

מְרוֹמֵי תוֹרָה

פרשת בראשית - שבת מברכים - כ"ד תשרי תשפ"ה

A Greater Whole

Ben Freund

One year ago, I was tasked with writing a *d'var Torah* for this column. I had written what I thought was a beautiful piece and sent it in for editing. Then, the devastating tragedy of October 7th happened, and none of the words I had written resonated anymore. I had to quickly rewrite my *d'var Torah* and send it in, but no words could appropriately express the pain we were all feeling.

One year later, today, I asked to write a *d'var Torah* for this column. I wanted to reflect on a lesson I've learned over the past year, a possible takeaway from the tragic year we've had to face.

One of the most often recited sets of *pesukim* in *parshas Bereishis* is the paragraph of וַיְכַל, recapping the seventh "day of creation".^[1] I've always read this paragraph and taken the *pesukim* for granted: Hashem finished creating on the sixth day, rested on the seventh, and made it holy.

However, the *Or HaChaim* implies a question that I've never thought of before.^[2] Why does *Bereishis* 2:1 exist? Everything written in that first *pasuk* is essentially repeated in the following *pasuk*. So why include *Bereishis* 2:1 at all?

He answers with a fascinating insight that can be particularly relevant to our times. By stating וַיְכַל in *Bereishis* 2:1, the *Torah* didn't just mean a finishing or a cessation of activity. Rather, the *Torah* intended to convey the completion of a whole. On each day of creation, Hashem made a different aspect of the world. On the seventh day, His world was made whole, complete.

This is what *Bereishis* 2:1 is telling us. Not just that the creation was finished, as that we can learn from *Bereishis* 2:2. Rather, that the creation was completed in such a way that, as is quoted in the name of Aristotle, "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts". As *Bereishis* 2:1 indicates, upon the completion of sky, land, and everything else, Hashem's world was complete and elevated.

This idea can be applied to our nation as well. *Baruch Hashem*, we are a people with a lot of different *minhagim* and even more opinions. Sometimes, this overflow of ideas can cause tension. However, post October 7, we've seen a unity like no other. We've seen how each individual Jew can use their strengths to help the situation, how they can do what they can to make the world a better place. We've seen how each great individual has formed a nation that is somehow even greater than the sum of its parts.

But let us not let this unity fade. Let's not make this year a completion, but rather an inspiration. Let's allow ourselves to continue enhancing this unity, respecting our differences and utilizing our strengths to glorify Hashem and our nation. Let's utilize the frequency with which we say וַיְכַל every Shabbos to focus on how we can further unify our people.

Be'ezras Hashem, by rededicating ourselves to unity, may we be zoche to the building of the third Bais HaMikdash, speedily in our days.

[1] Bereishis 2:1-3. We recite it three times throughout every Friday night, once during Shemoneh Esrei, once after it, and once during kiddush.

[2] Or HaChaim Bereishis 2:1 s.v. וַיְכַל השמים וגו'.

Did You Know?

Hevel was killed a mere two days' travel from Chevron.

Source

סדר הדורות שנה א', בשם ספר גלילות ארץ ישראל.