

## Parshas Bereishis

For the week ending 27 Tishrei 5756  
20 & 21 October 1995

### Summary

**I**n the beginning, Hashem creates the entire universe, including time itself, out of nothingness. The creation is completed and perfected in six days. On the seventh day, Hashem rests, bringing into existence the spiritual universe of Shabbos, which returns every seven days. *Adam and Chava* — the Human pair are placed in the *Garden of Eden*. Chava is enticed by the serpent to eat from the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, and in turn gives of the fruit to Adam. By absorbing Sin into themselves, Adam and Chava render themselves incapable of remaining in the spiritual paradise of Eden and are banished. [Death, hard work, (both physically and spiritually) now enter the world, together with pain in childbirth and the struggle to correct the sin of Adam and Chava, which will be the subject of the history of the world.] Cain and Hevel, the first two children of Adam and Chava bring offerings to Hashem. Hevel gives the finest of his flock, and his offering is accepted, but Cain gives inferior produce and his is rejected. In the ensuing quarrel, Cain kills Hevel, and is condemned to wander the earth. The Torah traces the genealogy of the other children of Adam and Chava, and the descendants of Cain until the birth of *Noach*. After the death of *Sheis*, mankind descends into evil and Hashem decides that He will blot out Man in a flood which will deluge the world. However *Noach* alone finds favor in Hashem's eyes.

**"I know it was your house Mr. Cohen...but G-d gave it to me!"**

### Commentaries

#### **"In the beginning of God's creating the heavens and the earth" (1:1)**

Rashi writes that the reason for The Torah starting with the story of the creation is that if the nations of the world accuse the Jews of being thieves — seizing the lands of the seven Canaanite nations — we can say to the world: The whole world belongs to G-d. He created it and He gave it to whom He deemed fit. Through His will He gave it to them, and through His will He gave it to us.

If you think about it, this seems a pretty poor piece of logic. With this reasoning, any thief could come along and say: "I know it was your house Mr. Cohen, but the whole world belongs to G-d. He created your house and He gave it to whom He deemed fit. Through His will He gave it to you, and through His will — He gave it to me!"

The answer is that everything in this world can be stolen. Everything, that is, except Eretz Yisrael. The Land of Israel is unique because *Eretz Yisrael is un-stealable*. Thus, the mere fact of its possession *is* proof of ownership. However, we only merit that Hashem gives us Eretz Yisrael when we show that *our will* is to be in the Land of Israel. *Through His will He gave it to them and through His will He gave it to us* — it is only by showing that our will to be in Eretz Yisrael corresponds to Hashem's Will to give us The Land, that we can guarantee that Hashem will continue to give us this country...

(Based on Rav Moshe Shapiro)

#### **"...And there was evening and there was morning - a second day." (1:8)**

Of all the other days of physical creation the Torah says 'it was good' or even 'very good', but no such mention is made on the Second Day. Why wasn't the Second Day 'good'? After all, on the second day the angels and the 'firmament' were created — two momentous events. For something to be 'good' it must reflect the prime purpose of creation. That prime purpose of creation is Man and his setting is the 'lower world'. The heavens and all the lofty spiritual realms only fulfill

their purpose to the extent that they serve Man's role to bring Hashem's plan to fulfillment; In themselves they are not 'good' because: "*The righteous are greater than the ministering angels*". (Sanhedrin 93a)

(Adapted from Rabeinu Bachya)

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**“By the seventh day G-d completed His work which He had done, and He abstained on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” (2:2)**

There once was a small boy sitting by the side of the road, crying his eyes out. A great rabbi was passing by and he stopped and gathered the child up into his arms. “Why are you crying little fellow?” he asked him. The little boy replied “I was playing hide-and-seek with my friends, and I said that I would hide and they should come and look for me...but nobody came to look for me.” The child burst into tears again. “Don’t feel so bad,” said the Rabbi “you’re in good company, because Hashem feels pretty much like you — Not many people are coming to look for Him...”

The word for *the world* in Hebrew is from the same root as the word *hidden*. The world is literally a place for Hashem to be hidden in it. The job of Man is to uncover Hashem’s presence in the world and thus earn the closeness to Him which is the Creator’s desire. This is the purpose of the creation.

When the Torah talks about Hashem ‘working’, obviously there can be no concept of effort with regard to Hashem. The work that Hashem does is *the creation of veils* — the creation of ‘hiddenness’. These veils are necessary so that Man may have freedom of choice. For when the courtier is standing in the throne room in front of The King, he has no freedom to choose to do the will of The King, for he is transfixed by the awe of His presence. When The King is behind the veil of the world, Man then has a stage-set on which he can exercise his freedom to choose to do The King’s will. On Shabbos when Hashem ‘rests’, He ceases to create these veils which obscure Him from us, and when we experience Shabbos the way the Torah teaches us, we feel close to Hashem. That’s why Shabbos is called a *resemblance* of the world to come. A world where there are no veils...

*(Based on Michtav M’Eliyahu and a story heard from Rabbi Zev Leff)*

## Haftorah: Yishayahu

**42:5 - 43:10**

**“Hashem desires, for the sake of His righteousness, that the Torah be made great and glorious” (42:20)**

In the future “the Earth will be full with the knowledge of Hashem like the water covers the sea” (Yishayahu 12:9). But that does not mean that this knowledge will be equal. The *talmid chacham*, who has labored to know the Torah, immersing himself in its wisdom day and night, will have a very different knowledge than someone who turned up at shul on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur... So just as the sea seems flat and equal on the surface, but here are places of immense depth, and there the water barely covers the bottom, so will be the difference in the knowledge of Hashem. In the future the knowledge of the Torah will envelop the world: “the Torah will be made great” - all will know it — “and glorious” — Hashem will make the Torah a thousand times greater and deeper for those who labored and dedicated themselves to it even before it covered the world.



Insights into the Zemiros sung at the Shabbos table throughout the generations.

**Shalom Aleichem - of Igola**

*“Welcome...”*

This song of greeting to the two heavenly angels who, our Sages say, escort us home from the synagogue, serves as the perfect introduction to all the *zemiros* we will sing throughout Shabbos. When a Jew arrives home and finds the candles brightly burning, the table festively set and the entire home in magnificent order the good angel accompanying him says “May it be the will of Hashem that the same situation exist on the Shabbos to come.” The other angel, the one charged with the responsibility for punishing those lax in the preparation for Shabbos, is compelled to answer “Amen.”

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