

Israel And The Jews

By Moshe Coronel, 11th Grade

There is a famous Rashi on the first pasuk of the Torah: "In the beginning Hashem created the Heaven and Earth." (Bereshis 1:1) Rashi comments that in reality the Torah should've started with the first mitzvah, but the reason the Torah started with the story of creation, was so that the Jews could use the story of creation as a proof against the Non-Jews that they owned Israel.

However, an obvious question remains in Rashi's interpretation- what does Rashi see in the story of creation that would imply the Jews' ownership rights to Israel? Additionally, why would Israel and the story of creation be connected at all?

The answer can be seen in a parable. Imagine a wealthy couple had a child who they loved very much. In order to provide for their child, the doting parents gave the child whatever he needed to succeed- in the form of money, clothing, food, housing, and so on. As this child was growing up, however, the parents felt that in order to unleash the child's true potential, they wanted the child to be independent. Of course, while the parents wanted the child to be independent, they also wanted the child to know that they would be there at all times to help, protect, and support the child. Therefore, they splurged on a mansion with all comforts imaginable for the child to live in. When the child finally reached adulthood, they sent the child to live in the mansion. As the child walked into the mansion, he was greeted by a piece of paper. The paper simply read, "Remember where you are from and don't be afraid to reach out."

The answer is that Hashem was informing us of our birthright. When Hashem created the world, He obviously had in mind the millions of Jews that would come in the

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The Power of Hakaras Hatov

By Joshua Pomerantz, 12th Grade

After Kayin killed his brother, Hevel, the Torah writes "Vayasem Hashem Lakin Os", meaning that Hashem gave Kayin a sign. The Rambam explains that this "sign" was a dog to protect Kayin from anyone who would want to attack him. One question to ask here is why specifically a dog to protect him? Additionally, why refer to this dog as an "os (sign)" and not something that would make more sense, like "shomer" (guardian)? The Kesav Sofer gives an amazing answer to this. He first brings Rashi, who explains that despite the fact that Hashem provided a very comfortable life to Kayin, the only thing that he donated to Hashem was a small amount of flax seeds. This was a tremendous insult towards Hashem because it showed a lack of hakaras hatov for all that Hashem did for him. That was Kayin's first offense. Kayin's second offense came when he murdered his brother Hevel. What was his motive to commit such a horrible sin? The Chachamim say that he had an argument with Hevel about the division of the world between the two of them and when Hevel didn't agree with Kayin he was killed. Kayin killed Hevel, his very own brother, motivated by his greedy desires for wanting to control more and more of the world. Therefore, Hashem needed to give Kayin a sign to remind him of these two offenses. The reason to use a dog over anything else is because a dog is the type of animal who is very loyal to his owner. When Kayin would see this dog, it would remind him to never commit that type of sin again and always have hakaras hatov to Hashem. In Sefer Yeshaya, it says that dogs are also very greedy and don't know when they have had enough. Kayin

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Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshat Bereshit

Questions

1. Which person in the book of Genesis (Breishit) is actually referred to as "Reishit"?
2. Aside from the first day of creation, where else in the book of Genesis is the phrase "Yom Echad" – "one day" used? (2 answers)
3. The sun and the moon are not called by their names with regard to their creation, but are referred to as "luminaries" (Me'orot). Where in the book of Genesis are the words sun and moon found in the same verse?
4. The snake tricked Eve (Chava) into eating from the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Where else in the Torah does a snake appear? (4 answers)
5. In this parsha, who named a city after someone? Who else in the Torah named a city after a person? (4 answers)
6. What was found in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle, and also placed near the Garden of Eden?

Answers

1. In Genesis 49:3, Yaakov refers to Reuven his first-born as Reishit Oni – "my initial vigor."
2. In Genesis 27:45, Rivka worries that her two sons will die on "Yom Echad" – "one day." In Genesis 33:13, Yaakov excuses himself from traveling with Esav by stating that if he does, the children and sheep will be too pressured for "one day."
3. In Genesis 37:9, the sun and the moon appear in the dream of Yosef.
4. In Genesis 49:17, in Yaakov's blessing to his son Dan, a snake is mentioned. In Exodus 4:3, at the burning bush, the staff of Moses turns into a snake. In Numbers 21:7, when the snakes bite the Jews, Moses fashions a copper snake. In Deut. 8:15, Hashem describes how He protected the Jews in the desert from snakes.
5. Kayin named a city after his son Chanoch (4:17). In Numbers 32:41-42, Yair Ben Menasheh and Novach each named a city after themselves. It is also possible that the city of Shchem is named after the person of the same name (Genesis 33:18-19).
6. The "Keruvim" (Cherubs) exist in both places. In the Tabernacle they are the golden figures that rest upon the Ark cover (Exodus 25:18). In our parsha they protect the path to the Tree of Life (Genesis 3:24).



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First Aliyah: Hashem created the world in six days. On the first day Hashem made darkness and light. He dividing the "upper waters" from the "lower waters." On the second day, Hashem separated Earth and heaven. On the third day He set the boundaries between land and sea. Additionally, trees and greenery were created on this day. Hashem created the sun, moon and stars on the following day. Fish and birds were created on the fifth day. On the sixth day Hashem created land-animals. Later that day He created Adam. Hashem stopped work on the seventh day, and sanctified it as a day of rest.

Second Aliyah: Adam was created from the earth. Hashem permitted Adam to eat from any tree in the Garden of Eden, with the exception of the Tree of Knowledge. Adam named all the animals and birds. Hashem then decided that Adam needed a mate...

Third Aliyah: Hashem caused Adam to fall into a deep slumber and formed a woman, Chava, from one of his sides. The serpent, at the time the wisest of all animals, convinced Chava to eat from the fruit of the forbidden Tree of Knowledge. Chava shared the fruit with Adam, and imbued with a new sense of knowledge and awareness, they were ashamed of their nakedness and clothed themselves. Because of this sin, Hashem cursed the serpent, Chava, and Adam.

Fourth Aliyah: Adam and Chava were then expelled from Gan Eden. Chava gave birth to two sons, Kayin and Hevel. When Hevel's offering to Hashem was accepted, while Kayin's was rejected, Kayin murdered his brother. As a punishment to Kayin, Hashem designating Kayin to be a lifelong wanderer, but postponing his ultimate punishment - death - for seven generations.

Fifth Aliyah: The sixth generation descendent of Kayin was Lemech, who fathered several children — seventh generation descendents of Kayin.

Sixth Aliyah: The blood of Hevel is avenged, as the *pasuk hints to the fact that Lemech accidentally killed Kayin in a hunting accident. Adam and Chava later gave birth to a third son, Sheis. The beginning of the detailed listing of the generations is found in this aliyah.*

Seventh Aliyah: The final three generations are recorded in this section. The tenth generation descendant of Adam was Noah. Noah, unlike those around him, was righteous and found favor in God's eyes.

10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by
Yosef Axelrod

The Shabbos Shluf

Is taking a nap on Shabbos something that Jews happen to do or is it required according to Halacha?

- The Rambam in Sefer 30th perek of Hilchos Shabbos in Halacha 10 makes no mention of taking a nap on Shabbos.
- Tur in Siman 290 writes that if someone usually takes a nap during the week in the afternoon, then he can't be mevatel that nap on Shabbos since it is his Oneg Shabbos.
- This is quoted in the Rama Siman 290:1
- Mishnah Berurah warns us that we shouldn't nap for too long that it would be Mevatel Torah.

Is taking a nap an actual requirement or only if you enjoy taking a nap, should you take one?

- Sefer Zeh Hashulchan Chelek 1 Siman 290 writes that it is forbidden to stay up the whole night on Shabbos even if your learning. The reason is, that since if you normally sleep at night during the week you should certainly sleep on Shabbos at night.
- 3 proofs:
 1. The Rama cited above
 2. Sefer Pesach Hadvir writes that a person is required to sleep.
 3. Rashi in Meseches Kesuvos, Daf 62:b explains Oneg Shabbos as getting Hanaas Haguf meaning to satisfy your Guf and not just to have Ruchniyos. So by not napping he wouldn't be observing Oneg Shabbos properly.
- The Tzitz Eliezer Chelek 7 Siman 23:2 writes that none of these proofs are good proofs:
 1. When the Rama writes that someone who normally takes an afternoon nap during the week has to do so on Shabbos, it means only if your going to be doing nothing anyway (playing board games); but, if they are learning or have a good reason to not take a nap then they don't need to take a nap.
 2. The Pesach Hadvir is talking about a case where it's going to be physically harmful to a person, and in that case he should take a nap, but if he's fine then he doesn't need to.
 3. The Ran quotes this Rashi and says how really some Talmidei Chachamim never slept on Shabbos since they were learning the whole time.

What about a person who doesn't normally sleep in the afternoon, since the Rama only says if you normally sleep in the afternoon?

- Shulchan Aruch Siman 4:16 writes that Dovid Hamelech, based on the Gemara in Sukkah, was careful not to sleep 60 breaths because he didn't want a taste of death.
- Rama writes that Dovid only did this method of not taking 60 breaths while napping during the day, however while he slept at night he did not do this..
- Magen Avraham quotes from the Emek Hamelech that on Shabbos you should sleep in the afternoon even if your not accustomed to during the week.
- The Chida says that the Ari would sleep on Shabbos in the afternoon even though during the weekday he would not normally sleep in the afternoon.
- The reason the Rama said someone who is accustomed to sleeping in the afternoon all week, should sleep in the afternoon on Shabbos is to let it be known that such a person can't be mevatel his sleep, but for someone who doesn't normally take a nap in the afternoon it is still a Mitzvah of Oneg to take a nap on Shabbos.

What if I'm taking a nap on Shabbos afternoon because I have a big night planned that Motzei Shabbos?

- Mishnah Berura writes that a person shouldn't say that I will sleep now so I can stay up Motzei Shabbos since your showing that your doing it for a weekly thing and not for the oneg of Shabbos itself.
- Sefer Chassidim Siman 296 writes that even if your plans are to sleep on Shabbos in order to write a Sefer Torah after Shabbos, it's still not okay since your showing that your sleeping on Shabbos specifically for after Shabbos.
- **What's the problem?**
- Hachana
- Rav Shlomo Zalman in Shulchan Shlomo Siman 290 writes that sleeping is not the Issur, but to express that your taking a nap on Shabbos for after Shabbos is the Issur.
- Daber Davar
- Magen Avram writes that vocalizing that your nap is for something after Shabbos is a violation of Daber Davar, that you shouldn't speak weekday type things on Shabbos even by a Dvar Mitzvah
- Zilzul
- Elyah Raba Siman 307:1 writes that when you are

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(Moshe Coronel- Continued from page 1)

ensuing years. Like the parents in the parable, Hashem wants us to be independent but at the same time be within His reach in case we need Him. Therefore, He built us a mansion, in the form of Israel. Of course, during the construction of the mansion, Hashem left us a note saying "Remember where you are from and don't be afraid to reach out."

Rashi of course saw this lesson and spelled it out for us. Rashi was telling us that even before the responsibilities assigned to us were written, Hashem wanted us to be aware that He had us in mind and will be continually watching out for us.

The lesson is simple: remember your birthright and know that Hashem is always watching out, no matter the circumstances.

Have a Great Shabbos!



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LOOK AHEAD!

By Dylan Broder, Associate Editor, 12th Grade

The Mid-rash asks, "Why was the world created (ie. the Torah begin) with the letter beis? If you look at the letter beis, you will see that it is closed on the top, bottom, and right side, but the left-facing side is open. Chazal say that this represents the idea that one should not talk and focus too much on what is above, below, and what was before the world was created.

However, the opening side of the beis is facing the rest of the Torah. This gives the effect of looking forward and gives the message to keep continuing in Torah. As we start the cycle of Torah readings, we hear about the story of Adam and Chava, of Kayin and Hevel, stories that are familiar to us. But the direction of the ב's opening reminds us to look forward and infuse them with new meaning each year.

To that end, we should never feel that we have finished the Torah as the beis is always waiting for us back at the beginning and facing toward the Torah. This may be another reason why the letter beis starts the Torah. Just as a Mesechta of Gemara starts on daf beis, giving the message that we are never complete with the Gemara and must always chazar, we also must review the Torah each year and grow more and learn it more in-depth.

(Joshua Pomerantz- Continued from page 1)

too was very greedy, so having a dog next to him would serve as a reminder not to be as self serving. There is a tremendous lesson for us to take from here. Kayin was not fortunate as we are today to have received the Torah. Because he didn't have that access, Hashem sent Kayin a dog to protect him. In our lives, since we are fortunate enough to have the Torah to protect us, we should have even more hakaras hatov.

(10MH- Continued from page 3)

saying that you will sleep on Shabbos for something after Shabbos, it is a Zilzul (disgrace) of Shabbos. A nap on Shabbos is supposed to be something that is for Oneg Shabbos, and to actively say that your using it for some other reason is forbidden.

- What a person does can always be a devar mitzvah depending on your mindset, so if you have the right mindset that taking a Shabbos afternoon nap is Oneg Shabbos, your Shabbos will be more spiritual and uplifting.

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REST NOT RELAX

BY AKIVA MEHLMAN, 9TH GRADE

“And Hashem blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it He rested from all the work that Hashem had created.” Two obvious questions arise. Since Hashem is All-Powerful, and creating the world didn’t require a lot of effort, then why did He need to rest afterward? Also, why do we commemorate Hashem’s creation of the world through resting? Wouldn’t it be more appropriate to commemorate the creation of the world with a day of creation and work?

The Meforshim explain based upon Rashi that Shabbos also reflects a day of creation in that Hashem on the seventh day created something called rest, which is something positive, and not merely the absence of doing work. What does positive rest mean?

We know that one is not allowed to do Melachah on Shabbos. Melachah is an action that is different from Avodah, which implies heavy labor. Melacha is broadly defined as taking basic things and creating something more complicated. One example of this was when Hashem took dirt and made it into man, which was not necessarily heavy labor. Hashem’s activity on those six days of creation was not work as defined by heavy labor, but rather as being creative. Avodah-heavy labor requires relaxation, but Melacha-creativity requires something completely different, Shabbos-rest.

Rabbi David Fohrman offers an understanding as follows. Being creative has no end; the artist can always add another stroke of paint and the writer can always edit another sentence. And when our creative process never pauses, then it can destroy itself. By creating positive rest, Hashem is teaching us to take one day out of the week to not merely take a breath and relax, but rather to stop fine-tuning, tweaking and fixing, and begin to appreciate all that we have created during the week. It means letting things be, and valuing what you have accomplished for what it is in itself, and not for what you can try and make it into. Once the sixth day of creation ended, Hashem decided to stop fixing the world. He looked at His creation and said: “Hineh Tov Me’od; Indeed, it is very good.” *Hashem did not stop creating, after all, “Hamichadeish Be’Chol Yom Tamid Ma’aseh Bereishit; Who continually renews the work of creation day after day.” Nonetheless, He declared, “Hineh Tov Me’od.” We emulate Hashem by not only being creators six days a week but by also pausing once a week to appreciate what we have accomplished through rest.*

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Lviv, then known to Jews as Lemberg and to Poles as Lwów. The information didn’t mean anything to him, so when he tucked the card into his wallet, he forgot about it completely.

Reb Avraham was sweating in his suit, lips moving ceaselessly with chapters of Tehillim. It was the day of his trial, and he was standing in the courtroom awaiting the judges. The heavy, wooden doors opened and the three judges—two men and a woman—strode down the aisle, their robes billowing in their wake.

Reb Avraham’s jaw went slack: that was the woman he had helped at the train station!

The judges took their seats and the trial commenced. As though perfectly rehearsed, the prosecutors proceeded to paint a convincing case against Reb Avraham, describing his crimes in painful detail, and, lastly, recommending that he be treated according to the full extent of Polish law. Reb Avraham felt numb when he noticed two judges bobbing their heads in agreement with prosecution’s pronouncements. And when his own attorneys did nothing to mitigate his guilt, he could already taste the prison gruel he’d be eating for a long time.

But a familiar voice interrupted the trial.

“I unequivocally object,” pronounced the third judge loudly. “Several months ago, when no one wanted to help me, an unknown stranger in a faraway train depot, this man here stepped up and did so. He did not know me. He asked nothing in return. I am not a member of his nation, yet he did not care. I, therefore, cannot believe this man was willingly involved in such a crime, and even if he was, I believe he deserves another chance, as it must have been an anomaly, a one-time moral failing, not at all representative of who he is.”

Swayed by her powerful retelling of the encounter at the train station, the other two judges reversed their verdict, and the case was dismissed.

I have chosen this story for this shabbos simply due to the amazing message that I believe this story holds. We all make mistakes, there is no way to deny that, and sometimes it may feel like those mistakes cannot be undone.

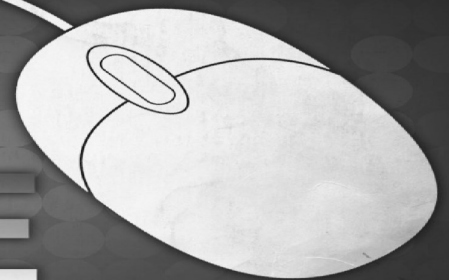


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TOLD OVER BY: HILLEL GOLUBTCHIK

Reb Avraham Lampel, a textile businessman in pre-war Poland, was honest to a fault. He diligently recorded every transaction and kept his distance from anything that might entangle him with the local tax authorities. For many years, his business operated without the tiniest hitch.

Then temptation arose: a bargain that would allow him to save a great deal of money by evading some red tape. He hesitated, but the promise of easy money won him over.

Reb Avraham quickly realized his decision was a regretful mistake, but Polish authorities swept through the offices and arrested everyone involved before he could extricate himself from the situation. Set in official ink, a date was soon scheduled for his court hearing.

As the court date drew nearer, an unrelated business opportunity arose. For decisions like these, Reb Avraham usually traveled to his Rebbe, Rabbi Yissachar Dov of Belz, to request a blessing for success. Though he desperately wanted to unburden his troubled mind and request a blessing for his pending court appearance, he was too ashamed to bring up the sordid topic. Reluctantly, he buried the legal woes in his heart and hoped the Rebbe's blessing for the new business venture would cover his ongoing challenges as well.

Reb Avraham received the Rebbe's blessing and made his way to the door, suppressing a sigh. Suddenly, the Rebbe called out, "If you are presented with an opportunity to help someone, even if it's an ordinary stranger from the bazaar, don't hesitate to do so."

And with those cryptic words ringing in his ears, he was dismissed.

Reb Avraham had never heard the Rebbe speak that way. Eyes roving vigilantly for any

needy passerby, he tried to make sense of what the Rebbe meant, but no satisfying explanation came to mind.

Waiting for the train home, Reb Avraham noticed a woman nervously pacing the length of the platform. She didn't appear Jewish, and she was clearly troubled by something. Reb Avraham approached her and offered to help.

"No, thank you," said the woman politely.

The Rebbe's words echoing in his head compelled Reb Avraham to ask one more time, a bit more empathically. The woman sighed and shook her head.

"My purse is gone, along with my personal documents and money. Either I lost it or it was stolen, and I don't have a clue how or when it disappeared. But that doesn't matter. As of now, I have no way to return home."

"How much do you need for the trip?" Reb Avraham asked.

"Twenty-five zloty. At least."

Without a moment's hesitation, Reb Avraham whipped out his wallet, counted out 25 zlotys, added a few more, and placed the money in her open palm.

"Have a safe journey," he wished her with a smile.

The woman's eyes welled up with tears. As soon as she was able to speak, she pressed Reb Avraham for details so she could repay him, but he simply smiled kindly and wished her well. Refusing to leave the good soul empty-handed, the woman handed him her calling card, thanked him again, and left.

Reb Avraham studied the card and discovered that the woman served as a judge in

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