



## A Marvelous Chiddush from the Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh

# Yaakov Avinu Set the “Even HaShesiyah” in the Kodesh HaKodashim נ'עשה אדם and ב'ראשית Is an Acronym for the Utterances אב"ן

This week's parsha is parshas Vayeitzei. We are going to focus on the fascinating journey of the stone that Yaakov Avinu placed beneath his head when he slept at the site of the future Mikdash. Subsequently, he took that stone and consecrated it as a monument to become the **House of G-d**. This journey begins with the opening pesukim of the parsha (Bereishis 28, 10):

“ויצא יעקב מבאר שבע וילך חרנה, ויפגע במקום וילן שם כי בא השמש, ויקח מאבני המקום וישם מראשותיו וישכב במקום ההוא.”

**And Yaakov departed from Be'er Sheva and went to Charan. He encountered the place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; he took from the stones of the place, and he placed them around his head and lay down in that place. Rashi comments: “And he placed them around his head”: He arranged them like a gutter-pipe around his head, because he feared the presence of wild animals. The stones began to quarrel with one another. This one would say, “Upon me shall the tzaddik lay his head”; and this one would say, “Upon me shall he lay his head.” Immediately, HKB”H made them into one stone. This is implied by the words (ibid. 18): “And he took the stone (singular) that he placed around his head.”**

Now, we have an accepted principle: “לא עביד קוב”ה” ניסא למגנא. In other words, HKB”H does not perform

miracles for naught. That being the case, why was it necessary to merge the stones into one? We must also endeavor to understand the quarrel that took place among the stones. In fact, we find a fundamental insight and explanation from the author of the Akeidas Yitzchak (25). He explains, in his own inimitable way, that the quarrel among the stones reflects various ways to serve Hashem. Each stone represented a particular “derech” of serving Hashem. Hence, each stone wanted the tzaddik to rest his head and his thoughts on it. Therefore, HKB”H transformed them miraculously into a single stone to emphasize that they are all equally valid and must be integrated in the service of Hashem. With the Almighty's help and blessing, we will explain the matter guided by illuminating insights from our sacred sefarim.

### This Stone Will Become the House of G-d

We will begin by examining the next step in this special stone's journey. After placing this one stone—that had been formed from the group of quarreling stones—beneath his head, and sleeping on it, the narrative continues (ibid. 28, 18):

“וישכם יעקב בבוקר ויקח את האבן אשר שם מראשותיו וישם אותה מצבה ויצוק שמן על ראשה... וידר יעקב נדר לאמר, אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני בדרך הזה אשר אנכי הולך ונתן לי לחם לאכול ובגד ללבוש, ושבתי בשלום אל בית אבי והיה ה' לי לאלקים, והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה יהיה בית אלקים וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך.”

**Yaakov arose early in the morning and took the stone that he had placed around his head and set it up as a monument; and he poured oil on its top . . . Then Yaakov took a vow, saying, “If G-d will be with me, and He will guard me on this way that I am going; and He will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear; and I will return in peace to my father’s house, and Hashem will be a G-d to me—then this stone which I have set up as a monument shall become a house of G-d, and whatever You will give me, I shall surely tithe to you.”**

The Ohr HaChaim hakadosh teaches us a marvelous chiddush concerning the intent of Yaakov Avinu with his pronouncement: **“This stone which I have set up as a monument shall become a Beis Elokim.”** He explains that Yaakov Avinu consecrated it to be the foundation stone—the “even Shesiyah”—of the Beis HaMikdash—the **“House of G-d”**—in the Kodesh HaKodashim. Let us refer to the Mishnah (Yoma 53b): **“אבן היתה שם מימות נביאים ראשונים ושתייה היתה נקראת”—a stone was there from the days of the early prophets, and it was called “Shesiyah.”** Furthermore, the Gemara states (ibid. 54b); **“תנא שממנה הושתת העולם”—a Baraisa taught: Because from it the world was founded.** In reality, this chiddush was already taught in the Zohar hakadosh (Noach 52a): **“והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה יהיה בית אלקים, דא אבן שתיה”—this stone that I placed as a monument will become a house of G-d (“Beis Elokim”); this is the foundation stone (“even Shesiyah”).**

To summarize, we have learned a fascinating tidbit concerning the evolution of the “even Shesiyah.” When Yaakov was about to fall asleep at the site of the Mikdash, HKB”H made this monumental stone from which the world was founded available to him. It is regarding this stone that the Torah says: **“He took from the stones of the place, and he placed them around his head”** for protection from wild animals. Then, when he awoke, he made a vow: **“This stone which I have set up as a monument shall become a Beis Elokim”—**implying that this very stone would be the “even Shesiyah” in the Kodesh HaKodashim.

This, however, deserves clarification. If the stone upon which Yaakov rested his head was the stone from which the world was founded, how are we to explain the premise that it was originally a group of individual stones quarreling with each other as to where **this tzaddik would rest his head?** Was the world founded from a single stone or a group of stones? Additionally, what is the deeper connection between the two parts of Yaakov’s vow—between **this consecrated stone becoming a permanent feature in the House of G-d in the Kodesh HaKodashim** and his vow **to give one-tenth of everything he owns as a tithe to HKB”H?**

### **In the Merit of Giving a Tithe of One Tenth HKB”H Promises to Give Yaakov’s Children Ten Days of Teshuvah**

I would like to propose a wonderful explanation for these issues. We will begin by explaining a Midrash Pliah brought down by the Gaon Chida, ztz”l, in his sefer Devarim Achadim (Shabbas Teshuvah, Drush 12) and in his sefer Ahavas David (Shabbas Teshuvah, Drush 4): **“בשביל שאמר יעקב וכל אשר נתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך, אמר הקב”ה בשביל זה: אני נותן לבניך עשרת ימי תשובה”—because Yaakov said: “And whatever You will give me, I shall surely give one-tenth to You,” HKB”H said: “For this, I will give your children Ten Days of Repentance.”** We must explain how these two things correspond to one another. What is the “midah k’neged midah” of giving ma’aser and the reward of Aseres Yimei Teshuvah?

It appears that we can explain this Midrash based on a fundamental principle gleaned from the sacred teachings of the Sefas Emes (Shabbas Teshuvah 5662). We are taught in the Mishnah (Avos 5, 1): **“בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם, ומה תלמוד לומר, והלא במאמר אחד יכול להיבראות, אלא להיפרע מן הרשעים שמאבדין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות, וליתן שכר טוב לצדיקים שמקיימין את העולם שנברא בעשרה מאמרות.”** **The world was created by means of “ten utterances.” What does this come to teach us? Indeed, it could have been created with a single utterance; but this way allows for retribution from the wicked—who destroy the world that was created with ten utterances—and the bestowal of ample**

**reward to the righteous—who sustain the world that was created with ten utterances.** The Sefas Emes asserts that HKB”H gave us the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah as a means of rectifying the Ten Utterances with which the world was created.

Accordingly, he posits that on every Rosh HaShanah HKB”H renews creation with the Ten Utterances just as He created the world initially with the Ten Utterances mentioned in parshas Bereishis. Thus, the tzaddikim, who sustain the world with their study of Torah and performance of mitzvos, are active participants in the renewal of creation with the Ten Utterances. In contrast, the reshaim, however, whose evil deeds and transgressions corrupt and destroy the world that was created with the Ten Utterances, destroy the conduits that provide blessings and abundant good and are incapable of participating in the renewal of creation.

For this reason, HKB”H, in His infinite mercy and kindness, gave us the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah. During the ten days from Rosh HaShanah to Yom HaKippurim, every Jew is able to rectify via teshuvah and good deeds the damage he caused to the Ten Utterances. In this merit, HKB”H will renew the creation with the Ten Utterances. Every Jew who participated in this renewal will merit receiving abundant good from the conduits of plenty generated by the Ten Utterances.

### Rosh HaShanah Corresponds to the First Utterance “Bereishis”

Undoubtedly, Rosh HaShanah—the first of the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah—and Yom Kippur—the tenth day—are more important and on a higher level than the rest of the ten days. Aligning these ten days with the ten utterances, Rosh HaShanah aligns with the first utterance, and Yom Kippur aligns with the tenth utterance. This infers that the first and tenth utterances are also more important and significant than the other utterances.

In general, we find that the first and last items in a set possess special significance. The increased significance of the first is evident from the mitzvah of bikkurim—bringing the first fruit. Also, the firstborn

man and animal are sanctified to Hashem. Regarding the special significance of the last item, we have learned in the Mishnah (Berachos 12a): **הכל הולך אחר”**—**everything follows the conclusion.** This explains the rationale for Rashi’s comment citing an Aggadic Midrash (Devarim 8, 1): **שאינה נקראת המצוה אלא על”**—**a mitzvah is only attributed to the one who completes it.**

So, what are the first and last of the Ten utterances, which are more significant than the other utterances? To answer this question, let us refer to a teaching in the Mishnah (R.H. 32a). On Rosh HaShanah, we recite ten pesukim in the section of Malchiyos. This prompts the Gemara’s question (ibid.):

**הני עשרה מלכיות כנגד מי, רבי יוחנן אמר כנגד עשרה מאמרות שבהן נברא העולם”**

**—to what do these ten pesukim of Malchiyos correspond? Rabbi Yochanan said: They correspond to the Ten Utterances with which the world was created.** The Gemara asks: But in the passage describing the creation the word **“ויאמר”**—introducing the utterances—only appears nine times. The Gemara answers: **“בראשית נמי מאמר הוא דכתיב”**—**the word בראשית also constitutes an utterance, as indicated by the passuk** (Tehillim 33, 6): **“With the word of Hashem the heavens were made.”** Thus, we learn that the first utterance with which the world was created is (Bereishis 1, 1): **“בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ”**. Accordingly, Rosh HaShanah—the first of the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah—aligns with the first utterance: **“בראשית ברא אלקים”**. This implies that we are obliged to rectify this first utterance on the holy day of Rosh HaShanah.

### The Utterance of “Bereishis” Encompasses All Ten Utterances

Understood in this light, we can explain why our blessed sages instituted the recitation of the ten pesukim of Malchiyos corresponding to the Ten Utterances on the first day of the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah, which corresponds to the utterance of **“Bereishis.”** Let us refer to the in-depth comment of the Ramban on the first passuk of the Torah (Bereishis 1, 1): **“בראשית ברא”**—**אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ”**. He says that HKB”H created

the spiritual roots of all of creation on the first day of creation—the amorphous, raw material and potential, so to speak—from which HKB”H subsequently created every element of creation on its respective day.

This means that Rosh HaShanah, which corresponds to the utterance of **“Bereishis,”** actually incorporates the spiritual roots of all ten utterances. Therefore, our blessed sages instituted the recitation of the ten pesukim of Malchiyos corresponding to all ten utterances on Rosh HaShanah. This is designed to extend the abundant bounty associated with the first utterance of **“Bereishis”**—which incorporates the spiritual roots of all ten utterances—to renew the creation via the Ten Utterances with which the world was created.

Let us embellish this thought. We can explain how the utterance of **“Bereishis”** encompasses all of the Ten Utterances based on what they elucidated in the Midrash (B.R. 1, 1): **“בראשית ברא אלקים, התורה אומרת אני הייתי כלי: אומגתו של הקב”ה... היה הקב”ה מביט בתורה ובורא את העולם, והתורה אמרה: בראשית ברא אלקים, ואין ראשית אלא תורה.”** **The Torah declares: “I was the craftsman’s tool (blueprint) of HKB”H” . . . HKB”H would look in the Torah and create the world. So, too, did HKB”H peer into the Torah (as His guide) and create the world. Therefore, the Torah said, “בראשית ברא אלקים” — “with ‘Reishis’ G-d created.” There is no “Reishis” other than the Torah.** We see that the first utterance of **“בראשית ברא אלקים”** alludes to the fact that HKB”H peered into the Torah and created the entire universe that was created with the Ten Utterances.

### Yom HaKippurim Corresponds to the Tenth Utterance

Now, let us focus on Yom HaKippurim. As the tenth day of Aseres Yimei Teshuvah, it aligns with the tenth utterance. But what is the tenth utterance? We find several different opinions concerning the enumeration of the Ten Utterances. We will follow the opinion of Chazal in the Midrash (ibid. 17, 1): **“תנינן בעשרה מאמרות: נברא העולם, ואלו הן, בראשית, ורוח אלקים מרחפת, ויאמר אלקים יהי אור, ויאמר אלקים יהי רקיע, ויאמר אלקים יקוו המים, ויאמר אלקים תדשא הארץ, ויאמר אלקים יהי מאורות, ויאמר אלקים ישרצו המים, ויאמר אלקים תוצא הארץ, ויאמר**

**אלקים נעשה אדם.”** This Midrash clearly identifies the tenth utterance as (Bereishis 1,26): **“ויאמר אלקים נעשה אדם בצלמנו—כדמותנו—And G-d said, “Let us make man in Our image and Our likeness.”** It turns out, according to this opinion, that Yom Kippur, the tenth day of Aseres Yimei Teshuvah, aligns with the tenth utterance: **“נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו—Let us make man in Our image and Our likeness.”** Hence, it is the task of every Jew on Yom Kippur to rectify this utterance.

Let us elaborate. Seeing as the decrees concerning every individual’s life in the year to come are sealed on Yom Kippur, it is appropriate to rectify the utterance of **“let us make man”** on this day. This is the poignant message conveyed by the divine poet Rabbi Amnon of Mainz in U’Netaneh Tokef: **“בראש השנה יכתבון וביום צום כפור—יחתמוון, כמה יעברון וכמה יבראון, מי יחיה ומי ימות, מי בקצו ומי לא בקצו”** **on Rosh HaShanah they are inscribed, and on the fast day of Yom Kippur they are sealed: How many shall pass away and how many shall be born; who shall live and who shall die; who shall live out his allotted time and who shall depart before his time.** Therefore, on this holiest of days, it is imperative to rectify the tenth utterance uttered by HKB”H in relation to the creation of man: **“Let us make man in Our image and Our likeness.”** By doing so, we renew the contract, so to speak, to create man for another year—for a good, positive life.

Now, we have already explained how the first utterance: **“בראשית ברא אלקים”**—corresponding to Rosh HaShanah—encompasses all of the Ten Utterance. We will now explain how the same holds true of the tenth utterance: **“נעשה אדם”**. We will also explain what our sacred duty is on Yom Kippur to complete the tikun of this utterance associated with it.

To do so, we will introduce a precious teaching from our master, the Arizal, in Likutei Torah (Ki Sisa) in the name of the Zohar hakadosh (Pinchas 238b), interpreting the utterance: **“ויאמר אלקים נעשה אדם”**. Why does HKB”H employ the plural term **“נעשה”**—**“let us”**? Since He is the One and Only, He, seemingly, should have said: **“אעשה אדם”**—**I will make man**—rather than **“let us.”**

The Zohar explains that man is a microcosm incorporating all of the universes and all of the heavenly malachim. When he rectifies himself through Torah-study and good deeds, he essentially rectifies every element of creation contained within his being, as well. If, however, he goes astray, chas v'shalom, he damages all the elements of creation contained within his being. By including them in his creation, it behooves them to pray on his behalf—that he should succeed in his service of Hashem. For if he succeeds, he will also rectify all of them.

This enlightens us as to the tikun and atonement we are obliged to complete on Yom HaKippurim. As explained, it is the tenth day of the Aseres Yimei Teshuvah corresponding to the utterance "נעשה אדם". With this utterance, HKB"H addressed all of creation—both on earth and in the heavens—requesting that they all contribute a part of themselves to the creation of man. As a result, man would be an aggregation of all of creation. Thus, when he sins, he harms his own being and all the parts of creation within him. Therefore, on Yom Kippur, he must seek atonement for himself and all the parts of creation within him that were harmed by his iniquities.

This explains beautifully how the tenth utterance encompasses all of the Ten Utterances. Since the utterance "נעשה אדם" was a request from HKB"H to all of creation to participate in the creation of man by contributing parts of themselves; it turns out that everything that was created with the other utterances is also included in this tenth utterance.

It is precisely for this reason that HKB"H endowed Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur with heightened kedushah above and beyond that of the other Aseres Yimei Teshuvah. For, these two holy days correspond to the first and tenth utterances. The first utterance: "בראשית ברא אלקים"—states that the Almighty created the heavens and the earth for the sake of the Torah and Yisrael, which are both referred to as "Reishis." While HKB"H invited all of creation to participate in the creation of man with the tenth and final utterance: "נעשה אדם". By completing the tikun of these two

utterances that encompass all of the Ten Utterances with which the world was created, a person rectifies every part of creation.

### The Quarreling Stones Are the Two Utterances "נעשה אדם" and "בראשית ברא"

Following this sublime path, we will now proceed to unravel our sages' enigmatic words. They interpreted the passuk: "**He took from the stones of the place, and he placed them around his head**"—as per Rashi's comment: "**And he placed them around his head**": **He arranged them like a gutter-pipe around his head, because he feared the presence of wild animals.** Here is the explanation: Yaakov Avinu was on his way to Charan to establish the House of Yisrael for all future generations. Yet, he was extremely wary and fearful that the spiritual, wild animals present in Lavan's home would harm his progeny spiritually.

Therefore, he wisely took "**from the stones of the place.**" The **stones** allude to the Ten Utterances with which HKB"H—the **place** of the world—created the world. Then, he selected from them the two utterances associated with Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim—"בראשית ברא" and "נעשה אדם"—which, as we have explained, encompass the entire Ten Utterances. By rectifying them, a person rectifies all of creation. Then, Yaakov placed them "**around his head**"—securing them in his thoughts—to protect them from wild animals.

**The stones began to quarrel with one another. This one would say, "Upon me shall the tzaddik lay his head"; and this one would say, "Upon me shall he lay his head."** The first and tenth utterances began quarreling with each other. Since each one encompasses all of the Ten Utterances, each one yearned for Yaakov to rest his thoughts on them alone. **Immediately, HKB"H made them into one stone. This is implied by the words: "And he took the stone (singular) that he placed around his head."** The word אבן is an acronym for these two all-inclusive utterances: בראשית נעשה אדם—attesting to the fact that they are equivalent so far as representing the Ten Utterances.

We can now explain why Yaakov Avinu connected these two utterances magnificently by declaring: **“This stone which I have set up as a monument shall become a house of G-d, and whatever You will give me, I shall surely tithe to you.”** We have learned from the Zohar hakadosh and the Ohr HaChaim hakadosh that Yaakov consecrated this stone as the “even Shesiyah” in the Kodesh HaKodashim. What is the significance of this exalted designation? It highlights the truth that the creation expanded and evolved from this special stone. For, HKB”H created the world with the Ten Utterances; and since the first and last which encompass all Ten Utterances are represented by the term אב”ן, he placed it permanently in the Kodesh HaKodashim.

Amazingly, we can now appreciate why Yaakov Avinu connected the אב”ן with giving ma’aser—one tenth—as a tithe. Now, the Gemara (Kesubos 50a) deduces from the double-language “עשר אעשרנו” that Yaakov was committing to giving two tenths. In other words, from everything he would receive from HKB”H

in Olam HaZeh, he would sanctify two tenths. He would sanctify the first tenth, the first utterance—“בראשית ברא אלקים” – by committing to use all matters of Olam HaZeh exclusively for the sake of the Torah and for the sake of Yisrael—the two “Reishiss.” He would sanctify the second tenth, the tenth utterance—“נעשה” – by heeding to rectify all the elements of creation incorporated within him.

In conclusion, it gives me immense pleasure to clarify the message of the Midrash: **Because Yaakov said: “And whatever You will give me, עשר אעשרנו לך,” HKB”H said: “For this, I will give your children Aseres Yimei Teshuvah.”** In the merit of sanctifying the first and last utterances, HKB”H gave Yaakov Avinu Ten Days of Repentance to accomplish the tikun of the Ten Utterances. He attributed heightened significance and kedushah to the first day—Rosh HaShanah—and to the tenth day—Yom Kippur—to complete the tikun of the first and tenth utterances, as implied by the words: “עשר אעשרנו לך.”



Our thanks and blessings are given to those who donated for the publication of our weekly dvar Torah for the merit of אחינו בני ישראל

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