

In loving memory of Lazer Ben Chaim (Józef Bojm), who passed away on 30 Tishrei 5757 (13 October 1996). May his memory be a blessing and his soul have an aliyah.

בס"ד

10 OCTOBER 2026 | 29 TISHREI 5787

VOLUME 40 | #6

DAF HASHAVUA

בראשית | BEREISHIT

SHABBAT ENDS:

London: 7.05pm
Birmingham: 7.12pm
Bournemouth: 7.15pm
Cardiff: 7.20pm
Dublin: 7.29pm
Edinburgh: 7.17pm
Glasgow: 7.21pm
Hull: 7.09pm
Leeds: 7.10pm
Liverpool: 7.18pm
Manchester: 7.13pm
Nottingham: 7.12pm
Sheffield: 7.13pm
Southend: 7.01pm
Southport: 7.20pm
Jerusalem: 6.50pm

Shabbat Mevarechim

**Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan is
on Sunday and Monday**



SIDRA
BREAKDOWN

בִּרְאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

1st Sidra in:
בִּרְאשִׁית
BEREISHIT

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

Headlines:
**CREATION OF
THE WORLD**

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

**HAFTARAH
(MACHAR CHODESH):**
Artscroll p.1207
Hertz p.948
Koren Sacks p.1645
Soncino p.1189

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'Y) – 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'Y) – 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 (I SHMUEL 20:18-42)
The haftarah is the special reading for Shabbat Erev Rosh Chodesh, from the Book of Shmuel (Samuel). It relates how Yehonatan (Jonathan) risked his life to protect his friend David (later to be King David) from the wrath of Yehonatan's father, King Shaul (Saul). Their initial discussion of how to ensure David's safety took place on Erev Rosh Chodesh, the day before Shaul's special feast.



To sponsor Daf Hashavua, scan this QR code or go to
www.theus.org.uk/daf-hashavua-sponsorship

For any comments or questions, contact
education@theus.org.uk

United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

Produced by US Education & Events together with the Rabbinical Council of the United Synagogue

Editor-in-Chief: Rabbi Baruch Davis
Editorial and Production Team:
Rabbi Daniel Sturgess
Rebbetzen Nechama Davis
Shevi Grunewald
Jennifer Dorling

www.theus.org.uk
©United Synagogue 2026



WHERE ARE YOU?

BY: **SHIRA JACKSON**

US Education

Bereishit opens on a cosmic scale - light and darkness, the heavens, oceans and the earth, followed by the great luminaries and then living creatures to inhabit each new environment. But when the Torah turns to mankind, the text seemingly begins to repeat itself. The creation of humanity is layered.

Rav Soloveitchik (1903-1993), in *The Lonely Man of Faith*, famously reads the two creation accounts as two dimensions of the human personality. In *Bereishit* Chapter 1, Adam I is described by Rav Soloveitchik as "majestic man." He is commanded to fill the earth and conquer it. He is a builder of civilisation, a problem solver, an achiever. The Rav emphasises that this drive is not only necessary but dignified and creative. Adam I contributes to society, uplifts the human condition, and expresses the talents God placed within him.

In *Bereishit* Chapter 2, Adam II is formed from dust, placed in a garden, and immediately confronted with loneliness. God declares, "it is not good for man to be alone," and creates Eve. The Rav calls Adam II "covenantal man"; he's lonely and seeks meaning, relationship and connection.

The Rav insists these are not two types of people but two dimensions within each of

“ The challenge of contemporary life is not choosing one over the other but finding space for both.

us. They are two voices, two legitimate human callings that often pull in different directions.

We can see how this framework helps illuminate the story that follows. The sin of the Tree of Knowledge is not described as a rebellion. Adam and Eve were not trying to provoke God; they were overcome by a moment of desire and curiosity. Applying Rav Soloveitchik's categories to this episode, we might say that Adam and Eve reached for wisdom with the drive of Adam I; they had an impulse to expand, grasp knowledge and understanding. Yet they had not cultivated the qualities of Adam II, the capacity to hold moral knowledge and the responsibility to uphold it.

After the sin, God calls out, "Ayeka?" "Where are you?" (*Bereishit* 3:9). It is the first question addressed to a human being. Not "What did you do?" but "Where are you in relation to Me, to yourself, to the person you hope to become?" It is the eternal question of Adam II, an inward, searching voice.

The tension between these two dimensions is not theoretical; it is the makeup

of our daily lives. We organise, manage and produce, answer emails, meet deadlines, pay bills and juggle responsibilities. We live as Adam I every day, not only out of necessity, but as a meaningful expression of our creativity and responsibility.

Yet the soul that God breathed into us when He created Adam II quietly longs for something else. Connection. Meaning. Rootedness. Torah. Relationships. God. The challenge of contemporary life is not choosing one over the other but finding space for both.

The Talmud teaches that one of the questions we will be asked after we leave this world is, "Did you set aside fixed times for learning Torah?" (*Shabbat* 31a). Not, "Did you learn everything?" or "Are you a scholar?" Simply, did you carve out a small, steady space for your soul? Something nourishing, realistic and manageable in your regular week.

Amid the demands of Adam I, as we start the Torah cycle anew, let us make room for Adam II, beginning the year with balance and a commitment to feed the part of us that quietly asks, "Ayeka - where are you?"



SEFER YIRMIYAHU (JEREMIAH) – PART 7

YIRMIYAHU UNDER THE FINAL KINGS OF YEHUDA

BY: **PNINA SAVERY**

Ma'ayan and US Educator

During the brief reign of Yehoyachin (Jeconiah), the penultimate king of Yehuda (Judah), Yirmiyahu (Jeremiah) returns to his public role as a prophet. He had been in hiding due to persecution by the previous king, Yehoyakim (Joakim). Yirmiyahu is now commanded by God to convey important messages to the people through actions. For example, he must destroy a linen undergarment. God states “so shall I ruin the pride of Yehuda and the pride of Yerushalayim (Jerusalem)” (*Yirmiyahu* 13:9).

The prophet calls upon the leaders to “be humble” although he understands that people don’t change (13:18). He states: “a leopard never changes his spots” (13:23). Frustrated with the reluctance of the kings to listen to his prophecies, Yirmiyahu openly criticises Yehoyachin. He uses a derogatory nickname and calls him a “despised, broken vessel that nobody wants” (22:28).

Yehoyachin rules for only 3 months. The Babylonians exile him along with the rest of the elite of society. Those left in Yehuda are to be ruled by another member of the royal family, Mataniah, who is renamed Tzidkiyahu by the Babylonians.

With Tzidkiyahu as the new king, Yirmiyahu states that the exiled

upper echelon of society are the “good figs”. This means that they will return to *Eretz Yisrael* 70 years later. Those currently left in Israel (“the bad figs” in this metaphor) will be lost (24:1-10). Yirmiyahu understands that the exile of the elite is only stage one in a process of destruction. His job now is to encourage Tzidkiyahu to act appropriately, to ensure that the coming destruction is as limited as possible.

In Chapter 27, we read how Yirmiyahu wanders the streets of Yerushalayim with a yoke around his neck, urging the people to serve the Babylonian rulers and live. At this point, Yirmiyahu comes up against the false prophet Channaniah, who claims that God will break the yoke of Babylon in two years (28:1-4). The people are swayed by this pronouncement. However, the two-year mark comes and goes without fulfilment of the prophecy, proving it to be false.

Interestingly, Yirmiyahu sends words of encouragement to the exiled Jews in Babylon, urging them to live normal lives and put down roots there. He even tells them to pray for the welfare of their new homeland (29:7). This is the basis for the prayer for the Royal Family that we say on Shabbat morning.

Finally, Babylonian armies lay

“ The exiled upper echelon of society are the “good figs”. This means that they will return to Eretz Yisrael 70 years later.

waste to the towns of Yehuda and lay siege to Yerushalayim. King Tzidkiyahu sends word to Yirmiyahu, asking him to pray for the people (37:3). Rabbi Benny Lau points out that a different passage shows God’s answer to this prayer: “do not pray on behalf of this people... rather I will destroy them with sword, famine and plague” (14:11-12).¹ This is very difficult for the people to accept. They believe that Yirmiyahu’s refusal to pray is because he doesn’t love the people enough. Instead, Yirmiyahu encourages the people to surrender to the invading armies so that they will be allowed to live (21:3-10).

This angers both the king and the people. Accused of collaborating with the enemy and discouraging the remaining soldiers from defending the city, Yirmiyahu is imprisoned (38:6,28).

We can only imagine the pain and heartache Yirmiyahu experiences at this stage in his story.

¹ Binyamin Lau, *Jeremiah: The Fate of a Prophet*, p.155-156.

ISRAEL IN THE PARASHA

This series is an adaptation of short ideas written by former Chief Rabbi Lord Jakobovits z"l in the 1960s, which were later reprinted in a compilation of his writings, 'Mishnat HaSar'.

BEREISHIT: THE JEWISH CLAIM TO THE LAND OF ISRAEL

The most striking reference to the Jewish claim to the Land of Israel appears at the very beginning of Rashi's seminal commentary on the Torah. The Torah is not a book of science or history. Why, then, does it begin with the story of Creation rather than with the first commandments given to the Jewish people in *Shemot*, chapter 12?

Rashi cites the *Midrash*: "If the nations of the world accuse

Israel of being robbers for having overcome the seven Canaanite nations, Israel can answer: "The whole earth belongs to God. He created it and gave it to whomever He deemed fitting. By His will He gave it to them, and by His will He took it from them and gave it to us."

Therefore, the book of Bereishit was intended to establish the Jewish people's moral right to the Land of Israel, a right promised to them by God.

The Torah does this by extending its narrative all the way back to the very beginning of Creation.

“ The book of Bereishit was intended to establish the Jewish people's moral right to the Land of Israel, a right promised to them by God.

PHRASE OF THE WEEK

BY: **RABBI ALEX CHAPPER** | Borehamwood & Elstree United Synagogue

Each week, working our way through the alphabet, we explore a Jewish word or phrase, bringing clarity and deeper understanding to its meaning.

L
M
N

Does **MIKRAOT GEDOLOT** mean:

1. Open miracles? |
2. Significant period of time? |
3. The Great Texts?

First published in 1517 by Daniel Bomberg, *Mikraot Gedolot* is an edition of the *Chumash* (often in five volumes) that contains not only the text of the Torah but also includes several of its most influential translations and commentaries.

This was a typographical innovation that displayed a page of the Torah text in a similar way to that of the Talmud. It presents a number of verses from the Torah and alongside them an Aramaic translation by Onkelos.

Beneath the text there is an array of major commentaries including Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Ramban and Seforno as standard. Depending on the edition and the space available, it might also feature additional commentaries such as the Rashbam, Kli Yakar and Ohr HaChaim.

The benefit of this edition is that it allows the reader to gain a deeper understanding of a verse based on the different perspectives cited. The array of commentaries provides

the reader with a range of interpretations, from the "*peshat*" – simple explanation of the text – to "*derash*" – a more homiletic approach.

Over the years, new editions have been published that contain additional elements and references, and earlier inaccuracies have been corrected through comparison with the manuscripts they were based on.



THE COMMENTATORS:

HAKETAV VEHAKABBALAH

BY: **RABBI MICHAEL LAITNER**

US Director of Education & Head of Research at the Rabbi Sacks Legacy

Nineteenth-century Germany, as the Enlightenment developed, was a challenging place for believing Jews. It called for strong and scholarly Jewish leadership. One exemplar of this was Rabbi Yaakov Zvi Mecklenberg.

His birthplace, Lissa, was famous for its Jewish scholarship. He showed an early appetite and aptitude for Torah learning and he maintained this even when he went into business. He entered the rabbinate in 1831, when a vacancy arose in Koenigsburg (today Kaliningrad, Russia). It was a centre of the Enlightenment and home to the philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). It was here that Rabbi Mecklenberg's scholarship and leadership would emerge.

Jewish observance and belief, especially relating to the integrity of the Torah and Jewish law, faced an onslaught from Enlightenment ideas such as Biblical Criticism. These ideas were promulgated by Jewish assimilationists and various Christian scholars alike. This posed a dangerous existential threat, spiritually and even physically, to Jews and Judaism. Koenigsburg's new rabbi was thrown into the eye of the storm to defend and promote Judaism.

It was in this context that *Haketav Vehakabbalah* was

written. Its title shows its intent. *Haketav* refers to the text of the Torah (and the other parts of the *Tanach*, Hebrew Bible). *Hakabbalah* is not mysticism, but the more general term for the Oral Law, which sits alongside the Torah. In the face of attacks, Rabbi Mecklenberg demonstrated the harmonisation of both as a single unit and the authenticity of the Revelation at Sinai. Let's consider an example at the end of *Parashat Bereishit*, in chapter 6.

This section describes the wickedness of human beings even at that early stage: "Then God regretted (*vayinachem*) that He had made man on earth, and His heart was touched with sorrow."¹

Was this the end of humanity? If so, especially in the context of the attacks on Judaism, what message does that send about the integrity of Judaism, whose basis is in the Torah?

The word *vayinachem* is not straightforward to translate. Rabbi Sacks follows the view of the medieval Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra, that God 'regretted', rather than the more familiar translation of 'comforted', which is Rashi's explanation.

Rabbi Mecklenberg chooses a different route. Quoting from the Biblical prophets Hoshea (11:8)

RABBI YAAKOV ZVI MECKLENBERG

Name: Rabbi Yaakov Zvi Mecklenberg
Lived: 1785-1865

Locations: Germany: Lissa, near Posen; Koenigsburg

Selected works: *Haketav Vehakabbalah*, 1839
(translated into English by Rabbi Eliyahu Munk, Ktav Publications, 2001); *Iyun Tefillah* and *Derech HaChayim* on the siddur.



and Jonah (3:8), he suggests that *vayinachem* here should be understood as God's mercy being aroused despite human wickedness, so that God would give us another chance. This explanation sits well with an earlier verse (6:3) that God would give us 120 years to make things right, and the continuation of chapter 6, which describes Noah and the ark, the construction of which took...120 years (Rashi 6:3).

God's mercy prevailed over strict justice, alongside the opportunity for humanity to improve. This approach is an example of the rabbinic teachings of *teshuva*, based on the Oral Law. These became particularly important following the destruction of the Second Temple, which gave rise to a major theological question: how do we find our way back to God, to His Land and to His Temple?

Rabbi Mecklenberg's approach taught his readers of the harmonisation of Written and Oral Law. He reminded us that even those who had strayed from Judaism should not despair of finding the road back home.

¹ Translation of Rabbi Sacks, used with permission.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT BEREISHIT

9-10 OCTOBER | 29 TISHREI

CREATING CREATORS



BY: **HANNAH REUBEN**

Tribe Senior
Operations Manager

At the beginning of *Bereishit*, the Torah describes how God created the world. But if we look carefully, we notice a pattern that repeats throughout the six days.

"And God said, 'Let there be...' And there was... And God saw that it was good."

Rabbi Sacks zt"l points out that these are actually three stages of creation. First comes an idea or vision: "Let there be." Then comes action: "And there was." Finally

comes reflection: "And God saw that it was good."

This is a powerful lesson because we are also creators.

We create when we have an idea, when we build a friendship, when we write something, solve a problem, make a joke that cheers someone up, or even decide to change something about ourselves.

But having an idea isn't enough. We have to turn it into action. And even then, we should stop and ask, is what I created actually good?

There is something else fascinating. After each stage of creation, God looks at what He has made. He doesn't simply move on to the next thing. He pauses and

evaluates it.

Perhaps this is a lesson for us in a world where everything moves so quickly. We are constantly creating, posting, messaging and doing. But sometimes the most important thing we can do is stop and look.

What am I creating? What effect am I having on the people around me? Am I making the world a little better?

Rabbi Sacks teaches us that human beings are unique because we can imagine a world that doesn't yet exist - and then help bring it into existence.

Bereishit is therefore not only the story of how God created the world. It is an invitation to become creators ourselves.

Creation Match

Match each item to the day they were created

DAY 1

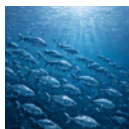
DAY 2

DAY 3

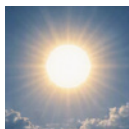
DAY 4

DAY 5

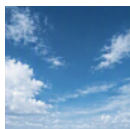
DAY 6



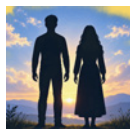
A.



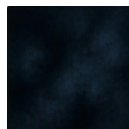
B.



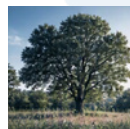
C.



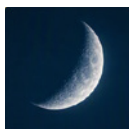
D.



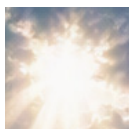
E.



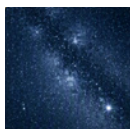
F.



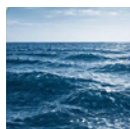
G.



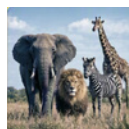
H.



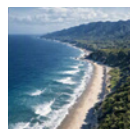
I.



J.



K.



L.



M.

THE TRIBE SCRIBE

The Day the Walls Came Down

Yericho (Jericho) is completely shut, because the people have heard all about the miracles **God** had done for the **B'nei Yisrael** (Children of Israel). The people are nervous.

Yehoshua remembers the promise made to **Rachav**, who sheltered the spies. Her scarlet cord marks her home.

Day 1: The **Kohanim** (Priests) are carrying the **Ark**, and seven **Kohanim** are walking in front of it blowing **Shofarot**. The people walk once around the city walls.

RACHAV AND HER FAMILY MUST BE HELPED ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE.

WE PROCEED AS COMMANDED.

WE WILL COMPLETE THE CIRCUIT IN SILENCE AND RETURN TO CAMP.

GOOD JOB YOU BOUGHT ME THOSE NEW TRAINERS, MUM! OOPS, I'M SUPPOSED TO BE SILENT!

SURE! GOD SPLIT THE SEA AND IT CAME CRASHING DOWN ON THE EGYPTIAN ARMY. AND GOD DID SOMETHING SIMILAR WITH THE RIVER JORDAN ONLY RECENTLY!

For six days, the same pattern continues: the **Ark**, the priests with **Shofarot** being blown, and the people circling the city once each day.

On the seventh day, the people rise early and circle the city seven times.

After the seventh circuit, the **Kohanim** sound a long, sustained blast of the **Shofarot**.

THEY'RE MARCHING AGAIN!

WE CONTINUE WITHOUT CHANGE!

YOU MUST COMPLETE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THE 7 CIRCUITS.

WE STAND READY!

THOSE AIR-CUSHIONED SOLES HAVE COME IN REALLY HANDY!

SHOFAR SHO GOOD! THIS REALLY IS A LOOOONG BLAST!

I'M HAVING A BLAST!

THE SEVENTH ROUND IS NEAR!

Then, **Yehoshua** tells the people to shout at the top of their voices, after the seventh circuit.

LIFT YOUR VOICES, ALL OF YOU!

NOT SO LOUD!

I'M SO PROUD TOO!

NO, I SAID, NOT SO LOUD!

SORRY. I STILL CAN'T HEAR YOU!

The walls of **Jericho** fall, and the **Children of Israel** walk into the city.

THE WALLS HAVE FALLEN.

CRASH!

ADVANCE! THE PATH IS OPEN!

RACHAV, GATHER YOUR FAMILY. COME SAFELY WITH US.

WE ARE READY. WE WILL FOLLOW.

Yehoshua sends the same two spies as in the earlier episode, to bring **Rachav** and her family out safely, fulfilling the promise.