

Sept 28

B'REISHEET - In the Beginning

Over the years, there has been a great deal of debate as to the nature of the truth of Torah. Is it chronological and organized like a history book? Or is the truth of Torah factual in the way that a science textbook is true? Perhaps there is another way in which the level of meaning and purpose that is the truth of Torah can be found. As we begin another cycle of Torah reading, it may be fitting to re-examine what the Torah seeks to convey.

The opening words *-B'reisheet bara* - have invited a wide range of translations. The King James Version is familiar to most of us. "In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth." These few words alone make creation sound like a lesson in history. First HaShem created heaven and then the earth, then this, and then that. But to read this first sentence as history creates an immediate problem that is theological in nature. This cannot be a chronological history because water already existed. Scripture tells us that the *Ruach* was hovering over the water. How could the *Ruach* be hovering over the water when it had not been created yet? At least Scripture does not tell us that water was created. In any event, this verse does not come to teach us the order of creation. We sometimes force Hebrew School students to memorize what was created on which day. Or we can argue endlessly about how long each day of creation was. When we do this, we miss the very truth that is before our eyes. It is not chronological information that we seek, but religious truth.

As we study the truth found written on the scroll, we learn from the recorded acts and encounters of our ancestors. We learn the wisdom of Torah and we direct our actions in the context of *mitzvot* and good deeds. This is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives. Read the Torah and come to savor its truth. It is not intended to be a shoddy science text or a sloppy history book. The truth of Torah is of a higher sort. The truth of Torah is the kind of truth that lends a thorough and elevating purpose to our lives. It can carry us through our days in joy and can link the generations to one another and to HaShem.

Focus: The Truth of Torah

Hebrew reading Genesis 1:1-5 k Hemmings is the reader

Old Testament Genesis 1:1-5

Haftarah Isaiah 42:5-7

B'rit Chadasha Revelation 22:6-7

Thanks