

DAF HASHAVUA

בראשית | BEREISHIT

SHABBAT ENDS:

- London: 6.49pm
- Birmingham: 6.54pm
- Bournemouth: 6.57pm
- Cardiff: 7.03pm
- Dublin: 7.11pm
- Edinburgh: 6.58pm
- Glasgow: 7.01pm
- Hull: 6.51pm
- Leeds: 6.52pm
- Liverpool: 7.00pm
- Manchester: 6.55pm
- Nottingham: 6.54pm
- Sheffield: 6.55pm
- Southend: 6.45pm
- Southport: 7.01pm
- Jerusalem: 6.40pm

Shabbat Mevarechim

Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan
is on Wednesday and
Thursday



בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

1st Sidra in:
בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

By Numbers:
146 VERSES
1,931 WORDS
7,235 LETTERS

Headlines:
**CREATION OF
THE WORLD**

BEREISHIT:
Artsroll p.2
Hertz p.2
Koren Sacks p.5
Soncino p.1

HAFTARAH:
Artsroll p.1130
Hertz p.21
Koren Sacks p.1409
Soncino p.27

Sidra Summary

1ST ALIYA (KOHEN) – BEREISHIT 1:1-2:3
(The aliya divisions of Bereishit vary from one chumash to another)
The Torah details the six days of Creation. On the first four days, God created light, water, dry land, vegetation, the sun, the moon and the stars. On the fifth day, He created creatures of the sea and the air. On the sixth day, He created animals and the first man and woman, whom He blessed to be fruitful and to have dominion over the rest of Creation. On the seventh day, God rested.

2ND ALIYA (LEVI) – 2:4-19
The creation of human beings is detailed again. Adam is placed in the Garden of Eden to guard and protect it, and is warned not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, lest he become mortal. Chava (Eve) is created from one of Adam's "sides".

3RD ALIYA (SHLISHI) – 2:20-3:21
The snake, the most cunning of animals, manipulates Chava into eating from the Tree of Knowledge, after which Chava also gives Adam its fruit to eat. God rebukes them, punishing Chava with the pain of childbirth and Adam with the need to toil and sweat for his sustenance. The snake is cursed to crawl on his stomach and eat the dust of the earth.
Point to Consider: *Why is it considered a curse for the snake to have his food constantly available? (3:14)*

4TH ALIYA (REVI'I) – 3:22-4:18
Chava gives birth to Cain and Hevel (Abel). They both bring offerings. Hevel's offering is accepted. However, Cain's offering is inferior and is not accepted by God,

who then appears to Cain and tells him to improve his ways rather than remain downcast. Nevertheless, Cain goes into a field and murders Hevel. God punishes Cain by decreeing that he will be a homeless wanderer for the rest of his life. Cain's descendants are listed.

5TH ALIYA (CHAMISHI) – 4:19-22
Lemech is the sixth generation from Cain. Lemech's children pioneer cattle-breeding, instrumental music and metal sharpening.

6TH ALIYA (SHISHI) – 4:23-5:24
Lemech accidentally kills Cain (see Rashi) and pleads his innocence to his wives. Adam has another son, called Shet (Seth). The ten generations from Adam to Noach are listed, including their age at death. Adam dies aged 930.

7TH ALIYA (SHEVI'I) – 5:25-6:8
Noach has three sons: Shem, Cham and Yefet. Immorality starts to spread and God decides to limit humanity's lifespan to 120 years. After further sins, God 'regrets' the fact that He created humanity and decides to wipe out all living creatures, apart from Noach and his family.

HAFTARAH (YESHAYA 42:5-43:10)
The prophet Yeshaya (Isaiah) declares God's ongoing mastery over Creation and charges Israel to be "a light unto the nations". He encourages us to help other nations remove their blindness to God's greatness. Yet Israel often disappoints and does not lead by example to fulfill this mission. Nevertheless, God does not abandon us.



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COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

THE GOD OF CREATION AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL

To mark the upcoming 5th yahrzeit of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l and The Rabbi Sacks Global Day of Learning 2025 on 20 Cheshvan (11.11.2025), we will feature over several weeks a potpourri of parasha articles taken from the archives of the Covenant & Conversation Family Edition. Learn more from Rabbi Sacks at www.rabbisacks.org

The very first question Rashi (1040-1105) raises in his Commentary on the Chumash is: Why does the Torah begin with the story of Creation? His answer is fascinating. Seven times God will promise the land of Israel to Avraham, once to Yitzchak, and three times to Yaacov. Soon after we complete the book of Bereishit, we will read of Moshe hearing about "the land flowing with milk and honey." After that, the entire Torah is about Israel, the destination of the Jewish journey.

If the central theme of the Torah is the promise of the Land, the beginning must in some way be related to it. Hence Rashi's comment on the first verse of the Torah explaining why the Torah begins with the Creation narrative:

So that if the nations of the world will say to Israel, "You took the land by force," Israel can reply to them, "The whole earth belongs to the God. He created it... and by His will He gave [the Land] to us."

The Creation narrative is therefore highly relevant to Israel. It signals that the Jewish People's connection to the Land of Israel comes from the highest

conceivable source, the Sovereign of the universe, the Creator of all.

And now an obvious question arises. Why should a religion be tied to a land? It sounds absurd, especially in the context of monotheism. Surely the God of everywhere can be served anywhere. The answer here is that Judaism is primarily about collective redemption, about what it is to create an entire society that is the opposite of ancient Egypt, where the strong enslaved the weak. The Torah teaches of a society of free people, where justice rules and each individual is

recognised as bearing the image of God. We are social animals.

Therefore we find God in society. That is what we discover when we reflect on the basic structure of the Torah's many commands. They include laws about courts of justice, the conduct of war, ownership of land, employer-employee relationships, the welfare of the poor, and the *Shmittah* cancellation of debts.

Laws shape a society, and a society needs space. A sacred society needs sacred space, a holy land.



Hence Jews and Judaism need their own land. In four thousand years, for much of which Jews lived in exile, the people of the covenant were scattered over the face of the earth. There is no land in which Jews have never lived. Yet in all those centuries,

there was only one land where they were able to do what almost every other nation takes for granted: create their own society in accordance with their own beliefs.

The premise of the Torah is that God must be found somewhere

in particular if He is to be found everywhere in general. Just as in the Creation narrative Shabbat is holy time, so in the Torah as a whole Israel is holy space. That is why, in Judaism, religion is tied to a land, and a land is linked to a religion.

COVENANT AND CONVERSATION

WHY WERE WE CREATED?

There is a deep question at the heart of Jewish faith. The Torah begins with God creating the universe day by day, bringing order out of chaos and forming wondrous diversity. At each stage God sees what He has made and declares it good. What then went wrong? How did evil enter the picture? The short answer is: humans. Of all the life forms thus far known to us, only we have freewill and moral responsibility. We have the ability to choose wisely and morally, but we often get it wrong.

It is our complex capacity to speak, think, and choose, that is at once our glory, our burden, and our shame. We are the one form of life capable of destroying the very order God made and declared good.

So why did God create us? That is the question posed by the Talmud, imagining a conversation between God and the angels:

When God came to create man, He created a group of angels and asked them, "Should we make humanity in our image?" They

replied, "What will be their deeds?" So God showed them the future of humankind. The angels replied, "Let man not be created." And God destroyed the angels. He created a second group, and asked them the same question, and they gave the same answer. God destroyed them.

He created a third group of angels, and they replied, "God, the others told You not to create man, You did not listen. What then can we say but this: The universe is Yours. Do with it as You wish." And God created man. But when it came to the generation who built the Flood and then the Tower of Babel, the angels said to God, "Were not the first angels right? See the corruption of humans!" And God replied, "Even to old age I will not change, and even to grey hair, I will still be patient."

The angels' question is the ultimate one at the heart of faith. Why did God, knowing the risks and dangers, make a species that could and did rebel against Him, devastate the natural environment, hunt species to extinction, and oppress and kill his fellow man?

The Talmud thus suggests a tension within the mind of God Himself.

The answer God gives the angels is extraordinary. He is saying, I, God, am prepared to wait. However many times humans disappoint Me, I will not change. However much evil they do in the world, I will not despair. God created humanity because God has faith in humanity. We may fail many times, but each time we fail, God says: "I will still be patient. I will never give up on humanity. I will never lose faith. I will wait for as long as it takes for humans to learn not to oppress or use violence against other humans." That, implies the Talmud, is the only conceivable explanation for why a good, wise, all-seeing and all-powerful God created such fallible, destructive creatures as us. God has patience. God has forgiveness. God has compassion. God has love.

For centuries, people have been looking at religion upside-down. The real phenomenon at its heart – the mystery and miracle – is not our faith in God. It is God's faith in us.



RABBI ELI SALASNIK, Z"l

A TRIBUTE

BY: **RABBI MEIR SALASNIK AND RAFI SALASNIK**

Rabbi Meir Salasnik is a former Rabbi of Bushey United Synagogue

Our father, Rabbi Eli Salasnik (Harav Yosef Eliyahu ben Harav Menachem Ya'akov), whose 10th yahrtzeit falls this Shabbat, 26 Tishrei, dedicated over 60 years to serving Anglo-Jewish communities—even though he arrived in Britain in his mid-20s with only limited English.

Born 100 years ago in Jerusalem's Old City to parents also born there, he was a sixth-generation Israeli. His paternal ancestors were followers of the Vilna Gaon, who, although he never made it to the Land of Israel himself, encouraged his disciples to move there. The family first settled in Safed, later relocating to Jerusalem.

Rabbi Salasnik's education was firmly rooted in Torah learning, with minimal secular studies. He studied at the Chevron Yeshiva and later at Yeshivat Merkaz HaRav, founded by Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook.

His maternal great-uncle founded Yeshivat Torat Chaim in the Old City, where his grandfather was among the *Roshei Yeshiva*. The family lived in rooms within the *yeshiva* building, located just outside the Jewish Quarter and frequently attacked. During the 1929 riots, they fled to the new city, and tragically, his aunt's husband was murdered in the Hebron



Rabbi Eli in 1950

massacre. Despite widespread destruction following the 1948 war, Torat Chaim was one of the few Jewish buildings spared—

thanks to the devotion of its Circassian caretaker.

In January 1948, our father buried his great-uncle (his future wife's grandfather) at the Mount of Olives under heavy fire from Arabs. It was one of the last burials there until after 1967.

On 22 February 1948, while on Haganah guard duty on Ben Yehuda Street, he narrowly missed being caught in a bombing carried out by British Army deserters working with Arab forces. Dozens were killed, and many injured. That Pesach, he guarded the western approaches to Jerusalem, protecting convoys from Tel Aviv and ensuring the survival of Jerusalem. That hill became part of Har Nof—now home to many of our family.

He married our mother, his English-born second cousin, who had moved to Israel. After their engagement, she contracted polio and returned to London following the wedding to recover. He followed her there, intending to study law, but instead used his *semicha* to serve as a community rabbi.

In 1952, he became rabbi of Walthamstow & Leyton Synagogue, which later became Waltham Forest Hebrew Congregation. He led the community for over 35 years—their longest-serving minister. He also served as a rabbinic supervisor for the London Board of Shechita and was active in the Federation Beth Din.

Believing deeply in the value of Jewish education, he founded the Walthamstow & Leyton Jewish



(l-r) Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Salasnik (Rabbi Eli's uncle), Dayan Hillman, Chief Rabbi Herzog & Rabbi Eli, at his wedding

Day School, which he, with other volunteers, sustained for 25 years without government support.

After retiring, he served the Brighton & Hove (Holland Road) community, then was interim rabbi at Chigwell & Hainault United Synagogue, before Rabbi Baruch Davis' appointment. He also chaired the Rabbinical Council of East London and West Essex.

Rabbi Eli Salasnik was much beloved by his family and the wider Jewish community, on which he had a huge impact. He was charismatic, empathetic, warm, reassuring, approachable, and deeply devoted. He left behind a legacy of kindness, dedication and quiet leadership, and is remembered with deep affection by all who knew him. We feel profoundly blessed to have had him as our father.



A characteristic pose: Rabbi Eli in 2008



BABYLONIAN EXILE: PART ONE

SEFER MELACHIM (KINGS) II: CHAPTER 24

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and US Educator

During the reign of King Yehoyakim, Babylon rises to become the new superpower, replacing Egypt. Nevuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, turned Yehuda (Judah) into a vassal kingdom. Jewish kings had been subjected to this vassal status for some time: first to the Assyrians, then to the Egyptians. Now it is the turn of the Babylonians.

We must remember that, during this period, Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) the prophet is constantly sharing the word of God. He urges the people to repent and improve their ways to avoid further punishment. However, he is largely ignored. During Yehoyakim's reign, a scroll containing Yirmiyahu's prophecies is brought to the royal court, to be read aloud before the king and his

advisors. Yehoyakim ignores the divine message and tosses the scroll into the fireplace.¹

Yehoyakim accepts this vassal status for three years before rebelling against the Babylonians. In response, the Babylonian army invades Yehuda. The *Tanach* records that this is the fulfilment of God's decree of destruction due to the sins of a previous king, Menashe. In fact, the *Tanach* states that "God sent against [Yehoyakim] troops" rather than the Babylonian king sending them (*II Melachim* 24:2). There should be no mistaking the situation here. This is all part of God's plan.

At this point, Yehoyakim dies. *Sefer Melachim* does not record how, but in *II Divrei HaYamim* (Chronicles) 36:6, we are told that he is deported to Babylon in chains. Rashi (1040-1105) explains that Yehoyakim was dragged along the ground whilst being deported, which is how he dies.

Yehoyachin now becomes king at the age of 18. He reigns for only three months before he is exiled from Yehuda in the first stage of the *Churban* (destruction of the Temple). In this first stage, the elite of society are exiled: the king, the royal family, the Kohanim, the army and the wealthy. The Babylonians initially believed that the poor Jews could be left behind in Jerusalem

without posing a threat to their rule. At this point, they ransack the royal treasury and the *Beit HaMikdash* (Temple) but do not destroy the building.

An important figure included in this first exile is Yechezkel (Ezekiel) the prophet. Due to his status as a priest, he is counted among the upper class. He plays a fundamental role among the exiles, providing encouraging prophecies and uplifting the people during this time of crisis and despair. Throughout *Sefer Yechezkel*, the prophet refers to the exile of Yehoyachin repeatedly, reiterating what a disastrous milestone it was for that generation.

The Babylonians place a new king on the throne. This is Mattaniah, son of the former king, Yoshiyahu, and uncle to the previous king, Yehoyachin. They change his name to Tzidkiyahu to illustrate their power over the people. He becomes king at the age of 21, rules for 11 years and will be the final king before the *Churban*. He is recorded as being a wicked king.

The final verse of our chapter records that "Tzidkiyahu rebels against the King of Babylonia" because of the "anger of God". Once again, God ensures that His plan for punishment is coming to fruition. Time has run out for the people to repent and change the final decree.

“The *Tanach* (Hebrew Bible) states that “God sent against [Yehoyakim] troops” rather than the Babylonian king sending them (*II Melachim* 24:2). There should be no mistaking the situation here. This is all part of God’s plan.”

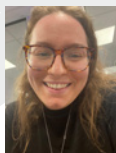
¹ This is recorded in *Sefer Yirmiyahu*, chapter 36.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT BEREISHIT

17-18 OCTOBER | 26 TISHREI

NEW BEGINNINGS



BY: **TOMOR
BELOVSKI**

Tribe Projects
Executive

"Bereishit bara Elohim - In the beginning God created"

These words may be familiar to you as the first three words of the Torah. We have celebrated Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Succot and Simchat Torah, and we begin the new cycle of Torah reading this week, as we do every year after Simchat Torah. Simchat Torah is a time to celebrate the gift of the Torah that God has given us, and now we start afresh.

The *parasha* breaks down the

creation of the world, each day more is added into the world until God created human beings. The words "...it was good" are used many times during the description of Creation. Why does God need to admire the work He has done? One explanation for this could be to teach us that everything God created in this world is good and has a purpose. He gifted us a world to use in the correct way – one that offers us endless opportunities to build a world of giving, kindness and meaning.

As young members of the Jewish community, we also have purpose and a chance to look around us and see what can we give. Is there an older person who needs to smile today? What school

chesed (kindness) project can I help with, or start, today? Which friend can I start afresh with today?

Starting from the beginning is sometimes hard, but each year, just as we read the Torah right from the very start, let it remind us that we have the opportunity to start anew. There is a famous YouTube video of a US Navy Seal who describes how during training, he had to make his bed every morning. Even though this might appear a small, unremarkable and irrelevant task, by doing this every morning, it encouraged him to start afresh and give of his best every day.

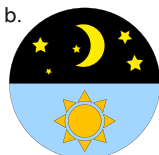
What can you create with your new beginning today, this week or this year?

Creation Match-Up!

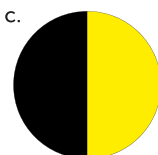
Can you match the pictures to the days of creation?



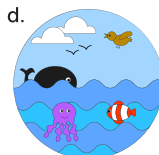
Day ?



Day ?



Day ?



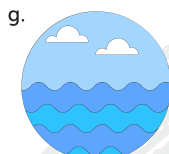
Day ?



Day ?



Day ?



Day ?



Answers: a. Day 7 - Rest/Shabbat b. Day 4 - Sun, moon and stars c. Day 1 - Light and darkness d. Day 5 - Fish and birds e. Day 6 - Animals and humans f. Day 3 - Land, seas and plants g. Day 2 - Sky and waters



THE TRIBE SCRIBE

BEREISHIT: ROUND AND ROUND!

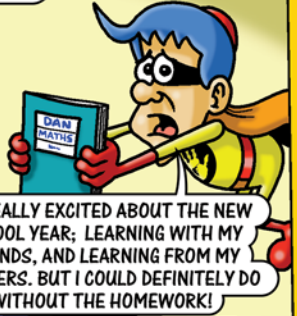
BEREISHIT MEANS 'IN THE BEGINNING'!



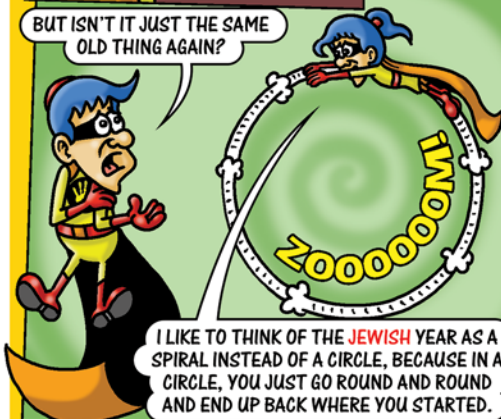
IT'S NOT JUST THE TORAH READING STARTING AGAIN. WE HAVE A WHOLE SEASON OF BEGINNINGS, STARTING WITH THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR, AND THEN, OF COURSE, ROSH HASHANAH!



I'M REALLY EXCITED ABOUT THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR; LEARNING WITH MY FRIENDS, AND LEARNING FROM MY TEACHERS. BUT I COULD DEFINITELY DO WITHOUT THE HOMEWORK!



BUT ISN'T IT JUST THE SAME OLD THING AGAIN?

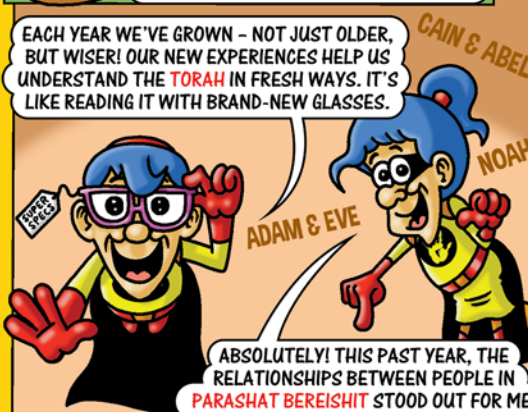


I LIKE TO THINK OF THE JEWISH YEAR AS A SPIRAL INSTEAD OF A CIRCLE, BECAUSE IN A CIRCLE, YOU JUST GO ROUND AND ROUND AND END UP BACK WHERE YOU STARTED.

BUT IN A SPIRAL, YOU COME BACK TO THE SAME SPOT - ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL!

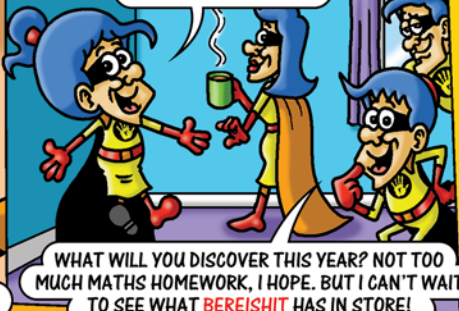


EACH YEAR WE'VE GROWN - NOT JUST OLDER, BUT WISER! OUR NEW EXPERIENCES HELP US UNDERSTAND THE TORAH IN FRESH WAYS. IT'S LIKE READING IT WITH BRAND-NEW GLASSES.



ABSOLUTELY! THIS PAST YEAR, THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE IN PARASHAT BEREISHIT STOOD OUT FOR ME.

FAMILIES IN THE TORAH AREN'T PERFECT (JUST LIKE OURS), BUT THROUGH LOVE, LOYALTY AND EVEN STRUGGLES, WE LEARN TO CONNECT TO EACH OTHER AND GOD.



WHAT WILL YOU DISCOVER THIS YEAR? NOT TOO MUCH MATHS HOMEWORK, I HOPE. BUT I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT BEREISHIT HAS IN STORE!



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www.tribeuk.com

Tribe is the Young People's Department of the United Synagogue: Creating a future for our community through engaging, educating and inspiring the next generation.