



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY

RABBI REUVEN TRADBURKS
RCA ISRAEL REGION

PARSHAT BERESHIT

The first 2 parshiot of the Torah, Breishit and Noach span 2,000 years. They can be viewed as the dawn of mankind. But in the narrative of the Torah, they must be seen differently.

The Torah has 54 parshiot. The first 2 describe universal man. And 52 describe the Jewish people's covenant with G-d. Clearly, the first 2 parshiot are a prelude, the backstory to the story of the Jewish people. But not the Jewish people. The unique covenant between G-d and a people. That is the story of the Torah. The story of the Torah is the covenant established by G-d with the Jewish people; who is in, how it develops, what are the mutual demands, how is it expressed. The first 2 parshiot must address the most basic question; why was a covenant made with a single people? While Parshat Breishit is rich in myriad lessons as to the nature of man, it is primarily this backstory to the covenant with the Jewish people that is the narrative of our parsha.



1ST ALIYA (GENESIS 1:1-2:3)

In the beginning was chaos; the spirit of G-d hovered over the waters. Day 1, light was created. Day 2, the waters were split up and down, with heavens emerging between. Day 3, the water below was split, with dry land emerging, with vegetation. Day 4, the heavens above were filled with the sun, moon and stars.

Day 5, the seas were filled with fish, the skies with birds, blessed to be fruitful. Day 6, animals were created on the land. And finally, man is created in the image of G-d. Man is blessed to be fruitful and multiply, to subdue the world and to rule over the animals. The world was completed; with no creation on the 7th day, it was endowed with blessing and holiness.

The Creation of the world is depicted as evolving from less sophisticated to the most sophisticated. It begins with inanimate earth, water, heavens, which then are filled with vegetation, then living beings of fish and birds, then land animals. And finally, man.

It is clear that it is not the creation of man that is the pinnacle of this story, but rather the radical being that he is; the image of G-d. While we are quite familiar with the description that man is created in the image of G-d, it is, as Rabbi Sacks coined, "Radical Then, Radical Now". Man created in the image of G-d? That is a shocking depiction of man. As if to say, G-d is Creating a partner, a shadow of Himself. Man is not a fancy ape, a well-developed baboon. While man shares characteristics with animals, a chasm divides; that chasm is the image of G-d.

The rest of this parsha is the development of this unique and radical relationship; G-d and His shadow creation, man. How much is man like G-d? In what ways? And more crucially, in what ways not?



2ND ALIYA (2:4-20)

A more detailed account of the Creation of Man: G-d creates man from dust of the earth and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. He is placed in the Garden of Eden, full of beautiful trees, to work it, surrounded by rivers. G-d commands man to not eat of the tree of knowledge. And declares that it is not good for man to be alone; I will make him a partner.

The language of chapter 2 is in striking contrast to chapter 1. Chapter 1 placed man as the pinnacle of created beings. Chapter 2 describes personality, morality, humility, emotion. Chapter 1 is the creation of mankind – chapter 2 is the creation of a person. Man gets the name Adam as he is created from the *adama*, the earth, a rather humble beginning. He is created alone. The garden will not grow without him. He is to work and preserve the garden. He is given a command punishable by death. It is not good that man be alone; I will make him a partner. The animals are brought to Adam to name.

This description of man is defining the image of G-d. Man, as G-d's image is charged with being His partner. But he is not G-d Himself. He is to rule the world, as G-d Rules. He is to name the animals, as G-d named the day, night, heavens and seas. As He is a Creator, man is to be a creator – a creator of life through children, a creator of vegetation through the garden. On the other hand, it is not good that he is alone – for there is only One who is Alone. Man is to be G-d like, to be creative, to name things as G-d named things in the Creation, to take his place as the guardian of the world. But how far he goes and how far He goes is the topic of the 3rd aliya.

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It's how you SEE**

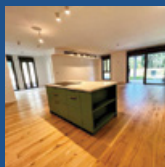


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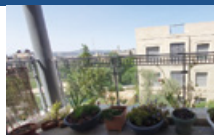
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3RD ALIYA (2:20-3:21)

Woman is created. The serpent convinces Eve that were she to eat of the forbidden fruit, she would be as G-d, knowing good and evil. She and Adam eat of the fruit and their eyes are opened and they cover themselves with fig leaves. They hide from G-d, Who challenges their disobedience. All are punished – the serpent will slither, the woman will birth children with pain, and man's cultivation of the earth will be with sweat.

A richer story of symbolism in Tanach is hard to find. A speaking serpent, the enticement of beauty, hubris, failure, hiding from G-d, blame, consequences. Many and varied are the lessons to be culled from this story.

Man, created in the image of G-d, must aspire to his lofty calling, while remembering he is but the image of, not G-d Himself. Man being alone may deceive him into thinking he is the One and Only. Hence, he needs a partner. The serpent convinced Eve, and then she Adam, that man need not keep the command, for you are in His Image. The serpent convinced them: as G-d cedes to man leadership in this world, He likewise cedes to man the role as legislator of good and evil. If you don't like His rule to not eat, make up your own rule.

In that they err. While G-d like, you must defer in the ways I Require. G-d responds by walking them back a bit specifically in their most creative activities, as if to say that while you are creators, I remain the Creator. Eve, when you create and bear children, the quintessential creative moment of humanity, it will be with labor, a reminder of your earthly origins. And man, when you create from the earth, it

will be with sweat. There is only One who Creates with the uttering of a word, with ease. He is the Creator; you, a creator. And He is the Commander of what is good and evil, while you are the commanded.



4TH ALIYA (3:22 – 4:18)

Man is exiled from the Garden of Eden. Cain and Abel are born. They bring offerings to G-d – Abel's accepted, Cain's not. Cain kills Abel. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain is consigned to wander the earth.

Cain kills his brother. And in so doing, violates another boundary between the one created in His Image and the Creator himself. While man will be a *creator* of life, he will not be a *taker* of life. That he must cede to the Creator.

Sin is met with exile. Adam's sin brings exile from the Garden of Eden. Cain's sin brings wandering, homelessness. The Torah explains the meaning of exile: Cain left from being before G-d. This introduces a pillar concept of man and G-d. Divine disfavor with man results in distance. Adam was sent away from the Garden. Cain sent away from being before G-d. Later, the tower of Babel will bring dispersion. Only Avraham will reverse this and journey not away but toward a specific place.

In memory of our beloved and sorely missed
uncle, parents, aunt and uncle, grandparents and
great-grandparents

Arnold Becker z"l
אהרן בן משה, ד"ר
ט"ו חשוון
on his 17th Yahrzeit

I. Judith Becker a"h
יהודית בת אפרים, ע"ה
ט"ו תשרי
on her 10th Yahrzeit

Arnold Wandel z"l
אהרן בן אליעזר ליפמן ד"ר
ה' חשוון
on his 6th Yahrzeit

The family will be meeting at the Kvarim -
Har Tamir Chelka Taf Gimel
on Friday morning 20/10/23 at 9:30am be"H



5TH ALIYA (4:19 – 4:22)

Lemech and his wives Ada and Tzila bear children. One is the initiator of animal husbandry, one of the music of strings and wind instruments, and one of the fashioning of copper and iron.

A curiously short aliya. Mankind advances marvelously in creatively mastering the world: the mastery of animals, creative artistic expression of music and advanced productivity of copper and iron. Man was commanded in creation to master the world. He is doing a good job. But, while man is masterful in his creative conquest of the world, the brevity of mention is perhaps to highlight that of much greater importance is his mastery of himself. The Torah is far more interested in man's ethical behavior and his relationship with G-d than with his mastery of iron and the creative expression of his music. He is mighty good at mastery of the world. Let's see how good he is at mastering himself.



6TH ALIYA (4:23 – 5:24)

The generations from Adam through Noah.

Enosh is described as beginning to profane the name of G-d. Rashi explains that people and things were ascribed Divine qualities. The beginning of idolatry. It is erroneous to call Avraham the first monotheist. G-d spoke to Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel brought offerings and He spoke to Cain, and Noah will be instructed by G-d.

Rather, man moved away from G-d, failed in his behavior and became distanced. Avraham is not the first monotheist; he is the first to be embraced and to be pulled closer by G-d.

The creation of man in the image of G-d, to be His partner is suffering. Man

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overstepped his place in failing to listen to the command, in murder, and now in failing to maintain G-d's unique being. Early mankind is moving away; Avraham will eventually be brought near.



7TH ALIYA (5:25 – 6:8)

Noah is introduced. G-d is disappointed in man; his lifespan is reduced to 120 years. G-d plans to destroy man, animals, birds. Noah finds favor in His eyes.

In the man/G-d balance, longevity induces in man a feeling of eternal life, blurring again the crucial differences between man and G-d. In calibrating the correct balance for the man/G-d relationship, longevity is counter-productive. Mortality is better. Man will not live forever – only One lives eternally. A shorter lifespan is in fact a gift from G-d, an act of love and generosity. Reducing man's lifespan helps

man to more clearly see that while man is created in G-d's Image, he is not G-d Himself. Only One is eternal.

And so, the pillars of man in His Image are laid. Only He is One; man has a partner. Only He Commands; man obeys. Only He Takes life; while man creates life, he does not take it. Only He is Eternal, man but 120 years.

I SHMUEL 20:18-42

Today's *haftorah* is read on a Shabbat that is immediately followed by Rosh Chodesh. Indeed, the reading opens with the words, "Yonathan said, 'Tomorrow is the [first of the] new month.'"

The story is one of loyalty and devotion. David and Yonathan are dear friends. Yonathan's father, King Shaul, despises David, fearing that he will depose him from the throne. Sensing danger, Yonathan told David to hide in the field rather than attend Shaul's Rosh Chodesh feast. Yonathan then attended the feast and gauged the king's mood. Realizing that Shaul was determined to kill David, Yonathan went out to the field, shot three arrows and called to his assistant, "The arrow is beyond you," a predetermined signal to his friend that it was not safe to return to the king's palace.

Before parting, the two friends kissed and wept, and swore to maintain their mutual affection for generations to come. ■

STATS

1st of the 54 sedras; 1st of 12 in Bereshit.

Written on 241 lines in a Torah, rank 9th.

23 Parshiyot; 10 open, 13 closed, rank: 6.

146 pesukim - rank: 8th (5th in Bereshit), same as Mikeitz; but Miketz is longer in lines, words, letters.

1931 words - ranks 8 (5th in Bereshit).

7235 letters - ranks 11 (5th in Bereshit).

MITZVOT

One positive mitzvah: Pru U'rvu- Be Fruitful and Multiply.

May the Torah learning
from the Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of

VIVIAN CHESNER a"h
Beloved Mother and Grandmother

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נלב"ע א' מרחשון

*Nechama & Elliot Rosner
and Family*

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