

PAR-SHA 5

EXPOSITION [1:20-23]

20. E-LO-HIM SAID: (LET THE) WATERS TURN OUT LIVELY VOLITIONAL MOVERS
AND FLIERS AVIATING NEAR THE GROUND (AND ON) THE FACE OF THE RANGE (OF) THE HEAVENS.

יִשְׂרָצוּ YISH-R'TZOO (TURN OUT): A ש ["Shin"] prefix to the root "Reish-Vav-Tzadiq" (RUN) forms שָׂרָץ SHEH- RETZ ["runner"]. The waters were to produce swift animals. A רָמַשׁ REH-MESS (root "Reish-Mem-Samech", TREAD/TRAMPLE - cf. LEVITICUS 11:44; ISAIAH 63:3; HOSEA 2:20) crawls and the הִלְךְ HOH-LEKH (LEVITICUS 11:20) walks. "Swarm/teem/bring forth abundantly" presume myriads of small wrigglers burgeoning spontaneously. Scripture suggests large numbers with הַרְבֵּה HAR-BEI (MUCH - GENESIS 16:10), רַבִּים RA-BEEM (MANY - EXODUS 5:5), רַב וְצִדּוֹם RABH V'A-TZOOM (ENLARGED - JOEL 2:2) or הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד HAR-BEI M'OHD (NUMEROUS - JOSHUA 22:8); verse 23 implies small numbers, else why the blessing?. His embedded replicative process - and blessing - enlarged populations and stimulated speciation. Those who have אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׂרָץ / אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׂרָץ KOL NEH-PHESH CHA-YAH A-SHER YISH-ROHTZ (EZEKIEL 47:9) as "All living things that move/all swarming creatures" see YISH-ROHTZ as a prepositional adjective or adverb. It is a verb; the prophet encouraged a "leap" into life-giving waters. The spurious association of YISH-R'TZOO with a multitude may be traced to the mandate שְׂרָצוּ בָאָרֶץ SHI- R'TZOO BA-A-RETZ (GENESIS 9:7), translated as "proliferate on the earth". But the verb is separate from the preceding phrase, פְּרוּ וּרְבֹה P'ROO U-R'BHOO, "Be fruitful and increase numbers" and coupled with a second U-R'BHOO. The first phrase is a charge to increase population, the second to enlarge the area of habitation. Similarly, EXODUS 1:7 is assumed to reference the swelling numbers of the children of Israel. That would be PA-ROO V'RA-BHOO V'O-TZ'MOO V'SHO-R'TZOO (WERE FRUITFUL, INCREASED NUMBERS, FILLED THEIR LAND AND BURST [through boundaries]). Instead, וַיִּשְׂרָצוּ VA-YISH-R'TZOO is between פָּרוּ PA-ROO and וַיִּרְבּוּ VA-YIR-BOO, with וַיִּשְׂרָצוּ VA-YA-A-TZ'MOO at the end and only PA-ROO in the completed past. The first verb refers to population size; the others to the Israelites' diffusion and rise to prominence.

שָׂרָץ SHEH-RETZ NEH-PHESH CHA-YAH (LIVELY VOLITIONAL MOVERS): Singular nouns in sequence denote classes (cf. GENESIS 32:5, DEUTERONOMY 8:8; EZEKIEL 26:10). A SHEH-RETZ moves of its own volition. The root "Peh-Vav-Shin" ("spread/scatter" - cf. NAHUM 3:18; HABAKKUK 1:8, MALACHI 4:2 [3:20 in the Hebrew]) with added "Nun" yields the more exuberant NEH-PHESH ([A] LIFE) - not related to "breath" or "soul"; Indo-European associations of breath with soul survive in the Hindi "Mahatma", a combination of "Maha" (GREAT) and "Atma" (SOUL), the latter a cognate of "breath" still present in some Western languages [e. g. the German "atmen" - "breathe"]. When Jeremiah [15:9] bemoans a woman that נִפְתְּחָה נֶפֶשָּׁהּ NO-PH'CHA NAPH-SHAH, most translate this "her soul exhaled" and presume she died but then the rest of that verse makes no sense. Jeremiah meant depression, a reading which is consistent with NEH-PHESH as "life". Scripture views blood as the life carrier, the NEH-PHESH; DEUTERONOMY 12:22, 23 is unequivocal and motivates the sprinkled blood on the altar, the indispensable sacrifice validation. חַיָּה CHA-YAH is usually translated "life/living". This is redundant; NEH-PHESH by itself is the class of living organisms (cf. GENESIS 12:5 and 40:27, where the singular NEH-PHESH is a group). CHA-YAH has extended meanings construed from context. יִשְׂחָא ISH CHAI (SAMUEL II 23:20) is a "vigorous man". When Isaac's servants dug a well of מַיִם חַיִּים MA-YIM CHA-YIM (GENESIS 26:19), its waters were fresh and clear, while in NUMBERS 19:17, the same phrase means unadulterated water. Our text portrays lively marine creatures.

וְעוֹף יָעוֹפֵף V'OOPH Y'OH-PHEIPH (AND FLIERS FLY): OOPH is any flying creature. The second word should be יָעוֹפֵף YA-OOPH (SHALL FLY - cf. ISAIAH 6:6; PSALMS 91:5; JOB 20:8). Y'OH-PHEIPH, with doubled "Peh", denotes migration or specific destinations (cf. ISAIAH 6:2, HOSEA 9:11 and note the "flying" sword of EZEKIEL 32:10). "Fliers" were to spread beyond the seas and coasts of their native regions, as spelled out next.

עַל-הָאָרֶץ AL HA-A-RETZ (NEAR THE GROUND): Not on top of it but over it [Israel's national airline is אֶל-עַל EL AL {"To Above" - HOSEA 11:7}], though at low altitudes. Of short flight range, insects, small birds, bats and gliding mammals are to proliferate over extended areas.

עַל-פְּנֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם AL P'NEI R'QEE-YA HA-SHA-MA-YIM (ACROSS THE HEAVENS): AL P'NEI is an orientation, not a location (see v. 2). Flying creatures other than those in the previous passage ranged over the globe. {Conspicuously absent is וַיִּהְיֶה-כֵּן VA-Y'HEE KHEIN (AND IT BECAME THUS - see v. 7). Conditions did not remain static; not all species made it into succeeding epochs, while others evolved later.}

21. E-LO-HIM CREATED THE WHALES AND ALL VOLITIONAL LIFE (FORMS) THAT CRAWL(S)
WHICH THE WATERS TURNED OUT BY THEIR KINDS AND EVERY BIRD (OF) WING TO ITS KIND(S)
E-LO-HIM SAW THEM WHEN (THEY) BECAME GOOD.

הַתַּיִם הַגְּדֹלִים ... וַיִּבְרָא VA-YIBH-RA... HA-TA-NEE-NIM HA-G'DOH-LIM (AND [HE] CREATED... THE WHALES): VA-YIBH-RA is used again only for man's creation (v. 27; בָּרָא BA-RA [CREATED - v. 1] is a general introduction). Struggling to explain its presence here, commentators suggest it points to the uniqueness of the large TA-NEE-NIM, ignoring the fact that it modifies the entire verse. Nor is there a consensus as to what a TA-NEEN is. *When Aaron's rod turned into one (EXODUS 7:9-10), it is translated "serpent" but it was Moses' staff (EXODUS 4:3) that became a נָחָשׁ NA-CHASH, "snake/serpent", so TA-NEEN must be another animal. Similarly, Isaiah turns from the "Leviathan serpents" (ISAIAH 27:1) to the TA-NEEN "in the sea", implying it is not a serpent and not all are aquatic, for he does not call it תַּיִם TA-NEEN HA-YAM (THE SEA TA-NEEN) but adds אֲשֶׁר A-SHER ["which"] - it is a marine variant of a class; Ezekiel does the same when he labels Egypt's ruler the "TA-NEEM in the river" (EZEKIEL 29:3), typically rendered "dragon". These are probably crocodiles, omnipresent in the Nile region. [It is indisputable that TA-NEEN in DEUTERONOMY 32:33, PSALMS 91:13 and LAMENTATIONS 4:3 is a land animal.]* The only species singled out besides man, if because of its size, then there were others of its kind that were small, else it would have its own name - and there were at least two variants. Yet, the text omits לְמִינֵוֹ L'MEE-NOH (TO ITS KIND), used with the other creatures in the verse. This means the smaller versions were included in the group of the next phrase, those the waters "turned out" – and that the "large TA-NEE-NIM" were whales [not "great whales" {King James Bible}]. What was it about them that the text singled them out? Nothing! – And that is the point. They were produced by the same conditions and forces as the others but listed first to tell us there was no order to speciation. Standard size TA-NEE-NIM - dolphins and reptiles - were all part of the group in this verse, the "large" ones not necessarily related to them taxonomically. The mechanism He implanted yielded a diversity transcending time and boundaries.

לְמִינֵהֶם L'MEE-NEI-HEM (TO THEIR KINDS): If these were fully formed by type when they were turned out, the text would be ... כֹּל מִינֵי KOL MEE-NEI... (ALL KINDS... - cf. GENESIS 9:2; NUMBERS 11:22; EZEKIEL 38:20). This qualifier consigns the process to the creatures themselves (see v. 1). *By detaching the word from הָרֹמֵשֶׁת HA-ROH-MEH-SETH (THAT CRAWLS), which it should follow, the combined dative and ablative forms indicate creature development after the "turning out".*

לְמִינֵהוּ L'MEE-NEI-HOO (TO ITS KINDS): Unlike the "double" plural of the previous phrase, this is a "singular" plural. *Scripture views all air-borne travelers as one type, as it does marine life; only land creatures are categorized.*

כִּי־טוֹב ... וַיִּרְא VA-YAHR... KEE TOHBH ([HE] SAW... WHEN [THEY BECAME] GOOD): Marine and avian life spread over regions populated by various types of vegetation and forest progressed to a point He deemed satisfactory.

22. E-LO-HIM BLESSED THEM SAYING: BE FRUITFUL, INCREASE NUMBERS AND FILL THE WATERS IN THE SEAS
AND THE BIRDS (SHALL) MULTIPLY (THEIR NUMBERS) ON THE LAND (EARTH).

וַיִּבְרָךְ VA-Y'BHA-REKH (AND HE BLESSED): בָּרַךְ B'RA-KHA (root "Beth-Resh-Kaph") is cognate to בְּרִיחַ B'REI-KHAH (POOL), typically an elevated cistern (cf. KINGS II 18:17, ISAIAH 36:2, NEHEMIAH 2:14). Blessings are reservoirs recipients can draw on to overcome obstacles or limitations – even to flourish; *they are not innate in individuals or objects. A divine B'RA-KHA can ensure success provided the recipient's efforts are directed properly, like a B'REI-KHAH's waters following paths nature dictates. After He "saw" that the panorama of marine and avian life "became good", He conferred a benediction of great specificity. VA-Y'HEE KHEIN (AND IT BECAME THUS – v. 7) is again omitted; this sphere's development never ceased. The period's objectives were met but its full flowering had only begun, obstructions surmounted with the blessing enunciated in the ensuing passage.*

פְּרוּ P'ROO (BE FRUITFUL): Fruit is a seed receptacle. Organisms are fruitful when they reproduce, not when they produce edible pods. E-LO-HIM's blessing empowered these organisms to procreate in a manner surpassing the replicative potency of flora.

וַיִּרְבּוּ U-R'BHOO (AND INCREASE NUMBERS): Animals were to copy themselves, impelled by a drive today accepted as innate. There is no obvious reason why proteins, nucleotides and organelles in a cell or multicellular organism should be seized with a compulsion to make another self. *Trees are far more efficient; many occasionally export seeds but all continually absorb nutrients and can grow for centuries.* This “ghost in the machine”, missed by theologians and biblical apologists, is a mighty argument for Scripture’s divine origin. This robust procreative force was postulated over three thousand years ago by a tiny group - and defied all the intellectual currents of the powers of empire and commerce with a vision of how life unfolded unlike any lore, mythology or creation saga. Is there a stronger argument that the biblical narrative’s provenance had to be external to the collective human intellect?

23. IT BECAME A MIXTURE AND IT BECAME AN EMERGENCE – A FIFTH DAY

וַיִּהְיֶה... יוֹמַם VA-Y'HEE... YOHM CHA-MEE-SHEE (AND THERE WAS... A FIFTH DAY): The animals turned out by the waters and in the air multiplied, diversified and filled oceans, seas and avian reaches in layer five.

DECOMPRESSED RECAPITULATION

E-LO-HIM directed the waters to turn out self-driven, mobile creatures, low-flying ones – small birds, insects, gliders and bats – and high-fliers capable of spreading over land masses. The waters produced whales and other marine life that swim and crawl in aquatic regions and winged creatures that fly over and cover vast land areas, all forming a biosphere He deemed of satisfactory functional utility. His blessing instilled in them a drive to reproduce, enlarge their numbers and diversify, so that they would fill the pathways of the seas and oceans while the avian creatures spread over the earth.

Scripture does not associate breathing with life, a vital force or a soul. Nor is there stasis; that mature, completed forms sprang up, so to perpetually remain, does not reflect the text.