

MEANING AND PURPOSE: A GOOD BEGINNING

by Rabbi Label Lam

(B'reishis) In the beginning of G-d having created the heavens and the earth- (Breishis 1:1)

(Reishis) The beginning of wisdom is fear of HASHEM! (Tehillim 110:11)

We know the Torah is not a book of cosmology for the curious but rather a book of instruction. What can we learn from the Torah's first words?

The story is told about an extraordinarily wealthy person, we'll call Mr. Vanderbilt. He wanted to go on an exotic vacation so he sent a servant on a mission to prepare the way. An ideal island with a fancy hotel was discovered. The advance scout came into the impressive lobby where he was met by the manager of the hotel. This emissary suggested strongly that Mr. Vanderbilt likes Gothic architecture and if they could please make that arrangement to be done in two weeks. The manager agreed, "Sure, for Mr. Vanderbilt? Anything!" Then the manager opened the master suite. The man was favorably impressed but he suggested to the manager that Mr. Vanderbilt is rather fond of a Greek motif. "If you could just put up some Greek columns and drapes and make it like the acropolis." The manager agreed, "For Mr. Vanderbilt? Anything!" Then they went to inspect the beach. The fine sand and blue waters were on open display. Mr. Vanderbilt's front man informed him again that his boss likes sand with varying textures. He wondered if different size particles could be imported for the occasion of his visit. The manager responded, "For Mr. Vanderbilt? Anything!" Turning their attention to the clear blue sky and ideal weather conditions the manager bragged, "It's always just like this!" "HMMMMMMM! Mr. Vanderbilt likes a cloud in the sky. Is there anything that can be done?" With all the professionalism he could muster the manager assured him, "For Mr. Vanderbilt? Anything!"

Two weeks later Mr. Vanderbilt arrives. Entering the lobby he is excited to see Gothic décor. In the deluxe suite he beholds to his delight the sheer elegance of Greek columns draped tastefully with fine silk cloth. Striding onto the beach his feet are pleased by the variety and textures of sand particles between his toes. Now reclining on his beach chair his eyes are vaulted to blue sky where a plane has inconspicuously just deposited a soft white puffy-cloud hovering overhead. Mr. Vanderbilt breathes a deep sigh expressing his most sublime delight and then he declares aloud, "This place is so exquisitely beautiful. Who needs money?"

If this would be a fundraising dinner for a Yeshiva, this would be the time for an appeal. Who needs money? One enters a building where everything is well-built to accommodate the students' every

need: There are masterful Rebbeim, instruments of climate control, and tasty food too just to be certain learning and growth takes place. It's all a result of great effort, planning, and yes, money that makes this setting of perfection possible. It's engineered so elegantly that one may be deluded into thinking, "Who needs money? Everything makes itself!"

So it is with this world. In six days of creation a stage is built with such precision and care that the benefactors of that excellence may stride a bit too casually at times and imagine foolishly, "Who needs G-d? Everything makes itself!"

Rabbi Yeruchim Levovitz ztl. writes, "As soon as you start studying the Torah, right from the first verse: "In the beginning The Almighty created..." you become aware that there is a Creator and Ruler of the universe. This first awareness already makes a major change in you for the rest of your life. You realize that there is a real reason for everything. The world has meaning and purpose." **A good beginning!** DvarTorah, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Label Lam and [Torah.org](https://torah.org).