



Bereishis: From Nothing to Something

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

“Bereishis, In the beginning ...” Simple words laced with much profundity. What was there in the beginning? *“V’Ha’aretz haysa sohu va’vohu, the land was astonishingly empty.”* From nothing came something. Herein lies the greatness of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*; He can create something from nothing, He can take that which is empty and void and fill it with meaning, holiness, and purpose. We began this new year with feelings of excitement, poised to accomplish great things and effect real change. And just as we should have been climbing to this apex of our national joy on *Shmini Atzeres*, our world came crashing down. So many beautiful *neshamos* taken from us, so much potential drained from the sea of Am Yisroel. Just a few days ago, it felt as if we had returned to *sohu va’vohu*, to a world without light. It wasn’t just lacking light; we saw it filled with the most despicable and unspeakable evil. And once again, the Jewish people were tasked with leading the battle against evil in its purest form. But this parsha doesn’t only contain the story of creation, it also contains the story of recreation. Adam and Chava, having defied the one edict of Hashem are cast out of Gan Eden. They had to recreate something new. The world as they knew it no longer existed – it was out of reach. Accepting this reality, they set out to build a new world and a new life. And they were successful. They were able to pick up the pieces, and although the new world didn’t sparkle or have the grandeur of the old one, it was in this new world that they raised their family and created future generations. While this new world was certainly filled with challenges, setbacks, and terrible mistakes, it produced much beauty and accomplishment as well. The ability to rebuild has become the greatest strength of our holy nation.

I don’t think it is hyperbolic to say that the world as we knew it before this past Shabbos, *Shmini Atzeres 5784* is gone and out of reach. We can’t unsee or unhear all we have experienced. The void created by the animalistic violence of Hamas cannot be filled, and we still don’t know the condition of our brothers and sisters being held in captivity. But like Adam and Chava, we too will rebuild, and we will build something beautiful and holy. We will build a national edifice which rests on the pillars of serving the *Ribono Shel Olam*, *achdus*, and love for one another. We will rebuild a beautiful nation with *mesirus nefesh* (willingness to sacrifice) and *chesed*. We will rebuild this new world together.