

בראשית א:ה,ה,י
ויקרא אלהים | לאור יום ולהשך קרא לילה...
ויקרא אלהים | לקוץ שמים...

ויקרא אלהים | ליבשה ארץ ולמקנה המים קרא נמים...
Genesis 1:5,8,10
God called the light: Day, and the darkness he called: Night...

God called the dome: The Heavens!...
God called the dry land: Earth, and the gathering of the waters he called: Seas...

Only five entities receive names from God in creation: Day. Night. Heaven. Earth. Seas. We might include a sixth - the human being, but that is reported later, in chapter 5:2 ויקרא את-שם אדם ביום הברואם - male and female he created them and gave blessing to them and called their name: Humankind on the day of their being created. What is the significance of naming? The naming of something gives it reality. It is one thing for God to bring these things into existence. It is another for God to call them something. It is as if the act of naming activates them. They become Day, Night, etc. because they are named. Without their names, they don't exist. Creation is one form of power, naming, another. God brings them into existence but until they are named, their existence is incomplete. Without their names they have no reality. What does it mean that these five things (plus the human) are the only things in the universe that are named by God? Could it be that the Torah is differentiating the five entities from the rest of creation? Arguably, Day, Night, Heaven, Earth and Seas are qualitatively different from everything else. In naming them, God has distinguished them perhaps because, while they are not static, they never decay. They evolve, but they are permanent and eternal like God. In Genesis 1, naming stops on the third day after the naming of the Seas. This raises the question: how did everything else get their names? Grass, trees, fruit, the great light, the small light, etc. The Torah doesn't say. It's interesting that God will bring all the animals to Adam to see what he will name them (2:19). ויצר ה' אלהים מן-האדמה כל-חית השדה ואת כל-עוף השמים ויבא אליהם לראות מה-יקרא-לו וכל אשר יקרא-לו האדם גפש חיה הוא שמו: So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wildlife of the field and all the birds of the

heavens and brought [each] to the human, to see what he would call it; and whatever the human called it as a living being, that became its name. God gets particular delight in witnessing Adam behave, as it were, in a godlike manner. Naming, formerly God's exclusive power, is now solely the power of the human creation.

בראשית ב:י-יד
ונחַר יצא מעדן להשקות את-הגן ומשם יפרד ותהי לארבעה ראשים: שם האחד פישון הוא הסובב את כלי-ארץ החוילה אשר-שם הזהב: ותהי הארץ ההוא טוב שם הבדלח ואבן השהם: ושם-הנהר השני גיחון הוא הסובב את כלי-ארץ פוש: ושם הנהר השלישי תדקל הוא ההלך קדמת אשור ונהר הרביעי הוא פרַת:

Genesis 2:10-14
Now a river goes out from Eden, to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four stream-heads. The name of the first one is Pishon/Spreader—that is the one that goes around all the land of Havila, where gold is; the gold of that land is good, there too are bdellium and the precious-stone carnelian. The name of the second river is Gihon/Gusher—that is the one that goes around all the land of Cush. The name of the third river is Hiddekel/Tigris—that is the one that goes to the east of Assyria. And the fourth river—that is Perat/Euphrates. This river, what is it? What does it mean? Why does it branch out into four rivers? Why is the Pishon river so richly described, the Gihon, less so, the Hiddekel even less, and the Perat, not at all? Examine how they are described: The Pishon: geography with another geographical marker, with a description of its mineral resources, namely the quality of its gold, bdellium and lapis lazuli; the Gihon, a specific geography; the Hiddekel a vague geography; the Perat? Nothing. Just a name. A homily: This is the only occurrence of Pishon in the Bible. Gihon figures in Kings (1 1:33, 38, 45 and in 2 Chron.) and is identified as a spring in Jerusalem. Hiddekel occurs in Daniel (10:4). And Perat is probably the most cited, because it is one of the classic boundaries of the Land, and it is also known as the Great River. The river of gold, the Pishon, has no currency in the Bible. But the river that is only defined by its name, the Perat/Euphrates becomes the most important. Go figure.

בראשית ג:טז
 אֶל־הָאִשָּׁה אָמַר
 הֲרַבָּה אֲרַבָּה עֲצֻבוֹנָךְ וְהִרְגָה
 בְּעָצֵב תֵּלְדִי בָנִים
 וְאֶל־אִישׁךָ תִּשְׁוֹקֶתְךָ
 וְהוּא יִמְשֵׁל־בְּךָ:

Genesis 3:16

To the woman he said:

I will multiply, multiply your pain [from] your pregnancy; with pains shall you bear children. Toward your husband will be your lust, yet he will rule over you.

The other characters in the story have their punishments specified **as a consequence** of their actions. Thus, the snake gets a punishment, (its curse and its slithering condition) **כִּי עָשִׂיתָ זֹאת - because you did this**. (3:14) What did the snake do? He tempted Eve. Adam gets a punishment, (the ground is cursed before him and in order to produce food, he will have to work, 3:17-19) **כִּי - because you listened to your wife and you ate from the tree**.

But God doesn't give a reason here for increasing the woman's pain in childbirth and subordinating her to her husband. Why not? Maybe she simply couldn't resist, or maybe she is not liable. Or maybe, we are maintaining her dignity by overlooking the obvious: she ate it because she was influenced by the snake. Or maybe it really wasn't her fault to begin with. Maybe because the snake convinced her, she acted under false counsel and therefore, should not be liable. **הַנְּחָשׁ - The snake enticed me, and so I ate**. The great Italian commentator Samuel David Luzzato (1800-1865) says it nicely:

הַשִּׁיאָנִי: ל' השאה ענינו להביא אחרים לעשות דבר
 מה על ידי הרחקת היראה שהיתה מונעתם מעשותו, וכן
 כאן הנחש אמר לה לא מות תמותון
The meaning of this word, hasha'a, is to convince another person to do a particular thing on the basis of dampening the natural fear that would have prevented him from doing it in the first place. And here the snake said to her, "you won't die." In other words, when she says, ***The snake enticed me*** she is claiming that she's not at fault. (We never learn specifically that Adam "hears" what Eve said, she simply gave the fruit to him and he ate. Shouldn't he be exempt too? Mind you, it didn't take much to convince him!) The bottom line is that, unlike the punishments for the snake and Adam, God does not link the

woman's punishment to a specific reason. There is no **because you did such and such כִּי עָשִׂיתָ** for her, or no **because you listened to so and so כִּי - שָׁמַעְתָּ**. God says to her, *I will make your pain great, not because of anything you did. Rather, I will make your pain great because, as you will discover, your pain will become a fact of your life and you should know about that now. It's a necessity of human childbearing. It is a built in feature of your life. It is not a consequence of this act. In your present state, having not given birth to any children yet, I am disclosing this to you now as you acquire knowledge (which I wanted you to know anyway). Here is the knowledge you have acquired: understand that bringing children into the world will incur physical pain. Raising children will incur psychological costs. The dynamic in your relationship with Adam will include both your vulnerability and desire. These are facets of your life that are part of being a human, and I am disclosing them to you now.*

בראשית ד:יד
 הִן גִּרְשֶׁת אֶתִּי הַיּוֹם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה
 וּמִפְּנֵי אִסְתָּר
 וְהִיִּתִי גַע וְנָל בְּאָרְצִי
 וְהָיָה כָּל־מִצְאָי יִהְרָגֵנִי:

Genesis 4:14

Here, you drive me away today from the face of the ground, and from your face I must conceal myself, I must be wavering and wandering on earth— now it will be: whoever comes upon me will kill me! It is strange that the first person to speak in poetry is Cain. The first killer is the first poet, the first person capable of harnessing the rhythm and cadence of language. We have reason to be skeptical about talent. As we see all too often, especially in popular culture, great talent is no guarantee for moral grandeur. Why must Cain forever conceal himself from God's face? Because he will be forever guilty for the death of his brother. He will never be worthy of God's compassion or grace. Luzzatto: ***אהיה נסתר מנגד I will be hidden from your eyes. It will be as if you do not see me.*** To be invisible to God is unbearable. We have to appreciate the audacity of what Cain says to God: ***I will be forever vulnerable. Abel too was vulnerable. He did not benefit from your divine protection. If he had had your protection he would still be alive today. I am guilty. But do you not protect the innocent?*** **Shabbat Shalom!**

