



THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



A BEAUTIFUL FRESH START!

This week we restart reading the Torah from the beginning – Bereishit.

The first book of the Torah takes its name from the first word - Bereishit - in the beginning.

The first Pasuk of the Torah is filled with a multitude of commentaries, every word deep in its meaning and understanding.

I would like to share with you a novel idea.

The Chida comments that the word Bereishit can stand for the Rashei Tevot of - Bekol Ram Avarech Shem Hashem Tamid - with a loud voice I give constant praise (through blessing) to Hashem.

The Chida explains that it is very important when a person wishes to make a blessing that he does so by moving his/her lips and by saying out loud (in a normal voice) the blessing.

Saying a blessing out loud, enables one to concentrate, and brings out the full essence and meaning of the blessing.

Many times we are caught thinking that we have said a blessing before eating something, only to be told by someone near us that we missed out the Beracha.

They never saw our lips move; they never heard anything emanate from our mouths.

By emphasising that the blessing be said out loud this helps ensure the Beracha is successful.

The story is told about Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli, every day after the Morning Prayer; he would go to his private study and call out in prayer to Hashem.

Once his Shamash listened clearly to this prayer and heard what R Zusha was saying.

"Hashem, we have just finished the Morning Prayer, please now give us the sustenance to take us through the day."

The Shamash heard this and felt pity for him. He decided he would help the Rabbi. From now on he would place the Rabbis breakfast through the side window every morning without the Rabbi noticing.

And so it was, every morning he would pray and shortly after receive his breakfast. One day, someone was passing by and noticed what was going on. He decided that he would try and take care of the Shamash so that the Shamash would not give the Rabbi food the next morning, and then he would be able to see whether the Rabbis prayer was really effective or not.

The next morning the man sent a few people to keep the Shamash busy, and sat and waited to see what would be with R Zusha's prayer. He was shocked to see, that as soon as R Zusha finished praying a man came in with trays of silver and gold, full of delicatessens for breakfast. ▶

26 TISHREI 5779

SHABBAT BEGINS: 18.15

SHABBAT ENDS: 19.14



THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"The best antidote to annoyance is act of love"

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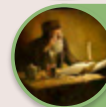
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Who was this man?

He waited as R Zusha and the man sat together and dined. Once the man left, he decided to confront him. Who are you and why did you bring R Zusha breakfast? The man answered that yesterday morning, he was crossing a narrow bridge, and there was only room for one person to pass, as he walked he noticed another person walking towards him, he met him and pushed him off the bridge into the shallow water. Only afterwards did he realise that he had pushed none other than R Zusha. He came today to beg forgiveness and hand R Zusha a good meal.

The man was impressed.

We go through our daily lives, and buy our groceries from the supermarket, our meat from the butcher, and bread

from the baker, but nowadays we don't really relate to Hashem's Hand in all the blessings of our life.

Hashem is behind all these scenes for without Hashem's help, there would be no food, no taste, and no beauty.

We state in Birkat Hamazon, Hazan Et Olamo ...Bechen - Hashem feeds the world with Chen.

What is Chen?

Imagine a world in which all your monthly food intake was taken care of with one tablet. Eat the small white tablet and all your bodies nutrients are taken care off for a month. Sounds good? Perhaps not. The tablet has no taste, doesn't really appeal to the eye. What about the thousands of different tastes we are able to feel? What about the colour and

beauty inherent in every fruit? That would be missing.

Hashem wished to feed the world with Chen - all fruit are wrapped in a beautiful outer coat, the apple is wrapped in red, it looks juicy, the orange appeals to the eye, the Etrog smells nice etc. This is Chen.

Blessing Hashem for the kindness might be difficult nowadays to relate too, but it is our duty, therefore says the Chida, this is hinted to in the first word of our Torah - we must bless Hashem full heartedly. By expressing the words of the blessing aloud, we enable ourselves to connect to Hashem's Beracha. ■ **Shabbat Shalom**

RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM - SHALOM LAAM DIASPORA



PERFECT HARMONY

As we start the new cycle of reading the Torah, we have the opportunity to refresh ourselves with the concepts of the book of Bereshit. One could ask, since this book comprises mainly of historical events of our forefathers, why was it designated as the first of the five books of the Torah, whose purpose is to instruct the Jewish People about the mitzvot?

The answer is that the book of Bereshit, otherwise known as Sefer HaYashar – the Book of Uprightness, teaches and defines our goals, aims and purpose in this world. We are first introduced to the creation of the world and its most amazing, complex and important component – man. Then,

we are told, in great detail, about the actions, ways and correct paths, which our forefathers and mothers exemplified. Not only was this their essence, but their actions also injected the innate character traits of kindness, bashfulness and mercy into the genes of our nation. These traits are fundamental and a prerequisite to being able to accept and adhere to the Torah. Hence the Torah begins with the book of Bereshit.

Concerning the creation of man we are taught (Rashi, Bereshit 1:27) that, at first, G-d created man and woman as one being, having two faces, one of a man and one of a woman. Then, (Bereshit 2:21-

24) G-d separated woman from the original being, by thrusting him into a deep sleep, removing one of his sides and reconstructing it. Thus, there were two stages in their creation. Firstly, man and woman were created as one, and then, they were separated. The second

stage brought with it the allocation of roles and job definition. With their appropriate roles established, they could work as a partnership, fusing together in perfect harmony. This harmony would resemble their level at the first stage of creation, where no conflict was possible.

One may ask, why was it necessary for man and woman to be created initially as one being, if later, they were anyway to be separated? The answer is that without this previous state, their ability to return to a state of perfect harmony would have been impossible.

When studying the book of Bereshit, let us explore the roles and purpose of both men and women, so that our marriages will reach the level of harmony of the first stage of man's creation. ■ **Shabbat shalom**

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OUR CHACHAMIM

HILLEL THE ELDER

We all know that the patience, gentleness, and humility of Hillel the Elder has become proverbial. It was only on one occasion that he was seen getting angry, and it was precisely his humility – the feeling that he had of his own lowliness – that had ignited his anger in front of the idleness of so many competent men. In brief, the story goes that Hillel had been questioned on a law, yet had to admit that he once knew it, but had since forgotten. This had happened to him under the influence of anger. Later, he remembered what he had forgotten (see Pesachim 66a for details). Yet anger should be censured.

The Sages bring remarkable examples of the unflinching patience and gentleness of Hillel the Elder.

One day, someone wagered that he could make him get angry. The bet was 400 pieces of gold. It was just before Shabbat and Hillel the Elder was preparing for its arrival. The man therefore rushed to Hillel's home and cried, "Hillel the Elder! Where's Hillel the Elder?" At the time, Hillel was washing himself, and so he interrupted his preparations, wrapped himself in his clothes, and went to the one who was calling him. "What do you want, my son?" he asked.

"I have a question to ask you."

"Ask me then."

"Why are the heads of Babylonians so round?"

And Hillel the Elder, himself Babylonian, answered him with a smile. "You have asked a profound question, my son, and I will answer you. It is because they have bad midwives that don't know how, when a baby is born, to give the head a good shape."

The man didn't reply. Later, he again asked Hillel a question: "Why are the people of Tadmor weak-eyed?"

"Because they live in a sandy country," Hillel the Elder replied.

After a certain time, the man came back and asked, "Why do Africans have such wide feet?"

With inexhaustible patience, Hillel the Elder answered: "Because they live in a marshy land."

"I still have many questions to ask you," said the man, "but I am afraid of making you angry."

"Ask on, my son," said Hillel the Elder, "ask me everything you want to know."

Although Shabbat was arriving, Hillel the Elder sat down in order to be more attentive to the anthropological and ethnographic questions that this stranger, a man that he had never before seen, wanted to ask.

"Are you really Hillel," said the man, "whom they call a prince in Israel?"

"Yes, that is correct my son," he replied.

"Well, I hope that here are not many more in Israel like you!"

"And why not, my son?" asked Hillel.

"Because of you," said the man, "I have lost 400 pieces of gold, for I wagered that I could make you angry."

"Be warned for the future," said Hillel the Elder. "Better that you should lose 400 pieces of gold, and 400 more after that, than it should be said of Hillel that he lost his temper!"

In that time of trouble and distress, it was Israel's great fortune to have a man as kind and gentle as Hillel the Elder as a prince. He could thus guide the young through all of life's pitfalls by means of Divine teachings and preserve the Torah for generations to come. Herod, the descendant of Idomean slaves, had been raised to royalty with the support of the Romans and had assassinated the remaining offshoots of the Hasmonean dynasty. As for the members of the Sanhedrin, he had them executed, as Shemiah had foretold them. All Israel was filled with hatred for the abhorred tyrant, yet the rage of Herod was broken by the gentleness of Hillel. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

HOW ARE THE LETTERS IN A SEFER TORAH, TEFFILIN AND MEZUZOT WRITTEN? THE LETTER HEH

When buying tefillin and mezuzot, and even a Sefer Torah, it is important to understand the proper shapes of the letters. Every letter has a proper structure. However, while there is general agreement regarding the tzura (shape) of the letters, they are many different customs regarding different aspects of the letters. For example, there are three common customs: Beit Yosef, Kaf HaHaim (in his Kol Yaakov), and Minhag Sofrim (often called Ktav Vellish, which is the most standard writing for Sephardim). There are numerous differences between these three customs.

For example, the letter "heh" is constructed from a resh, and a vav. It is customary to put a "tag", a crown, on the letter heh, a little to the right of the upper left corner, as it is customary to draw single tagim on the letters bet, dalet, hey, het, yud, and koof, often known by the acronym "bedek hayah. The leg of the heh is generally shaped like a diamond- narrow towards the top, and thicker in the middle.

It is interesting to note that the Ari z"l has a unique hiddush regarding the shem Hashem (yud, heh, vav and heh), the name of God, as it appears in the Sifrei Torah. According to the Ari z"l, the first heh differs from the second heh. On the bottom of the leg of the first heh, i.e., on the right side, there is a "pesi'a lebar" – literally a step sticking outwards. The second heh is a regular diamond-like shape. A person who is buying a Sefer Torah should be careful to purchase one in which the first heh of the shem Hashem is written in this manner. A Sefer Torah without the pesi'a lebar is not mehudar.

Needless to say, if the left leg touches the roof, the letter is invalid (pasul), as it looks like a het. However, as long as there is a slight separation between the left leg and the roof, it is valid, but not mehudar. Finally, preferably the two legs of the heh should end at the same point. If the right leg is longer, it may look like a koof.

Summary: every letter has its own characteristics, and it is important to be familiar with the characteristics of each letter when purchases a Sefer Torah, tefillin or mezuzot. We noted that the letter heh is constructed from a resh and a small vav, the vav is usually somewhat diamond-shaped. There should be a kotz on the top of the left leg of the letter. When the vav is part of the first heh in the shem HaShem, the minhag HaAri z"l is to draw a "pesi'a lebar" – a small line saving left. ■

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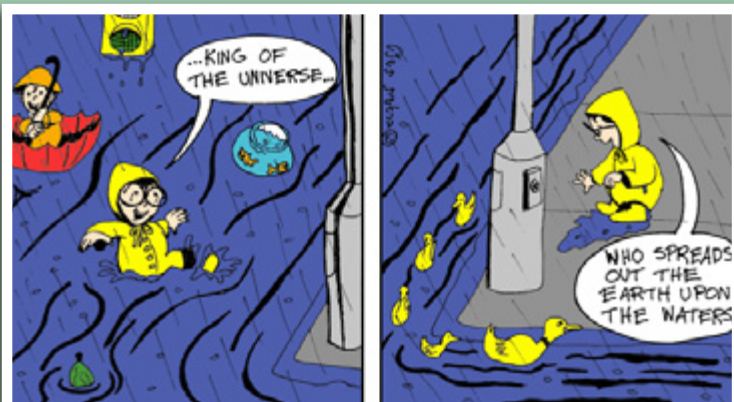
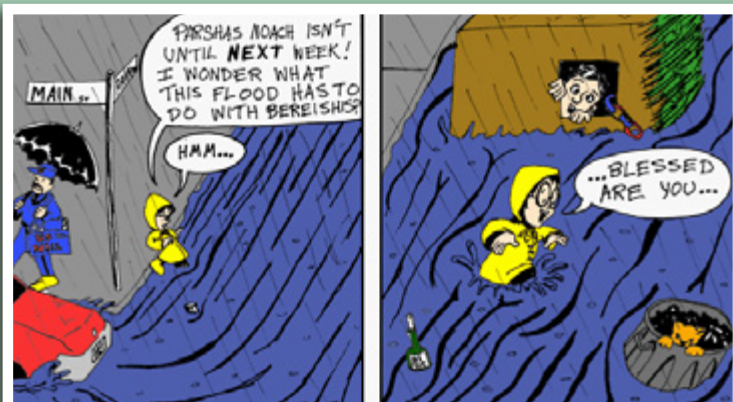
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TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Why does the Torah start with the account of Creation?
- ❷ What happened to the light that was created on the first day?
- ❸ Why isn't the word "good" associated with the second day?
- ❹ How were the trees supposed to taste?
- ❺ On which day were the sun and moon created?

Answer

❶ 1:1 - So that when the nations accuse us of stealing Eretz Canaan from the Canaanites, we can respond that Hashem, as Creator, has the right to give the land to whomever He sees fit, and He gave Eretz Canaan to us. ❷ 1:4 - Hashem saw that the wicked would be unworthy of it so He hid it for the righteous. ❸ 1:7 - Because the work with the water wasn't completed until the third day. Anything that is incomplete is not "good." ❹ 1:11 - The wood was to have the taste of the fruit. ❺ 1:14 - They were created on the first day and suspended in the firmament on the fourth day.



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