

How the Days of Creation Were Understood by Our Sages
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Current academia depicts the world as having existed for aeons, rather than merely six millennia, and to man as a creature evolved from others. Although many Torah scholars object that these claims are in contradiction to the teachings of the Mesorah, others have claimed that one can find support among the earlier Torah authorities for accommodating the Torah to academia's depiction. This essay takes issue with this claim.

It is not implausible that despite one's endeavors to make a point clear and simple—despite one's striving to expunge any ambiguities and to prevent any misconstruing of what he means—there will still be some who will construe from [his very words] the very opposite of the point he wished to convey. This has happened even with the words of Hashem Yisborach: He stated that He is One and that there is no other; and, in order to remove from our souls the corrupt ideas believed by the Dualists, clearly stated regarding this point, “Hear O Israel, Hashem our G-d, Hashem is One.” Yet the Christians use this very verse as a “proof” that the Alm-ghty is a trinity, and they say, “It says, ‘Hashem,’ then ‘our G-d,’ and then, ‘Hashem.’ Behold: these are three Names; and it then says ‘One’—a proof that they are three and the three are One”!

Rambam, introduction to his *Ma'amar T'chiyas HaMeisim*

The Rambam wrote the above lines in response to accusations that in his *Mishneh Torah* he denied the principle of *techias ha-meisim*, the future resurrection of the dead. Despite his teaching this very concept as a fundamental of Judaism, some took his statements in other contexts to be “hinting” that he “really” did not believe in it. Some attacked him for this phantom position, while others gleefully cited him as an authoritative source for their *kefira*, their denial of a fundamental doctrine of Judaism. The Rambam reacted pointing out that even the Torah's clear words cannot escape distortion by those whose agendas contradict the Torah's intended message.

The Rambam's words quoted above should come to mind when one is confronted by the strange interpretations people suggest to avoid the clear premise Hashem sets up for us in the Torah—the premise that the world was created in six days.¹ Hashem details this in *Breishis*. He repeats it in *Sh'mos* 20:11 (“For six days G-d made the Heavens and the Earth”), and again in *Sh'mos* 31:17 (“Between Me and *B'nei Yisrael* this will be a sign forever, that in six days Hashem made the Heavens and the Earth...”),² and *Chazal* have instituted our referring to this fact every Shabbos and Yom Tov. What could Hashem say to make His intent clearer? Yet despite all this, some suggest that we ignore these clear words in deference to an ever-morphing alternative to Creation.³

Our *mesorah* insists that the six days of Creation, counting from the first creative act, were six literal days.⁴ One cannot insert the evolutionary explanation into the *p'sukim* by claiming that the days were actually billions of years. Even the idea that Creation was anything less than a totally miraculous process, not conducted through natural processes

at all, —accelerated” or otherwise—is rejected by the *Maharal* (*Ba'er HaGolah*, p. 83, *Ba'er Four*):

Know that He, May He be blessed, brought out these creations, all of them, to physical reality during the six days of *Breishis* by Himself, in His Own Glory—not by means of an agent, meaning Nature. Creation was contrary to the way things are after the conclusion of the six days of *Breishis*, wherein *Hashem Yisborach* conducts His world by means of the agent, i.e., *Nature*.”

Indeed, as elaborated upon by the *Maharal*, if anything bothers *Chazal*, it is the *mesorah* attributing the extra steps Hashem took (and time involved) in creating the world through His “*ten ma'a'maros* (declarations””, instead of creating everything in one “*ma'a'mar*” (and in one fraction of a second).⁵

THE AGE OF THE UNIVERSE

Our *ba'alei mesorah* have always understood and insisted that the six days of Creation were regular days, not eons, and that the first day of Creation began less than 6,000 years ago. Even *kabalistic* passages, if taken literally as referring to physical worlds preceding ours, in no way conform to the world's history as portrayed in academia's current versions (as of this writing).

Rabbaynu Saadia Gaon (*Sefer Emunah V'Dei'os*, end of first chapter) is very clear about his understanding of how long the universe has existed:

And the third opinion [is] the opinion of the fools... [who] say, 'How can the intellect accept that the world has existed for only 4,693 years?' And we will answer [in defense of that] that once we accept that the world was created, it is impossible for it not to have had a beginning."

In fact, he states (*Emunos V'Dei'os* 3:8) that if someone professing to be a prophet suggests that Hashem took a *year* to create the world, he is a false prophet!

Rabbeynu Yehudah HaLevy, in *HaKuzari* (Book One) as well, states clearly that Judaism has always considered the world to have been created in six regular days, and has consequently existed merely thousands of years:

(42) The Khazar King: What could be more erroneous, in the opinion of the philosophers, than the belief that the world was created, and that it was created in six days? ...

(43) The Rabbi: ... Our prophet ... revealed the hidden things, and told how the world was created...and the years of the world from Adam until now.

(44) The Khazar King: It is astounding, too, if you have a clear counting from the creation of the world!

(45) The Rabbi: With it we count, and no Jews exist from Hodu to Cush who contest this.

(46) The Khazar King: And what is your count today?

(47) The Rabbi: 4,500 years....

(60-62) The Khazar King: Does it not weaken thy belief if you are told that the Indians have antiquities and buildings which they consider to be millions of years old?....And what will you say of the philosophers (read: scientists--ZL) who, as a result of their careful researches, agree that the world is without beginning? This is not a matter of tens of thousands of years, nor even millions of years, but of something that has no beginning or end at all!

(63) The Rabbi: The philosophers—we can't blame them. Being Grecians, they inherited neither wisdom nor Torah....

(64) The Khazar King: Does this obligate us not to rely on Aristotle's philosophy?

(65-67) The Rabbi: Yes. Since he did not possess a *kabbala* through the reporting of a person he could trust, he exerted his mind, deliberated about the beginning and end of the world, and found it difficult to envision it [both as] having a beginning as well as it being infinite. However, through his unaided thought processes, he concluded by accepting his logical structures that inclined towards the theory of a world with an infinite past. He did not see fit to ask about the correct count of years from anyone who came before him, nor about the chronology of the human race. Had the philosopher lived among a people possessing widely known traditions, which he would be unable to dismiss, he would have applied himself with his logic to strengthen the viewpoint that the world came about through Creation.

...Heaven forbid that the Torah would contain anything that actual proof or demonstration would be able to contradict! But the Torah does record, in its account of Creation, the occurrence of miracles and different behaviors in nature, and the changing of one thing to another, to demonstrate that the Creator of the world is able to accomplish what He wants, when He wills it. The question of eternity and creation is deep; the arguments would be evenly balanced; but the prophetic tradition of Adam, Noah and Moses resolves the question in favor of Creation. For prophecy is undoubtedly more reliable than conjecture. And if a Torah-person would find himself compelled to believe and concede that matter is eternal, and [to believe in] the existence of many worlds prior to this one, this would not be an impairment to his belief. For he would [still] believe that *this world* was created from a certain time, and that Adam and Eve were the first human beings.

Three strands intertwine among the commentators: the Torah teaches that the world was created less than 6,000 years ago; the earth's state of *tohu va-vohu* followed immediately upon earth's creation; and the "days" of Creation are regular 24-hour type days. Each of the *meforshim* explicitly state one or more of these ideas, and implicitly vouch for all of them; and virtually all⁶ agree that the earth's state of *tohu va-vohu* began and ended during the first day. We have already noted the disposition of the *Maharal*, Rav Saadia Gaon, and Rabbeynu Yehudah Halevy. The **Rambam's son, Avraham**, (*Sefer Milchamos Hashem*, ed. Margolios, *Mosaad HaRav Kook*, pp. 57-58 and 59): continues the legacy of our *mesorah*:

The Torah was given to Israel twenty-four hundred years after the creation of the world. And if anyone mumbles to you, "Haven't the *Chachamim darshonned* that the Torah was created a thousand years before the world?" —you should answer him: That drash needs many *payrushim* to answer it (*l'taretz osso*), and it is impossible that it should be understood literally. And even if it *were* meant literally, the subject under discussion is when it [the Torah] was given [and not when it was created]....Behold, their [the philosophers'] belief is that that world is old (*yashan*), and it has no beginning. And we disagree with them, through the *emunah* of the Torah, and we can present *teshuvos* and establish many proofs to make the Torah *emunah* clear, that the world is new (*chadash*), and created; and nothing exists that is *rishon* and *acharon* except for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

We should note that both Rabbeynu Yehuda HaLevy and the Rambam's son acknowledge an esoteric teaching about time and/or worlds preceding our world; but they both do so reluctantly and go out of their way to hold themselves aloof from it as a mainstream *mesorah* literal, physical depiction of history.

The Rambam himself, in *Moreh Nevuchim*, makes it clear that when confronted with *Aggadic* statements that contradict the *p'shat* and/or logic, the *Aggadta* must not be taken literally. Thus, he too rejects the literal meaning of even talmudic statements that assign the concept of time to "before" Creation. Rav Yosef Albo (*Sefer Ikkarim*), the Ramban, Rabbeynu Saadia Gaon, and the *Maharal* (for one instance, in *Ba'er HaGolah*, *Amud* 82-3, *Ba'er HaR'vi'vi*) all follow this approach. These *ba'alei mesorah* either reject or reinterpret such *Aggadta* so as not to conflict with the simple understanding that Creation began and ended within seven literal days.

A DAY IS A DAY

Long before the Gaonim and Rishonim, the **Talmud** (*Chagiga* 12a) set the record straight:

Said Rav Yehudah in the name of Rav: Ten things were created on the first day: Heaven and Earth, *tohu va-vohu* (*Emptiness and Formlessness*), Light and Darkness, Ruach and Mayyim, *middass yom and middas layla* (*the length of day and length of night*).

This talmudic passage clarifies two things regarding our subject:

1. Even if the sun, moon and stars were not operating as they do at present, whatever conditions necessary for time passage were already operating normally the first day, which saw the creation of Heaven and Earth, Earth's condition of *tohu va-vohu*, and Light and Darkness.

2. The length of day and night was determined and put in effect that first day. Without any further qualifications, it is obvious that the measurement of the day and night refer to the length of day and night to which we are accustomed (—certainly for the days following the first). Indeed, **Rashi** explains, “*middass yom and middas layla* means the length of day and the length of night: *24 hours combined*.”

We will see that not only Rashi, but all the classic *mefarshim* understand the Creation days to be 24-hour type days. Whereas in some other instances the word “*yom*” may refer to longer periods of time, the *meforshim* treat such instances as exceptions, and point out when they occur.¹ They do not do so regarding the days of Creation.⁷

Ibn Ezra:

“*Yom echad*” is a reference to the turning of the sphere ... And after it said that the Light should be called Day, it is not possible to call the evening “Day.” The only *payrush* is: it was evening, and [then] it was also a morning of one day.

Even the **Ramban**, renowned *kabbalist* that he was, indicates impatience toward any tampering with the meaning of the word “day” in the Creation account (*Breishis* 1:3):

Know that the days mentioned in *Ma'aseh Breishis* were, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, literal days, composed [not of years and millennia, but] of hours and minutes, and they were six, just as are the six days of the work-week,

The Ramban (*ibid.*) even rejects the thesis that the original light initially shined bright for one moment, and then immediately waned to produce a twelve hour night, and then shined for twelve hours. The *Kuzari* (II:20) suggested this to explain the sequence in Scripture of evening preceding morning. The Ramban rejects it “because they would be adding an additional, albeit short, day, onto the specifically six days of Creation.”

In a private communication, Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb has pointed out that the **Rambam** in *Moreh Nevuchim* (2:30) invokes the unanimous position of

All our Sages...that all of this [the creation of Eve from Adam, the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge, and the account of the serpent] took place on the sixth day.... None of those things is impossible, because the laws of Nature were then not yet permanently fixed.

For the Rambam's problem and solution to make sense, he must be presupposing 24-hour days. If the “days” of creation were unspecified “periods” actually consisting of the passage of numerous 24-hour days, there would be no difficulty of containing all the

events mentioned in the pesukim within one such period, and no need to invoke the fact that the laws of Nature were not yet fixed.

Even those commentators who do not directly explain the length of the Creation days in their comments on the verses mentioning those days **do reveal their assumption (no doubt based on *p'shat* and *Chazal*) that they were 24-hour type days** when they deal with another issue: The question arises as to how the first three days of Creation could be measured if, as a simple reading of the verses indicates, the sun was first created on the fourth day. Without a sun, what determined the first three days, and how could they be measured? Defending the *mesorah* that the first three days of Creation, just as the last four, were regular days as we know them, the *mefarshim* offer solutions:

Rambam, in the same chapter of *Moreh Nevuchim* cited above (2:30) posits as follows:

If [as appears from the *p'shat*] there were [as yet, before the fourth day] no [celestial] sphere and no sun, how was the first day timed? ... The foundation of the entire Torah is that Hashem brought the world into being from out of nothingness. [This was] not “within the beginning of Time,” for Time [itself] was created. For time depends upon the movement of the [celestial] sphere and [although the sun and stars were not yet put in position], the sphere *was* created.” [ZL: That is how there were 24-hour days: through the revolution of the celestial sphere or, in our parlance, through the 24-hour rotation of the earth.]⁹ ... Our Sages have explained that ... all things were created together [with heaven and earth on the first day], but were separated from each other successively.... According to this undoubtedly correct interpretation, the difficulty ... is removed, which... consisted in the question as to the thing by which the first day, the second, and the third were determined. In *Breishis Rabba*, our Sages, speaking of the light created on the first day according to the Scriptural account, say as follows: these lights [of the luminaries mentioned in the Creation of the fourth day] are the same that were created on the first day, but were only fixed in their places on the fourth day. The meaning [of the first verse] has thus been clearly stated.

Rabbeynu B'chaya gives the same answer:

“Evening” is the declining of light, and “morning” is the shining of light. Yet the Torah speaks of the first three days experiencing evening and morning, even though “Let there be light-bearers in the Firmament” was not stated yet. This is because regarding the first three days, “evening” and “morning” were not spoken of in the aspect of light, but in the aspect of the rotation of the sphere. But from the fourth day and on, when the light-bearers (the sun, moon and stars) were created, it speaks of “evening” and “morning” with the [effects of] light in mind.

Ralbag gives the same answer:

Abarbanel offers another explanation, which still illustrates the presumption that the days spoken of are 24-hour type days:

How were the first days timed, if there was still no revolving the celestial sphere? [The answer is that] that first Light was an entity spread through space through the will of the Creator, for an allocated time, in which was the day; and it disappeared an allocated amount of time, which was night; and that Light came in gradations of morning and evening and noon. Through this, then, were the days timed in hours and minutes [not years and decades and millennia--ZL] just as the latter, natural days were [later] timed by the revolution of the celestial sphere. (Malbim gives the same explanation.)

Seforno combines the two ideas:

Even though He separated the Light and the Darkness, so that that they would serve at different times without means of the sphere's revolution, He still separated them in such a way so that between them there would be a time of evening [gradually] developing into night, and a time of morning [gradually] developing into [full] daylight.

Rabbeynu Ovadiah MiBartenuro answers in a way that presumes time as a reality independent of the movement of objects:

“And there was morning and there was Evening--One Day.”--The causes of day and night is the movement [or, as we would say, the *apparent* movement--ZL] of the sphere. But since the sphere was not created [until the fourth day], how could the Torah state [already on the first day], how could there have been a morning and an evening? Answer: Hashem told Moses that the amount of time over which this took place was *the same amount of time that [the passage of] morning and evening takes nowadays*.

Ralbag (Breishis 1:1) offers this as one of two answers as well:

By what was the first day, second day, and third day timed, since the light-bearers [sun moon and stars] were not in existence until the fourth day? The answer is clear according to the first explanation [I had given, that all was actually created the first day]: The diurnal sphere was in existence the first day, and each revolution it made was about one day's time.

He then adds:

And it is not bizarre to suggest that it was known to Hashem the measurement of time without the sun and stars. And this is self-explained.

BETWEEN INITIAL CREATION AND BEGINNING OF *TOHU VA-VOHU* STATE

Certainly by now, one perceives the spirit in which our *mesorah* approaches the Torah's description of Creation. All the commentators, while they were certainly aware that there are deep secrets and humanly incomprehensible aspects to *Maaseh Breishis*, still primarily understood whatever the Torah *does* reveal in its plain meaning. Following the

plain meaning, different explanations are offered. All agree that anthropomorphisms, as throughout the Torah, must of course be understood properly. (“The sound of Hashem going through the Garden” refers to the traveling of the sound Hashem created, not to the sound of Hashem walking.) Some attribute to the terms Earth, Heaven, Wind and Darkness the four elements. First-glance impressions are sometimes modified (as concerning the *machlokess* over whether the creation of “the heavens and the earth” means that the heavens were created before the earth, rather than after or, the meaning most *mefarshim* prefer, simultaneously; or precisely what part of the heavens the words “*shamayim*” and “*rakiah*” refer to). But, as we have seen, “days” is never reinterpreted, and the sequence of events is accepted as presented.⁹ We can therefore anticipate how the *mesorah* understands the Torah’s meaning of the state of things between Breishis 1:1, which reports that Hashem created the universe, and the following verses that speak of the earth’s state of *tohu va-vohu* (*emptiness and void*), the creation of Light and everything else.

Did a long period of time pass between the moment of Creation and the earth’s state of *tohu va-vohu*—allowing for the creation of landscapes and creatures and prehistorical histories untold—or did the earth’s state of *tohu va-vohu* follow immediately upon the earth’s creation?

According to several *mefarshim*, including **Rashi**,¹⁰ **Rambam** and **Ramban**, everything was actually created the first day, and the other days consisted of further miraculous extracting, forming and positioning of that which was already created. All agree that no significant time elapsed between Breishis 1:1 and 1:2, and certainly no swamps and evolving dinosaurs and other forms of life existed during that period, and almost needless to say, the origins of vegetable, animal and human life appeared only afterwards, and in fully developed form:

Seforno on Breishis (1:2) “and the earth was *tohu va-vohu*” directly addresses and dismisses such as possibility:

And *that earth created then* was a thing composed of [*tohu va-vohu*]. (I.e., *tohu va-vohu* was the first state of the universe upon the universe’s creation. No time passed between “*Breishis bara*” and “*V’ha’aretz hayssa so-hu va-vohu*.”

Ibn Ezra does the same:

The meaning is that *at the beginning of the creation of the sky and the land*, the earth was uninhabited.

—as does the **Rashbam**:

Do you think that this world has always been fashioned as you see it now--full of all goodness? No, it was not so. *B’raishis bara Elokim, etc.*” Meaning, at the beginning of the creation of the heavens and the earth, meaning, at the time the heavens above and the earth [that you see now--ZL] were already created--*then*, whether for a long or short time, the world was *tohu va-vohu*.

One should not attempt, based on the words, “whether a long or short time” to attribute to the *Rashbam* the idea that between the beginning of “*tohu va-vohu*” and “*Yehi Ohr*” passed millennia of evolutionary processes, leaving physical evidence of plant and animal development which evolutionists have discovered. For the *Rashbam*, along with all the others, define “*tohu va-vohu*” as a state that admits no developments:

Tohu Va-vohu means that there was not in them anything whatsoever ... They were desolate, with no inhabitants.

The Abarbanel makes the same point:

After Scripture clarified the fact of the creation of the heavens and the earth, it comes to clarify how their situation was *now, in their being created* ... and regarding this it says that the earth was *tohu*...

—as does **Rabbeynu B’chaya**:

And all these great *ikkarim* (fundamental principles) are clarified from this *parashah*: It tells us first, that the world is created *m’chudash, ex nihilo*. After its first being *tohu va-vohu*, He created all the existing things in six days, and on the sixth day He created Adam....

And the **Hizkuni** addresses the potential error head-on:

This is not to be explained as meaning that before its creation it had been *tohu va-vohu*...

Thus, all the commentators speak plainly, if not pointedly, of the absence of any vegetation or animal life before the first of the six days, and of six days in a natural sense.¹¹ There is no room to suggest that the *p’sukim*’s words mean anything other than a normal day, and/or that *the tohu va-vohu* state consisted of millennia filled with evidence-leaving, aging, physical entities, and that the origin of the life-forms we have today are with life-forms that were immediately created fully-formed. All such contortions of the biblical text do violence against both its letter and spirit, and are contradicted by the conventional sense presumed and accepted by our *meforshim*.

The *mesorah* we have is a reliable, historical transmission from Adam, Noach and Moses of the factual account of how the world came to be. It is more reliable than speculations based upon the assumption that nature always ruled, always acting as it does now. Indeed, **Midrash Shemos Rabbah** (30:9) records **Onkelos**’ marveling the fact that *the youngest Jewish children know “how the Holy-One-Blessed-be-He created the world.—They know what was created the first day and what was created the second day, how much [time] there is since the world was created, and what [good deeds] sustain the world. And their Torah is true.”* And the **Ramban** cites this *Midrash* to illustrate that “the Torah ‘opens one’s eyes,’ for it reveals to us the secret of the Formation, the subject of *Maaseh Breishis, the Creation and Formation of the Universe.*”

May our eyes be opened to the truths taught by the Torah.

ENDNOTES

¹ The commentaries, including **Rabbeynu Saadia Gaon's** *Emunos V'dei'os* and **Rav Yosef Albo's** *Sefer Halkarrim*, teach us that a word's primary conventional meaning is the proper way to initially understand a given word in the Torah. Only if contradicted by sensory perception, logic, or other verses—data available to the reader since the time of the Torah's revelation—are we to understand the word in a less conventional usage. Thus, as will be demonstrated in this article, Chazal and the commentaries all understood the word “*yom*” in our context to be a 24-hour type day.

² Note that the testimony we are commanded to declare is focused not on the implicit Creation-from-nothing, but on the time period of six days.

³ They fail to recognize the circular nature of their thinking: Evolutionary explanations of how the world came into existence are propelled by a discipline which, in principle and by self-definition, arbitrarily refuses to accept the possibility of a meta-natural (outside-of-natural, i.e., miracle-based) explanation of the world's origins. But meta-natural processes are the very bedrock of the six-day Creation our testimony, as explained by our *mesorah*.

⁴ And the *mesorah* is not beginning its count just from the time of Adam's creation, a suggestion some have made in order to insert millennia of earth's existence before his creation. Nor, in a rather odd interpretation sometimes touted, is it beginning its count just from Adam's “ensoulment,” after his having been a soul-less creature born from a millions-of-years-old line of creature ancestors. For “all of creation was created fully formed.”—At *ma'aseh b'raishis* the ox was created not as a calf but as an adult [Rashi in *Rosh HaShonna* 26a s.v. *shor sheh-hu par*]; and Adam was likewise created as an adult, the Talmud reports, within the same 24-hour period—standing erect.

⁵ *Pirkei Ahvos* (5:1).

⁶ Rashbam, the sole exception, says that the first day only began at the creation of Light, and therefore the earth's period of *tohu va-vohu* (emptiness of visible life-forms), and the heaven's period of Darkness, lasted an indefinite time prior.

⁷ For example, Maimonides' son, Avraham, comments on the verse (Breishis 2:4) reading “...the day Hashem fashioned the Heavens and the Earth.” He says that here the word “day” cannot be taken in its conventional way, because the fashioning of the Heavens and Earth took place over a period lasting six days, not just one. (Needless to say, if he thought the six days of Creation were already not meant as conventional days, the contradiction would not have arisen.)

⁸ The Ramban elaborates on the first created thing, the “*tohu*,” being the equivalent of the formless matter of Greek fame. He assigns no time frame to the phase of “*tohu*,” but

there is no basis to suggest that he disagrees with the Gemora that explicitly includes the “*tohu*” phase among those things created within the first day (of 24 hours), as the *poshut* reading of the *posuk* implies.

⁹ The **Ralbag** has posited that the Rambam means that since everything was created simultaneously and instantly and, as Rambam citing *Chazal* shows, all in their fully developed form, there was no creative or formative activity left to be done the following days. Thus, he concludes, *Chazal* were telling us that the report of events on the ensuing days, until Shabbos, is not meant literally, but is meant to relay the hierarchical relationships between all created things. (It seems difficult to match this to the *Moreh Nevuchim*’s clear advocating of the same *Chazal* that other *rishonim* [such as *Rashi*] cite, which teaches that most things created the first day still needed to be extracted, more fully formed and permanently positioned on the following days, and the *Moreh Nevuchim*’s invoking the fact that Nature was not yet fixed on the sixth day, in order to defend the possibility of so many events occurring on that one day.)

However,. At any rate, the Ralbag’s position (dismissed by the Abarbanel and other commentators) would not be helpful to those who would like to extend the existence of the world to billions of years. On the contrary, according to the Ralbag the world existed six days less than the time stated by the other commentators! And as just demonstrated, the approach of the Ralbag is to build the understanding through the teachings of *Chazal*, and not through rejecting them on the basis that they differ with the science of the day.

¹⁰ Rashi clearly states on 1:14 (see also on 1:6, and *Sifsei Chachamim ad loc*) that everything was actually created on the first day, but each created thing was brought out, fashioned, positioned and/or perfected on the day the Torah declared. Some have made much ado about Rashi’s comment on verse 1:1, where he states that we are forced to say that the *mikreh* is not describing the chronological order of events. They translate “*mikreh*” as “Scripture [in general]” and take Rashi to mean that throughout the entire account of Creation, Scripture does not intend to describe the chronology. This posits the absurd idea that when Scripture says one thing happened on day two, and another on day one, it does not mean to tell us the order of occurrence, and it may really have happened in a different order. The Rashi on 1:14 shows this is wrong. “The light-bearers [sun, moon and stars] were created from the first day, but on the fourth He commanded them to be hung in the sky. And likewise all the *tolodos* of the heavens and earth were created back on the first day, and each one was set in its permanent state on the day decreed for it. This is why [when describing their creation on the first day,] “*ess*” is written before the word *shamayim* and before the word “*ha-arezi*” to include their “offsprings”

Rashi’s comment about the *mikreh* not describing chronological order is in reference to the *first verse*. The focus of this *mikreh*, this verse, is not to tell you the chronology of the creation of the earth in its narrow sense (i.e., *sans* water and the other elements) in relation to heaven or the elements. The first verse, based upon grammar and information we have from *Midrashim*, Rashi holds, must be read not “The first thing G-d created [before water or fire or Light or the vegetation and creatures] was the heavens and the

earth.” It must be read, in conjunction with the following verse, “*During* the start of G-d’s creating heaven and earth...G-d said, ‘Let there be Light!’”

¹¹ And with the exception of the Rashbam, all the *meforshim* include the *tohu va-vohu* period within, and not prior to, the first day. (See note 6.)