MOSES BEN MAIMON

The Thirteen Principles

READING QUESTIONS

1. What, according to these principles, are the main characteristics of the Creator?
2. What does Maimonides confess with respect to Moses and the Law (Torah)?
3. Why do you think so little is said about the Messiah?
4. Most of these "principles" are devoted to the Creator, and only a few deal with other matters. What does this tell you about Maimonides' understanding of Judaism?

1. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be his name, is the Author and Guide of everything that has been created, and that he alone has made, does make, and will make all things.

2. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be his name, is a Unity, and that there is no unity in any manner like unto his, and that he alone is our God, who was, and is, and will be.

3. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be his name, is not a body, and that he is free from all the accidents of matter, and that he has not any form whatsoever.

4. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be his name, is the first and the last.

5. I believe with perfect faith that to the Creator, blessed be his name, and to him alone it is right to pray, and that it is not right to pray to any being besides him.

6. I believe with perfect faith that all the words of the prophets are true.

7. I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, peace be unto him, was true, and that he was the chief of the prophets, both of those that preceded and of those that followed him.

8. I believe with perfect faith that the whole Law, now in our possession, is the same that was given to Moses our teacher, peace be unto him.

9. I believe with perfect faith that this Law will not be changed, and that there will never be any other law from the Creator, blessed be his name.

10. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be his name, knows every deed of the children of men, and all their thoughts, as it is said, It is he that fashioneth the hearts of them all, that giveth heed to all their deeds.

11. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, blessed be his name, rewards those that keep his commandments, and punishes those that transgress them.

12. I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah, and, though he tarry, I will wait daily for his coming.

13. I believe with perfect faith that there will be a resurrection of the dead at the time when it shall please

From *Authorized Daily Prayer Book*, translated by S. Singer, 9th American ed. (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1912), pp. 89–90.

the Creator, blessed be his name, and exalted be the remembrance of him for ever and ever.

10.4.2 Mystical Visions

There have been many different schools of Jewish mysticism, but since the twelfth century the **Kabbalah** has been the most dominant. The classical statements of early Kabbalah can be found in two thirteenth-century texts, the *Sefer ha-Bahir*, or *Book of Brightness*, and the *Sefer ha-Zohar*, or *Book of Splendor*. The ***Zohar*** became so influential that within a few centuries it became a sacred text. Moses de Leon, a Spanish Jew from Guadalajara, wrote it between 1280 and 1286. The central character in the book is Rabbi Shim'on, a second-century sage, who presents a verse-by-verse **midrash** (commentary) on several books of the *Tanakh*. Moses de Leon claimed that he discovered this ancient text and that Rabbi Shim'on had written it himself. For nearly six hundred years, Kabbalists believed Moses de Leon.

The key teaching of the *Zohar* centers on the ten emanations of God called the ***Sefirot.*** These ten divine attributes (Crown, Wisdom, Understanding, Love, Judgment, Beauty, Endurance, Majesty, Foundation, Presence) are the key to the structure of the created order and the key to the return of human beings to their divine source, the *Ein Sof*, or Infinite.

According to Genesis 1:27, God creates humans in his image. The *Sefirot* are the image of that image and hence are often (though not always) arranged visually to resemble a human body with the Crown (*Keter*) as the head and the other attributes arranged in left and right columns to form arms and legs. Beauty (*Tif'eret*) is in the center as a balancing power between God's Love and God's Judgment. Foundation (*Yesod*) is the phallus, and Presence (*Shekhinah*) is at the bottom. God's ***Shekhinah*** is the divine immanence that pervades and sustains all the universe. It is the *Keneset Yisra'el*, the mystical soul of the community of Israel.

The origin of evil lies deeply buried in this mystical body. If Judgment (the left arm) is not balanced by Love (the right arm), an imbalance can result. Both Judgment, which constitutes limitation, and Love, which constitutes grace and freedom, are necessary for the creation of the world. However, too much Judgment (limitation, restriction) and not enough Love (grace and freedom) lead to evil.

The human soul is the result of the union of God's Beauty (*Tif'eret*) and God's Presence (*Shekhinah*). This union gives birth to the human soul, and the mystical journey of the return of the soul to its source begins with the awareness of this mystical origin. Study, prayer, and meditation open the gate of the *Shekhinah*, and the mystic can begin the homeward journey through each of these *Sefirah* to God.

There is much more to this rich symbolism and mythology than I can convey here. These mystical insights fascinated the faithful Jew and the Gentile. The *Sefirot* were put to magical uses, and even fortune-telling *Tarot* cards embodied their symbols.

It is now time to read some of the *Zohar* for yourself and be ushered into a world of mystical wonder and splendor.

MOSES DE LEON

The Zohar

READING QUESTIONS

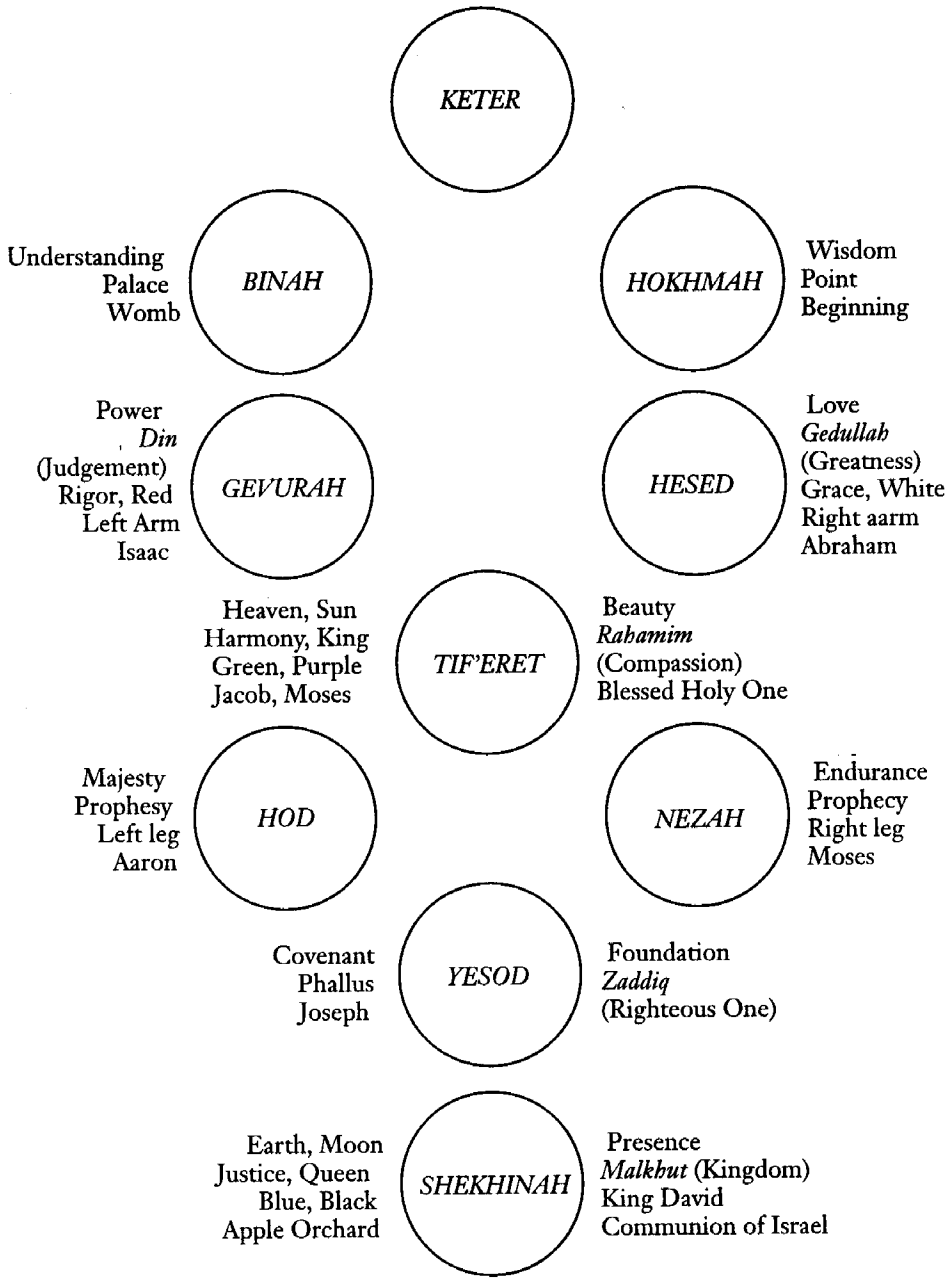
1. How should we look at the Torah?
2. What is the secret?
3. Who is Adam?

How to Look at Torah

Rabbi Shim'on said
"Woe to the human being who says
that Torah presents mere stories and ordinary words!
If so, we could compose a Torah right now with
ordinary words
and better than all of them!
To present matters of the world?
Even rulers of the world possess words more sublime.
If so, let us follow them and make a Torah out of
them!

From *Zohar*, translation and introduction by Daniel Chanan Matt. © 1983 by Daniel Chanan Matt. Reprinted by permission of Paulist Press, Inc. Pp. 43–45, 49–50, 55–56, 153–157.

THE TEN SEFIROT



From Daniel Chanan Matt, "Introduction," *Zohar: The Book of Enlightenment* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), p. 35. © 1983 Daniel Chanan Matt. Reprinted by permission.

Ah, but all the words of Torah are sublime words,
sublime secrets!

Come and see:
The world above and the world below are perfectly
balanced:
Israel below, the angels above.
Of the angels it is written:
'He makes His angels spirits'
(Psalms 104:4).
But when they descend, they put on the garment of
this world.
If they did not put on a garment befitting this world
they could not endure in this world
and the world could not endure them.

If this is so with the angels, how much more so with
Torah

who created them and all the worlds
and for whose sake they all exist!
In descending to this world,
if she did not put on the garments of this world
the world could not endure.

So this story of Torah is the garment of Torah.
Whoever thinks that the garment is the real Torah
and not something else—
may his spirit deflate!
He will have no portion in the world that is coming.

That is why David said:
'Open my eyes
so I can see wonders out of Your Torah!'
(Psalms 119:18),
what is under the garment of Torah!

Come and see:
There is a garment visible to all.
When those fools see someone in a good-looking garment
they look no further.
But the essence of the garment is the body;
the essence of the body is the soul!

So it is with Torah.
She has a body:
the commandments of Torah,
called 'the embodiment of Torah.'

This body is clothed in garments:
the stories of this world.
Fools of the world look only at that garment, the story of Torah;
they know nothing more.
They do not look at what is under that garment.
Those who know more do not look at the garment
but rather at the body under that garment.
The wise ones, servants of the King on high,
those who stood at Mt. Sinai,
look only at the soul, root of all, real Torah!
In the time to come
they are destined to look at the soul of the soul of Torah!

Come and see:
So it is above.
There is garment and body and soul and soul of soul.
The heavens and their host are the garment.
The Communion of Israel is the body
who receives the soul, the Beauty of Israel.
So She is the body of the soul.
The soul we have mentioned is the Beauty of Israel
who is real Torah.
The soul of the soul is the Holy Ancient One.
All is connected, this one to that one.

Woe to the wicked
who say that Torah is merely a story!
They look at this garment and no further.
Happy are the righteous
who look at Torah properly!

As wine must sit in a jar,
so Torah must sit in this garment.
So look only at what is under the garment!
So all those words and all those stories—
they are garments!"

The Creation of *Elohim*

In the Beginning

When the King conceived ordaining
He engraved engravings in the luster on high.
A blinding spark flashed
within the Concealed of the Concealed
from the mystery of the Infinite,
a cluster of vapor in formlessness,
set in a ring,
not white, not black, not red, not green,
no color at all.
When a band spanned, it yielded radiant colors.
Deep within the spark gushed a flow
imbuing colors below,
concealed within the concealed of the mystery of the Infinite.
The flow broke through and did not break through its aura.
It was not known at all
until, under the impact of breaking through,
one high and hidden point shone.
Beyond that point, nothing is known.
So it is called Beginning,
the first command of all.
"The enlightened will shine like the *zohar* of the sky,
and those who make the masses righteous
will shine like the stars forever and ever"
(Daniel 12:3).

Zohar, Concealed of the Concealed, struck its aura.
The aura touched and did not touch this point.
Then this Beginning emanated
and made itself a palace for its glory and its praise.
There it sowed the seed of holiness . . .

Male and Female

This is the book of the generations of Adam.
On the day that God created Adam,
in the likeness of God He created him;
male and female He created them.
He blessed them and called their name Adam
on the day they were created.

(Genesis 5:1–2)

Rabbi Shim'on said
"High mysteries are revealed in these two verses.
'Male and female He created them'
to make known the Glory on high,
the mystery of faith.
Out of this mystery, Adam was created.

Come and see:
With the mystery by which heaven and earth were created
Adam was created.
Of them it is written:
'These are the generations of heaven and earth'
(Genesis 2:4).
Of Adam it is written:
'This is the book of the generations of Adam.'
Of them it is written:
'when they were created.'
Of Adam it is written:
'on the day they were created.'

'Male and female He created them.'
From here we learn:
Any image that does not embrace male and female
is not a high and true image.
We have established this in the mystery of our Mishnah.

Come and see:
The Blessed Holy One does not place His abode
in any place where male and female are not found together.
Blessings are found only in a place where male and female are found,
as it is written:
'He blessed them and called their name Adam
on the day they were created.'
It is not written:
'He blessed him and called his name Adam.'
A human being is only called Adam
when male and female are as one."