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Tazriah/HaChodesh - Progress

The Obvious The Tangent & The Mystery

“When a woman will conceive and give birth to a male she will be ‘impure’ for seven days and on the eighth day he shall be circumcised..... and 33 days she’ll have blood of purity....etc.”

There are a few questions that arise in these Pesukim. First of all, why does the Torah have to point out that the woman conceived before she gave birth? That’s plainly obvious! The Torah is discussing the laws of ‘impurity’ and goes on to say how long she remains impure regarding being able to come to the Beis HaMikdash and touch ‘Kodshim’. Then the Torah launches into other forms of ‘impurity’ as well. But there is a break in the flow by pointing out that the boy has to have a Bris Milah on the eighth day. Why did the Torah go off on that seemingly unrelated Halacha? The Torah did not go on to state that at 30 days he would require a pidyon haben! What does Bris Milah have to do with the laws of ‘impurity’? There is a general question that should bother any thinking person: Before the giving of the Torah these laws of ‘impurity’ were not on earth, even Avraham Yitzhak and Yaakov were not commanded in them. This remains the case for the **sons of Noach who do not have these laws or criteria whatsoever** (the Beis Din of the Chashmonaim decreed upon them impurity to prevent assimilation – but **Biblically these concepts don’t exist for them!**). Isn’t this counterintuitive? The Jewish people who are the “holy nation” should also be the “pure nation”! **Why is it that our natural body functions and human events generate “impurity” for us and the Goyim who have the same body functions and events do not have any impurity as a result of them?**

Understanding Nissan

On a leap year parshas Tazria intersects with parshas Hachodesh – a relationship that we will explain. parshas Hachodesh is the mitzvah to set

the Jewish calendar with Nissan as the first of months. It is the first mitzvah given to us as a nation! The Rambam understands that the Halacha of the leap year to ensure that the month of Nissan always remains in the spring is part and parcel of this mitzvah. This is the month that marks a new year of reign of a Jewish king. There are many questions that immediately pop up that demand explanation: Why would the first mitzvah that we get as a newly born people be to set a calendar? Why must we keep Nissan in the spring? **If keeping Nissan in the spring is important, then why didn’t Hashem just give us a solar calendar?** We count the years by Rosh Hashanah and there is the theme of coronating Hashem as our king on that holiday. **Wouldn’t it be more befitting to mark off the years of our Jewish kings when we mark off the years anyway, and when we also declare Hashem as our king?** In the Haggadah we say, “you may think that the obligation to tell the story of ‘Yetzias Mitzrayim’ starts Rosh Chodesh (Nissan) - the Torah teaches us ‘on that day’ (of Pesach)”. **Why would we think that the obligation to recount the story of Yitzias Mitzrayim would start from Rosh Chodesh Nissan?**

Potential vs Actual

There is a famous question in Jewish philosophy: **Why is the world only 5779 years old? If there was potential for the world, why didn’t it come into being earlier?** The Ramchal in his sefer “Daas Tevunos” answers that prior to creation there was no potential for the world! There was nothing except Hashem and **no other concept existed**. However, upon Hashem’s decision to create the world **He first created the potential for the world and after that made the world go from potential to actual!** The Ramchal is laying down two ideas: Firstly, potential is in itself a creation! The Ramchal goes on to make another point: When Hashem created the world, He took on a structural style of

everything first existing in potential and only then in actuality. He explains that there is a tremendous benefit in that: **All shortcomings are rooted in the potential state, in FULL actuality there is only perfection.** By the creation of reality itself, when Hashem said “Bereishis bara.....es hashamayim v'es ha'aretz” and created “the heavens and the earth” **obviously it's not to heaven and earth in actuality which were created on the second and third days of creation! It means the potential! “Es”- the heavens includes everything that fills the heavens and “Es” -the earth includes everything that fills the earth! Potential was created with that first utterance and the next nine utterances are to bring the potential into actual!** In the potential state “the earth was shapeless and formless with darkness over the over the depths and there was water everywhere” As reality moved from potential to actual it attained greater refinement and escaped the state of deficiencies. **If there any deficiencies in reality it's because reality hasn't been fully actualized yet! In the future when everything has been actualized there will no longer be any shortcomings in reality! The essence of the course of destiny it is the quest to move the cosmos into full actuality which culminates with the world 'Morphing' into Olam Haba**

Segments of Destiny

With this we could understand what Chazal mean when they divide world history and destiny into three eras: 2000 years of “Tohu”- shapelessness, 2000 years of Torah, and 2000 years of Moshiach. The obvious question is why are the first 2000 years called “shapelessness”? Great civilizations arose and there were amazing technological advances! What was “shapeless” about the first 2000 of history? **During the first 2000 years of history the world was not moving to any higher state of actuality, it was just going in circles!!** Even though there was technological advancement, the human race and the living creatures were not getting any more refined. They were still in the same physical state as at the end of the days of creation. **The Cosmos was 'shapeless' in the sense that it was not attaining a higher, more refined, shape.**

Promises made – Promises Kept

That changed in the second era with the emergence of Avraham Avinu and the Avos. They started preaching the truth, and for that change Hashem reciprocated and gave them Bris Milah which is for a person to change himself from the way he's born to a greater state of refinement. However, the Avos just ushered in that era in potential and 'Midah Kneged Midah' Hashem gave them promises that He did not fulfill in their lifetime. **The promises were made, and the potential was built up - paralleling how the Avos were building the potential for a great nation that would change the world. The 2000 years of Torah reach full actuality 210 years later with the birth of the Jewish people coming out of Mitzrayim!** The word “Mitzrayim” means constraints. When something is in a potential state it is 'under wraps' and not allowed to expand to full actuality. **Coming out of “Mitzrayim” is like coming out of the Womb that used to engulf and envelop the baby. Once those constraints were broken the Jewish people were born.** That's when the 2000 years of Torah are in full actuality and Hashem delivers in full actuality the promises made to the Avos.

Eternal Spring

This is the secret behind the Halacha that the month of Nissan which is the month of **Yitzias Mitzrayim** has to always be in the spring. Spring is the time of bloom where things unfold into actuality. **During the winter potential is built up with all the rain that falls and is absorbed in the earth. Spring is when it goes from potential to actual. Yitzias Mitzrayim was and is the blooming of reality. This process continues in every Generation until the end of the 6000 years when enough potential has been actualized to make the great metamorphosis to convert this world into the perfect world of Olam Haba.** This is the secret that **“in every generation and generations a man must see himself as if he himself left Mitzrayim”** because every generation is part of **Yitzias Mitzrayim** – the process of actualizing more and more of the potential that is still locked away and waiting to be revealed!

Destiny in the Individual

The life of the Jewish individual mirrors the course of destiny. At the time of conception and for the first 40 days the Gemara tells us that the fetus is “just water” - **like the world was on the first day of creation!** Even though during the nine month (or seven months as we will explain) the fetus develops, all that development is potential relative to the actuality of afterbirth! During those nine (or seven) months it's taught the whole Torah to prepare it for its mission, **but at the time of birth all that Torah is forgotten, a breakdown like “tohu va'vohu”, leaving all those levels achieved as nothing more than potential that needs to be actualized.** The child is born and seeks to actualize regaining all that Torah and all those levels, and also **to move away from his original state of being “just water” to being fully formed to the point of perfection both physically and spiritually.** If the person is successful then the metamorphosis is completed after death and resurrection because the full actuality cannot be attained in this world because of the sin of Adam. The Jew actualizes to the furthest extent that he can and then Hashem finishes it off. This is parallel to how the generations combined actualize the potential of this world but at the time when it will need to metamorphosis into Olam Haba it will shut down for 1000 years before it reemerges as Olam Haba. **It is the mission of the individual to actualize his spiritual potential and it is the mission of the Jewish people as a nation to actualize the potential of all of reality.**

Conception Birth Bris

This is what is alluded to in this week's prasha: **“when a woman conceives”** - referring to the recognition that we start off in a potential state. In the potential state, on the one hand **we're taught the whole Torah to give us the potential to succeed and it also our weakness - we could slide back into the state of “just water” or any other shortcomings along the way! As a function of our recognition that we are imperfect and our mission to actualize more of our potential to attain perfection, that is why we have the laws of impurity for natural body functions and human events!** Afterbirth there is **impurity reminding us where we came from and with that we have a long**

way to go and after seven days of impurity, parallel to the minimal amount of seven months of pregnancy and all seven that is “natural”, then on the eighth day **Bris Milah** - start perfecting yourself, start actualizing your potential, **start changing yourself from the way you were born!** The **Goyim do not seek any higher level of spiritual development**, they are happy with themselves the way they are! That's why **they do not have laws of impurity because they don't view their natural state as anything that needs improvement!** They're happy with the way they are, therefore, they have no laws of impurity reminding them that they are far from perfect. We have lots of impurity reminding us that we need to progress and advance to full actuality of our potential.

The Lunar Cycle

All this is also alluded to in the moon. The moon at its first instant was created as big as the sun and then it was shrunk. It was as big as the sun is to give it the **potential** to get back there, but then there was the 'meltdown' that potential states are subject to, like the fetus that forgets his Torah, and the moon was mitigated. The moon is striving to get back to that greatness that it originally had and then “the moon will shine as brightly as the sun”. The fact that **the moon shrinks after it grows and grows again is like in the Jewish woman's monthly cycles of impurity after purity**, reminding us to further strive for even greater perfection! **All those 'growth spurts' of the moon will come back when the moon swells to the size of the sun - the moon shrinks purely for the purpose of a reminder that it has to grow again - just like the Jewish woman goes through cycles to remind us that further improvement is still necessary!**

National Birth & Bris

This is what happened to the Jewish people as a nation. Upon **Yitzias Mitzrayim** we're **born**. Just like a Jewish woman after birth is impure for **seven** days and only **after seven** days could be reunited with her husband so also we have the **seven** weeks of the omer for purification and then we are reunited with Hashem **after seven** weeks on the 50th day which ushers in the **eighth** week parallel to **Bris Milah** and we attain up a higher level of purity that

allows us to reunite with Hashem on the higher level of **Matan Torah**.

Tishrei vs Nissan

With this we can understand the difference between Tishrei and Nissan. The Gemara tells us that there's a Machlokes Rabi Eliezer and Rabi Yehoshua whether the world was created in Tishrei or Nissan. Rabbeinu Tam says that they are both correct: **in Tishrei Hashem contemplated the creation of the world but the world was created in actuality in Nissan!** That's why we say on Rosh Hashana "Hayom haras olam" - today is the conception of the world! **The potential for the world was created in Tishrei. The world was created in actuality in Nissan. The seven months of Tishrei through Nissan is like a seven-month pregnancy with the birth happening in Nissan!**

The Book vs The Story

That's the secret behind what the Sefer Yetzira says: "Hashem created his world with a **book** a **book** and a **story**". The final book is the book at the end of time that will be a record of all history **as it was lived out**. The first book is the potential. **A book could be read in many ways the reader of the story could put different accentuations and different punctuations that could put a twist and spin on how the story is actually understood!** (similar to how each political party wants to be the one to **read out** the "report") **This is the relationship between the written Torah – the "Book" and the Oral Torah – "the way the story is told"!** How the written Torah is put into action all goes by how the oral Torah explains it!

Our Turf

In Tishrei the world is being re-created in potential and that's "the book" - the book of life and the book of death. These "Books" provide a script, but there's a lot of interpretation that could be put on the script! **The interpretation of the script, like the oral Torah, is exclusively in the hands of the Jewish people! We determine how the year plays out. It's included in our eternal mission of making potential move to actuality!** How the story is told is in the hands of the Jewish people. **Hashem is the sole king when it comes to setting the potential for the world. Tishrei ushers in the winter where**

everything collapses, but all the rain coming in during that time is building the potential. Nissan ushers in spring which is actuality and that's in the hands of the Jewish people. **That's the secret that the Jewish kings count the years of their reign from the month of Nissan - the "turf" and leadership that the Jewish people have is in carving out the course of destiny - which is to move things from potential to actual.**

Sun vs Moon

That is what the moon represents and that's why we count time by the moon. We must keep it synced with the sun because it's Nissan is all about ushering in the Jewish mission of moving the world to actuality. That is why it's the first mitzvah that we got is a people. Our mission is to usher in the actuality that happens in the spring month. That is what the lunar calendar represents, as opposed to the sun that doesn't renew, it just stays the same, and **that's why the goyim count time by the sun - they don't want to change!**

The Story of Life

The story of Yitzias Mitzrayim is the story of destiny! The destiny of the Jewish people and the destiny of the world - to bring all potential into full actuality and thus the world will attain perfection. The month of Nissan ushers in that world order and that's why we would think you would tell over the story of **Yitzias Mitzrayim** - the story of destiny - from Rosh Chodesh Nissan because **that new order starts with Rosh Chodesh Nissan.** Therefore, it's a chiddush that we need not recount the story **Yitzias Mitzrayim** which is the story of destiny until - **Seder night - the night of the order!**

I will discuss this more next week Bezras Hashem.



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