

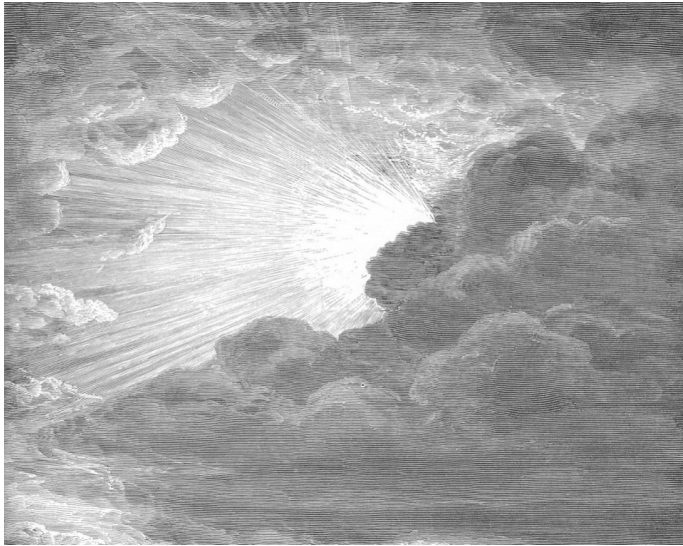
Yesh Maayin

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Beor Panecha

part of the K'sod Siach series

The Berditchever Rebbe explores and explains the multitude of meanings hidden behind the first word of the Torah, *Bereishis*.



Gustave Doré, *The Creation of Light* (1866)

He cites the Zohar HaKadosh in much of this inquiry, which includes the creation of something from nothing — *ex nihilo*, *yesh maAyin*. *Ayin* (אֵין) as in *Ain Sof* (אֵין סוֹף), the term translated as “without end,” “endless,” or the Infinite. This is a term often employed when referring to Hashem.

He expounds on the word *Bereishis* by explaining that it can be broken down to its essence as *bara yesh* — Hashem having created the very notion of “ex-IS-tence,” that is, *yesh*. *Yesh* translates to “there is.” Indeed, “is” is phonetically derived from, and sounds like, *yesh*. “Is” defines the quality of existence, something that was a non-entity prior to Creation. Thus, existence itself did not exist — something that may seem incomprehensible to those who exist.

When the Berditchever Rebbe describes Creation as Hashem having *bara yesh*, *yesh maAyin* — *ex nihilo* — perhaps there is yet another dimension and purpose to this insight.

Chazal tell us that the purpose and ultimate realization of Creation was to create man. It is man’s purpose to

experience the pleasures, challenges and reality of this physical world within a divine context. Indeed, the world was created for man. That is why we celebrate Rosh Hashanah — *not* on the day the world was created (the 25th day of Elul), but rather on the first day of Tishrei, when man — Adam — was created, on the sixth day of Creation.

THE HEBREW WORD FOR “MAN”

אִישׁ

The letter *aleph* is formed with three components: a *yud* above and a *yud* below the center component, the letter *vav*. Numerically, these letters combined yield a total of twenty-six, which represents the numerical value of the Tetragrammaton. The four-letter holy Name of Hashem represents the measure of mercy, and is a most holy and intimate Name. It also represents how Hashem transcends time itself — time having been created for man, whose time is finite, unlike our Creator, for whom time is simply a construct for His creation.

Indeed, the first mention of אִישׁ — *ish* — in the Torah is found in Bereishis 4:1. Chava states: “*Vatomer, kanisi ish es Hashem*” — “I have acquired a man with Hashem.” Rashi explains that Hashem was a partner in the creation of their first offspring, Kayin.

Noteworthy in this context is how the introduction of *ish* is explicitly connected to Hashem, and is attributed to His involvement in man’s very creation, with man being the very purpose of creation itself. This passage refers to the first man to be conceived and born. Thus, it can be inferred that the intimacy and proximity of the *Ain Sof* to man did not stop with Adam, who was created from the earth itself and was not “born.” The passage explicitly states man’s close association with Hashem.



The creation of man, and the name itself — *ish* — possesses the essence of creation itself. The *yesh* (יֵשׁ) of *ish*

(אִישׁ) is coupled with, and attached to, the *aleph* which precedes it. Hashem preceded man's existence, shown as the letter *aleph* which precedes the *yesh* of the word *ish*.

This suggests that the אִישׁ — man — is by definition the purpose of Creation: *yesh*, following the *aleph*. As *bara yesh* means Hashem having created the very notion of “ex-IS-tence,” the symbol of Hashem, the *aleph*, immediately precedes it, creating the very name of “man.”

“Naming” in the Torah has profound significance. It was Adam's task to name the animals. “Hashem” is translated as “the Name,” which is ineffable and most holy. Thus, names are meant to represent their quality and essence.

It also suggests that the act of Creation, along with the purpose of the creation of man, is man's intimate connection and closeness to Hashem, as the naming of man as *ish* indicates. Thus, the purpose and essence of Creation itself is intimately connected to our own existence, both in the literal and existential sense.



Bereishis bara is revealed as containing the same numerical value (*gematria*) as the phrase:

DEVARIM 6:4

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד

Hear, O Israel: Hashem is our God, Hashem is One.

Chazal (the Chida) describe how the numerical value of this *pasuk* contains the numerical equivalence — with two *kollelim*, counting each of the two words as a unit — of:

BEREISHIS 1:1

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא

As the prayer of *Shema* ideally represents the core belief of every Jew, it can be asserted that its equivalence to the first two words of the Torah, announcing the creation of the world, expresses the very purpose of creation itself: Hashem is One, His Creation is One, and everything that exists — *yesh* — is part of that Oneness.

Indeed, the Kli Yakar notes on Devarim 6:4 that the first letters of *Shema Yisrael* — שׁי — actually spell out the

word *yesh*. This aligns with the thesis that all of existence, creation itself, indeed all that exists — *yesh*, “is” — is for the purpose of recognizing that Hashem is One. This message is, of course, delivered via Hashem's Chosen, Israel. Ultimately, the hope is that one day all the nations of the world will recognize His Oneness.

The Kli Yakar further expounds on the deeper meaning behind this holy prayer. He describes how the mitzvah of *tefillin*, contained within the first paragraph of *Shema*, expresses Oneness with Hashem. He cites Tosafos in Chagigah 3b: “HaKadosh Baruch Hu and Israel serve as witnesses for each other,” citing Yeshayahu:

YESHAYAHU 43:10

אַתֶּם עֲדֵי נְאֻם ה'

You are My witnesses — declares Hashem.

The Kli Yakar continues: “And this is the matter associated with *tefillin*: just as we place them on our heart and on our hand to unite HaKadosh Baruch Hu, so does Hashem seal us in His heart and on His hand,” citing Shir HaShirim:

SHIR HASHIRIM 8:6

שְׁיִמְנֵי כַּחוֹתָם עַל לִבִּי כַּחוֹתָם עַל זְרוּעִי

Let me be a seal upon your heart, like the seal upon your arm.

“This serves to make us, Israel, one nation in the Land — that both Israel and Hashem serve as witnesses to each other in the matter of Oneness,” as Israel, the Torah and Hashem are One, notes the Berditchever.

The Kli Yakar continues: “Within the *tefillin* is the Name *Shin Dalet Yud* — a Name of Hashem. The *shin* appears on the head *tefillin*, and the *yud* appears on the hand.” The first letters of the two words of the *Shema* — שׁי — spell out the word *yesh*. This *yesh* represents the reward that “is”: Olam Haba, the World to Come. Thus, contained within the *yesh* of the first letters of *Shema Yisrael*, together with the placement of the two *tefillin*, which also carry these same letters, the very existence and reality of Olam Haba is expressed.

Generally, when we think of Creation, we think of the heavens and the earth — and of course, man. The Kli Yakar tells us that with the utterance of the *Shema*, and

by wearing *tefillin*, we express the existence of the next world, something that did not exist before Creation.



As discussed above, the concept of Hashem creating the universe *ex nihilo* — *yesh maAyin* — may now be seen in a new light.

Yesh maAyin is classically interpreted as the creation of something from nothing: *ex nihilo*, something out of nothingness. But an alternate perspective on the Hebrew word *Ayin* reflects a deeper understanding of creation itself. *Ayin* can be read in Hebrew as *Ain*, as in *Ain Sof*. *Ain Sof*, as noted above, translates to “without end,” the Infinite — a Kabbalistic term for Hashem. Expounding on this alternate reading of *Ain* as in *Ain Sof* reveals a very important concept: *yesh maAyin* can now be understood as *yesh maAin Sof*. This translates to “that which exists derives from the Infinite” — from Hashem.

Thus, anything and everything which exists is attributable to, and sourced from, Hashem. This notion is exactly parallel to the phrase which Jews are required to recite twice daily, the *Shema Yisrael*.

The *Shema Yisrael* represents the Jew’s declaration that Hashem is One. The last two words of this phrase

equate Hashem with One. This “equation” states that the Infinite is equal to One! That means that everything which exists is One. This perfectly aligns with the assertion above that all which exists — *yesh maAin Sof* — derives from Hashem.

Thus, in the declaration of *Shema Yisrael*, we remind ourselves that Hashem is One, and that everything which exists — *yesh* — is derived from Hashem: *yesh maAin Sof*.

The very purpose of Creation is for us, and for the entirety of creation, to declare that Hashem is One and His Name is One. Everything and anything which exists is derived not simply from nothingness, *ex nihilo*. Its existence is totally attributable to its derivation from the Infinite: *bara yesh* — *yesh maAin Sof*.

TEHILLIM 121:1

מֵאַיִן יָבֵא עֶזְרִי

From where will my help come?

Me’Ayin yavo ezri is not a question. It is a declaration: my salvation comes from Hashem. The *Ayin* is the *Ain Sof* — Hashem.

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