



Bereishis - Mother of Invention

A Tribute to my Mother Z"l on the occasion of her first Yahrzeit

Twenty Generations of Anger

"There were ten generations from Adam until Noah to make us aware how much patience Hashem has as all these generations angered him constantly until (after waiting ten generations) He brought upon them the Waters of the flood. There were ten generation from Noach until Avraham to teach you how much patience Hashem has as all those generations constantly angered him until Avraham came and receive the reward of all of them." (Avos 5:2-3)

As we read the parshas of Bereishis and Noach, every year we wonder why all this had to be written in the Torah. Rashi tells us at the very beginning of our parsha that Bereishis was written to make our case for taking the land of Israel. We will say to the UN: "Hashem created the world and therefore owns it and He can give the land of Israel to whoever He wants". If that's all there is to it, then after mentioning the story of the creation in 'Rishon' of our parsha, the Torah should go straight to the life and times of Avraham Avinu as he is the one who was promised the land of Israel. What is the purpose of going through the details of these twenty generations before Avraham? It would have been easy enough just to write those lines of the mishnah "all these generations before Avraham angered Hashem but He still had ten generations worth of patience". Why all the details of how these twenty generations unfolded?

House of Shes vs House of Kayin

Adam has his son Shes who is the only son who has the honorable title of being in Adam's "Tzelem u'Dmus" - his Divine form and likeness (5:3). It is implied that Hevel may have been able to attain that level as Adam says that Shes was granted to him "to replace Hevel who was killed by Kayin" (4:25). Regardless, Kayin does not have the distinction of being called in Adam's "form and likeness". As the generations unfold, we see great Tzaddikim emerge from Shes' bloodline. Of particular note are Chanoch, Mesushelach and above all, Noach. Kayin's bloodline is not distinguished the same way in terms of righteous descendants **but they are outstanding in the development of technology** in all different forms; agriculture, architecture, herding, music and metal work are the ones that are specifically mentioned but they undoubtedly developed many other related arts and sciences. Rashi comments that these advancements were stimulated from evil impulses and plans. Herding and music for manipulation and idol worship, metalwork for the purpose of making weapons. It is implied that this is what fueled their advancement. Why should evil impulses stimulate creativity and advancement?

The Plow

The descendants of Shes may have been righteous but seemingly made no contribution to scientific and technological advancement. Why is

MAY ALL THE HARBOTZOS HaTORAH AND KEDUSHA GENERATED BY THIS
WEEK'S PARSHA SHEET BE A TREMENDOUS Z'CHUS FOR

לעילוי נשמת אמי פורת האשה החשובה שולמית בת
הרב דב יהודה ז"ל נלב"ע ביום כ"ח תשרי תשע"ט

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that the case? Shouldn't the righteous and well-disciplined be the ones who initiate advancement? The amazing thing is, **for all their seeming disinterest in the sciences and the arts, Noah has the distinction of inventing the plow to alleviate the hardships of agriculture that came into being because of the sin of Adam** (5:29 Rashi there). How did the descendants of Kayin miss the plow? They were engaged in agriculture and toolmaking. They should have been the ones to invent it, as they were making advances in related fields. Why is it that the righteous that were not involved in earthly pursuits are the ones to invent the plow?

Utility of Insanity

The Rambam in his monumental introduction to his commentary on the Mishna explains what Chazal meant when they said, "all Hashem has in his world are the four Amos of Halacha" (Brachos 8A). It's incredible to say that out of billions of people on earth, all Hashem has is the one man, who takes up the space of four Amos, who is learning Torah. The Rambam decodes this statement of Chazal by raising the question as to **why Hashem found it necessary to allow billions and billions of people to exist when so few of them are engaged in the pursuit of worship of Hashem, wisdom, and spirituality in general.** Clearly the goal are those few perfect individuals that spend their lives learning Torah, doing Mitzvos and kindness for the betterment of society. What is the purpose of the billions of people on earth? One of the answers that he supplies to this crucial philosophical question is as follows: **If these perfect individuals who only spend their lives in the pursuit of wisdom and Divine service would have to make their own clothes and shoes, grow their own food, and build their own houses, they would spend all the time of their life on surviving and would not have time or strength to learn Torah and serve Hashem.** To remedy that situation, Hashem allows for the existence of billions of others who are, in the words of the Rambam '**insane with greed**'. The Rambam quotes an Arabic saying: '**if not for the insane, the world would be desolate**'. As the Rambam explains, humanity at large is fueled with an insane greed to have much more than what they really need. The particular example that he gives for the purpose of explaining this Chazal is: A man has an insane desire to live in a huge mansion, for that purpose he has to engage in extensive commerce and take many business trips which take a toll on his

health, all for a mansion that he didn't need, as even before he ruined his health he would not have lived long enough to wear out a cabin of reeds. His insane greed resulted in a shell of a mansion to be constructed before he dropped dead from his damaged health. Decades later, the righteous man that we're describing was able to seek refuge in that shell from a storm and survive to continue his life-long mission of Torah study and good deeds. The Rambam goes on to explain that all of industry is fueled by insane greed that is causing production of goods and services far beyond what is necessary for basic survival. All the extra products are sold off cheap and are now affordable to those righteous few so they can have what they need at a very affordable price so as not to be distracted from their focus of Torah learning and serving Hashem. This is what it means "all that Hashem really has is the four Amos of the man who learns Torah" **because the whole wide world and all its inhabitants have their existence tolerated by Hashem just in the merit of their extra crumbs that go the way of the righteous perfect man.**

Mother of Invention

With the words of the Rambam we begin to get a picture of what was happening in the course of those ten generations between Adam and Noah, which remain true of the trends in humanity until this day. **The righteous who have their personal passions and impulses subdued and use their minds purely for knowing Hashem and marveling at His creation do not care for their creature comforts and that's why their mind does not work in the direction of making life easier for themselves.** Their minds are totally taken up with the Torah and **they marvel at creation purely to see the Divine Wisdom without ever raising the question "what can I gain from this?"** It is said that "necessity is the mother of invention". This is not true at all. **Passion is the mother of invention.** It is the passions and wants that push the mind in the direction of inventing these contraptions to use to fulfil our passions, either directly or be able to sell them in order to fulfil our passions. It is because the descendants of Kayin had these uncontrollable impulses, **those impulses enslaved their intellect to work in the direction that these impulses wanted to go in.** Along the way a lot of good products emerged. But it was their impulses that were the driving force. This remains true until this day. Many inventions that make life easier for us or are just great to have,

the technology was originally developed years before in the military, for the purpose of warfare, and over time, that technology seeped down to the private sector. In other instances, things were just developed out of greed and other nefarious purposes but once the discovery has been made, it's only a matter of time that it will filter down to the regular consumer market.

Solve problems but no Final Solution

There is a 'Catch 22'. In passion-driven technology, which is done either out of greed or out of a quest to manipulate, dominate or murder, **the worst nightmare of all leaders of all industries would be to find a final solution to the problems that their inventions address.** A "final solution" would mean that they will have created their greatest invention that will put them out of business because they will never be needed again. Someone who manufactures weapons does not want the weapons to be able to settle a war once and for all and bring about world peace. He wants the reality of war to continue so there should continue to be a market for weapons. If a Doctor should ever enter the field of medicine purely for the purpose of making money, he would never want to invent the perfect cures because no one would ever need a doctor again. The same is true for every single passion or greed-based industry. For every advancement that they make in addressing a need, they hope and maybe even design and orchestrate new needs to arise, so people have to be perpetually updating, otherwise they will drive themselves out of business altogether.

Selfless Science

The righteous who do not have their self-interest in mind and heart are not likely to invent contraptions of convenience, as they are not interested in that whatsoever. But Ironically, **they will be the ones who would invent perfect cures or final solutions to problems because they want to fulfil Hashem's mission to perfect the world, not their own self-aggrandizement.** With this we can understand why the descendants of Shes who were content with the simple life discovered the plow because it was for the idealistic purpose of alleviating the ill effects created by the sin of Adam. It was to fix the world and improve life. The descendants of Kayin were not interested in improving life per se or fixing the world and that's why the plow evaded them. Not only that, they had a mental block against inventing the plow because it would make

agriculture easy for everyone and destroy the monopoly of those engaged in agriculture professionally.

Passion & Progress

This remains true in the trends of human history. The "goody-goodies" may be great scientists who marvel at the wonders of creation, but they are not the inventors or entrepreneurs. It is the ones full of passions and impulses that invent, engage in far-reaching commerce way beyond what they need for their livelihood and if they can't do their own inventing, they hire and put to work those who can and force them to invent.

However, **all these inventions display and bring into full actuality all of the potential that Hashem put into the forces of nature. Impulse and passion drive us to bring potential into actuality.** Hashem desires the technological advancement when it is done for the right reason: **to actualize the amazing amount of potential that has been encoded in creation.** The problem is in the human experience. Passions and impulses distract us from learning Torah, serving Hashem and even from scientific enquiry for the pure sake of scientific enquiry. The "goody-goodies" stay the course by squelching their passions and impulses and those who are full of passions and impulses are distracted and controlled by them. However, **if not for the impulses of the Yetzer Hara a man would never have the impetus to get married and have children, and to produce the requisite resources to provide for them.** This is why we have to serve Hashem with "all our heart" (Devarim 6:5), as Chazal explain, **"with the Yetzer Hara also"**(Brachos 54A). Without the Yetzer Hara, very little physical activity and advancement would ever happen, "if not for the insane, the world would be desolate".

This is the generation spanning challenge of balance. In the life of the individual it is how to balance his Yetzer Hara with the Yetzer HaTov, with the Yetzer HaTov being the dominant one. In the human race, the mischievous, hyperactive creative types need to work in harmony and under the spiritual direction of the strait-laced, disciplined, spiritually oriented who are intellectual for the pure sake of pursuing wisdom. **Both forces are needed for a full life and a full world that displays the full power that Hashem put into creation.**

Beginning of Time & End of Days

We were told that towards the end of time, the generations born into that era will be full of “Chutzpah” (Sota 49b). We were also told **it will be a time of tremendous technological advancement (Zohar 1:116B) as there has been more advancement in the last hundred and eighty years, than in all the history of humanity combined.** These two points are totally interrelated. It is the “Chutzpah” that is causing all this creative energy that Hashem wants before the end of time which will move the full power encoded in creation from potential to full actuality. These generations, full of impulses and passions, are the ones who are doing Hashem’s work. **They are the secret of “Mashiach’s donkey”.** The word ‘donkey’ in Hebrew is “Chamor” – which is the same word as “chomer”- matter or material. The full power that is encoded in matter, needs to be revealed. **The people with the impulses and passions are the ones to do that work but they have to be “driven by Mashiach” who is the global Yetzer HaTov** that will take control and direct all that power in the right direction. **This is the Holy work of these generations of “Ikvasa DeMishicha” who are the Tikkun for all those generations that lived before Avraham Avinu.** Those early generations, full of passions and impulses, preceded the forces that appear at the end of time. In their day they brought a great deal of technological advancement, but they failed to connect it to Hashem. These generations of Ikvasa De Meshichsa are their Tikkun and will successfully make the connection between **driving force** and **service of Hashem.**

The Generation of Moshiach

The stormy passionate nature of the last few generations which superficially may seem as being terribly distracted, unfocused, and uncommitted, are in reality **the forces of creativity and progress that are going to push the physical world into full actuality and will be the catalyst to break out of “the box of mediocrity” that so many believe to be “proper” and “normal”. and bring about the new world with the higher order that Mashiach brings.** The generation does not need to be subdued or restrained or taught diluted content. We need to produce a whole new type of excellent teachers filled with content and analytical skills but also with the creativity and flexibility “to roll with the punches” of the stormy character of the last generations before Moshiach. (See more on this

in Rav Klonimus Kalman of Piasezna’s introduction to his **Chovas HaTalmidim** entitled “**Siach im Avos u’melamdin**”)

Master Educator

My mother z”l was that type of master educator. Born and raised in Europe, she was “old school” as far as high standards of erudition, level of learning, hard work, and purity of character. And yet, she was decades ahead of her time with her ability to think creatively and “out-of-the-box” with the mental and emotional agility to improvise with ‘class’, whenever necessary. **There was no such thing as a student she couldn’t teach.** She would find a way to relate and **explain anything to any Jew from across the entire spectrum** from the most right-wing Bais Yaakov to the most left-wing unaffiliated **and all age groups** from the early grades to adult education. She was never shocked or surprised by a question or rattled by rudeness or disciplinary problems of the students. She always “rolled with the punches” and found a way to their hearts and brought out their full potential. She succeeded with those ‘difficult children’ deemed by the establishment as ‘hopeless.’ When everyone gave up on me, including myself, she wouldn’t have it. שלי ושלכם שלה

תנצב”ה

