

"In the beginning, Hashem created." (1:1)

In the *Yalkut Shimoni*, *Chazal* explain why the *Torah* begins with the letter "*Bais*." The *Midrash* relates that when Hashem was about to create the world, each of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet came before Him and asked that the world be created specifically with its letter. The "*Taf*" felt it should be first since it begins the word "*Torah*." This scenario continued, with each letter vying for the honor of being chosen for this most sublime "occasion." At the end, the letter "*Bais*" entered and said it should be selected since the *Bais* is used for blessing Hashem daily, "*Bless Hashem forever*." Hashem immediately chose the *Bais* to serve as the letter for creating the world. Throughout *Chazal*, other reasons are mentioned for the selection of the letter *Bais*. We must endeavor to understand the significance of the world being created through the letter *Bais*.

Horav Dovid Shneur, Shlita, comments that the words of *Chazal* notwithstanding, there is yet another reason for creating the world using the letter *Bais*. This explanation communicates the underlying motif for the world's creation and its continued existence. The numerical equivalent of the letter *Bais* is two. This alludes to harmony and unity. When people live together, when two individuals work together -- not as separate units -- the world has meaning and life has value. People must always think of others, not only of themselves. A world in which everyone considers his own needs and has no sensitivity towards the needs of others is truly perverted.

Dissent and discord, thinking only of oneself, lies at the root of all the world's ills. Indeed, the first family was marred by inner strife between two brothers, Kayin and Hevel. We must remember that "*The world is built upon chesed, kindness (Tehillim 89:3)*". The world was built upon a foundation of Hashem's altruism. Our kindness toward each other will effect its continued growth.