

In memory of Yentel bat Zev z"l

בס"ד

14 OCTOBER 2023 | 29 TISHREI 5784

VOLUME 37 | #6

DAF HASHAVUA

בראשית | BEREISHIT

SHABBAT ENDS:

London 6.57pm
Southend 6.53pm
Hull 7.00pm
Leeds 7.01pm
Birmingham 7.03pm
Sheffield 7.05pm
Manchester 7.05pm
Edinburgh 7.07pm
Liverpool 7.08pm
Southport 7.11pm
Cardiff 7.12pm
Glasgow 7.12pm
Dublin 7.20pm
Jerusalem 6.45pm

Shabbat Mevarechim

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



**בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT**

1st Sidra in:
**בְּרֵאשִׁית
BEREISHIT**

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

Headlines:
**CREATION OF
THE WORLD**

BEREISHIT:
Artscroll p.2
Hertz p.2
Soncino p.1

HAFTARAH:
Artscroll p.1207
Hertz p.948
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 Mankind 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'U) – 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'U) – 5:25-6:8
Noach has three sons: Shem, Cham and Yefet. Immortality starts to spread and God decides to limit mankind's lifespan to 120 years. After further sins, God 'regrets' the fact that He created mankind and decides to wipe out all living creatures, apart from Noach and his family.

HAFTARAH (MACHAR CHODESH)
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.

In loving memory of Avraham ben Yisrael z"l

United Synagogue Daf Hashavua

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The Source of all Conflicts



**RABBI RAFI
GOODWIN**

Chigwell
& Hainault
Synagogue

The Biblical story of Cain and Abel recounts the first murder in human history. Cain, a farmer, is the first son of the first couple, Adam and Eve. Abel, a shepherd, is their second. Each brother offers a sacrifice to God, but Cain is angered when only Abel's is accepted. God offers Cain a second chance to submit a worthy sacrifice and warns him against yielding to resentful anger, but Cain does not respond. He subsequently converses with Abel and then murders him.

"Cain then had words with his brother Abel, and it happened that when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him" (Bereishit 4:8).

Why did Cain kill Abel? What was the nature of the conversation between them that led to the murder?

The Rabbis in the Midrash (early rabbinic teachings), reading between the lines of the Biblical text and with an eye to extracting a message from those lines, offer three different scenarios (Bereishit Rabba 22:7):

The first (which pre-empted

Karl Marx) argues that the conflict was over wealth distribution. Cain and Abel said to each other: "we are the only two children of Adam and Eve, let us divide the earth between ourselves." Cain said, "I will take the land and you will take the moveable property." They agreed. But then Cain said to Abel: "The ground you are standing on is mine, get off my property, you must fly". Abel responded, "The clothes you are wearing are mine, you will have to walk around naked." The argument continued until Cain murdered Abel.

The second suggests that the argument was over God and religion. One said: "God's Temple will be built on my territory." The other said: "No, the Holy Temple will be built on my land!" So Cain rose up and killed Abel. According to this opinion, the first murder in history was due to a "holy war", violence inspired by religion.

Finally, the third scenario (this time pre-empting Sigmund Freud). Rabbi Huna proposed that the argument was over marriage. Cain was born with a twin sister, whom he subsequently married (at the time, there was no-one else!), and Abel was born with two twin sisters (Rashi on Bereishit 4:2). The brothers were fighting over the additional girl. Cain said, "I am the oldest, she is for me".

Abel said: "she was born with me; she is supposed to be my wife". So Cain killed Abel to seize this girl. According to this opinion, the first murder in history had marital relationships as its cause.

The Torah is teaching us archetypes of the quarrels that would define human life throughout the millennia until this very day. Ultimately, if we are not careful, our egos will cause us to fall victim to one of these three conflicts. As I heard recently, in a creative sense, the word "ego" can be read as an acronym for 'Easing God Out'.

Please God, as we enter the new cycle of Torah reading, from which we can learn new ideas every year, we will connect with God's infinite wisdom contained within it and avoid repeating the mistakes of history. As we learn in *Pirkei Avot*: "Turn the Torah over and over, for everything is in it" (5:26).



Ma'aleh: Education for Women¹



**SHIRA
JACKSON**

United
Synagogue
Educator

They say knowledge is power. In the prayer of *Aleinu*, which we say three times a day, we quote, "And this day you should know, and place it on your heart, that God is the [only] God in the heavens above and the earth below, there is no other" (Devarim 4:39). We are not a religion of blind faith; we are meant to spend our lives getting to know God and using that knowledge to emotionally connect with Him. Luckily, it's not as difficult to get to know Him as one may think because He gave us the Torah, outlining everything He thinks and feels about us and the world He created. For over three millennia, we have delved into and grappled with Jewish history, philosophy and law, in order to live a meaningful Jewish life.

In a rapidly changing world, we are living in times of unprecedented access to knowledge, and so of course the world of Jewish education has likewise evolved, especially women's education. More women than ever, of all

ages, are either dipping into or fully immersing themselves in the world of Torah. Within US communities, many shuls augment their programming with specific provision for women, so that they feel engaged and able to access Jewish knowledge and experiences.

We want to build a cadre of educational leadership with many different access points to Jewish knowledge, allowing people to choose their favourite way to connect, helping our community to build its Jewish journey.

Never before has it been as feasible as it is today for women to have it all; we can choose to be professionals or homemakers or both. We are highly educated in so many areas. Why should our Judaism be any different?

The Ma'aleh programme for women is designed to offer a high-level Jewish learning opportunity, as well as give participants skills to further educational leadership

within our communities and beyond. Here are just some of the reasons women gave for wanting to join when we recruited recently.

"I remember leaving school at the age of 18 and thinking 'Is this it? Is this the entire sum of my Jewish education? Is the skill level I have now the limit of what I can learn forever?'"

"I would love to be part of a group of women with whom I can engage in a real way due to a shared enjoyment of Torah."

"I am a dentist and a mother, an Englishwoman and a Jew. I want to be a Torah scholar too... we learn Torah to know God. I want to know God, and I want my children and my community to have the opportunity and the skills to enable them to do the same."

"Whilst learning in seminary, I felt more alive and happy than I had ever felt and I wish so many others could have the opportunity to feel this way."

"I love the idea of my teenage daughter seeing me actively enthused by learning and hopefully emulating this in her life."

Each morning, in our prayers, we ask, "God, please make the words of Your Torah sweet in our mouths and in the mouths of Your people Israel." Why do we describe learning Torah in terms of its taste? When one has a delicious culinary experience, one wants to share it with others, but it cannot be shared verbally; one has to let people try it for themselves, and offer them a full menu because tastes vary.

We want to build a cadre of educational leadership with many different access points to Jewish knowledge, allowing people to choose their favourite way to connect, helping our community to build its Jewish journey.

¹ The US runs this programme in partnership with the Office of the Chief Rabbi, Mizrahi UK and the London School of Jewish Studies.

Symbols in Judaism

Part 9: The Four Matriarchs



**REBBETZEN
ILANA
EPSTEIN**

Western
Marble Arch
Synagogue

On Friday nights, just before kiddush, many families follow the tradition of blessing their children. The blessing for girls is, "May God make you like Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah." Do these matriarchs function solely as historical figures, or do they carry distinct or combined symbolism? Let's delve into their stories to find out.

Sarah, who I think of as the "original" matriarch, played a pivotal role in the emergence of monotheism. Alongside Avraham, she bravely left her known world and embraced the concept of a single omnipresent God, transcending the prevailing practices of praying to nature and objects. Sarah drew many people towards the belief in monotheism. In addition, her level of prophecy surpassed even that of Avraham, according to the Rabbis, making her a truly exceptional individual.

I often think of Rivka (Rebecca) as the "daughter-in-law", even though she and Sarah never met.

Their beauty radiates through their qualities, making them timeless symbols to emulate. We can all learn from their experiences and virtues, striving to find the good within ourselves and others, and recognising the divine spark that resides in each individual.

As Yitzchak's (Isaac's) wife and the mother of Yaakov (Jacob) and Esav, she bore the weight of carrying the family legacy forward from Avraham and Sarah to Yaakov and his wives. Renowned for her kindness, hospitality and beauty, she also displayed shrewdness in managing the complexities of her role.

Rachel I think of as "the sad one". Daughter of the wicked Lavan, she faced immense challenges in marrying her beloved Yaakov, ultimately sharing him with her sister, Leah. Rachel's barrenness added to her sorrow, as she witnessed Leah and Yaakov's other wives bearing children. Tragically, giving birth to Benjamin cost Rachel her life, leaving her buried alone, unlike the other matriarchs and patriarchs. Despite her hardships, Rachel symbolises compassion and unwavering love for her descendants, and people still flock to pray in her merit at her grave on the road between Jerusalem and Efrat.

Leah, to me, is "the survivor". She demonstrated remarkable adaptability in challenging circumstances. When she was substituted for her sister in marriage to Yaakov, she faced the

situation with grace and resilience. The Rabbis spoke of her loss of physical beauty, but that her dignity shone brightly. Two of her sons, Levi and Yehuda (Judah), rose to lead the tribes responsible for priesthood and kingship, respectively.

The combination of these four women's attributes forms a powerful set of exalted personal attributes for humanity to emulate, particularly women. Each of the matriarchs embodies unique qualities that hold relevance today. Sarah's unwavering belief in a higher power inspires faith and spiritual exploration. Rivka's kindness and hospitality remind us of the importance of compassion and empathy towards others. Rachel's enduring love for her children amid hardship teaches us the value of nurturing bonds with family and community. Leah's resilience and dignity in adverse circumstances exemplify the strength to overcome challenges.

Their beauty radiates through their qualities, making them timeless symbols to emulate. We can all learn from their experiences and virtues, striving to find the good within ourselves and others, and recognising the divine spark that resides in each individual.

The four matriarchs in Judaism, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah, represent not only historical figures but also embody profound symbolism. Their stories teach us valuable lessons about faith, kindness, compassion and resilience.

The Rabbi in Exile in Rome

Tannaim and their Cities: Part 23

This series of articles takes a closer look at the Tannaim (Sages of the Mishnaic era) mentioned in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 32b) and the locations which served as their Torah centres.



**DAVID
FREI**

US Director of External
and Legal Services and
Registrar of the London
Beth Din

What does one do when one's homeland has been devastated by a cruel, invading army, which has brutally murdered tens of thousands of one's compatriots?

The sad decision made by four rabbis, because of the brutal vengeance wreaked by the Romans after the collapse of the fall of Beitar, which ended the Bar Kochba Revolt, was to seek their fortunes abroad. Early Rabbinic teachings in the Midrash *Sifrei* (Devarim 80) tell how Rabbis Yehuda ben Beteira, Matya ben Charash, Chanina (nephew of Rabbi Yehoshua) and Yonatan were travelling abroad when they reached the city of Paltom, at which time they remembered the Land of Israel which they had left. They raised their eyes and wept, tore their clothing like mourners and recited the verse in which Moshe tells his people about the impending conquest of Israel, "and you shall drive them away and settle in their land" (Devarim 12:29). At this point, they turned around and returned home, saying that the mitzva of living in the Land of Israel is equal to all other mitzvot.

Sadly, some of these Rabbis did eventually leave Israel and Rabbi



Tzipori National Park

Matya, whose principal teacher was Rabbi Eliezer HaGadol, settled in Rome, where he opened a famed Yeshiva. This Yeshiva was visited by Rabbis Shimon bar Yochai and Eliezer ben Yose when visiting the Imperial Capital on diplomatic missions to plead for the Jews of Israel.

Few of Rabbi Matya's Halachic teachings are quoted in the Talmud and these relate to the relaxation of the laws of Shabbat, Yom Kippur and Kashrut when one's life is in danger. His *Aggadic* teachings (non-legal narratives) are more widely known, and in *Pirkei Avot* 4:20 he is quoted as advising that, when meeting a person, one should be the first to offer a greeting. He also counsels one to be a "tail to lions rather than a head of foxes"; namely that, when choosing your associates, aim for the higher elements of society, even though your relative importance in the

group is thereby reduced.

Rabbi Matya was known as being particularly scrupulous in averting his eyes from all types of temptation.

What we have said about his Yeshiva being in Rome is challenged by a minority of scholars, who assert that there was a town called Romi in Galilee, which was the site of Rabbi Matya's Yeshiva. Rabbi Yecheiel Heilprin (c.1660-c.1746), the Lithuanian Talmudic scholar, in his historical work *Seder HaDorot*, maintains this and quotes Tzfat resident, Rabbi Moshe Alshich (1508-1593), in his commentary on *Shir HaShirim* (Song of Songs), saying that there was in his time a settlement with the name Romi close to Tzipori in Galilee. Some identify the site as being in the area of the Arab villages of Rumat al Heib and Rumana, north of the Tzipori National Park.

THE TRIBE WEEKLY

PARASHAT BEREISHIT

13 - 14 OCTOBER | 29 TISHREI

Fire and Water



**RAFI
KLEIMAN**

Projects Executive,
Tribe

Ever wanted advice on how to argue? Comes along Pirkei Avot (5:17) to give us a key principle:

“A debate for the sake of heaven will have lasting value.”

On a surface level, be sure that your intention is holy, anchored in the will to defend what is just. Yet, with this baseline understanding, what makes such an argument “for the sake of heaven”? Is there something extra about “heaven” that relates to this type of debate?

Rashi, the most important rabbinic commentary on the Torah, in this week’s parasha, gives three possible explanations for the word ‘heaven’,

used to describe what was made on the second day of Creation. His third suggestion is that ‘heaven’ is a hybrid of fire and water - mingled together. Making this comment at the conclusion of the second day of Creation, Rashi’s remark is within the context of a glaring omission.

On each day of Creation, we are told that God saw what He created and declared it ‘good’. On the second day, however, we have no such declaration! We are merely told:

“And God called the firmament, ‘heaven’. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day” (Bereishit 1:8).

So the question on our lips is: why is this creation of God not good? The answer is found in day three - where, not only are we told that God saw His work as ‘good’, we find that He declares this twice! Once relating to

the formation of the waters and the other regarding the completion of the third day of Creation.

The 17th Century Prague-based rabbinic commentator known as the ‘Kli Yakar’ points out that these two ‘good’ declarations come to emphasise the lack of any ‘good’ declaration the day before. The formation of the waters on the third day represents unity, whereas the division of the waters to form the firmament the previous day brought separation and the potential for disagreement into the world.

Returning to our opening words of advice, we can now understand what a “debate for the sake of heaven” is. Perhaps it is one focused on creating unity – fusing opposing elements, like fire and water – rather than one which promotes separation and strife. This is a debate that will have lasting value.

Creation Chronology

Can you place the following events from Parashat Bereishit in the right order, as they appear in the Torah?

- a. God created the sun, moon and stars
- b. God created light and darkness
- c. Cain kills Abel when he feels a surge of jealousy
- d. Adam and Eve are thrown out of the Garden of Eden
- e. God forbids Adam and Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge
- f. God creates the first man
- g. God creates the first woman
- h. God rests on Shabbat
- i. God sees the world and says “it is good” twice



THE TRIBE SCRIBE

BEREISHIT: A FRESH START!

BEREISHIT - IN THE BEGINNING... I'M ALWAYS EXCITED WHEN WE COME TO **BEREISHIT** AND START THE **TORAH** CYCLE AGAIN! NOPE, I'M NOT BORED, EVEN IF WE'VE READ IT LOADS OF TIMES BEFORE!



BUT THIS YEAR, LIKE EVERY YEAR, WE READ IT AFRESH. WE BRING A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO IT. THE DINA WHO IS READING **BEREISHIT** THIS YEAR IS A YEAR OLDER AND HAS MORE EXPERIENCE.



THE DAN LEARNING **BEREISHIT** THIS YEAR HAS ANOTHER YEAR'S WISDOM AND INSIGHTS. STUDYING IT AGAIN, OFFERS US THE CHANCE TO SEE NEW IDEAS AND LAYERS OF MEANING.



LIKE HOW FITTING IT IS THAT **BEREISHIT** BEGINS IN A GARDEN - THE GARDEN OF EDEN!



DR ERICA BROWN REMINDS US THAT A GARDEN IS WHERE SEEDS SPROUT AND FRUIT BLOOMS. A GARDEN IS WHERE WE CAN HAVE THE JOY OF WATCHING NEW LIFE EMERGE, AGAIN AND AGAIN.



A GARDEN IS FULL OF POTENTIAL, FULL OF GROWTH, FULL OF POSSIBILITY.

AS WE BEGIN THE **TORAH** ANEW, WE'RE CHALLENGED TO THINK OF HOW TO TEND TO THE WORLD AROUND US AND WITHIN US.



WHAT A PERFECT PLACE FOR THE CREATION OF PEOPLE - WE ARE JUST AS FULL OF POTENTIAL, GROWTH AND POSSIBILITY!



WHO OR WHAT WILL YOU BE GROWING THIS YEAR?



tribe
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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.