

Bereshit Rabbah 10:9

Commentary on Genesis 2:2-3

Rabbi asked R. Ishmael b. R. Jose: Have you heard from your father the actual meaning of *And on the seventh day God finished* (Gn. 2:2)? Said he to him: It is like a man striking the hammer on the anvil, raising it by day and bringing it down after nightfall.

Rabbi Simeon b. Yohai said: Mortal man, who does not know his minutes, his [exact] times or his hours, must add from the profane to the sacred; but the Holy One, blessed be He, who knows His moments, His times, and His hours, can enter it by a hair's breadth.

Genibah and the Rabbis discussed this. Genibah said: This may be compared to a king who made a bridal chamber, which he plastered, painted, and adorned; now what did the bridal chamber lack? A bride to enter it. Similarly, what did the world still lack? The Sabbath.

The Rabbis said: Imagine a king who made a ring: what did it lack? A signet. Similarly, what did the world lack? The Sabbath. And this is one of the texts they changed for King Ptolemy, [making it read:] And He finished on the sixth day and rested on the seventh.

King Ptolemy (some say "A certain philosopher") asked the elders in Rome: In how many days did the Holy One, blessed be He, create the world? In six days, they replied. And since then Gehenna has been burning for the wicked, exclaimed he; woe to the world for the judgments it must render!

His work (Gn. 2:2)! Did not R. Berekiah say thus in the name of R. Judah b. R. Simon: Neither with labor nor with toil did the Holy One, blessed be He, create the world, yet you say, [*And he rested*] *from all His work*! But it is [so stated] in order to punish the wicked who destroy the world which was created with labor, and to give a goodly reward to the righteous who uphold the world which was created with toil. And what was created therein (on the Sabbath, after God rested - see Gn. 2:2)? Tranquility, ease, peace, and quiet.

Rabbi Levi said in the name of R. Jose b. Nehorai: As long as the hands of their Master were working on them they went on expanding; but when the hands of their Master rested, rest was afforded to them, and thus He gave rest to His world on the seventh day (Ex. 20:11 - reading *and He rested* as "He created a resting").

Abba said: When a mortal king takes his army into quarters, he does not distribute largesse [which he does only before the troops are to go into battle or start on a march], whilst when he distributes largesse he does not order a halt; but the Holy One, blessed be He, ordered a halt and distributed largesse, [as it is written,] *And he rested ... And he blessed* (Gn. 2:2-3).