



Cosmos and Creation

Jewish Text: Gen 1:1-10

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, **2** the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. **4** And 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, the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." **7** So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. **8** God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

1 בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:
2 וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תֵהוֹ וּבְהוֹ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ
אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם:
3 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי־אוֹר:
4 וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאוֹר כִּי־טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר
וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ:
5 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וּלְחֹשֶׁךְ קִרְא לַיְלָה וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב
וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד: פ
6 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהִי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין
מַיִם לְמַיִם:
7 וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַרְקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת
לְרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לְרָקִיעַ וַיְהִי־כֵן:
8 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְרָקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם
שֵׁנִי: פ
9 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יִקּוּוּ הַמַּיִם מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם אֶל־מְקוֹם
אֶחָד וַתֵּרָא הַיַּבְשָׁה וַיְהִי־כֵן:
10 וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לַיַּבְשָׁה אָרֶץ וּלַמְקוּוֹה הַמַּיִם קָרָא יַמִּים
וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב:

Notes: These verses form the start of the Jewish Bible, (which is also the Old Testament, the first part of the Christian Bible). The whole chapter is a stylized and repetitive account of creation in a series of stages. Verses 1-10 depict God's formation of the earth as three separations – between night and day, between water and water, and between sea and dry land. The rest of the chapter shows how the realms of sky, sea and earth are filled by God with living things.



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Christian text

Ps 19: 1-6

To the leader. A Psalm of David.

¹ The heavens are telling the glory of God;

and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

² Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

³ There is no speech, nor are there words;

their voice is not heard;

⁴ yet their voice goes out through all the earth,

and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,

⁵ which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy,

and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

⁶ Its rising is from the end of the heavens,

and its circuit to the end of them;

and nothing is hidden from its heat.

1 Οἱ οὐρανοὶ διηγοῦνται δόξαν θεοῦ,

ποίησιν δὲ χειρῶν αὐτοῦ ἀναγγέλλει τὸ στερέωμα·

2 ἡμέρα τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐρεύγεται ῥῆμα, καὶ νύξ νυκτὶ ἀναγγέλλει γνῶσιν.

3 οὐκ εἰσὶν λαλιαὶ οὐδὲ λόγοι, ὧν οὐχὶ ἀκούονται αἱ φωναὶ αὐτῶν·

4 εἰς πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν ἐξῆλθεν ὁ φθόγγος αὐτῶν

καὶ εἰς τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης τὰ ῥήματα αὐτῶν. ἐν τῷ ἡλίῳ ἔθετο τὸ σκῆνωμα αὐτοῦ·

5 καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς νυμφίος ἐκπορευόμενος ἐκ παστοῦ αὐτοῦ, ἀγαλλιάσεται ὡς γίγας δραμεῖν ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ.

6 ἀπ' ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἡ ἔξοδος αὐτοῦ,

καὶ τὸ κατάντημα αὐτοῦ ἕως ἄκρου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὃς ἀποκρυβήσεται τὴν θερμὴν αὐτοῦ.

English translation: NRSV

This hymn of praise from the book of Psalms (used by both Jews and Christians in their worship) describes the way in which the physical cosmos relates to God. The second part of the psalm describes the importance of the law of God for the regulation of human life and morality.



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Muslim text:

[Verses] Made Distinct

41: 9-12

9 Say, 'How can you disregard the One who created the earth in two Days? How can you set up other gods as His equals? He is the Lord of all the worlds!'
10 He placed solid mountains on it, blessed it, measured out its varied provisions for all who seek them — all in four Days.
11 Then He turned to the sky, which was smoke — He said to it and the earth, 'Come into being, willingly or not,' and they said, 'We come willingly' —
12 and in two Days He formed seven heavens, and assigned an order to each. We have made the nearest one beautifully illuminated and secure. Such is the design of the Almighty, the All Knowing.

﴿قُلْ أَبْنَكُمْ لَنْتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ
الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أَنْدَادًا
ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٩) وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا
رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ
فِيهَا أَقْوَامَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً
لِلسَّابِلِينَ (١٠) ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ
وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ أَنْتِنَا
طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا قَالَتَا أَنْتِنَا طَائِعِينَ
(١١) فَفَضَّلَهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ فِي
يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا
وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحٍ وَحِفْظًا
ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ (١٢)﴾

English translation: M.A.S. Abdel Haleem

Notes: This passage is taken from chapter 41 of the Quran titled Fussilat. It literally means elaborated, detailed or designed. This chapter is believed to have been revealed in Mecca and takes its name from the second verse which describes the Quran as a book whose verses are logically explained in Arabic recitation for the people who know. Verses 9-11 occur after a series of questions addressed to those who doubt the origins of revelations. One of the answers to their doubts is the miracle of creation as explained in this passage. This passage is however hotly debated, because when we count the days of the different stages of creation we arrive at a total of eight days, while in other Quranic passages (7:54-58) it is stated that the creation took place in six days. Note also that the term 'day' in the Quran does not always refer to 24 hours; for example, in verse 22:47 it is stated that a day in the sight of God is like a thousand years of our reckoning