

## Genesis 1:1 – Numbers Seven and Eight

by Ed Nelson

The text reads:

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ:  
*Beresheit bara Elohim Aleph-Tav HaShammayim ve-Aleph-Tav haeretz*

*Beresheit* (“in-beginning-of”)

*bara* (“created”)

*Elohim* (“God”; plural of *Eloha* used to amplify with absolute, infinite intensity)

*Aleph-Tav* (usually a pointer to the direct object; interpreted also as a reference to the Messiah—the *Aleph* and the *Tav*, *i.e.*, “the First and the Last”)

*HaShammayim* (“the heavens”)

*ve-Aleph-Tav* (“and-*Aleph-Tav*”)

*haeretz* (“the earth” literally, “the runner”; *cf.* the poetic parallelism in Psalm 147:15: “He sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly”)

Much is said in these seven words, much, much more than this paper will show. For our purpose we shall examine some of the possibilities of meaning using either the method of interpretation known as *remez* (hint or allusion) or *sod* (hidden or secret).

### The *Remez* (Hints or Allusions) in Genesis 1:1

To introduce the interpretive method known as *remez* which shows us hints and allusions in the Hebrew text, let’s look at the complexity of the form and structure of the first sentence in the Torah. Remember, all these things we point out regarding *remez*, if they merit validity, always reveal the value of the Torah and the imprint of the Messiah, the Living Torah, on the Hebrew Bible, its language and people.

**Hints of deeper truth in the numbers—the number seven.** For starters, Genesis 1:1 is a complexity of sevens. Seven is a number that has significant meaning in the Hebrew language. It means “complete” in the sense of the natural order. The seventh day of creation is made holy, for example, bringing to completion the natural order of creation. A partial listing of the sevens found in Genesis 1:1 includes:

1. The total number of Hebrew words in the sentence equals seven.
2. The total number of letters is 28, or seven times four. In this case, we would want to ask what the value of four is in connection to the number seven. We would look for the hint or allusion to something about God and his creation. For example, the Hebrew word for “strength” (*koach*) has the same value of 28. Does this number of letters allude to the strength or power of God?
3. The first three Hebrew words—*Beresheit bara Elohim* (“In [*the*] beginning-of God created ...”)—contain 14 letters, or seven times two. In this case, we would ask the significance of the number three, the number two as well as the number seven.