

# Pre-Adamic Humanity

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Most students of the Bible and religion are unaware that Torah literature is full of references to an intelligent and civilized pre-Adamic humanity. While this may seem to contradict a literal reading of the Bible, the Sages over the centuries have assured the faithful that indeed, this is not the case. Even a literal reading of scripture is understood to indicate that there is more to history than what scripture records, and how scripture is understood on its surface.

Genesis, the first book of the Bible begins with the famous words, "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). Immediately, the following verse states, "And the earth was without form and empty" (Gen. 1:2). The Sages have noticed that Isaiah 45:18 states that "the earth was not created empty." Genesis says that in the beginning the Earth was empty, yet Isaiah says that it was not created that way. How then was the Earth "not created empty" according to Isaiah, and then become empty by verse two (2) in Genesis? The two verses are not contradictory, but there does seem to be something significant missing between verses 1 and 2 of Genesis 1.

This mystery was addressed long ago by the Sages. Using their traditional metaphoric method of parable, called midrash, the Sages have revealed to us many interesting teachings. In the Midrash Rabbah (Gen. R. 3:7) a question is asked, "what was God occupied with prior to His creation of our world?" The Midrash answers and reveals that prior to creating our world, God was busy building and destroying other worlds. Essentially the first creations filled the universe, thus it was not empty. Then, God tore down what he had built and began to rebuild, using the same "parts" that He had used before. Therefore, while the Heavens and the Earth were indeed created empty, by the time it came to creating our world, the emptiness had already been filled many a time over. This would indeed resolve the apparent contradiction between Genesis and Isaiah. Yet, this Midrash alone only speaks of creation, destruction and re-creation. It does not speak about pre-Adamic humanity. While this Midrash does not speak of the Pre-Adamites, other midrashim do.

In Leviticus, it is written that, "for six years you shall plow your fields, but the seventh year shall be holy to God, in that year you shall do no work." Based upon a midrashic interpretation of this verse, the Sages (T.B. San. 98A) stated that, "six thousand years shall the world last, and then for one thousand years shall it remain desolate." Our Sages have learned from an ancient, secret tradition, based on this verse in Leviticus, that the days of our world, our present human civilization, will be measured in the same way, as is the Biblical Sabbatical year. Six years shall we labor, and in the seventh year shall we rest. So, our civilization will grow for six thousand years, and then for a thousand years shall it

“remain desolate” which means to be left alone to rest. After this time, it is said that G-d will renew (again) His creation.

The Bible proceeds to speak about the Jubilee year. We are instructed to count seven times seven years and then to proclaim a Jubilee, a year of complete release. The Sages have revealed that just as our civilization will last for the Sabbatical period of six thousand years, and one thousand years of desolation, so will there be seven cycles similar to this, corresponding to a cosmic cycle of Sabbaticals and Jubilee. Therefore, according to this calculation, human civilization will rise and fall seven times, each for a period of six thousand years, with a rest period of a thousand years between.

Based upon this understanding, a question has arose among the Sages, if we are indeed in the middle of this Sabbatical cycle of seven, in which of the seven are we?

Many Sages look back to the verse in Genesis and conclude that we are certainly not in the first Sabbatical. Most thus conclude that we are in the second. The Sabbaticals are said to reflect the influences of the lower Seven Sefirot, with each one influencing an epoch of humanity. Previous humanity was in the epoch of the first sefirah Hesed, mercy. The Sages explain that this is why there are so many cross-cultural references to a lost prehistoric advanced civilization of some sort, usually referred to as Atlantis or Mu (Lemuria).

The Talmud, Hagigah 13B, employs the midrashic method to extrapolate from scripture that there were 974 generations of humanity prior to Adam. One of the early Kabbalistic classics, the Ma'arekhet Elokut, states specifically that the Talmud is making clear reference to the generations of humanity from the prior Sabbatical.

For some reason, as advanced as they became, the final generation of these 974 pre-Adamic generations somehow corrupted themselves and were destroyed by a combination of Divine design, and their own destructive choices. Our Adam, and his Biblical story, came in the aftermath of their destruction.

Indeed, later Kabbalistic literature refers to Adam as coming to Earth, from another domain or dimension with the specific intent to serve as a “mashiah” (redeemer) to those who came before him. They interpret Genesis 2:15 which states that God put Adam in Eden to work and safeguard the Garden as a reference to the redemptive nature of his original mission.

We are thus considered to be in the second Sabbatical, the sefirah of Gevurah, severity. This is said to explain why human civilization, in this period of recorded history, is full of violence and bloodshed, corresponding to the influence of the sefirah over the epoch.

Aside from the ancient legends from the Torah Sages, other more modern Sages have seen references to these pre-Adamic times in the discoveries of modern science. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a famous European Sage, Rabbi Yisrael Lifshitz, the author of the Tiferet Yisrael commentary to the Mishna, addressed the topic of pre-Adamic life in his introduction to the eleventh chapter of Tractate Sanhedrin.

Drawing upon what were the scientific discoveries of his day, and the Darwinian conflict on creationism and evolution, Rabbi Lifshitz pointed out that the Torah does acknowledge the existence of dinosaurs. These, he said, were the creations of the prior Sabbatical. Not only this, but Rabbi Lifshitz goes further to say that Adam was not really the first human being, but that there were countless people before him. He called them pre-Adamites.

The views expressed by Rabbi Lifshitz were unfortunately too radical for many of the fundamentalists of his day. In spite of the centuries old teachings of the Sages, many of the fundamentalists still insisted on a literal reading of Genesis, in spite of the overwhelming evidence of the Sages that contradict such a baseless, fundamentalist stance. A number of years ago Rabbi Lifshitz's essay on this topic was translated into English and published by Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan in his book, *Immortality, Resurrection and the Age of the Universe*.

Another famous source that culls together many different sources about the cosmic Sabbaticals is the book, *Yalkhut Reuveni*, written by Rabbi Avraham Reuven HaKohen Sofer. The Rabbi's work is a compendium of views and teachings culled from numerous sources. He richly includes many of the teachings about the cosmic Sabbaticals and is one of those rare sources where one can turn to find a treasure of information, often ignored (and even boycotted) by the religious fundamentalists.

There are a great number of both earlier and later generation Rabbis, Hasidic masters and Kabbalists who have spoken quite openly about the doctrine of the cosmic Sabbaticals. With regards to them, Rabbi Shmuel Lifshitz opens his discussion of the matter in his *Anafim Shatul Mayim* commentary to *Sefer HaIkarim* by saying “[I] open my mouth like a talebearer to reveal hidden secrets.”

Throughout centuries of Torah literature, Sages of all kinds alike have written about the cosmic Sabbaticals. Perhaps the largest source material for the teachings about the cosmic Sabbatical comes from the writings of the Kabbalists. Many famous Sages have referenced the cosmic Sabbaticals in their Biblical commentaries to Leviticus or elsewhere.

A list of some of the famous books that mention it include the *Sefer HaTemunah*, *Sefer HaKana*, *Ma'arekhet Elokut*, *Shatul Mayim* on *Sefer HaIkarim*, *Sefer Livnat HaSapir* of Rabbi David ben Yehuda HaHasid (Sefardi), *Sefer Shoshan Sodot*. Even the *Tikunei Zohar* makes reference to it in *Tikun 36*.

Among the famous Sages who reference it include the *RAMBaN*, *Rabbeynu Bahya*, Rabbi *Yitzhak D'Min Acco*, *Recanati* on the Torah, *Tziyuni* on the Torah, the *Radbaz*, Rabbi *David Zimra* (the Kabbalistic teacher of the *Ari'zal*), and many others of later generations.

Not everyone, however, accepted the doctrine of the cosmic Sabbaticals. Rabbi *Haim Vital*, the redactor of the Kabbalah teachings of the *Ari*, in his *Sha'ar Ma'amrei Rashbi 44A*, bluntly claims that the doctrine of the cosmic Sabbaticals is not correct, according to his rendition of the earlier creations (*Akudim*, *Nikudim*, *Berudim*).

Rabbi Vital's view of the pre-Adamic worlds is that they were all spiritual in nature, and never manifested physically. This understanding of his is easy to debate and even contradict. Nevertheless, many later Kabbalists follow Rabbi Vital's position on this, and accept his views to be the authoritative views of the Ari himself. Yet, not everyone is in agreement with this.

What is important to note is that Kabbalistic opinions, even those as authoritative as the Ari, should never be considered binding, or obligatory. As Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan so eloquently stated, "Since this is not a matter of law, there is no binding opinion. Although the Ari may have been the greatest of Kabbalists, his opinion on this matter is by no means absolutely binding. Since there were many important Kabbalists who upheld the concept of the Sabbatical cycles, it is a valid, acceptable opinion." (Immortality.... pages 6-7)

Following in the footsteps of the Ari/Vital school was the 20<sup>th</sup> century Kabbalist, Rabbi Yehuda Fatiyah of Jerusalem. In his commentary Beit Lekhem Yehuda (2,66A), to Haim Vital's major work on the Torah of the Ari, the Etz Haim, Rabbi Fatiyah addressed the issue of the cosmic Sabbatical from the point of view of the Ari.

Yet, even Rabbi Fatiyah, in his other book, Minhat Yehuda (pg. 222), expounds on a section of the Zohar that speaks of the pre-Adamic parents of Adam. He even states that Adam's parents copulated on the spiritual plane, that his mother conceived and gave birth to Adam's body, which, the Rabbi emphasizes was completely non-physical. Where Adam's parents came from, Rabbi Fatiyah does not say. However, he makes it quite clear that they are individual beings and not simply an appellation for G-d.

In spite of the Ari's apparent objection to the concept of the Sabbaticals, not all Kabbalists following the Ari, interpreted Rabbi Vital's teachings in this way. Interesting to note is the Sha'at Ratzon commentary on the Tikunei Zohar (36). The author Rabbi Shlomo Kohen is one of the greatest, later generation Kabbalists of the Ari/Vital/Rashash school. He is also the author of the authoritative commentary to Rabbi Vital's Etz Haim entitled Yafeh Sha'ah.

In his commentary to the Tikunei Zohar 36 Rabbi Kohen comments on the clear reference made there to the cosmic Sabbaticals, and then mentions Rabbi Vital's objections to this view. Rabbi Kohen then elucidates a brilliant compromise how the view of the ancients and the view of Rabbi Vital can be synthesized. Thus, no present day student of Kabbalah should be so quick to dismiss the doctrine of the cosmic Sabbaticals out of hand based on the comments of Rabbi Haim Vital. For as we see, they are open to various interpretations.

Many Kabbalists in the generations after the Ari maintained their embrace of the cosmic Sabbaticals, even while at the same time, they would warmly embrace the teachings of the Ari. A short list of these include the author of the book, Tekhelet Mordechai, Rabbi Lifshitz in his Tiferet Yisrael, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Eichenstein of Zidatchov in his Ateret Tzvi commentary on the Zohar HaRakia, and even maybe the most famous of later generation Kabbalists, Rabbi Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna. All of these religious leaders, plus many more

all understood how Genesis was to be understood, and how that Adam was not the first man of the human race.

Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Eichenstein, in his commentary Ateret Tzvi (126B) on the book Zohar HaRakia, states that even though the Ari himself was silent on this matter, he definitely ascribed to the doctrine of the cosmic Sabbaticals, and that “God forbid anyone would disagree with the holy Sages of Israel.”

What we learn from all this is that the Sages have always known to read and understand the creation story in Genesis as a metaphor, not to be taken literally.

We can also safely conclude now that the early Sages were not ignorant fundamentalists, who ignored or denied the realities of God's creation discovered through science.

The Sages of old knew well the secret of pre-Adamic man and the civilizations that he built. The Sages of old even knew of ancient man's extraterrestrial connections, but this is a topic that I have discussed elsewhere.

In light of this prior review of the subject, we should look towards the past with added interest and curiosity. We should ask, what secrets are hidden, buried out there, and possibly ignored or denied by modern archaeologists who may have fallen into the same fundamentalist mindset trap as have their religious peers?

As it is said, the truth is out there, not just for those who want to believe, but also for those who want to explore and discover. So, happy hunting!

**Final Note:** *What makes this topic so interesting, and maybe even relevant, is the other topics that are related to it, specifically the beliefs about Inner Earth, extraterrestrials, angels, demons, the fallen ones (the Nefilim), and the coming of Mashiah.*

*In the ancient literature and especially in modern “conspiracy” literature, all these issues always overlap. If this was just an invention of modern times, I would dismiss it outright as fabricated entertainment. However, due to the fact that these intertwined topics are found in the most ancient literature, cross-culturally around the world, I am not so quick to dismiss them.*

*Indeed, being that the Sages of Torah also validate these beliefs, as a student of Torah, I am morally compelled to publicly teach them. As a student of life, along the path of discovery, my own curiosity has led me to my own encounters and experiences, of which I have documented in much of my literature.*

*These topics are indeed relevant today, very relevant indeed! And I believe it is just a matter of time before everyone finds out just how relevant and shocking they really are!*