



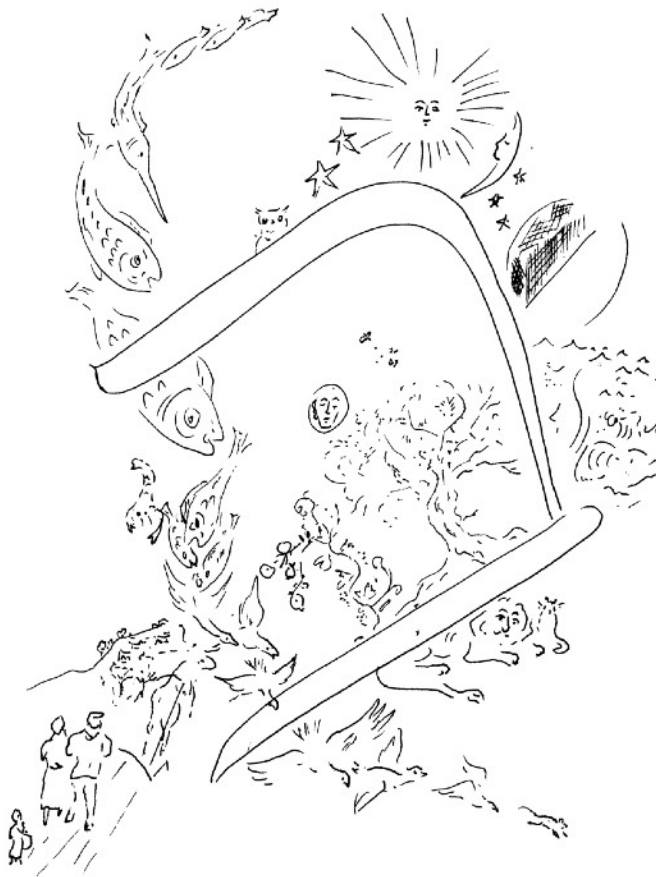
A message from the president:

According to our tradition, G-d created the world with Ten Words. These are the ten times G-d spoke, as described in the first chapter of the Torah, and as a result the world got created, expanded, improved with new features and creatures, embellished and refined. And at the end of each of the six days of creation “G-d saw that it was good”. On the seventh day *weshabat mikol melakhto asher bara El-him la’asot*, and He rested from all the work which Elohim had created to make. The grammatical construction with *la’asot*, *to make*, suggests future work, but in the same verse G-d had ceased from creating, *weshabbat*. Several midrashim have commented on this, explaining that from now on, after the seventh day, mankind will be G-d’s partner in creation, continuing what He started.

For instance, G-d created grain, but not bread. We, mortal humans, just have seeds of grain. In order to get bread we must transform the seeds, and go through a lengthy process of preparing a field, plowing, sowing the seeds, praying for rain, tending the grain, harvesting, winnowing, grinding, and, finally, baking bread from flour and putting it on our tables. We acknowledge G-d by saying a blessing before we eat it. G-d does not let challot grow ready to eat. We humans must go through the creative trouble to make these challot for Shabbat, in order to celebrate the day G-d stopped working. And what, if we would not want to be partners in creation? Then we would live like animals, eating raw seeds or whatever is ready to pick and eat in nature, like berries and fruit. No challah.

What can we learn from this as Jewish artists? Mankind, male and female, is created in G-d’s image. Humans are the only species on earth endowed with creative power to transform materials to create something totally new, unique. We can make new and meaningful art, for instance, from raw pigments, a piece of marble, a basket of wool, ink, copper ore, etc., there are endless possibilities. But being created in G-d’s image, and on top of that being G-d’s partner, also obligates us to emulate His divine qualities, to make sure that at the end of the day we see “that it is good.” Like HaShem, we, Jewish artists, have to create by transforming, to expand,

improve, embellish and refine the world with our art. That is why we have gotten this special talent to make art, to hold up a candle for the world. A little bit of light chases away a lot of darkness. With our art, images, objects, or in whatever mode or form we express ourselves, we make the world a better place. We make it a bit more divine. Mutatis mutandis, a little bit of beauty can chase away a lot of ugliness, it can uplift our souls and bring us and others closer to the divine image we are created in. Not only our own souls, but of all those who use and contemplate our art.



Fellow artists, go out and make the world a better place! It's in your head and hands!

Shoshannah Brombacher, January 2018