



**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

TORAH WEEKLY

T"01

30 September -
6 October, 2018
21 - 27 Tishrei, 5779

Torah:
Genesis 1:1 - 6:8
*On the holidays, we read
the Torah listed below.*

Hosha'ana Rabba
(9/30/2018):
*Numbers 29:26-34; Num-
bers 29:29-34*

Shemini Atzeret
(10/1/2018):
*Torah 1:
Deuteronomy 14:22 -
16:17*

*Torah 2:
Numbers 29:35 - 30:1
Haftarah:
Kings I 8:54-66*

Simchat Torah
(10/2/2018):
*Torah 1:
Deuteronomy 33:1 -
34:12; Genesis 1:1 - 2:3
Torah 2:
Numbers 29:35 - 30:1
Haftarah:
Joshua 1:1-18*

■ CHANUKAH GELT

Please ask
the chaplain for the
'Chanukah Gelt Form'.
Your children will
receive Chanukah Gelt
from you.

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MAIN CHARACTER, CENTER STAGE

This week we celebrate the completion of the weekly Torah reading cycle. When it comes to Torah learning it really is an endless wellspring. Therefore, as soon as we complete the last section of the Torah, Vezot Haberacha, we immediately start it all over from the beginning. There is always something new to be learned, even from materials one has already studied.

The first Parsha of the Torah is Bereishit, which, appropriately, means "in the beginning." It discusses the creation of the world in six days.

On day six, God introduced His ultimate creation - humanity. He created Adam, the first man, and his better half, Eve. Why was man created on the sixth day, after all had been said and done? The reason is because God wanted to create mankind with a purpose and a clear mission: to perfect the physical world and make it a suitable dwelling place for Him. When Adam arrived on the scene the stage was already set for him. Everything in the world was at his disposal with the express purpose of using it all for God's sake.

God wanted Adam to realize that there was no reason to wait, nothing was going to be introduced after him and his partner. The time was ripe to begin the service of God.

But there is also a

unique lesson in the way which Adam was created; solo. All the other creations, from the animals to the vegetation to the endless galaxies, were created in bunches. God created them in multitudes and spread them across the world. But man was created solo. One man, by himself. True, it wasn't long before God created the need for a soul-mate, yet there is a glaring message in the fact that at the very beginning Adam was the one and only human in the world.

Every person counts infinitely more than he or she could ever imagine. The unique position that we are in as the human race makes it so that each individual should literally see himself as the be all end all of the universe.

This theme is expressed in the Mishna (Sanhedrin 4:5), "Therefore each and every individual is obligated to say [to him/herself], 'the world was created for me.'" This is not intended to be said in a self-centered, egotistical way, but rather as a matter of self-responsibility. One cannot simply sit back and say, "seven billion people inhabit the Earth, there's no need for me to try and contribute." Rather, one must tell himself the exact opposite, "seven billion people inhabit the Earth, and yet God is waiting specifically for my contribution. The weight of the world sits on my shoulders."

Adam and Eve were created solo, without others to whom they could pass off their responsibility. The yearly reading of Parshat Bereishit reminds us that we must approach life in the same way.

IT'S ALL UNDER CONTROL

The first commandments given to the Jewish people in the Torah are the laws of Rosh Chodesh, the sanctification of the new month and the structuring of the Jewish calendar. Interestingly, this commandment is given more than sixty chapters into the Torah - well into the second book of Shemot, Exodus. So, why wait so long? Why did God not begin the Torah with the first commandments? After all, isn't that what the Torah is about? Is it not a rule book by which we run our lives?

The truth is that, no, it's not. The Torah is much more than a set of rules. Through beginning the Torah by spending time on what happened in the beginning of existence, where it all came from, God provides us with an invaluable point of knowledge. It is not simply knowledge of "how-tos" or "do's and don'ts," but rather it's about "why," and more importantly, "for whom."

A life of Torah and Mitzvot, a life of real Judaism is not just a set of rules. It is a relationship with our Father in heaven. It's a bond with our creator. Before getting into the specifics of how and when to serve Him, God wants us to know who He is. He wants us to understand Who it is that we are serving.

In all of Genesis we read about how God created the world ex nihilo, how God introduced mankind and told him to be fruitful and multiply, fill the world and perfect

it. We learn about the relationship which God established with those entrusted with operating and fine-tuning His world. We read about the ups and downs our ancestors had and the process through which they ended up having to entrust their own fate in God's Hands.

All this to create some understanding of what it is we are doing here on this Earth. We now understand that there is a master plan, one which we may or may not recognize at times, but one which is always in operation. God put us exactly where we are and told us exactly what He needs us to do in order to complete the intended purpose. The first line of business in religion is the "what & how." But, the first line of business in our relationship with God is the "who."

And there's more than that. Getting the rundown on creation should also give us a good handle on true reality. Understanding that everything in creation is just that, creation, helps us keep things in perspective. God created everything from nothing, He continues to do so constantly, and everything has a plan and a purpose. That being the case, no matter what is happening in our lives and no matter how bleak things may appear to be sometimes, we know that, ultimately, it's not about how things will turn out by the rules of nature. We know and can rely on the fact that God is in control. Creation is His, and He is at the wheel at all times.

When the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, was arrested by the KGB for alleged counter-revolutionary activities, he was brutally beaten before, during and after interrogation and was treated with absolute cruelty. The interrogating officers were trying to extract information from him regarding his followers who were involved with the Rebbe's underground network of synagogues, Mikvahs and Jewish schools.

When the Rebbe refused to divulge any amount of information, the interrogating officer drew his pistol and pointed it against the Rebbe's head. "You think you're so tough," he said, "but this little toy here has made many tough people speak in the past..."

Without batting an eyelash, and without a flinch, the Rebbe coolly responded, "Your little toy only scares a man who has multiple gods and only one world. I have only one God, and two worlds. Your toy doesn't scare me."

The Rebbe lived by such an unwavering trust in God. He knew at every moment of every day that whatever happens is in God's hands. Whether it turns out the way we hoped it would or not, it was God's decision and everything God does is good. Should He want me to live another day, I'll live another day - pistol or no pistol. Should He decide that it's time for me to return my soul to it's maker, so be it. And it is also good.

The absolute certainty that God created, continues to create and runs the world and everything that happens in it must serve as an unshakable reminder that everything in His world is good, for He is the ultimate Goodness.

By Rabbi Nissan Aizek

SHEMINI ATZERET & SIMCHAT TORAH

Dancing With Feet

On Simchat Torah we dance with our feet, not with our heads.

We are celebrating the Torah, and the Torah is something we study with our heads. But we dance with our feet, not with our heads.

If we would dance with our heads, each one would dance a different dance, each in a different space, some with friends but not with others, some as lonesome souls.

One head is higher, one is lower, one is here on earth, the other in the clouds or beyond, and some minds know only their own space that no one else can know.

But we dance with our feet, and all our feet are here on the same earth—none higher and none lower. So now we can all dance as one, with one heart, as a single being.

Now there is no loneliness, only joy.

In Jewish History

Monday, 22 Tishrei, 5779 - October 1, 2018 Lubavitcher Rebbe Suffers Heart Attack (1977)

While celebrating the joyous holiday hakafot with thousands of chassidim in the central Chabad-Lubavitch synagogue in Brooklyn, NY, the Rebbe suffered a massive heart attack. In spite of the tremendous pain, the Rebbe remained calm and insisted on continuing the hakafot, and only after they concluded did he depart the synagogue.

On the following day, the Rebbe requested that the chassidim celebrate the Simchat Torah festivities with the same joy and fervor as all other years, and so it was.

After the holiday ended, the Rebbe addressed and reassured the anxious chassidim from his office (which was hastily converted into a cutting-edge cardiac unit) via a public address system.

The Rebbe remained in his office in Lubavitch World Headquarters under medical supervision for several weeks. He returned home five weeks later on the 1st of Kislev, a day designated by chassidim for celebration and thanksgiving.

Thursday, 25 Tishrei, 5779 - October 4, 2018 Passing of R. Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1809)

Passing of the great Chassidic leader and advocate for the Jewish people, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1810). Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was a close disciple of the second leader of the Chassidic movement, Rabbi DovBer, the Maggid of Mezritch. He is best known for his love for every Jew and his impassioned words of advocacy on their behalf before the Almighty.

Passing of Chatam Sofer (1839)

Tishrei 25th is the yahrtzeit of Rabbi Moshe Sofer of Pressburg (1762-1839), known as "Chatam Sofer" after his work of Rabbinic responsa. Rabbi Moshe was an outstanding Halachic authority and community leader, and was at the forefront of the battle to preserve the integrity of traditional Judaism in the face of the various "reformist" movements of his time.