

Parshat Bereishit:
Rabbi Eryn London
Class of 2017

This week we begin the Torah reading cycle. Here we are at the very beginning, at Berashit. God creates the world, almost destroys the world, and at the very end, we learn about humans learning to create themselves.

The rabbis say that Adam sinned within the first day of his creation. Which means that on the sixth day Adam was created, Eve was taken from his rib, Eve had two sons, and they ate from the Tree of Knowledge. Not only were they banished from the Garden of Eden, but there were numerous punishments given to both Adam and Eve: they must work the earth, birth will be difficult, life will be more difficult than it would have been if they were able to stay in Eden.

Not long after leaving Eden, we read about Cain killing Abel, out of jealousy; feeling like God loved Abel more than himself. Instead of trying to find ways to better himself or how to talk to his brother, he kills him. After committing the first act of murder, he tries to hide his action from God. Cain is then punished to wander the earth with a mark showing the world that he is the father of murder.

Interestingly, at the end of the Parsha Cain is able to find solace. He finds a place that accepts him. He settles down and he even has children. Through Cain's children we have the creation of music and working with heavy metals. Humankind found a way to create, not only to destroy.

May we all be blessed to find moments of creation, even during times of destruction.



Rabbi Eryn London, is a chaplain resident at New York Presbyterian - Weill Cornell Medical Center. She earned her B.A from Goucher College, where she majored in theatre, minoring in psychology and Judaic studies. Eryn subsequently earned an M.A. at Goldsmiths, University of London. She specialized in applied drama: theatre in educational, community, and social contexts. Eryn made aliyah in February of 2010 and studied at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies and at the Susi Bradfield Women's Institute of Halachic Leadership at Midreshet Lindenbaum. She is one of the co-founders of "Gam Yachad", a multi-denominational Beit Midrash for Israeli rabbinical students. Eryn has served as scholar in residence and rabbinic intern at the ACT Jewish Community in Canberra, Australia, Adath Shalom B'nai Israel in Chicago, Illinois, and at the Mt. Freedom Jewish Center in Randolph, New Jersey. In addition, Eryn has lectured in various communities in Israel, Canada, Colombia, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.