



פרשת בראשית

CIRCLE TIME

AT YOUR
Shabbos Table

... FOR A Meaningful and Entertaining SHABBOS WITH YOUR CHILDREN ...

DVAR TORAH IN A STORY >>

BLACK HATS MATTER!

When Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, the Ponevezher Rav, founded Yeshivas Ponevezh in Bnei Brak, he had barely a shekel in his pocket. He had to travel all over the world to collect funds to build and run the yeshivah. The Rav was welcomed warmly in many towns and cities around the globe, but in others, he was greeted with sour faces. Not everyone looked favorably upon the idea of collecting funds for a yeshivah. In fact, in some places, the Rav faced active opposition.

One such place was Johannesburg, South Africa. In advance of his initial visit to the city, many people tried to prevent him from speaking in the shul altogether. They campaigned to the *gabbai* and shul president that Rav Kahaneman should not be allowed to speak.

"Don't let him spread his proselytizing message here!" they said. "No one wants to hear lengthy lectures, and we don't want the synagogue to turn into a poorhouse for collecting alms!"

When Rav Kahaneman arrived in the city, he approached the *gabbai* and asked for permission to talk after *Kabbalas Shabbos*. The *gabbai* bashfully replied that he could not allow it; too many people were in opposition.

But Rav Kahaneman made an offer he could not refuse. "Many people do want to hear me. Others say I will speak too long. So here's my deal: I will



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PARSHAH RIDDLES

Answers to this week's riddles will appear in next week's issue.

- 1 **Which letter does the Gemara say is missing from the entire story of creation until Chavah's creation? Where does it appear in the beginning of *Bereishis*, and why doesn't that count?**
- 2 **Who was the only person in history that never had a name? Why not?**
- 3 **What are the 10 *ma'amarim*, statements said by Hashem, of the creation of the world? Which one did not really make anything new? Which one does not begin with "*vayomer*," and why not?**



CHOLENT STORY

A story told in parts, designed to get children to come back to the table for the main dish!

The name of the great tzaddik was spreading like wildfire.

The Rebbe Reb Yisrael was quickly becoming well known in the towns and cities near Ruzhin, Ukraine. Stories of his greatness, the exalted experience of Shabbos or Yom Tov in his court, his vision, and even his miracles became famous. People began to accord him the rare honor of the title “*kadosh*,” and he was known as “*der heiliger Ruzhiner*.”

Near Ruzhin, in a small hamlet called Lezhitomi, lived a Chassid named Reb Beirish. He had been searching for many years for the Rebbe to whom he could connect. Reb Beirish had looked in many places but had not connected with anyone. But when he heard about the *heilige Ruzhiner*, he became excited. Could this be the man for whom he had been searching?

Reb Beirish traveled to Ruzhin for Shabbos. He joined the Rebbe’s *tefillos* in the Ruzhiner *beis midrash*, participated in the various events the Rebbe held over Shabbos, listened carefully to all the Torah, and even spoke to the Rebbe personally for a few minutes. When Havdalah finally arrived, there was no doubt in his mind: he had found his Rebbe!

Thereafter, Reb Beirish traveled to Ruzhin as often as possible, which was no easy task. There was no train or rail service of any kind, and the trip took three arduous days by horse cart. It soon became too much for Reb Beirish to visit for Shabbos, and he was forced to restrict his visits to Yom Tov.

Even that eventually became too difficult and too expensive, and Reb Beirish settled on spending two times per year in Ruzhin: Shavuos and Shabbos Chanukah. How exalted those times were! Reb Beirish looked forward to these visits all year. The hours he spent in the presence of the Rebbe carried him aloft throughout the remainder of the year.

One year, as Chanukah approached, Reb Beirish’s excitement built as usual. From Rosh Chodesh Kislev, he could talk of nothing else. Days in advance of his trip, he was packed and ready to go. His wife and children were sorry to see him go—they would miss him—but they knew how important these trips were, not just for Reb Beirish, but for them as well. The higher level of *ruchniyus* Reb Beirish attained during these visit and the stories, insights, and wisdom of the holy Ruzhiner that he brought back with him buoyed them as well.

The morning of Reb Beirish’s departure dawned bleak and gray. Reb Beirish was hurriedly packing the final packages into his rented horse cart while his wife watched the horizon worriedly. Menacing clouds with a frightening green tinge swirled there. A powerful wind had kicked up from the west, and the temperature was dropping steadily. All the signs pointed to a nasty blizzard in the making.

“Beirish, are you sure this is a good idea?” she asked. “I know how important this is to you, but look at the sky! If you get caught in a blizzard, you’ll never make it anyway!”

“I have to go. I must go. How will we survive if I don’t go?”

“But what good will it be if you don’t make it? You can get lost in a blizzard, or trapped, and freeze to death. Then what will happen to all of us?”

“The *zechus* of the tzaddik will protect me. I must be off. If I delay any longer, I may not make it in time for Shabbos!”

Reb Beirish pulled his gloves tighter around his wrists and wrapped his muffler snugly around his face. He jumped into the cart, waved goodbye, and set off, the horse jogging into the swirling, darkening, windy edge of visibility.

TO BE CONTINUED...

LITVAK, CHASSID, SEPHARDI

Three different angles on a *dvar Torah*, one each from Litvish, Chassidic, and Sephardic sources. Can be split between the three *seudos*.

... שיהא טעם העץ כטעם הפרי. והיא לא עשתה כן. לפיכך כשנתקלל אדם על עונו נפקדה גם היא על עוניה: עץ פרי

“Fruit tree: The tree was supposed to taste like the fruit, but it did not do so... Therefore, when Adam was cursed for the sin [of the *Eitz Hada’as*], it [received its punishment]” (*Rashi, Bereishis* 1:11).

Why were the trees punished for not tasting like their fruit when Adam and Chavah ate from the *Eitz Hada’as*?

YEDEI MOSHE:

The only reason Adam and Chavah had any interest in eating from the *Eitz Hada’as* was because it looked so much better than the other trees—it was the only one whose wood tasted like fruit! Had the other trees also done so, the *Eitz Hada’as* would have seemed like nothing special.

IMREI SHEFER:

The snake convinced Chavah that it was OK to eat the fruit of the *Eitz Hada’as* by telling her that if it was really forbidden, it should look or taste worse than the other trees; Hashem wouldn’t make forbidden things look the same as permitted ones. But the *Eitz Hada’as* wasn’t worse than the others—in fact, it was better since the tree tasted like the fruit!

LUCHOT HABRIT (ON MIDRASH TALPIOT):

The snake convinced Chavah that it was OK to eat the fruit of the *Eitz Hada’as* by telling her that Hashem meant only that it was forbidden to eat the tree itself, but the fruit was OK. His proof was from the fact that all the other trees had no taste, and the *Eitz Hada’as* (*esrog*) was the only one that tasted like its fruit.



PERSONAL GROWTH AVODAH OF THE WEEK

This section views the procession of parshiyos and Yamim Tovim as a ladder for personal growth. It identifies a theme in the parshah and a related area that needs growth, and assigns a weekly mission based upon it.

The Yamim Nora'im are over. We have climbed through the wonderful process of restoration of our relationship with Hashem. Through Elul, *Selichos*, Rosh Hashanah, Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, Yom Kippur, Sukkos, Hoshana Rabbah, Shemini Atzeres, and Simchas Torah, we painstakingly rebuilt all that we lost through the painful dry and dying days of the summer, Tammuz and Av. And it is still Tishrei.

Now, we are ready to set off. Refreshed and renewed, we are prepared to tackle existence all over again. It won't be easy—the dark and cold days of winter are looming ahead. But we can do it! We start from the beginning—from *bereishis*.

AVODAH OF THE WEEK:

1. Take two of your main commitments from the Yamim Nora'im and schedule them firmly into your day/week. Now is the time to make those changes permanent. Make sure there is time for a daily/weekly accounting of how these *kabbalos* are going.
2. It is likely that you have already made some mistakes over Sukkos. The *yetzer hara's* greatest tactic is to get us to give up because of a mistake or two. Mistakes are part of growing! This is the week of creation, but also of mistakes! Refocus on recommitting to your *kabbalos* in honor of *Bereishis*, even if you slipped up already.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S RIDDLES:

1. Which six things are called “*rishon*” or “*reishis*?” **Torah, Yisrael, Beis Hamikdash, Sukkos, Eisav, Mashiach**
Which two special features does the *esrog* have in the story of *Bereishis*? **The *esrog* tree was the only tree that tasted like its fruit. According to one opinion in the Midrash, it was also the *Eitz Hada'as*.**
2. Rabi Elazar holds there is a mitzvah to eat all meals of Sukkos in the sukkah, noting that that adds up to 14 meals (seven days of Sukkos in Eretz Yisrael). Why doesn't he say 15? Doesn't Shabbos have three meals? **Rabi Elazar is only listing the meals about which the *Chachamim* argue. The first night is a mitzvah according to all opinions, but there are 14 additional meals under dispute.**
3. According to Rabi Akiva, the sukkos that *Klal Yisrael* used in the dessert were real sukkos, not the *ananei hakavod*. What is so miraculous about that? Why would we make a whole Yom Tov to commemorate that? **The *sefer Doleh U'mashkeh* says the sukkos grew with the Jewish families, just as their clothing grew.**
4. In some *sefarim*, we find the words **סימן יתק"ק** at the end of *Koheles*. What is that referring to? (It is not the number of *pesukim*—there are only 222.) **It refers to the four *sefarim* in which we repeat an earlier *pasuk* after reading the final *pasuk*: קינות (איכה), קהלת, תרי עשר (מלאכי), ישעי'.**
5. Who is *Koheles*? **Shlomo Hamelech** Why was he called *Koheles*? **He taught at *Hakhel*, when the entire nation gathered to hear the Torah, and he gathered (*kihel*) all the forms of wisdom (see *Rashi, Koheles 1:1*). Can you prove his identity from the *pesukim* in *Megillas Koheles*? **The *pesukim* say he was a king and the son of Dovid. Shlomo was the only one of Dovid's sons who ruled in Yerushalayim.****
6. Which Yom Tov do *Chazal* refer to simply as “*chag*”? **Sukkos** Which one is *Atzeres*? **Shavuot** How do they refer to Shemini Atzeres? **יום טוב האחרון של חג**

Did you notice that the story of the haftorah, besides relating to the depth of the parshah or day, usually sounds like it is right out of current events?

HAFTORAH FROM THE HEADLINES

Haftorah of the day before Rosh Chodesh

This Shabbos is the day immediately before (two days of) Rosh Chodesh. The haftorah for this week is called *Machar Chodesh*, and it replaces the regularly scheduled haftorah for *Shabbos Bereishis*. The haftorah includes the words “*machar Chodesh*,” which remind us that tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh.

HAFTORAH SUMMARY

Shaul Hamelech knows he is going to lose his kingship to Dovid, a military general and harp player in his court. Shaul enters a deep depression and imagines that Dovid is actually out to kill him. He tries to kill Dovid several times by throwing spears and knives at him despite promising his son Yehonasan, a good friend of Dovid's, that he would not try to kill him.

In the haftorah, Dovid and Yehonasan decide to test Shaul's true intentions by Dovid absenting himself from the traditional Rosh Chodesh feast. Dovid will hide in the field, and Yehonasan will relay Shaul's reaction to Dovid's absence through a series of signs.

Shaul's reaction is swift and furious. He vows that Dovid must be destroyed. When Yehonasan defends his friend, Shaul turns his anger toward his own son, calling him a traitor and raising a spear against him as well.

In his secret rendezvous with Dovid in the field, Yehonasan relays the unfortunate truth: Shaul will not rest until Dovid is gone. The two make a treaty in which they vow to remain loyal to each other. Yehonasan knows that Dovid will become king, not himself, and he loves Dovid anyway. Dovid promises to protect Yehonasan's descendants in return for all he has done for him. The two part, and Dovid flees into the wilderness.

CONNECTION TO ROSH CHODESH

More than just containing the words “*machar Chodesh*,” the haftorah cuts to the root of the symbolism of Rosh Chodesh. The waxing and waning moon represents *Klal Yisrael*, and specifically *malchus beis Dovid*, the kingship of Dovid's household, which grew for 15 generations until Shlomo and then faded for 15 generations until the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. And like the moon, it will rise again. Rosh Chodesh is the time of the moon's greatest destruction—it is completely gone. But in the darkened sky, it is reborn, to grow and shine again. In Dovid's darkest moment in which he is fleeing the powerful king, comes his birth, the beginning of his rise to kingship and the coming of Mashiach. And with his pact with Yehonasan are planted the seeds of love that will carry *Klal Yisrael* through our darkest times.

CONNECTION TO THE PARSHAH

The loss of the moon's dominance and its future rise, in the time of Mashiach, are alluded to between the lines of the *parshah*. As we say in *Kiddush Levanah*, the moon will be restored and *Klal Yisrael* will be restored. The cycle of the moon and of *Klal Yisrael* and the house of Dovid are the themes of the haftorah.

RIPPED FROM THE HEADLINES

Klal Yisrael continues its wax and wane as we limp toward Mashiach. Peace treaties and economic-cooperation deals may be a step up or a step down, and a part of a chain of both. The ultimate restoration of *Klal Yisrael* will only be on that Great Day.

>> CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

speak for three minutes, no longer. No one can complain about that, and you will be safe on both sides.”

“Three minutes? What could the Rav possibly accomplish in three minutes?”

“Leave that to me.”

So it was. Friday night, after *Mizmor Shir*, the Rav stood up to speak. He surveyed the many hostile faces before him, and his voice rang out, clear and true.

“Today is a historic day in South Africa!” he announced. “Two hundred seventy-five years ago, the first white man settled in Cape Town. Jan van Riebeeck, an explorer from Holland, arrived in a country that was all black. Today, we have flipped one hundred eighty degrees! I have come to this fully white community with my black hat, coat, and beard. The question is, has your attitude improved?”

He then turned and began to march back to his place, well shy of three minutes.

But his message had hit home. Abashed and ashamed of their behavior, the people clamored for him to continue.

He climbed the steps again. “Let me ask you about *Kiddush Levanah*, the blessing designed to console the shrunken moon. Why do we say ‘*Tipol aleihem eimasah vafachad—May they be struck with fear and trepidation*’ and follow with a warm and friendly ‘*Shalom aleichem*’?”

“At first, when we hear that someone is coming from afar, he sounds scary. Who is this black-hatter, coming here to lecture us and take our money? We are fearful, and project fear back to him. But then, when he comes closer, we can see that he is just a Yankele! Just like us! Another *Yidele*! Then we can extend a warm *shalom aleichem*.”

The people wanted still more, so he continued.

“Why do we follow with ‘*Dovid melech Yisrael chai v'kayam—Dovid, the king of Yisrael, lives and endures*’? Jews used to say *Kiddush Levanah* in secrecy, hiding in the woods and forests. If they met another person, the password to indicate ‘I'm also a Jew, and I also support Torah’ was these words.

“I come here today to tell you, ‘*Dovid melech Yisrael chai v'kayam!*’”

REMEZ (HINT)

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹקִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

“In the beginning when Hashem created the heaven and the land” (*Bereishis 1:1*).

The Gaon of Vilna famously said that the first *pasuk* of the Torah contains hints to all 613 mitzvos. When someone challenged him for the hint to the mitzvah of *pidyon haben*, the redemption of a firstborn son, the Gaon said it was hinted in the first word:

בן
ראשון
אחר
שלשים
יום
תפדה

meaning, “a first son after 30 days you shall redeem.”

THIS DATE IN JEWISH HISTORY



The 29th of Tishrei is the *yahrtzeit* of Shimon Hatzaddik. He was a *navi*, a *kohen gadol*, and the last member of the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah*. Together with them, he wrote and organized the *tefillos* in the siddur, destroyed the *yetzer hara* for *avodah zarah* (and with it, *nevuah*), and established many *takanos*.

During Shimon Hatzaddik's time, Alexander the Great and his armies swept through the known world, defeating the Persians and replacing them with the Greeks. A group of Kusim tried to get Alexander to destroy the Beis Hamikdash. Shimon Hatzaddik dressed in the garments of the *kohen gadol* and went to greet Alexander at dawn at Antipater. When Alexander saw Shimon, he got off his horse and bowed before him. He told the shocked Kusim that the image of Shimon Hatzaddik preceded him to war and every military victory. Needless to say, the Beis Hamikdash was spared, and the Kusim were not.

Shimon Hatzaddik served as *kohen gadol* for 40 years. During that time, the *se'ir laHashem* of Yom Kippur, the goat which was sacrificed to Hashem, always came out on his right side. On his last Yom Kippur, he predicted his death, since on all other *Yemei Kippur* he was accompanied to the Kodosh Hakodashim by a vision of an old man dressed in white, but on his final Yom Kippur, he was accompanied by an old man dressed in black. He survived Yom Kippur but fell ill immediately after Sukkos and passed away seven days later.

HALACHAH

Shabbos Kiddush and Vayechulu



There is a *mitzvah d'Oraysa* on both men and women to say or hear Kiddush at least once on Shabbos, based on the *pasuk* “*Zachor es yom haShabbos lekadesh*—Remember the day of Shabbos to sanctify it” (*Shemos* 20:8). According to the Rambam and many *poskim*, one fulfills this mitzvah by *davening* Maariv on Friday night. There is a mitzvah *d'rabbanan* to say that Kiddush over a cup of wine. The *Mishnah Berurah* advises that one should have in mind not to fulfill their obligation of Kiddush with *davening*, in order to fulfill the mitzvah *d'Oraysa* over a cup of wine. If one does fulfill the mitzvah during *davening*, he may not be able to be *motzi* a woman who has not *davened*, because she has a mitzvah *d'Oraysa* while he only has a *d'rabbanan*. Rabbi Akiva Eiger says she discharges her *d'Oraysa* as well by simply saying “Good Shabbos.” Also, the general understanding is that one does not want to fulfill his obligation with *davening*.

If someone missed Kiddush on Friday night, he should recite the Friday-night text for Kiddush on Shabbos morning, which will be the *d'Oraysa* Kiddush. According to Rabbi Akiva Eiger, a woman's husband may say the Friday-night Kiddush for her in the morning if she missed it; he fulfills his obligation with it as well.

Generally, Shabbos-morning Kiddush is *d'rabbanan*. The purpose of Kiddush on Shabbos morning is very different from Friday night's: it is to mark the meal as being different from the usual by beginning with something other than *Hamotzi*. That is why various forms of whiskey may be used. However, under no circumstances may one make Kiddush on Shabbos day over bread, since that defeats the point! According to many, bread is preferable to liquids other than wine or grape juice on Friday night.

Vayechulu recited during Kiddush is not really part of Kiddush. A man recites in order to be *motzi* family members and/or others with the testimony of *Vayechulu*, which states that Hashem created the world and it was complete and perfect. The man should say it a total of three times on Friday night: during *Shemoneh Esrei*, after *Shemoneh Esrei*, and during Kiddush. The third time should be over a cup of wine. If he forgot to say it during Kiddush, he can say it during the *seudah*: he should fill a cup and say *Vayechulu* over it. It should be said standing because it is testimony, which must always be said standing. Some sit afterward, before continuing Kiddush, in order that the group be “sitting together” and more unified to be *motzi* each other with the *bracha*. According to the Gra, it is even proper to sit during *Vayechulu* in order to be sitting during the *bracha*. Some stand and then sit. Some stand just for the words “*Yom hashishi vayechulu hashamayim*,” whose first letters spell Hashem's Name. Each family should follow its own *minhag*.

THE LAST WORD

A one-liner worth remembering

“TWO PEOPLE TALKING AT ONCE CREATE NOISE. BUT TWO PEOPLE SINGING AT ONCE CREATE HARMONY.”

—Rebbe Nachman of Breslov



Would you like to dedicate or sponsor an issue of Circle Time: At Your Shabbos Table? Contact circletime@circmag.com.

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