



# Kinder Torah<sup>®</sup>



For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table  
Parshas Bereshis

## Firsts

**“H**adassah, what is the first parsha of the Torah?”

“Bereshis.”

“There are a lot of ‘firsts’ in parshas Bereshis.”

“You’re right Rivkah. Let’s see. The first day, the first plants, the first animals, and the first person were all created in this week’s parsha. Also the first Shabbos was created and observed.”

“You are a very positive thinker, Hadassah. Those are all positive things. Are there any negative ‘firsts’ in the parsha?”

“Unfortunately, there are, Rivkah. The first loshon hora ever spoken was also in this week’s parsha.”

“Who spoke it?”

“The *nachash* (snake). He was a devious creature. He was jealous of Adam and Chava so he spoke loshon hora and caused them to sin.”

“About whom did he speak loshon hora, Hadassah?”

“About Hashem Himself.”

“That’s awful.”

“It certainly was. He told Chava that Hashem ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge and created the world. Hashem was jealous, however. He knew that the day that Adam and Chava would eat from the tree, their eyes would open, and they would be able to create worlds also. Because of His jealousy, Hashem did not want another creator in the world. Therefore, He commanded them not to eat from the tree.”

“That is a complete lie. What a devious trick.”

“You’re right Rivkah. It was the biggest calamity in history. It brought death into the world, and exiled Adam and Chava from Gad Eden. But the *nachash* suffered the most.”

“Right. He lost his legs and his power of speech. He was condemned to eat dust his entire life. All of Hashem’s creatures hate him and want to kill him.”

“He received a terrible punishment, because he committed a terrible sin.”

“Hadassah, do you know that the Chofetz Chaim zt”l writes that all people who constantly speak loshon hora suffer the same fate. Once their bad nature becomes known, everyone hates them and avoids them. They do not want to be the subject of his loshon hora.”

## Kinderlach . . .

*We’ve spoken about loshon hora many times. Do you see how bad it is? It brought death to the entire world. It exiled Adam and Chava from Gan Eden. It made the nachash and all of his descendants suffer for all time. And it makes the one who speaks it hated by those around him. In his sefer Shmiras HaLoshon, the Chofetz Chaim explains that the destructive power of loshon hora has not diminished. It still causes death, exile, and all types of suffering. Isn’t this enough of a reason to learn the laws of shmiras haloshon and put them into practice?*

## His Handiwork

**“N**ow, boys, step this way and we will enter the antique furniture exhibition.”

“Wow, Aaron. Isn’t this museum great?”

“It sure is, Tzvi. We get to see how people lived two hundred years ago.”

“Boys, please notice the fine handiwork on these wooden chairs. Each piece is hand carved, finished, and polished.”

“Aaron, we don’t see chairs like that today. Everything is made with machines.”

“So true, Tzvi. You can judge the skill of the craftsman by his handiwork. The carpenter who made these chairs must have been very talented. His work is beautiful. Look. Here are more intricate pieces of furniture and fine wood carvings covered with silver.”

“You can judge the skill of the craftsman by his handiwork.”

“That’s what I said, Tzvi.”

“It is as true nowadays as it was 5761 years ago.”

“That’s ancient history, Tzvi. What are you referring to?”

“The first words of the Torah, Aaron, ‘Bereshis barah Elokim,’ ‘In the beginning of Hashem’s creating.’ Wouldn’t it have been better to begin the Torah with Hashem’s name and say, ‘Elokim barah Bereshis?’”

“I guess so.”

“Rav Shlomo Efraim from Lontshetz, who is known to us as the Keli Yakar, asks this question.”

“What is his answer, Tzvi?”

“He explains that we cannot know Hashem directly. We can only appreciate who He is by observing

His handiwork. Therefore, the word *barah* comes before the word *Elokim*. It is only through the creation (*barah*) that we know Elokim.”

“That is very philosophical, Tzvi.”

“True, Aaron, but it is practical also. Just look at the marvels of the world. The majestic mountains, the deep seas, the vegetation, the orbits of the planets, and the complexity of even the tiniest creatures. Hashem’s handiwork shows that He is quite a craftsman.”

“Do you know that we refer to this in our daily prayers, Tzvi? In the second blessing of the silent Amidah we say, ‘Who is like You, Master of mighty deeds, and who can be compared to You?’ The Rabbis explain that no one is capable of doing as many mighty deeds as Hashem, and no one can do even one of them as well as He can. Just think about how many millions, billions, and trillions of things Hashem has created and is supporting. Then think about the complexity of even the simplest of them.”

“Wow.”

“Now you can start to get some appreciation of our Creator.”

## Kinderlach . . .

*Inspiration is all around us. We just need to open our eyes a little wider, see it, and think about it. Let us all go around the Shabbos table and give examples of the wonders that Hashem has created in this world. Let’s see who can give the most examples. He will surely have a great appreciation of Hashem’s majesty.*

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