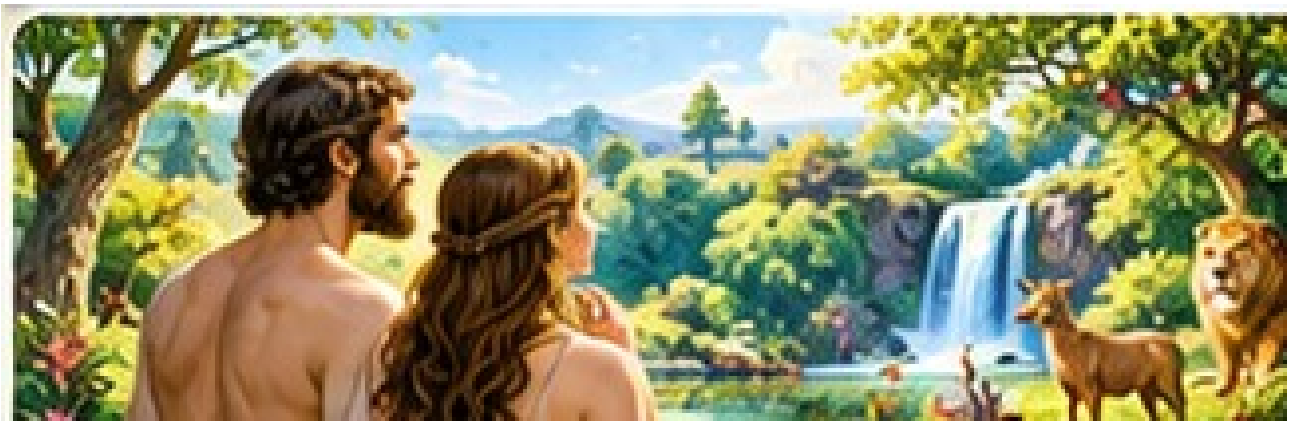
Sefer Bereishit

The Torah's Storyline · A concise guide to the twelve parshiyot

1. Bereishit

Creation, Adam and Chava, and the first generations



Beginning: Hashem creates heaven and earth, the world, and finally Adam and Chava.

Main events: Gan Eden, the sin of Adam and Chava, Kayin and Hevel, and the generations of Adam.

Message: Creation, human responsibility, free choice and its consequences.

Ending: Mankind becomes increasingly corrupt. Noach finds favour in Hashem's eyes.

Next: Noach and his family will be the ones to survive the coming destruction.

2. Noach

The Flood, a new beginning, and the generations after Noach



Beginning: Noach is introduced as a righteous man in a corrupt generation.

Main events: Building the Ark, the Mabul, the rainbow covenant, Noach's descendants and Migdal Bavel.

Message: Hashem judges the world but also provides the possibility of a new beginning.

Ending: The generations of Shem lead to Terach, the father of Avram.

Next: The story moves from mankind as a whole to one particular family: Avram's.

3. Lech Lecha

Avram's journey and the beginning of the covenant



Beginning: Hashem commands Avram to leave his birthplace and travel to the land He will show him.

Main events: Arrival in Canaan, famine and Egypt, separation from Lot, the war of the kings, the covenant between the parts, and the birth of Yishmael.

Message: The beginning of the special covenant between Hashem and Avraham.

Ending: Avraham receives the command of Brit Milah, and his household enters the covenant.

Next: Three visitors will announce that Sarah will have a son.

4. Vayera

The visitors, Sedom, Yitzchak's birth, and the Akeidah



Beginning: Hashem appears to Avraham, who receives three visitors.

Main events: The promise of Yitzchak, destruction of Sedom, Lot's rescue, birth of Yitzchak, Hagar and Yishmael's departure, and the Akeidah.

Message: Hospitality, divine justice, compassion and absolute faith.

Ending: Avraham hears of the family of his brother Nachor, including Rivkah's family.

Next: Sarah dies, and Avraham must arrange a burial place and a wife for Yitzchak.

5. Chayei Sarah

Sarah's burial and the marriage of Yitzchak and Rivkah



Beginning: Sarah dies at the age of 127. Avraham purchases Me'arat HaMachpelah.

Main events: Eliezer's mission to find a wife for Yitzchak, Rivkah's arrival, their marriage, and Avraham's later years and death.

Message: The continuity of Avraham's family and covenant through the next generation.

Ending: Yitzchak and Yishmael bury Avraham in Me'arat HaMachpelah.

Next: The story turns to Yitzchak's family and the struggle between his twin sons.

6. Toldot

Yaakov and Esav, the birthright and the blessings



Beginning: Yitzchak and Rivkah have twins, Esav and Yaakov.

Main events: Esav sells his birthright; Yitzchak's blessings; Yaakov receives the blessing intended for Esav.

Message: The importance of the birthright and the continuation of the covenant.

Ending: Esav plans to kill Yaakov. Rivkah sends Yaakov away to her family in Charan.

Next: Yaakov leaves home, and his journey towards Charan begins.

7. Vayetze

Yaakov's journey, his marriages, and the birth of his family



Beginning: Yaakov leaves Be'er Sheva and dreams of the ladder reaching heaven.

Main events: Arrival at Lavan's house, marriage to Leah and Rachel, the birth of his children, and Yaakov's growing wealth.

Message: Hashem accompanies Yaakov even in exile, and the family of Israel takes shape.

Ending: Yaakov leaves Lavan secretly, but Lavan pursues him. They make a covenant.

Next: Yaakov is returning to Canaan, but he must face his brother Esav.

8. Vayishlach

Yaakov meets Esav and receives the name Yisrael



Beginning: Yaakov sends messengers to Esav and prepares anxiously for their meeting.

Main events: Wrestling with the angel, receiving the name Yisrael, reconciliation with Esav, the episode of Dinah and Shechem, and the deaths of Rachel and Yitzchak.

Message: Yaakov becomes Yisrael, and the family develops into the nation of Israel.

Ending: The descendants and chiefs of Esav are listed.

Next: The Torah turns to Yaakov's son Yosef and the beginning of his troubles with his brothers.

9. Vayeshev

Yosef's dreams, his sale, and his descent into Egypt



Beginning: Yaakov settles in Canaan. Yosef is his favoured son and dreams of his future greatness.

Main events: Yosef is sold by his brothers; Yehudah and Tamar; Yosef in Potiphar's house and in prison.

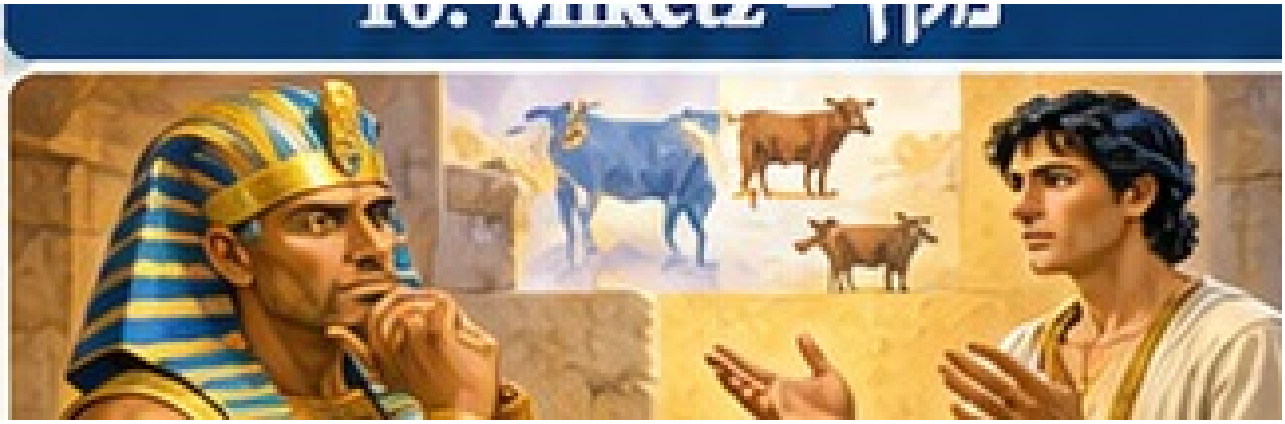
Message: Jealousy, human responsibility and the hidden beginnings of divine providence.

Ending: Yosef interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker, but the cupbearer forgets him.

Next: Pharaoh will have troubling dreams, and Yosef's forgotten gift will become essential.

10. Miketz

Pharaoh's dreams and Yosef's rise to power



Beginning: Pharaoh dreams of seven healthy cows and seven thin cows, followed by seven full ears of grain and seven empty ones.

Main events: Yosef interprets the dreams, becomes ruler over Egypt's food supplies, and his brothers come to buy grain. Binyamin is brought to Egypt.

Message: What appeared to be misfortune becomes the means of salvation.

Ending: Yosef's silver goblet is discovered in Binyamin's sack, and the brothers are brought back to him.

Next: Yehudah will step forward and plead for Binyamin's freedom.

11. Vayigash

Yosef reveals himself and Yaakov's family comes to Egypt



Beginning: Yehudah approaches Yosef and offers himself in place of Binyamin.

Main events: Yosef reveals his identity, the brothers reconcile, Yaakov and his family come down to Egypt, and they settle in Goshen.

Message: Divine providence transforms betrayal and suffering into the preservation of an entire family.

Ending: Yosef administers Egypt's food during the famine, and Yaakov's family settles in Goshen.

Next: Yaakov's life is drawing to its end. He will bless Yosef's sons and his own children.

12. Vayechi

Yaakov's final blessings, death, and Yosef's last request



Beginning: Yaakov lives his final seventeen years in Egypt.

Main events: Yaakov blesses Ephraim and Menashe, gives his final blessings to his twelve sons, dies and is buried in Canaan.

Message: The family of Yaakov has become the foundation of the future nation of Israel.

Ending: Yosef reassures his brothers, dies in Egypt and asks that his bones eventually be taken out of Egypt.

Next: Sefer Shemot begins. Yaakov's family has become a numerous people, but a new Pharaoh arises who does not know Yosef.