

SHABBAT SHALOM. Today is 27 Tishrei 5779. We bensch Rosh Chodesh Mar Cheshvan, which will be this Tuesday and Wednesday. The Molad (the reappearance of the moon) will take place Tuesday evening, October 9th at 9:01 p.m. and 11 chalakim (about 37 seconds), Jerusalem time.

[Rav Henkin noted that the time of the reappearance of the new moon is that single moment when the new moon is visible in Israel. When we announce that the time of the Molad is in the afternoon, we mean that it appeared in Eretz Yisrael in the afternoon, although here in America it was earlier in the morning. This discrepancy in time does not affect the yearly calendar, which always follows Eretz Yisrael. However, it does affect our Sanctification of the New Moon, which would be done before the exact moment of mid-month, which is ½ of 29 days, 20 hours, and 793 chalakim from the Molad. A chailek is 1/1080 of an hour or 1/18 of a minute. It is logical to conclude that we in America must sanctify the moon before mid-month in Eretz Yisrael, which is 7 hours before mid-month in New York.]

We omit Av Harachamim.

Mazel Tov to Eias Wainberg upon today's celebration of his Bar Mitzvah. Mazel Tov to Elias's parents Benjamin & Clara Wainberg, and to the entire family.

TORAH DIALOGUE

(p. 2 Hz) (p. 1 S) (p. 3 Hi) (p. 2 AS)

BREISHIT בְּרֵאשִׁית Genesis 1:1

[Compiled by Rabbi Edward Davis (RED), Rabbi Emeritus, Young Israel of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale]

1. When God embarked on the idea of creating a human being, the text tells us that God said, "Let us make man in Our image..." (1:26). The obvious question here is: Why is it in plural? Who was God talking to? The Midrash supplies the entire story: Moshe objecting to God in the usage of this terminology for fear that it would lead people to believe that there is more than one deity in the world. God told him to write it down anyway the way it is being dictated to him, for God wanted the people to know that he was consulting with the angels. This was to teach man that it is a very good idea before embarking on any important endeavor to consult with others. This is for the obvious reason that consulting would enable the individual to crystalize the idea better before starting the work. [RED's note: I remember always making an effort to consult my father on major decisions as in purchasing a car or purchasing a house. I looked upon it as not only an exercise of fulfillment of this Midrash, but also as fulfilling the commandment of honoring one's father. It turned out it was a better idea on both scores because frequently my father offered cogent advice which enabled me to make a better choice.] The Vilna Gaon makes an additional comment that Hashem was consulting with the animals because man will end up deriving knowledge and certain character traits from the animals. He will learn modesty from the cat, and industrious nature from ants, et al. I would add to the Vilna Gaon's perspective that it was necessary for God to consult with the animals because the human beings will be above the animals on the chart of creatures in the world. Man dominates the animal world. He will use the animal for work, for beasts of burden, and also for food and clothing.

2. Why did Eve give fruit to Adam after sinning by eating the fruit herself? It is understandable that she wanted him to sin as she did and suffer a similar fate. She would not be the only one dying and leaving him to fend for himself without her. This would indicate that she was sinful not just once, but she sinned a second time by offering it to him. This is the standard view among many commentators. I would add that once she ate maybe she initially felt remorse, but once the sin does not hurt and once one does not feel the mental pains or emotional grief of doing something wrong, then it became much easier to eat it again, have another bite, offer it to others including one's family. She found it easier to eat again and give it to her husband. This is a pattern of human nature that we would see repeated throughout time. Once a sin is committed it is much easier to repeat it and eventually one does not feel that it is a sin when doing it. (RED)

3. Many commentators note that there are two places in the Torah where we have Cherubim. The first time we see these Cherubim, they are established by the Almighty at the entrance of the Garden of Eden to guard the way and prevent anyone from entering and finding the Tree of Life. These Cherubim consequently are destructive angels. Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetsky, among others, noted that the term Cherubim was also used to describe the sacred angel-like children that were carved atop the Holy Ark. In our case they are destructive, and in that case they represent life-giving powers of Torah. Rabbi Kaminetsky, along with previous rabbis, looks at this as a lesson for us to understand the importance of education. Children can become holy or destructive depending on the type of education they receive from parents and from society. What would happen if a child is left without any form of education? Does it necessarily mean that the child will grow up and become animal-like and destructive? Most likely so. There are all different brands of education that children receive. The style of education has changed over time. Many would maintain that the style of education of previous generations was a much stricter form of education in terms of discipline and conduct, while today the school system has enacted certain principles that grant a leeway and liberal attitude toward the discipline of children. Maybe that is the reason we see many more children being destructive and the level of education not being as strong as in previous generations. Nevertheless the lesson is well-placed and would solve the interesting problem of the use of the term "Cherubim" only in these two places in Torah.

HAFTORAH

(p. 21 Hz) (p. 27 S) (p. 821 Hi) (p. 1130 AS)

ISAIAH יְשַׁעְיָהוּ 42:5

This week's Haftorah portion was selected because just as the Torah spoke about Hashem as the Creator of the Universe, so, too, the Prophet speaks about Hashem as constantly creating the Universe. The Prophet declared that although it looks as though the forces of nature allow the world to operate on its own, Hashem is actually continuously infusing the world with His energy. If He would stop, the world would cease to exist. In contrast, only man, to whom "He gives a soul" and a "spirit to walk in it (the world)," has the ability to act independently from Hashem's continuous control of the Universe by choosing to be righteous or evil. (M. Hirsch)

QUESTIONS FOR PARSHAT BREISHIT 5779
by Rabbi Edward Davis, Rabbi Emeritus

- I. From the Text
 1. What are five items that are created on the first day of Creation? (1:1-3)
 2. What was man's job in the Garden of Eden? And what could he eat? (2:15-17)
 3. What error did Eve make in conveying to the serpent what the prohibition was regarding the Tree of Knowledge? (3:1-3)
 4. What was the job of the Cherubim (destructive angels) at the end of the Garden of Eden story? (3:24)
 5. Which human being lived the longest, and how long did he live? (5:27)
- II. From Rashi
 6. Which day of Creation did God create the angels? (1:5)
 7. What did God create on the 7th day with Shabbat? (2:2)
 8. Where and when was Cain born? (4:1)
 9. Why did Hashem ask Cain where Abel was? Certainly God knew what happened! (4:9)
 10. Who killed Cain? (4:23)
- III. From the Rabbis
 11. What is the real meaning of the phrase in the Creation story that "God saw that it was good"? (Ramban)
 12. Part of Eve's punishment was to experience the pain of childbirth. What was her experience in giving birth prior to the Garden of Eden debacle? (Seforno)
 13. Why did these original human beings live such long lives? (Ramban)
- IV. From the Haftorah
 14. What is Israel's role in the world, according to Isaiah's prophecy? (42:6)
- V. Relationships.
 - a) Lemech – Lemech (2 answers)
 - b) Adam – Enosh
 - c) Yaval – Yuval
 - d) Cain – Seth
 - e) Chanoch – Metushelach

ANSWERS FOR PARSHAT BREISHIT 5779

1. Heaven, Earth, Darkness, Water and Light, all appear on the first day.
2. "Man was placed in the Garden to both work it and preserve it." He could eat of all the trees except for the Tree of Life, and the Tree of Knowledge.
3. Hashem told the First Couple that they were not permitted to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. Eve added that they were not permitted to touch it.
4. The Cherubim would "guard" the Garden, preventing man from discovering it, or reentering it.
5. Metushelach lived 969 years.
6. On the second day.
7. Menuchah: rest.
8. Cain was born in the Garden of Eden before the Sin. Therefore he was born on the 6th day of Creation, according to our Sages, before Shabbat (and on the same day that his father was created).
9. God entered into a calm conversation with Cain, giving him an opportunity to confess, repent, and ask for forgiveness.
10. Lemech, Cain's great-great-great-grandson killed him.
11. God saw that what He made was good, meaning that He made it permanent.
12. Before the Sin of the Garden of Eden, Eve conceived and gave birth immediately and painlessly.
13. Adam was physically perfect and so were his children; and therefore it was natural for them to live so long. After the Flood, nature changed. The deterioration of the atmosphere caused people to die sooner.
14. To be a light for the nations.

Relationships:

 - a) Distant cousins, and mechutanim
 - b) Grandfather Adam
 - c) Brothers
 - d) Brothers
 - e) Father Chanoch