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Bereishis - The conquest and the Mirror

הדברי תורה בעלון זה מוקדשים לזכות אמי מורתי מרת שולמית בת הרב דב יהודה והרבנית שרה סאשא

Bereishis – For the Land of Israel?

The first Rashi in the Parsha says as follows: “Rabbi Yitzchak said the Torah did not have to start from any other place than “This month is for you the first of months,” which is the first commandment that the Jewish people were commanded as a nation. So for what reason did the Torah open with Bereishis [and the whole story of the unfolding of the nations]? Because as the pasuk says: “the power of his deeds he told his nation to give to them the inheritance of nations.” Consequently, if the nations will say to the Jewish people, “You are thieves for you conquered the land of the seven nations!” the Jewish people can reply that the whole world belongs to Hashem; He created it and gave it to those whom He saw fit to award it. By His will He gave it to them and by His will He took it from them and gave it to us”

The Issues

There is much that needs to be explained here. First of all, that there's so much Torah in sefer Bereishis, and the first two and a half parshas of sefer of Shemos; the stories of our forefathers and their challenges. Every word of Torah has a message we can learn from. How could we imagine the Torah only starting from the time we were liberated from Egypt? Secondly, Why are we only concerned with the mitzvos that were commanded to us as a people? What about Avraham

Avinu getting Bris Milah, for example? Another point to ponder, if the whole point was just to say that Hashem created the world and is therefore its rightful owner who decides who gets what on the globe. In that case Sefer Bereishis should just be one line long: “In the beginning Hashem created heaven and earth” and then go straight to the mitzvah to to sanctify the new moon. Why are all the 26 generations until the giving of Torah including the stories of the flood and the Tower of Babel necessary?

Their inheritance?!?

Another questions that needs to be answered is this: The pasuk says the power of His deeds that He told to His nation to give them an **inheritance of nations** – is talking about the land of Israel! Why is it called an **inheritance of nations**, implying that Israel rightfully belonged to them? It belongs to us! If Hashem always wanted to give the land of Israel to Jewish people, why does it say “By His will **He gave it to them** and by His will He took it away and gave it to us”? Why couldn't He just give it to us straight away? Why did he give it to the nations of the world first?

Who needs “Matan Torah”?

A question that should bother any thinking person: Why was “**Matan Torah**” necessary when seemingly the generations that lived before the giving of

the Torah somehow accessed the Torah? We know Avraham Avinu figured out the whole Torah, but even earlier Noach knew to take from the kosher animals seven males and females and of the nonkosher animals to take only one pair - a male and female. "From here we see that Noah learned Torah" . If the earlier generations had access to Torah what changed with the giving of the Torah at Sinai?

Fingerprints of Torah

Chazal tell us "Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world" that means that all that exists has programming from the Torah. **Even the world in its non-optimal state that requires a great deal of fixing is also held into existence by the words of Torah. Even the faults that there are in reality also are only there because there is a program in the Torah that allows for their existence. There is nothing that does not have its existence from the Torah. This means that even the nations of the world, their existence, their unique characteristics and talents and their position in the Geo political sphere is all programming from the Torah. The "fingerprints of Torah" are everywhere because all was created by the Torah. That's what it means that Torah not been given, the Jewish people could've learned the prohibition of stealing from ants and modesty from the cats. **This is precisely why the earlier generations were able to figure out the whole Torah – from its fingerprints in the world around them.****

Natural Torah

Since the beginning of time, the Torah's fingerprints were everywhere, and there was even a certain revelation of Torah to keep the world going in that natural but non-optimal state that we call "nature".

The seven mitzvahs of the sons of Noach, parallel to the seven days of the week, is parallel to the whole concept that we call "nature". That is the Torah maintaining the world in its natural state with much room for improvement spiritually. In that natural state there is programming for the **70** (7*10) nations of the world.

After Matan Torah

However, Hashem had greater plans for the Torah! That it should not just provide the programming and existence for the "natural world" but rather the Torah should change the world and move it toward its destiny to become physically and spiritually optimal. That is the unique mission of the Jewish people. Prior to the "**Giving of the Torah**", Torah was **ONLY** in the highest place in reality, and its energies 'trickled' down to make the physical world as it is. Being limited to a 'trickle-down effect', creation retained its natural state, which was not moving to a higher perfection. However, once the Torah was placed on earth, the perfecting power of Torah is now in the Jewish people's hands. No longer are we limited to what 'trickles down'; **we have the power of direct impact of Torah upon physical reality, thus transforming and refashioning it.** That is our special destiny that began after we left Egypt when **we started getting the mitzvot commanded to us as opposed to figuring them out by 'looking for their fingerprints'**. The command to do these mitzvahs is the secret of what Chazal say: "Greater is he who is commanded and does than the one who does it voluntarily." The reason is: **The one who has the command has the power of the Torah in his actions** and therefore has the power to refashion reality with that mitzvah! **This is something that the**

nations of the world can't do with their seven mitzvos. As great as the Avos were, they weren't a nation! Only a nation is a receptacle big enough that can hold the essence an infinite Torah that endures forever.

Our Mission

With this we can understand why the first mitzvah we got as a nation was to control time with the power of setting the calendar. **If we control time, we control reality.** How apropos it is that the Hebrew word for month, "chodesh", has the root "chadash"—new! **We are supposed to bring newness to the world, to transform it and make it a new improved reality!** With this we can understand that the Torah that is uniquely that of the Jewish people and their mission to change reality starts with the mitzvah that we got to control time. Before that there was 2000 years of Tohu – shapelessness -- as the world was lacking its spiritual form that the Jewish people bring ever since they got the Torah. **Indeed the land that was later to become the land of Israel belonged to the seven nations, and it's no coincidence that they were seven to parallel to the seven of nature. That was their inheritance according to the "natural Torah". It is the Torah of nature that facilitates an imperfect world that needs the improvement that the Jewish people bring through their unique connection with the essence of Torah. The goal is for the power of the Jewish people to conquer the natural world and to merge all the forces of the 2000 years of Tohu with the Torah, and that's called conquest. To insure that the Jewish people successfully conquer the natural order Hashem gave them **ALL** the Torah of the natural order. By owning the "Torah of nature"**

the Jewish people gain control of the natural world controlled by the 70 nations – a microcosm thereof is in the "Land of the 7 Nations"

Moishiach's Donkey

That's the secret of what it means that Moshiach rides a donkey. Donkey in Hebrew is "Chamor" from the root chomer – physicality. **Moshiach is destined to ride on top and provide direction to all the forces of nature which are in those 26 generations before the Torah was given. All the Divrei Torah in Sefer Bereishis are about those forces of nature that were created by the Torah but are meant to be annexed to a higher manifestation of Torah -- the Torah as it is when it's in the hands of the Jewish people.** In the geo-political sphere this is played out by the Jewish people who are the eighth nation to capture the land of the **seven** nations. As the eighth people to occupy the land, they elevate its nature, raising it from natural to supernatural.

Land of Israel & the winter months

This is the significance of the Jewish people going from the desert where they lived a life of pure Torah with no earthly pursuits to the land of Israel where they had to live an earthly life. It is to graft the Torah onto the earthly and annex the earthly to the Torah. **Just like that is the mission of the conquest of the land of Israel so also it's the mission on this half of the Jewish calendar.** All the biblical festivals are on the spring side of the calendar starting with Pesach in Nissan, the first month of spring through Succos that goes to the autumn. This is followed by the winter side of the calendar when there are no biblical festivals. Just like that time is empty of the light of festivals, it's also lacking in

physical light as the days are short and cold. We spiritually energize ourselves with the spring side of the calendar that parallels our sojourn in the desert when we were energized with the Torah. Of the three Regalim, Succos which commemorates the time in the desert epitomizes this and prepares us to conquer the cold side of the calendar which represents the non-optimal non-spiritual side of reality. Over the millennia we have been successful in annexing the cold side of the calendar we created rabbinic holidays of Chanukah and Purim.

Mirroring

To go one step deeper, the light side of the calendar starts with Nissan, the month of spring - "**Aviv**". Its spelling begins with the first two letters of the aleph beis in order, to show that it refers to everything going in the proper order. In contrast, when we shift to the other side of the calendar with the month of **Tishri**, which is spelled "**tuf**" "**shin**" "**raish**", the letters go in the opposite direction - **backwards**. This is because on the spring side of the calendar things are going "top - down" from Hashem to us, and we are absorbing all that energy. **But then we are supposed to reflect that energy back and use it to conquer the dark side of the calendar for Hashem. Indeed the rabbinic holidays are a mirror image of the biblical ones, and they go into reverse order!** The last biblical holiday was Succos, and the first in the rabbinic group is the holiday of Chanukah. Chanukah is a mirror image of Succos. Just like on Succos we have an idea of "Hidur" so we want to beautify the succah and the four minim, so also on Chanukah we have "Mehadrin" and "Mehadrin min Hamehadrin". Furthermore Beis Shammai's opinion is that the first night you light eight and then seven and

then six in descending order **like the sacrifices of the bulls on Succos**. The second rabbinic holiday is Purim which is a mirror of Shavuot. Shavuot was the giving of the Torah, Purim was the "**reacceptance of the Torah in the days of Achashveirosh**". What we still have to achieve is the Rabbinic relection of Pesach. That will be the festival of the redemption of Moshiach. Just like in Nissan we were redeemed so also in Nissan we are destined to be redeemed may it be speedily in our days!

