

I am Hashem, Your G-d, Who has taken you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery. (20:2)

Kabbalas haTorah, the Giving/Receiving of the Torah, was the crown of Creation. As the *Abir Yaakov* (*Horav Yaakov Abuchatzzeira, zl*) writes, the purpose of Creation is to recognize Hashem's Monarchy. It is understandable that the world cannot exist without Torah, which guides us how to serve Hashem. In this sense, the world was not completed until *Klal Yisrael* received/accepted the Torah on *Har Sinai*. With this in mind, the *Abir Yaakov* explains the first *pesukim* of the Torah: *Bereishis bara Elokim*, "In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth...darkness was on the face of the depths, and the spirit of G-d hovered over the face of the water. And G-d said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

He first cites the *Zohar HaKadosh* which states that, when Hashem decided to create the world, the letters of the Hebrew alphabet ascended before Him one-by-one in reverse order, each one asking to be the letter with which the world be created. Each letter received a "no." Finally, the letter *bais* presented its case, because *bais* is the first letter of *b'rachah*, blessing. Through it, the heavens and earth would be blessed. Hashem accepted its rationale and He agreed to begin the creation of the world with the letter *bais*.

When the letter *aleph* saw this, it moved to the side and did not enter its counter claim. Hashem asked, "Why do you not step forward to present your case?" The *aleph* replied, "Hashem, I saw that all the other letters received a rejection. Why should I think that my letter had any more right to be accepted? Furthermore, the *bais* had already been accepted. Once the King has granted honor to one of his servants, it is improper to transfer this bestowal to another servant."

When Hashem heard the *aleph's* response, He said, "Since you have humbled yourself, I will exalt you. Through you, my Oneness will be known. Through you, all numbering, counting, will begin."

The *Zohar* teaches us that the greatness of the *aleph* was its humility, which served as the catalyst for its elevation to distinction. While indeed, the world was created from the letter *bais*, the *Aseres HaDibros*, which is the foundation of Torah, begins with the letter *aleph* (*Anochi*). Torah is *ohr*, light (*ner mitzvah v'Torah ohr*), which also begins with an *aleph*. The world created with the letter *bais* remained incomplete until that moment that *Klal Yisrael* accepted the Torah, which, for a number of reasons, is represented by the letter *aleph*.

We now understand the opening *pesukim* of *Sefer Bereishis*. In the beginning when the world was created, it remained dark and incomplete. When Hashem said, "Let there be light," there was light, which is reference to the light of Torah – the purpose of Creation. If not for the *aleph* with its extraordinary humility, the world could not exist.

Maharal m'Prague (*Nesivos Olam, Nesiv HaTorah 1*) cites *Chazal* (*Shabbos 88a*) who teach that

Torah sustains the world. *Va'yehi erev, va'yehi boker, yom ha shishi*, "It was evening, it was morning, the sixth day." Noticeably, the letter "*hay*," the definite article, "the," is added to "day" describing the last day of Creation, unlike the preceding five days which are referred to by ordinal number alone. This informs us that all of Creation was contingent on *Klal Yisrael's* accepting the Torah on *Yom Ha'Shishi*, "the" sixth day of *Sivan*. *Maharal* adds that, just as the Torah defines man's agenda, since it is the blueprint for life, so, too, does it define the course of the world.

The Torah defines the structure of the universe, and all things structured form a single unified whole. The universe is a carefully crafted Divine structure which has no unnecessary molecule. Hashem has purposely defined the relationships between all of its myriad parts. In this respect it is similar to the Torah, which does not have one extra letter. Every spelling, crown above its letters, is present for a reason, all symbiotically interrelated to represent one perfect whole. Thus, the universe and the Torah, both creations of the Almighty, represent perfection and completion as their apex.

Maharal cites *Chazal* (*Pirkei Avos* 5:1), "The world was created with ten utterances...This was done to reward the righteous who sustain the world created with ten utterances and to punish the wicked, who (by their actions undermine the purpose of Creation) demolish the world created with ten utterances." He offers a novel explanation of the depth of *Chazal's* statement. What is the significance of the number ten (ten utterances) in the larger picture of Torah, its content, purpose and overall message? The number ten denotes something which is a distinct entity, each (an) individual unto itself. Ten is a cumulative, inclusive number, in which the whole is a single integrated entity. In other words, "ten" is similar to "one."

When something is integrated into a single entity, a disruption of its order on the part of a single component fragments the entire order, thereby fractioning the entire whole. (This is similar to one malignant cell disrupting the entire body's genome.) When one forsakes the Torah, he violates the perfect order established by Hashem, thereby devastating the entire universe. The entire world is one integrated whole. Any departure from the prescribed order undermines the integrity of the whole. When two Jews become victims of strife, they undermine the wholeness/*shleimus* of *Klal Yisrael*. When we all live *b'shalom*, in harmony, we ratify Hashem's creation of the world.