

THE HUMAN JOURNEY: ARE WE THERE YET?!

Note:

This lesson includes more texts than can be covered in a 90-minute session. We encourage you to explore the texts not covered in class on your own time.



INTRODUCTORY TEXT

RABBI YOETZ KIM KADISH RAKATZ, *SIACH SARFEI KODESH I, 233*

(Early 20th century) Publisher and Chasidic writer.

I further heard in the name [of Rabbi Simchah Bunim of Peshischa (Poland, 1765–1827)], that he said every person must have two pockets to use when they need it. In one pocket [a note that reads], “For me the world was created” (Mishnah, Tractate *Sanhedrin* 4:5). In the other [a note that reads], “I am dust and ashes”

5 (Genesis 18:27).

רב יועץ קים קדיש, שיח שרפי קדש א, רלג
עוד שמעתי בשמו שאמר שכל אחד ואחד צריך להיות לו שני קעשינעס להשתמש בו בעת צרכו.
בקעשינע אחד בשבילי נברא העולם ובהקעשינע השני אנכי עפר ואפר.



TEXT 1

GENESIS (*BERESHIT*) 1:26–28

26 And God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth.” **27** And God created humankind in the divine image, creating it in the image of God—creating them male and female. **28** God blessed them and God said to them, “Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth.”

בראשית א, כו-כח
כו ויאמר אלהים נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו וירדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובבהמה ובכל הארץ ובכל הרמש הרמש על הארץ. כז ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו באלהים ברא אתו זכר ונקבה ברא אתם. כח ויברך אתם אלהים ויאמר להם אלהים פרו ורבו ומלאו את הארץ וכבשה וירדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים ובכל חיה הרמשת על הארץ.



TEXT 2

MAIMONIDES (RAMBAM), *MOREH NEVUKHIM* (*GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED*) 1:1

(1135–1204) (Moshe ben Maimon) Philosopher, codifier, communal leader, and doctor in Spain and Egypt.

Some have been of the opinion that by the Hebrew *zelem*, the shape and figure of a thing is to be understood, and this explanation led men to believe in the corporeality [of the Divine Being]: for they thought that the words “Let us make man in our *zelem*” (Gen. i. 26), implied that God had the form of a human being, i.e., that He had figure and shape, and that, consequently, He was corporeal . . . I hold that the Hebrew equivalent of “form” in the ordinary acceptation of the word, viz., the figure and shape of a thing, is *toär* . . . The term *zelem*, on the other hand, signifies the specific form, viz., that which constitutes the essence of a thing, . . . and in the phrase “Let us make man in our *zelem*” (Gen. i. 26), the term signifies “the specific form” of man, viz., his intellectual perception, and does not refer to his “figure” or “shape.”

Maimonides, M. 1904. *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 13–14.



TEXT 3

RABBI W. GUNTHER PLAUT, *BERESHIT* 1:27, *IN THE IMAGE OF GOD*

(1912–2012) Canadian Reform rabbi and theologian.

The creature called man is formed in the image of God, in His likeness. These words reflect the Torah’s abiding wonder over man’s special stature in creation, over his unique intellectual capacity, which bears the imprint of the Creator. Marveling at man’s powers, the Bible finds him to be “little less than divine” (Ps. 8:6).

This likeness also describes man’s moral potential. Man’s nature is radically different from God’s, but man is capable of approaching God’s actions: His love, His mercy, His justice. Man becomes truly human as he attempts to do godly deeds.

- 10 Man's likeness to the Divine has a third and most important meaning: it stresses the essential holiness and, by implication, the dignity of all men, without any distinctions.

Plaut, G. *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981, 22.



TEXT 4

RABBI LAWRENCE TROSTER, *IN THE IMAGE: PESHAT*

(1953–2019) Conservative Rabbi and founder of Shomrei Bereshit: Rabbis and Cantors for the Earth and GreenFaith's Fellowship program; he also taught in the Florence Melton School at the UJA Federation of Northern New Jersey.

- The Hebrew term for “image” (*tzelem*) has a cognate word in Old Akkadian and Old Babylonian that throws significant light upon the original nuance of the term used in Genesis. The cognate word (*tzalmu*) can mean a statue, a bodily shape, a figurine, or a relief drawing. The term sometimes refers to a statue or an image of the king,
- 5 which is placed in a captured city or elsewhere in the kingdom as an extension of the king's presence and the king's law. In other words, it is as if the king were present wherever the king's *tzalmu* is placed. The king rules wherever his *tzalmu* stands.
- 10 Seen in this light, humanity is the *tzalmu* of God. Wherever humans are, the presence of God is reflected. This cannot be said of any other creature. Indeed, the command to multiply and spread over the earth is none other than a desire to spread the presence of God and to actualize God's power throughout creation, rather than a desire for mere numerical increase. It is as if God could not function in
- 15 the world without humanity . . . This is certainly in accord with the Rabbinic idea of human beings as “partners of God in the work of Creation.”

Troster, L. *Judaism and Environmental Ethics: A Reader*, ed. Martin D. Yaffe. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001, 178.



TEXT 5 GENESIS (*BERESHIT*) 2:7, 15-23

7 the ETERNAL God formed a Human from the soil's humus, blowing into his nostrils the breath of life: the Human became a living being.

15 The ETERNAL God settled the Human in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it. **16** And the ETERNAL God commanded the Human, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat;

17 but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die." **18** The ETERNAL God said, "It is not good for the Human to be alone; I will make a fitting counterpart for him." **19** And the ETERNAL God formed out of the earth all the wild beasts and all the birds of the sky, and brought them to the Human to see what he would call them; and whatever the Human called each living creature, that would be its name. **20** And the Human gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but no fitting counterpart for a human being was found. **21** So the ETERNAL God cast a deep sleep upon the Human; and, while he slept, [God] took one of his sides and closed up the flesh at that site. **22** And the ETERNAL God fashioned the side that had been taken from the Human into a woman, bringing her to the Human. **23** Then the Human said,

"This one at last
Is bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh.
This one shall be called the Woman,
For from the Man was she taken."

בְּרֵאשִׁית ב, ז, טו-כג

ז וַיִּצֹר ה' אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם עֹפֶר מִן הָאֲדָמָה וַיִּפַּח בְּאַפִּיו נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְנֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה.

טו וַיִּקַּח ה' אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם וַיְנַחֵהוּ בְּגֵן עֵדֶן לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ. טז וַיִּצֹר ה' אֱלֹהִים עַל הָאָדָם לֵאמֹר מִכָּל עֵץ הָגֵן אָכַל תֹּאכֵל. יז וּמִעֵץ הַדַּעַת טוֹב וָרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכָלְהָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת. יח וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹהִים לֹא טוֹב הָיִיתָ הָאָדָם לְבֶדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה לוֹ עֶזְרָ כְּנֶגְדּוֹ. יט וַיִּצֹר ה' אֱלֹהִים מִן הָאֲדָמָה כֶּל

חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת כָּל עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֶל הָאָדָם לִרְאוֹת מֶה יִקְרָא לוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא לוֹ הָאָדָם נָפֶשׁ חַיָּה
 הוּא שְׁמוֹ. כִּי יִקְרָא הָאָדָם שְׁמוֹת לְכָל הַבְּהֵמָה וְלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּלְכָל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וּלְאָדָם לֹא מָצָא עֹזֶר
 כְּנִגְדּוֹ. כֹּא וַיִּפֹּל ה' אֱלֹהִים תְּרִידָמָה עַל הָאָדָם וַיִּשָּׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצִּלְעֹתָיו וַיִּסְגֵּר בָּשָׂר תַּחְתָּנָה. כִּב וַיְכֵן ה'
 אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַצֵּלַע אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מִן הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיָּבֵאָהּ אֶל הָאָדָם. כִּג וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם זֹאת הִפְעַם עָצָם מֵעַצְמִי
 וּבָשָׂר מִבָּשָׂרִי לְזֹאת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִשׁ לָקַחָהּ זֹאת.



TEXT 6

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, ON THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

(20 BCE–50 CE) A Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who spanned two cultures, the Greek and the Hebrew.

After this, Moses says that “God made man, having taken clay from the earth, and he breathed into his face the breath of life.” And by this expression he shows most clearly that there is a vast difference between man as generated now, and the first man who was made according to the image of God. For man as formed now is
 5 perceptible to the external senses, partaking of qualities, consisting of body and soul, man or woman, by nature mortal. But man, made according to the image of God, was an idea, or a genus, or a seal, perceptible only by the intellect, incorporeal, neither male nor female, imperishable by nature. But he asserts that the formation
 of the individual man, perceptible by the external senses is a composition of earthy
 10 substance and divine spirit.

The Works of Philo Judeaus, translated from the Greek by C.D. Yonge. London: George Bell and Sons, 1800.



TEXT 7

RABBI JOSEPH B. SOLOVEITCHIK, *THE LONELY MAN OF FAITH*

(1903–1993) Philosopher and talmudic scholar; leader of Modern Orthodoxy in America.

. . . However, the answer lies . . . in a real contradiction in the nature of man. The two accounts deal with two Adams, two men, two fathers of mankind, two types, two representatives of humanity, and it is no wonder that they are not identical . . .

Let us portray these two men, Adam the first and Adam the second, in typological categories.

There is no doubt that the term “image of God” in the first account refers to man’s inner charismatic endowment as a creative being. Man’s likeness to God expresses itself in man’s striving and ability to become a creator. Adam the first who was fashioned in the image of God was blessed with great drive for creative activity and immeasurable resources for the realization of this goal, the most outstanding of which is the intelligence, the human mind, capable of confronting the outside world and inquiring into its complex workings. . . .

Man of old who could not fight disease and succumbed in multitudes to yellow fever or any other plague with degrading helplessness could not lay claim to dignity. Only the man who builds hospitals, discovers therapeutic techniques, and saves lives is blessed with dignity. Man of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who needed several days to travel from Boston to New York was less dignified than modern man who attempts to conquer space, boards a plane at the New York airport at midnight and takes several hours later a leisurely walk along the streets of London . . . Civilized man has gained limited control of nature and has become, in certain respects, her master, and with his mastery, he has attained dignity, as well . . .

Hence, Adam the first is aggressive, bold, and victory-minded. His motto is success, triumph over the cosmic forces . . .

Adam the second is, like Adam the first, also intrigued by the cosmos. Intellectual curiosity drives them both to confront courageously the *mysterium magnum* of Being. However, while the cosmos provokes Adam the first to quest for power and

control, thus making him ask the functional “how” question, Adam the second responds to the call of the cosmos by engaging in a different kind of cognitive gesture. He does not ask a single functional question. Instead his inquiry is of a metaphysical nature and a threefold one. He wants to know: “Why is it?” “What is it?” “Who is it?” (1) He wonders: “Why did the world in its totality come into existence? Why is man confronted by this stupendous and indifferent order of things and events?” (2) He asks: “What is the purpose of all this? What is the message that is embedded in organic and inorganic matter, and what does the great challenge reaching me from beyond the fringes of the universe as well as from the depths of my tormented soul mean?” (3) Adam the second keeps on wondering: “Who is He who trails me steadily, uninvited and unwanted, like an everlasting shadow, and vanishes into the recesses of transcendence the very instant I turn around to confront this numinous, awesome, and mysterious ‘He’? Who is He who fills Adam with awe and bliss, humility and a sense of greatness, concurrently? . . . Who is He whose life-giving and life-warming breath Adam feels constantly and who at the same time remains distant and remote from all?”

In order to answer this triple question, Adam the second does not apply the functional method invented by Adam the first. He does not create a world of his own. Instead, he wants to understand the living, “given” world into which he has been cast . . . He encounters the universe in all its colorfulness, splendor, and grandeur, and studies it with the naïveté, awe, and admiration of the child who seeks the unusual and wonderful in every ordinary thing and event... He looks for the image of God not in the mathematical formula or the natural relational law but in every beam of light, in every bud and blossom, in the morning breeze and the stillness of a starlit evening.

Soloveitchik, J. B. 1965. *The Lonely Man of Faith*. New York: Doubleday, 10–22. With Permission of Penguin Random House.



TEXT 8

RABBI DAVID KIMCHI (RADAK), GENESIS (*BERESHIT*) 1:27

(1160–1235) Biblical commentator, grammarian, and philosopher from Provence. He knew philosophy and the sciences, and was particularly interested in the ethical component of biblical stories.

God created the human in [God's] image: this act of creation refers [specifically] to the [creation of the] soul, as the verse says, *in [God's] image* (and only the soul can be said to have been created in God's image). Thus the verse uses [the verb], “created,” to [help] distinguish between the body and the soul. When the verse tells

5 of the manufacture of the body, it says, *God formed the human, dust from the earth* (Genesis 2:7), [using the verb] “formed,” for that verb cannot be used in connection to the soul, for it is not corporeal. But the verb “created,” and so too the verb “to make,” can be used in conjunction with the incorporeal and the corporeal.

רב דוד קמחי (רד"ק), בראשית א, כז

ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו - בראה זו על הנפש נאמרה כמו שאמר בצלמו לפיכך אמר ויברא להבדיל בין הגוף והנפש כי בספור יצירת הגוף אמר ויצר ה' אלהים את האדם עפר מן האדמה כי אין לשון יצירה נופל על הנפש כי איננה גוף אמל לשון בראה וכן לשון מעשה נופל בין על מה שאינו גוף בין על מה שהוא גוף.



TEXT 9

BERESHIT RABBAH 8:1

Homiletic and midrashic material compiled on the biblical text, mainly in Israel, from the 3rd to 10th centuries.

Rabbi Yirmiyah ben Elazar said, When God created the first human, it was created [as an] *androgynos* (possessing both male and female sexual organs); thus is it written, *male and female did God create them* (Genesis 5:2).

- Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman said, When God created the first human, God created it
5 with two faces, and then split it and made a back for each one.

[The other rabbis] challenged him: But it is written, And God took one of his ribs (*mitzal'otav*) [and thereby created Chavah (Eve)]” (ibid. 2:21)?!

- 10 He replied to them, [*Mitzal'otav* does not mean “one of his ribs”], it means one of its two sides, as it states, *and for the tzela of the tabernacle* (Exodus 26:20), which is translated into Aramaic as “for the side of the tabernacle.”

בְּרֵאשִׁית רַבָּה ה, א

אָמַר רַבִּי יְרֵמְיָה בֶּן אֲלֶעָזָר בְּשֵׁעָה שֶׁבָּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן אֲנִדְרוּגִינוֹס בְּרָאוּ
הָדָא הוּא דְכְתִיב זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בְּרָאָם.

אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָן בְּשֵׁעָה שֶׁבָּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן דִּי פְרִצּוּפִים בְּרָאוּ
וְנָסְרוּ וַעֲשָׂאוּ גְבִיִּים גַּב לְכָאן וְגַב לְכָאן.

אֵי תִיבּוֹן לִיה וְהִכְתִּיב וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת מִצְלָעָתִיו?

אָמַר לְהוֹן מִתְרִין סְטְרוּהִי הִיךְ מָה דָּאֵת אָמַר וּלְצֹלַע הַמִּשְׁכָּן דְּמִתְרַגְמִינָן וְלִסְטֵר מִשְׁכָּנָא וְגו'.



TEXT 10

BABYLONIAN TALMUD, TRACTATE *NIDDAH* 45B

Compilation of teachings of 3rd–6th century scholars in Babylonia (*amora'im*); final redaction in the 6th–7th centuries.

It is written in the verse (Genesis 2:22), “And the Lord God *vayiven* the side (or the rib)” – this teaches that God endowed the woman with more understanding (*binah*) than the man.

תְּלִמּוּד בְּבִלִי, מִסֻּכַּת נִדָּה דִּף מַה עָמוּד ב

דְּכְתִיב וַיִּבֶן ה' [אֱלֹהִים] אֶת הַצֹּלַע מִלְּמַד שְׁנֵתָן תְּקִדּוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בִּינָה תִתִּירָה בְּאִשָּׁה יוֹתֵר מִבְּאִישׁ.



TEXT 11

RABBI DON YITZCHAK ABRAVANEL, GENESIS (*BERESHIT*) 2:21

(1437–1508) Statesman and scholar, financial adviser to the king of his native Portugal, financial agent to Queen Isabella of Castile.

[God] did not create woman from the legs, which are the lowest portion [of the body], so she should not be in his eyes as a slave-woman, nor did [God] create her from the head so she should not be in her own eyes as master of the house. However, [God] created her from the rib, which is in the middle of the body, so she should be in the house just like him.

5

רב דון יצחק אברבנאל, בראשית ב, כא

והנה לא ברא את האשה מן הרגלים שהוא החלק היותר שפל כדי שלא תהא בעיניו כשפחה ולא בראה מן הראש כדי שלא תהא בעיניה כגברת הבית אבל בראה מן הצלע שבאמצע הגוף לשתיה בבית כמותו.



TEXT 12

MISHNAH, TRACTATE *SANHEDRIN* 4:5

Compilation of teachings of 3rd century BCE–3rd century CE scholars in Eretz Israel (*tanna'im*); compiled and edited by Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi.

. . . This is why the human being was created as a sole creature at first, . . . to maintain peace among members of the human race, so that none should say to another, My progenitor is greater than yours. And also so that heretics not say, There are many authorities in Heaven. And to relate the greatness of God – for when a person mints several coins with one press, they are all similar to each other, but God “minted” all humans with the press of the first human, and yet none are similar to another.

5

מלשנה, מסכת סנהדרין ד, ה

לפיכך נברא אדם יחיד . . . ומפני שלום הבריות שלא יאמר אדם לחברו אבא גדול מאביך ושלא יהו מינין אומרים הרבה רשויות בשמים ולהגיד גדלתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שאדם טובע כמה מטבעות בחותם אחד וכלן דומין זה לזה ומלך המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא טבע כל אדם בחותמו של אדם הראשון ואין אחד מהן דומה לחברו.



TEXT 13

RABBI LINDA BERTENTHAL, *REFLECTING GOD'S IMAGE*

Congregational rabbi who served as the Associate Director of the Pacific Southwest Council of the Union for Reform Judaism.

The parallel structure of Genesis 1:27 links the two phrases that describe how God created humanity: “in the image of God” and “male and female.” This could simply suggest that male and female are equally created in the image of God. However, “male and female” need not be read only literally, but can also be read as a

5 metaphor for the various types of diversity God creates in humanity.

The linkage between “image of God” and “male and female” . . . leads us to believe that humanity’s diversity is a crucial component of its godliness. So, humanity is created in the image of God precisely because we are created male and female; black, white, Asian, and racially mixed; short and tall; straight, gay, and bisexual;

10 and with an infinite variety of abilities. To choose this reading has profound moral implications, for if it is humanity as a whole, in all its multiplicity, that reflects God’s image. . .

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KEY TERMS

Adam the first, Adam the second. Terms coined by Soloveitchik referring to two different aspects and purposes of human being as he derived it from the two differing accounts of creation in the first and second chapters of Genesis (*Bereshit*).

Adamah. Dirt, earth.

Tzela. Rib, side.

(Be)Tzelem Elohim. “(In) the image of God.” The infinite value of each human being is a function of having been created “in the image of God.”

KEY NAMES

Abravanel (Abarbanel) Don Isaac (Yitzchak). (1437–1508) Statesman, communal leader, philosopher, and biblical exegete. While living in Portugal (before 1483) and then in Spain, Yitzchak Abravanel served the local rulers as a tax-farmer and performed financial transactions for the crown. He also served as Queen Isabella's loan agent; she borrowed vast sums of money for her personal and political needs. When his efforts to revoke the Edict of Expulsion failed, Yitzchak Abravanel left Spain for Italy.

Bertenthal, Rabbi Linda. Reform Jewish leader ordained by the Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR). Before entering the rabbinate, she pursued a career in public interest law, serving as a federal district court law clerk and as a Legal Services attorney for low-income clients. Following her ordination, she worked with the Union for Reform Judaism for eleven years, assisting congregations across the Western United States and Canada. She is deeply committed to interfaith dialogue and social justice.

Rabbi Simchah Bunim of Peshischa. (c. 1765–1827) Hasidic leader and spiritual innovator in early 19th-century Poland. Known for his profound intellect, emphasis on a rational approach to spirituality, he became one of the most influential figures in the Peshischa (Przysucha) Hasidic movement. Originally trained in both Talmudic and secular studies—including philosophy and medicine—Rabbi Simchah Bunim worked briefly as a pharmacist before fully dedicating himself to religious leadership. Under his guidance, Peshischa Hasidism emphasized critical thinking, inner truth, and individual self-awareness, encouraging disciples to seek God through honest introspection and moral integrity rather than through external piety or miracle-working.

Philo of Alexandria. (20 BCE–50 CE) A Hellenized Jew, a figure that spans two cultures, the Greek and the Hebrew. Philo produced in his writings a synthesis of both cultures. Long studied in the Christian world, Philo is being rediscovered in the Jewish world.

Maimonides. (1135–1204) Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, also known as Moses Maimonides, was born in Spain, but he lived most of his life in Egypt, where he served as a physician and leader of the Jewish community. He is one of the pre-eminent Jewish philosophers and codifiers of all time. His *Mishneh Torah* became one of the central works of halakhic literature and his *Guide for the Perplexed* (*Moreh Nevukhim*) is one of the most important Jewish philosophical treatises ever written.

Plaut, Rabbi W. Gunther. (1912–2012) He was considered the leading historian, scholar, and representative of the Reform Movement. He wrote more than 25 books, and is best known as the editor of the UAHC's *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (often referred to as “the Plaut”), one of the most commonly used Chumashim in the world today. Born in Germany, he was trained in law and received his Doctorate in Jurisprudence from the University of Berlin in 1934. Arriving in the United States as a refugee, he was ordained a rabbi at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati in 1939. He has written on theology, philosophy, and history, and has produced three works of fiction and two volumes of autobiography. He has held many major posts, including the presidency of both the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Canadian Jewish Congress and served as Vice-Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Radak, Rabbi David Kimchi. (c. 1160–1235) Prominent medieval Jewish biblical commentator, grammarian, and philosopher, active in southern France, particularly in Narbonne. He is best known for his influential commentaries on the Prophets and the Writings (Nevi'im and Ketuvim), in which he combined linguistic precision with theological insight. In his commentaries, he often emphasized the *peshat* (plain meaning) of the biblical text, aligning with the trend of rationalist exegesis that characterized the Provençal school. He also addressed philosophical and theological issues, engaging with the ideas of contemporaries such as Maimonides.

Soloveitchik, Joseph B. (1903–1993) The pre-eminent spiritual leader, philosopher, and talmudic scholar of modern Orthodoxy in America; taught Talmud and Jewish philosophy at Yeshiva University; is the author of numerous books and articles.

Troster, Rabbi Lawrence. (1953–2019) Pioneering Jewish eco-theologian and a leading voice in religious environmentalism. He founded and coordinated *Shomrei Breishit: Rabbis and Cantors for the Earth*, a coalition dedicated to integrating environmental stewardship within Jewish spiritual life. Throughout his career, he held numerous influential positions, including Rabbinic Scholar-in-Residence at GreenFaith, Rabbinic Fellow for the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), and advisor to Hazon. He was also a member of Al Gore's Climate Reality Project Leadership Corps and participated in interfaith environmental initiatives.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Soloveitchik, J. 1965. "The Lonely Man of Faith." *Tradition* 7, No. 2.

Urbach, E. E. 1979. "Man." *The Sages*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 214–254.