

# **The Mind of Genesis**

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**Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer**

*Parshat Bereshit*

*(A Tale Told by Rebbe Yehiel Michal of Zlotchov)*

*A certain Rabbi Yehudah lived in the ghetto of Zlochtov, where he studied Talmudic Law under one Rabbi Leib. A dedicated man, Rabbi Yehudah would stay in his room for days on end with a single phrase which Rabbi Leib had assigned to him for study. Still, it was clear to Rabbi Yehudah, despite his devotion, that his soul would ultimately perish in the elegant disputes of Talmudic law; while his fellow disciples grew strong in their faith, scholarship merely succeeded in leading him farther and farther away from the Source of the Torah, and, rather than bringing a deepening joy to his daily life, it was turning him into a bitter sage and souring his faith.*

*Rather than coming to grief through the wisdom of others, Rabbi Yehudah devised a plan. Since the Torah is equally holy in all its parts, every word and every letter possesses the gateway to eternal life and profound understanding. Choosing a single letter, then, he could, in that letter's union with the Sacred Name, reach to the Sacred Name Itself. Not knowing which of the letters to choose, he settled upon aleph, the first letter of the alphabet.*

*Rabbi Yehudah drew the aleph on his wall with a piece of chalk and sat before it with great devotion, for it represented the entire Torah. He no longer visited Rabbi Leib, and he was never seen in the study hall or synagogue of Zlochtov. The aleph had become his only resource, his only form of worship. The aleph sustained him even on the Sabbath and the Day of Atonement.*

*Time passed, and Rabbi Yehudah discovered that he was no longer able to distinguish between the aleph and the wall on which it had been drawn. Rather than discontinuing his meditations, he included the wall along with the aleph in his mental devotions.*

*Time passed, and Rabbi Yehudah discovered that he was no longer able to distinguish the wall on which the aleph had been drawn from the adjoining walls of his room. Rather than discontinuing his meditations, he included those walls along with the first and the aleph in his mental devotions.*

*Time passed, and Rabbi Yehudah was forced to include the entire ghetto of Zlochtov, along with Rabbi Leib and the disciples, all of Galicia, all of Poland and Russia, all of Europe, and even America and the Orient. In fact, he carried in his mind at one time all of Creation, including the planets, the stars, and the kingdom of heaven.*

*Time passed, and the Universe proceeded without interruption from its Source through the mind of Rabbi Yehudah, who, sustained by the Sacred Name, no longer sought out the doctrines or laws of his faith.*

Concerning this tale, a student asked Rebbe Yehiel Michal, “Regardless of his perfection, can one really be called a rabbi who does not participate in the doctrine or the law?”

Rebbe Yehiel Michal replied, “What participation could you expect from such a one? His mind is the Mind of Genesis. The sun may rise and the sun may set – the days are days and the nights are nights – but still, in Rabbi Yehudah’s mind, G\*d has not as yet divided between them.”

Shabbat Shalom.