

Date: 27 Tishrei 5787 (October 8, 2026)

Torah Portion: B'resheet

Topic: Worlds Built, Worlds Destroyed, Part 2

This understanding illuminates the extraordinary importance that the Sages attach to Torah study. The Talmud associates the continued existence of heaven and earth with the enduring covenant of Torah (Nedarim 32a; cf. Jeremiah 33:25). Expanding upon this principle, R' Chaim of Volozhin teaches in Nefesh HaChaim (4:11) that if Torah study were to cease entirely throughout the world, even for a single moment, creation could not continue to exist.

His teaching presents Torah not merely as a collection of commandments or a source of religious instruction, but as the spiritual foundation upon which the universe continually depends. The acceptance of Torah at Sinai was therefore not simply a historical event. Its significance must be renewed in every generation through study, observance, and the conscious dedication of human life to the will of Elohim.

Yet the teaching concerning the creation and destruction of worlds also reveals another profound principle: the Divine pattern of rebuilding after destruction.

Just as the Midrash portrays Elohim bringing forth a new world after the dissolution of earlier ones, humanity is called to discover the spiritual strength to rebuild after failure, disappointment, and loss. To construct something for the first time requires courage, vision, and perseverance. But to rebuild after witnessing the collapse of one's previous achievements demands an even greater measure of faith.

Consider the person who has devoted years of labor, countless sleepless nights, financial resources, and emotional strength to a worthy undertaking, only to see it destroyed. What once appeared secure is suddenly reduced to ruins. The temptation to surrender may become overwhelming, for the pain of rebuilding is intensified by the memory of what has been lost.

Nevertheless, Torah teaches that destruction need not be the final chapter. What has collapsed may become the foundation for something greater. The loss of an earlier achievement does not necessarily invalidate the effort invested in it; rather, the experience may produce wisdom, humility, and spiritual maturity that could never have emerged through uninterrupted success.

Indeed, throughout the history of Yisrael, some of the greatest spiritual achievements have arisen in the aftermath of profound failure.

When Adam sinned, mortality entered the human condition, and the original harmony of creation was disrupted. Yet according to a tradition preserved in the Midrash and later Jewish mystical literature, Adam foresaw that David would possess only a brief lifespan and granted him seventy years from his own. From the shadow of Adam's mortality thus emerged the life of David, the king from whose lineage the future Moshiach would arise. What appeared to be the beginning of humanity's decline also contained the promise of its eventual restoration.

A similar pattern unfolded in Mitzrayim. According to Jewish mystical tradition, Yisrael had descended to the forty-ninth level of impurity, approaching the threshold of spiritual ruin. Yet through the redemption from Egypt and the seven weeks of preparation that followed, the same people stood at Mount Sinai and entered into covenant with Elohim. Those who had been enslaved and spiritually diminished were transformed into a nation entrusted with the Torah.

Their transformation, however, was not without further failure. Soon after the revelation at Sinai, Yisrael committed the grievous sin of the Golden Calf, threatening the covenant they had so recently embraced. Nevertheless, through the intercession of Moshe, repentance, and Divine mercy, the covenant was renewed. The building of the Mishkan then provided a visible expression of Elohim's continuing presence among His people.

Shalom.