

BE CREATIVE

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In the beginning G-d created the Heavens and the Earth...

The High Holiday prayer books have been shelved, the Sukkah is stored away (or at least that's the plan), and we start reading the Torah again from the beginning. The custom of restarting the Torah readings at this time seems designed to neatly line up with the inspiration and growth we've had over the High Holidays and Sukkos, and gives us the opportunity to start again from our own beginning.

Ahead of us is a new year. Genesis chronicles the steps G-d took to create a new universe, and we are now tasked with the creation of our year, ourselves -- our personal universe. The story is told of G-d's desire to create, and man, "in G-d's image," has an innate desire to create a life for himself.

G-d's creation was a complete change from its prior state of nothingness, to a world of somethingness. The G-dly image within us desires the same -- to model the Divine by making changes in our lives. This desire, however, is most often expressed in a drive to earn more money, to buy more things, to "accomplish" in our material pursuits. The Alter of Slobodka wisely said in Yiddish, "*Ah mentch vort besser un shayner, uhber nisht anderish*" -- "Man likes better and nicer, but not different."

But what our souls truly seek is a very different form of growth. We have the ability to make something from nothing; to do things differently this year, and live closer to our values and those of the Torah. (*Sefer MiShulchan Gevoha, HaRav Aharon Kotler ztl*)

May G-d give us the strength and the courage to make our new beginning.