

המחלקה לחינוך
ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית

אור בישראל

A LIGHT FROM WITHIN ISRAEL **בראשית**

כ"ט תשרי תשפ"ז 10.10.2026

1 Mazal tov, this week we start over! After the holidays, Jewish communities around the world begin reading the Torah again from the beginning, and you're invited to join in. This coming Shabbat is called "Shabbat Bereishit," and on it we begin reading the Torah from the words: "In the beginning (Bereishit), God created the heavens and the earth..." It's an important reminder for all of us: the world was created, it has a purpose, and chaos is not in control.

2 Parashat Bereishit describes the creation of the entire world, and there's great festivity in it: the heavens, the water, the moon, the sun, the stars, the animals, and also man, meaning us, created "in the image of God." And what else was created in this parasha? Shabbat. A wonderful gift, then and now. The parasha contains only one mitzvah: "Be fruitful and multiply." It is the commandment to bring children into the world and to carry on humanity, which began in Parashat Bereishit.

3 This Shabbat is also called "Shabbat Mevarchim," because on it we bless the month of Cheshvan, which begins next week.

4 In the Chassidic movement, it is said that Shabbat Bereishit influences every Shabbat and every weekday of the year: "The way a person stands on Shabbat Bereishit is how the whole year will unfold."

Shabbat Shalom, and may we hear good news. Here's to a fresh start!

A STORY FOR SHABBAT

Now It's Your Turn

Imagine walking into a huge library filled with thousands of fascinating books. You wander between the shelves, browsing, occasionally pulling out a book and flipping through it. Suddenly you stop. On one of the shelves, you've found a book with your family name on it. You reach out and open it with curiosity, and you see hundreds of pages written by different people in different languages. You try to understand what's written here and what this ancient book is about, and slowly you realize that your ancestors wrote it. Each of them wrote their story in their own chapter and passed it on to the next generation. You read on, chapter after chapter: from Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, through Noach, Avraham and Sarah, Moshe, and on to the Jewish people going into exile. Generation after generation. Suddenly things start to make more sense. You recognize your great-great-grandfather, then your great-grandmother, and then your grandparents, whom you know. The next chapter was written by your father and mother, and it's the last one. But when you reach the end of the book, you discover one blank page. At the top is your name, but not another word is written on it. This is the chapter you need to write. Will you put the book back on the shelf, walk away, and forget the whole thing? If you choose to do that, all the hundreds of generations before you who preserved this book will disappear along with you. They believed in you. They're waiting for you. Now it's your turn. You need to write your chapter, and one day you too will pass it on to your children and grandchildren. This is the eternal Jewish story.

(From the 'Ligdol' book series)

Food for Thought

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks used to tell this story many times in his talks across the Jewish world. He said that each of us has the opportunity to take part in the most moving and fascinating story in human history: the story of the Jewish people. Picture that blank page with your name at the top. What will be written in your chapter? What will you pass on?



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In the photos: Zvika, the bereaved father, and the new mother, and the new ambulance

IN YOUR BLOOD, LIVE

Hila Barbitz is a midwife who lives on Kibbutz Sa'ad, and she sent me a short but powerful story: "Thursday evening I got a phone call. Zvika Rider, our neighbor and a senior paramedic, tells me: 'I've got a call for a woman in labor.' Half a minute later, I'm already in his new ambulance, which was donated in memory of his son Dor, who was murdered in Be'eri on Simchat Torah 5784 (October 7, 2023). We start driving toward the entrance to Be'eri, through the fields. On the way, Zvika says: 'How I'd love for there to be a birth here, in Dor's ambulance. This is my first call with this vehicle.' On the way to Be'eri, Zvika spots the car that called us, pulled over on the side of the road. We get out and see a woman leaning against the car, two little kids inside, and a husband who is very happy to see us... The woman is already deep in labor. Zvika rushes to get the stretcher out so we can get her into the ambulance. We get in, and within seconds, she gives birth to a beautiful baby boy. We're all overcome with emotion. I control myself so I won't cry. With perfect timing, an ICU ambulance arrives and takes her to the maternity ward. And then I think about Dor Rider, Zvika's son who was murdered in Be'eri. An ambulance was dedicated in his name, and its first call was for a baby boy, born right on the road to Be'eri. And the brit was held on the eve of Simchat Torah. And now the tears won't stop. I cry for dear Dor, for my friend Adrienne, the beloved midwife who was murdered in Be'eri, and for the mother I helped bring new life into the world. I head home to cook for Shabbat. 'And I said to you: In your blood, live. And I said to you: In your blood, live.'"

FROM THE DIARY OF A SHLICHA

Osnat Shapira, an educational shlicha in Prague, writes to us: During Sukkot, and to mark October 7th, our 5th and 6th grade students created posters inspired by the "Ot Chaim" project, which uses the handwriting of people who were killed on October 7th. Each pair of students chose one person, learned a little about their life story, and used their handwriting to create a poster that tells something about the person, what they loved, and what we choose to remember about them. Sukkot is a holiday of home, community and hospitality. The sukkah is a temporary home with room for everyone. From this idea, we wanted to make room for memory as well: room for people, for their stories, and for the lives they lived. On the day of remembrance for October 7th, these posters make room for the stories of the people we chose to remember. Through the handwriting, words and images they chose, the students tell something about who these people were and what matters to them that we remember.



Around the Shabbat Table

- What can we learn about a person from their handwriting? And what can't we know from handwriting alone?
- Sukkot is a holiday of home and hospitality. What does it mean to "make room" for memory inside the sukkah?
- Zvika Rider lost his son, yet chose to keep saving lives in an ambulance named after him. What can we learn from that choice?
- What is the difference between remembering and memorializing?



דף הפרשה מוקדש לעילוי
נשמת החיילים הקדושים
מיכאל בן חמו ואייל טויטו הי"ד



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