



Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades
שמיני עצרת ושבט מברכים פרשת בראשית
Sh'mini Atzeret and Shabbat M'varchim Parashat B'reishit
October 5 & 7, 2017 | Tishrei 15 & 17, 5778



TORAH STUDY

Sh'mini Atzeret:

D'varim 14.22-16.17, Pages 1074-1084

Additional Reading: B'midbar 29.35-30.1, Page 936

Haftarah, M'lachim 8.54-66, Pages 1263-1265

**This Shabbat: Shabbat M'varchim, Parashat B'reishit
B'reishit 1.1-6.8, pages 3-34**

FIRST ALIYAH: "When God began to create the heavens and the earth," etc., does not end with the standard "and it was so" formula of Chapter 1. Why not?

FOURTH ALIYAH: Verse 3.22 is properly translated as "man was like one of us, knowing good and bad." What does this imply about the nature of his having sinned?

The haftarah, Yishayahu 42.5-21, begins on Page 36.

For haftarot, we follow S'fardi custom.

B'REISHIT 1 TELLS US WE MUST PROTECT THE PLANET

If we understood the first chapter of B'reishit, we might put an end to some of the needless arguments between scientists and religious believers. B'reishit 1 can be restated in terms with which even the most avowed secularist might agree. The world does not belong to us. We hold it as trustees on behalf of those who will come after us.

Renouncing our ownership of the Earth is all we need to ground what is surely the fundamental point of the story itself: that we are here to protect, not destroy or endanger, the Earth and all it contains.

An important thing to note is the chapter's numerical structure, one based on the biblically significant number seven. The Universe is made in seven days. Seven times the word "good" is used. The first verse contains seven Hebrew words, the second, 14. The account of the seventh day contains 35. The word "God" appears 35 times; the word "Earth" 21. The entire passage contains 469 (7 x 67) words. By these hints, we are told the Universe has a structure, and it is mathematical.

Then there is the structure itself. On the first three days, God creates domains: light and dark, upper and lower waters, sea and dry land. On the next three days, He populates these domains one by one: first the Sun, Moon and stars, then birds and fish, then land animals and human beings. The seventh day is holy. So six (the days of creation) symbolizes the natural order, seven the supernatural.

What is missing is the element of struggle between rival gods that dominates all mythical accounts of creation. In the biblical account, God speaks and the world comes into being.

On the second day, when the waters are divided, the account lacks the word "good." Instead, "good" appears twice on the third day. The Torah thus dismisses the most common features of myth: the primal battle against the goddess of the sea, symbol of the forces of chaos.

So the purpose of B'reishit 1 is clear. The Universe is good; it is a place of structure and order. Thus the text is an invitation to science, by implying that the world is not irrational and ruled by capricious powers.

—Adapted from the writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

CBIOTP STANDARDS & PRACTICES

1. Men must keep their heads covered in the building and must wear a talit when appropriate. Women may choose to do either or both, but it is not mandatory.
2. Anyone accepting a Torah-related honor must wear a talit, regardless of gender.
3. Only one person at a time may take an aliyah.
4. No one should enter or leave the sanctuary during a K'dushah. One should not leave the sanctuary when the Torah scroll is being carried from or to the ark.
5. No conversations may be held in the hallway outside the sanctuary, or while standing in an aisle alongside a pew.
6. The use of recording equipment of any kind is forbidden on sacred days.
7. Also forbidden are cell phones, beepers and PDAs, except for physicians on call and emergency aid workers (please use vibrating option).
8. No smoking at any time in the building, or on synagogue grounds on Shabbatot and Yom Kippur.
9. No non-kosher food allowed in the building at any time.
10. No one may remove food or utensils from the shul on Shabbatot. An exception is made for food being brought to someone who is ailing and/or homebound.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Sunday Herbert Galant

Wednesday Emily Darwish

Friday Marj Goldstein

Did we miss a birthday, anniversary, or other simchah?
Let us know. We can't print what we don't know.

Присоединяйтесь к нам для
освящение и обед

This week's kiddushim
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This week's Shabbat Booklet
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IRWIN ISAAC GERSTEN, ז"ל,

may his memory be for a blessing.

THE IMAHOT:

*Following is the text adopted by the Ritual Committee
for use by the Prayer Leader in reciting the Amidah, and
those wishing to insert the Matriarchs in their Amidot:*

ברוך אתה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבֹרָה וְשָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְרַבֵּקָה, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, רַחֵם
וְלֵאמֹר. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן, גּוֹמֵל
חֲסִדִּים טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר חֲסִדֵי אֲבוֹת, וְיַמְבִּיא
גּוֹאֵל לִבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

Recite this only between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

זְכַרְנוּ לְחַיִּים, מֶלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים, וְכַתְּבָנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים,
לְמַעַן אֱ-לֹהִים חַיִּים.

מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶגֶן אֲבֹרָה
וְעֵזֶר שָׂרָה.

GOT SHABBAT?

*If you know children who might enjoy
Morah Karen's Shabbat morning programs,
tell them about it.*

SPREAD THE WORD!



SH'MA MATTERS

THE BLESSINGS BEFORE THE SH'MA: TO RESPOND OR NOT?

Whenever a blessing is recited, we offer two responses. After "Baruch Ata Adonai" (Blessed are You, Lord), we say "Baruch Hu, u'varuch Sh'mo" (blessed is He and blessed is His Name). At the end of the b'rachah, we say "Amen."

But should any response be given to the blessings between Bar'chu and the Sh'ma?

It is not a frivolous question. These are blessings preparatory to reciting the Sh'ma, putting them in the same category as, say, the Motzi. We may not speak after the Motzi until we have eaten bread; may we "speak" until after the Sh'ma?

The S'fardi halachic authority, Rabbi Joseph Karo, author of the Shulchan Aruch, Judaism's definitive law code, says no. Rabbi Moses Isserles, in his equally authoritative gloss, "the Mapa," rules that Ashkenazim should respond.

Chasidic rulings follow Rabbi Karo, meaning chasidim do not respond with "Baruch Hu, u'varuch Sh'mo" and "Amen."

Either way is acceptable here, although our rabbi's tradition is to offer no response.

A MEDITATION BEFORE THE SH'MA

Before reciting the Sh'ma, keep this in mind:

I hereby accept upon myself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.

B'REISHIT 1: FREEDOM, GOD'S MOST FATEFUL GIFT

There are words that change the world, none more so than two sentences that appear in the first chapter of the Torah:

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.

"So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them."

The idea set forth here is perhaps the most transformative in the entire history of moral and political thought. It is the basis of the civilization of the West with its unique emphasis on the individual and on equality. It lies behind Thomas Jefferson's words in the Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal [and] are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights...."

These truths are anything but self evident. They would have been regarded as absurd by Plato who held that society should be based on the myth that humans are divided into people of gold, silver, and bronze, and it is this that determines their status in society. Aristotle believed that some are born to rule and others to be ruled.

Revolutionary utterances do not work their magic overnight. As Rambam explained in *The Guide for the Perplexed*, it takes people a long time to change. The Torah works in the medium of time. It did not abolish slavery, but it set in motion a series of developments—most notably Shabbat, when all hierarchies of power were suspended and slaves had a day a week of freedom—that were bound to lead to its abolition in the course of time.

People are slow to understand the implications of ideas. Thomas Jefferson, champion of equality, was a slave owner. Slavery was not abolished in the United States until the 1860s, and not without a civil war. And as Abraham Lincoln pointed out, slavery's defenders as well as its critics cited the Bible in their cause. Eventually, however, people change, and they do so because of the power of ideas, planted long ago in the Western mind.

What exactly is being said in the first chapter of the Torah? The first thing to note is that it is not a stand-alone utterance, an account without a context. It is in fact a polemic, a protest, against a certain way of understanding the universe. In all ancient myth, the world was explained in terms of battles of the gods in their struggle for dominance. The Torah dismisses this way of thinking totally and utterly. God speaks and the universe comes into being. This according to the great 19th century sociologist Max Weber was the end of myth and the birth of western rationalism.

More significantly, it created a new way of thinking about the universe. Central to both the ancient world of

myth and the modern world of science is the idea of power, force, and energy. That is what is significantly absent from B'reishit 1. God says, "Let there be," and there is. There is nothing here about power, resistance, conquest, or the play of forces. Instead, the key word of the narrative, appearing seven times, is utterly unexpected. It is the word *tov*, good.

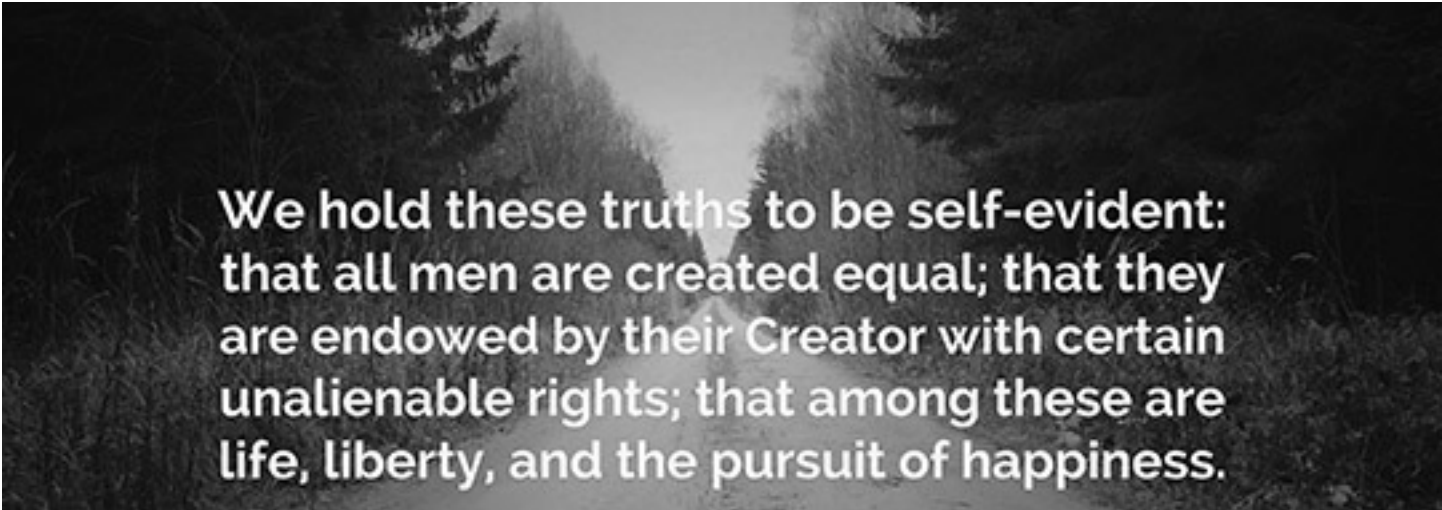
Tov is a moral word. The Torah in B'reishit 1 is telling us something radical. The reality to which Torah is a guide (the word "Torah" itself means "guide, instruction, law") is moral and ethical. The question B'reishit seeks to answer is not "How did the universe come into being?" but "How then shall we live?" This is the Torah's most significant paradigm-shift. The universe God made and we inhabit is not about power or dominance but about *tov* and *ra*, good and evil.[1] For the first time, religion was ethicised. God cares about justice, compassion, faithfulness, loving-kindness, the dignity of the individual and the sanctity of life.

This same principle, that B'reishit 1 is a polemic, part of an argument with a background, is essential to understanding the idea that God created humanity "in His image, after His likeness." This language would not have been unfamiliar to the first readers of the Torah. It was one they knew well. It was a commonplace in the first civilizations, Mesopotamia, and ancient Egypt. Certain people were said to be in the image of God. They were the kings of the Mesopotamian city-states and the pharaohs of Egypt. Nothing could have been more radical than to say that not just kings and rulers are God's image. We all are. Even today, the idea is daring; how much more so it was in an age of absolute rulers with absolute power.

Understood thus, B'reishit 1.26-27 is not so much a metaphysical statement about the nature of the human person as a political protest against the very basis of hierarchical, class- or caste-based societies whether in ancient or modern times. That is what makes it the most incendiary idea in the Torah. In some fundamental sense, we are all equal in dignity and ultimate worth, for we are all in God's image regardless of color, culture, or creed.

A similar idea appears later in the Torah, in relation to the Jewish people, when God invited them to become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. All nations in the ancient world had priests, but none was "a kingdom of priests." All religions have holy individuals, but none claimed to be a nation every one of whose members was holy. This too took time to materialize. During the entire biblical era, there were hierarchies. There were priests and high priests, a holy elite. After the destruction of the Second Temple, however, every prayer became a sacrifice, every leader of prayer a priest, and every synagogue a fragment of the Temple. A profound egalitarianism is at work just below the surface of the Torah, and the rabbis knew it and lived it.

A second idea is contained in the phrase, "and let him



**We hold these truths to be self-evident:
that all men are created equal; that they
are endowed by their Creator with certain
unalienable rights; that among these are
life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.**

have dominion over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky.” Note that there is no suggestion that anyone has the right to have dominion over any other human being. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton, like the Midrash, states that this was the sin of Nimrod, the first great ruler of Assyria, and by implication the builder of the Tower of Babel. Milton writes that when Adam was told that Nimrod would “arrogate dominion undeserved,” he was horrified:

*O execrable son so to aspire
Above his Brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurped, from God not given:
He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl
Dominion absolute; that right we hold
By his donation; but man over men
He made not lord; such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free.*
(*Paradise Lost*, Book XII: 64-71)

To question the right of humans to rule over other humans, without their consent, was at that time utterly unthinkable. All advanced societies were like this. How could they be otherwise? Was this not the very structure of the universe? Did the sun not rule the day? Did the moon not rule the night? Was there not in heaven itself a hierarchy of the gods? Already implicit here is the deep ambivalence the Torah would ultimately show toward the very institution of kingship, the rule of “man over men.”

The third implication lies in the sheer paradox of God saying “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” We sometimes forget, when reading these words, that in Judaism God has no image or likeness. To make an image of God is to transgress the second of the Ten Commandments and to be guilty of idolatry. Moses emphasized that at the revelation at Sinai, “You saw no likeness, you only heard the sound of words.”

God has no image because He is not physical. He transcends the physical universe because He created it. Therefore He is free, unconstrained by the laws of matter. That is what God means when he tells Moses that His name is “I will be what I will be,” and later when, after the sin of the

golden calf, he tells him, “I will have mercy on who I will have mercy.” God is free, and by making us in His image, He gave us also the power to be free.

This, as the Torah makes clear, was God’s most fateful gift. Given freedom, humans misuse it. Adam and Eve disobey God’s command. Cain murders Abel. By the end of the parsha we find ourselves in the world before the Flood, filled with violence to the point where God regretted that He had ever created humanity. This is the central drama of Tanakh and of Judaism as a whole. Will we use our freedom to respect order or misuse it to create chaos? Will we honour or dishonour the image of God that lives within the human heart and mind?

These are not ancient questions only. They are as alive today as ever they were in the past. The question raised by serious thinkers, ever since Nietzsche argued in favour of abandoning both God and the Judeo-Christian ethic, is whether justice, human rights, and the unconditional dignity of the human person are capable of surviving on secular grounds alone? Nietzsche himself thought not.

In 2008, Yale philosopher Nicholas Woltersdorff published a magisterial work arguing that our Western concept of justice rests on the belief that “all of us have great and equal worth: the worth of being made in the image of God and of being loved redemptively by God.” There is, he insists, no secular rationale on which a similar framework of justice can be built. That is surely what John F. Kennedy meant in his Inaugural when he spoke of the “revolutionary beliefs for which our forebears fought,” that “the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God.”

Momentous ideas made the West what it is: human rights, the abolition of slavery, the equal worth of all, and justice based on the principle that right is sovereign over might. All ultimately derived from the statement in the first chapter of the Torah that we are made in God’s image and likeness. No other text has had a greater influence on moral thought, nor has any other civilization ever held a higher vision of what we are called on to be.

—From the writings of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

May He who blessed | מי שברך

May He who blessed our ancestors bless and heal all those whose names are listed here, those whose names will be called out, and those whose names we do not know because either we are unaware of their illness or they are.

We pray He mercifully quickly restore them to health and vigor. May He grant physical and spiritual well-being to all who are ill. אמן

Sydelle Klein	Rifkah bat Chanah	Avraham Akivah bat Chanah Sarah
Bonnie Pritzker Appelbaum	Sarah bat Malka	Avraham Yitzhak ben Masha
Deenah bat Sarah Leah	Sarah Rifka bat Sarah	Aharon Hakohen ben Oodel
Rut bat Esther	Shimona bat Flora	Chaim ben Golda
Miriam Zelda bat Gittel D'vorah	Sura Osnat bat Alta Chayah	David ben Sarah
Miriam Chanah Sarah bat Liba	Tzipporah bat Yaffa	Ezra ben Luli
Miriam Rachel bat Chanah	Yospeh Perel bat Michlah	Gil Nechemiah ben Yisraela
Harav Mordechai Volff ben Liba Miryam	Michelle Blatteis	Mordechai ben Almah
Adina bat Freidel	Diane Fowler	Moshe ben Shimon
Baila bat D'vorah	Goldy Hess	Harav R'fael Eliyahu ben Esther Malkah
Chavah bat Sarah	Fay Johnson	Harab Shamshon David ben Liba Perel
Chayah bat Flora	Micki Kuttler	Harav Shimon Shlomo ben Taube v' Avraham
Devora Yocheved bat Yehudit	Katie Kim	Yisrael Yitzhak ben Shayndel
Esther bat D'vorah	Elaine Laikin	Yitzchak ben Tziviva
HaRav Ilana Chaya bat Rachel Esther	Mira Levy	Yonatan ben Malka
Liba Ruchel bat Michlah	Robin Levy	Yosef ben Flora
Masha bat Etl	Lani Lipis	Zalman Avraham ben Golda
Masha bat Rochel	Karen Lipsy	Zelig Herschel ben Kreintzeh
Matel bat Frimah	Kathleen McCarty	Harry Ikenson
Mindel bat D'vorah	Gail Schenker	Shannon Johnson
Ninette bat Aziza	Linda State	Itzik Khmishman
Pinyuh bat Surah	Mary Thompson	Adam Messing
Rachel Leah bat Malkah	Michelle Lazar	Gabriel Neri
Rita bat Flora	Norma Sugerman	Mark Alan Tunick

We pray for their safe return...

May He who blessed our ancestors bless, preserve, and protect the captive and missing soldiers of Tzahal—Ron Arad, Zecharia Baumel, Guy Chever, Zvi Feldman, Yekutiel Katz, and Zeev Rotshik—as well as those U.S. and allied soldiers, and the civilians working with them and around them, still missing in Afghanistan and Iraq, and all other areas of conflict, past and present.

And may He bless the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces and Tzahal, and those who serve the United States and Israel in foreign lands in whatever capacity, official or unofficial, members of our community or related to members, and their colleagues and companions. Guide them in peace and return them speedily to their families alive and unharmed. אמן

**HONOR YOUR DEPARTED LOVED ONES
WITH A PLAQUE ON OUR
VIRTUAL MEMORIAL BOARD.**

**CALL THE OFFICE TO ADD THEIR NAMES
TO OUR MEMORIAL BOARD.**

Yahrzeits for Today Through Next Friday

זכרונם לברכה — May their memories be for a blessing!

- 14** Louise Slote Davis*
Louis Neckowitz*
Dr. Robert Yager*
Simon Zuse Kahn*
- 15** Julius Glass
Leo Eliat, *Annette Messing's brother*
Laura S. Wolf*
Chassi Debora Spivak*
Nathan Stern*
David Schlusberg*
- 16** Helen Ehrenfreund, *mother of Mel Evans*
Morris Goldfarb*
Clara Tauber
Maurice Brewer*
Minnie Weintraub*
Harry Ginsburg*
Morton Isaacs*
- 17** Freda Helsel*
Dora Levine
Morris Cohen*
Morris Greenberg*
Irving Tobey*
Samuel D. Eisen*
Morris Breakstone*
- 18** Louis Faren*
Milton J. Stark*
Sen. Arlen Specter, *uncle of Judith Barzilay*
Isador Reiser*
- 19** Leon Levy, *husband of Mira Levy*
Samuel Barsano, *father of Rebecca Kaplan*
Louis J. Megibow*
Bernard Liberman*
- 20** Marion Wogens*
Bella Goldfischer, *grandmother of Dr. Mindy Goldfischer*
Harabbanit Esther Saltzman, *Rabbi Engelmayer's aunt*

* A plaque in this person's name is on our memorial board.

Kaddish list

Selim Chamuel	Jeanette Shandolow Herman
Yaakov Chamuel	Rebecca Kaplan
Francine Feder	Haviva Khedouri
Dr. Jerry Finklestein	Peter Koenig
Nancy Friedlander	Judith Lorbeer
Blanche Friedman	Harold Rappoport
Honora Gershman	Norman Harry Riederman
Lawrence Glazer	David Shandalow
Moshe Glickman	Paul Singman
Jay Greenspan	Frieda Gutfriend

Are we in your will? Shouldn't we be?

When people prepare their wills, they usually look to leave a mark beyond the confines of their families. Thus it is that general gifts are left to hospitals, and other charitable organizations.

All too often ignored, however, is the synagogue, even though its role in our lives often begins at birth, and continues even beyond death. We come here on Yom Kippur and other days, after all, to say Yizkor, the prayer in memory of our loved ones.

Our Virtual Memorial Plaques remind everyone of who our loved ones were, and why we recall them. All of us join in saying the Kaddish on their yahrzeits.

Considering this, it is so unfortunate that, in our final act, we ignore the one institution in Jewish life that is so much a part of us.

The synagogue is here for us because those who came before us understood its importance and prepared for its preservation. By remembering it in our wills, we will do our part to assure that the synagogue will be there for future generations, as well.

Think about it. We have always been here for anyone who needed us in the past. Do not those who need us in the future have the same right to our help?

Of course they do. Do not delay! Act today! Help secure the future of your communal home.

**Is there a yahrzeit
we should know about?
If it's not listed, let us know.**

Congregation Beth Israel of the Palisades
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Alex Glickman does it.
Dan Rappoport does it.
Joe Massuda does it.
Alan Kaminsky does it.
Eric Weis does it.
Matt Koenig plans to do it.
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Shabbat ends Saturday night with havdalah at 7:01 p.m. DST