

# BRINGING CREATION DOWN TO EARTH

*by Rabbi Berel Wein*

There is a tendency to look at the narrative that appears in this first portion of the Torah as being a description of the past – the story of the beginnings of creation, the planet and universe and of the story of civilization. However, we are taught in the traditions of Judaism that the Lord, so to speak, creates our universe and world anew each day.

Thus, the narrative contained in this week's beginning portion of the Torah is not only a story of the past, but it is just as importantly a description of our present world and society. We should not be surprised to find that human rivalries and disagreements often lead to murder and then to deep regret. The animalistic nature of humans leads them to sin and depravity.

The intellectual freedom and curiosity built into us by the fruit of the tree of wisdom leads to experimentation with strange ideas and to idolatry. As the population of the world increases, so does technology and ordered society. But deep within the original generations of humans lies a persistent and debilitating unhappiness.

Humans are not satisfied because they have been driven out of paradise and find their way back there only to be barred by heavenly forces beyond their control. They search for all sorts of detours and untraveled roads to return to where their soul wishes to lead them. And this has been the history of human civilization from its onset until today.

There is much that we today in our current so-called modern world can learn from this narrative as presented in this first portion of the Torah. We can learn that murder and violence really provide no solution to any of the problems that beset human beings. We can learn that false ideologies and man-made gods are of little value and in fact are quite counterproductive to human welfare, as the long run of civilized history makes abundantly clear.

We can learn that following our animalistic instincts only brings us farther away from where our soul longs to be, to our home and comfort zone. We can learn that temptations will always exist and that we are in one way or another doomed to fall and make mistakes. We can also learn that through our actions and ideologies, weaknesses and sins, we are capable of destroying our world and bringing on untold tragedy and despair.

But we can also learn that we have enormous qualities of greatness built within us and that we alone are able to conduct conversations with our Creator and are equipped to rise above the physical and intellectual challenges that surround us.

More importantly, we can learn that these fateful choices are given to us and, to a great extent, are the masters of our destiny and the shapers of our current world and future generations. This first portion of the Torah stands not only as the beginning of the holy words of God but also as representative of the entire story of human kind for all time.

Shabbat Shalom  
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