

The Significance of Why There Are Five Books of the Torah-Class 1 Part 2

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbetzin Leah Kohn

In the first 2000 years of creation Hashem kept the potential to return to *Gan Eden* within all of mankind. They had the choice to actualize it, but they didn't. The sages refer to these 2000 years as *tohu*. Rashi explains that it comes from the word *l'tot-* to wonder. The world wasn't fulfilling its purpose. Hashem allocated these years for people to define if they wanted to return to the level of Adam before the sin or remain at a lower level without the ability to ever come back. The Ramchal calls this stage the process of creating roots. Mankind had the opportunity to shape the roots and the tree that would eventually emerge would reflect these roots. This stage ended after *dor haflaga*. Hashem constantly tries to redirect man to come back. Punishment is one way Hashem helps us rectify our sins by shifting different aspects in our life to help us repent. After the Great Flood Hashem gave another chance to Noah and his children to rectify what needed fixing. Instead, mankind united to rebel against Hashem which meant the world had no hope to come to its purpose. Then Hashem chose Avraham Avinu and his children. The other nations were given the role of developing the physical world and freeing the Jewish people to concentrate on their purpose. The route of the Jewish people was established through the avot and imahot and the 12 tribes.

Just before the story of *dor haflaga*, the *Torah* tells us the generations of Shem, Cham and Yafes. It's a selective list, only 70 people who were the forefathers of the 70 nations are mentioned. In the *Torah*, 70 symbolizes completeness. Originally the 70 nations were meant to bring the world to its purpose. But when they chose a different path, the mission was given over to Avraham and his children. From the birth of Avraham to the point that his 70 descendants went down to *Mitzrayim*, the

root of *Klal Yisrael* was created. From Shemot and onward, we explore the tree that grew from the roots created in Bereishit. There's a connection between the history of the avot and our histories. *Maseh avot siman l'banim* means that what happened to our forefathers will happen to us. Through the tests and struggles they faced and overcame, they created the roots of the nation that would come back to the level of Adam before the sin. This is the book of *Bereishit*.

It seems as if the first 2000 years were a waste. Couldn't Hashem have just created Avraham right at the start? The *Nesivos Sholom* explains that these 2000 generations were the generations of *derech erez kadma l'Torah*. In order to be able to receive *Torah* and connect to Hashem the way *Matan Torah* gave us the ability to do, we had to prepare ourselves to be a vessel for it. In these 2000 years, the choices mankind made and Hashem response to it taught us lessons for life and the foundations of *derech erez*. Even if these generations perished, they are part of history and the lessons were transmitted to future generations. The root drive that urged *Kayin* to sin was jealousy, the sin of the *dor hamabul* was desire, and *dor haflaga's* downfall was due to *kavod*. Mankind failed, they were punished, and this laid the groundwork for the avot to learn from their mistakes and assume their mission.

Further on in the parshiot we find Yishmael, Eliezer, Esav, Lavan, Er and Onen, who did not merit to join *Klal Yisrael* in their chosen purpose. In *Vayechi* we finally encounter the 70 descendants of Yaakov who were all worthy. *Sefer Bereishit* is called *Sefer Hayetzira* because it's the book that tells the story of the formation of the roots. *Bereishit Rabbah* discusses the creation of light on the first day. The word *ohr* is mentioned in five verses

corresponding to the five chumashim. Each verse is expressed somewhat differently and defines the book it corresponds to. *Yehi ohr* corresponds to Bereishit. Rav Tzadok HaCohen explains that when Hashem created man he wanted to bestow upon him spiritual light, clarity, and warmth. The ability to see light is the connection to Hashem. In order to enjoy the light, you have to be a vessel to absorb it. There was a *hishtalshilut* -a process between those who were not ready to invest and those who were ready to work hard to become a vessel. The process ended when the 12 tribes were born because they were the first complete unit that were worthy to absorb the light. "*Vayomer Elokim yehi ohr -Hashem* so to speak said to himself, 'I am creating the world so that there will be people that can absorb the light.'" Till Yaakov's 70 descendants went down to *Mitzrayim*, creation wasn't finished yet, the *keilim* were not there yet, the ability to bring the world to its purpose was not completed.

The Ramban says *Bereishit* is about the root stage because all that happened to the avot was symbolic, helping us understand what would happen to us. And by the fact that the avot created the roots, they created the DNA, the wherewithal for us to face our challenges and transcend it and bring the world to its purpose.

The Malbim defines Chumash Bereishit as the book of *kelipa* and *lev*, the shell and the fruit. There's a division between those who are the heart and the purpose of creation and those who are the shell, serving the fruit. The nations have a role to serve the Jewish people and they in turn must fulfill their chosen purpose of bringing creation to its *tikkun*.



Part 2C- Why Do you Work

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Justen Treger

What is the unique nature of *chemdat hamamon* (desire for money) and what differentiates it from other desires? In *Kohelet*, King Shlomo refers to the desire for money as 'An evil matter which Hashem gave humanity to torture him...' The Midrash quotes the *chazal* that says, "Nobody leaves this world with half of his desires in hand; if he has 100 he wants 200 and if he has 200 he wants 400." The Midrash explains that the point King Shlomo wanted to make is that the desire for money is torturous because the more you have the more you feel you're lacking and the more you want. The Ruach Chaim says that this unquenchable desire for money applies to everyone even a *tzaddik*. How then can one get to the elusive state of *sameach b'chelko*-

being happy with one's lot? Wealth is always called *chelko*- a portion, it's never considered everything because you'll never have more than a portion even if you've got a lot of money. The chiddush of the righteous person is that he's *sameach b'chelek sheyesh lo* -He gets joy from the portion that he has and he doesn't spend his life chasing after more. He might still want more but he won't let that dictate his life. So, the difference between the *tzadik* and the unhappy person is not in the nature of *chemdat hamamon* which exists in all of us in all of us, but in what he does as a byproduct of it. Does he spend his life trying to chase after what he doesn't have yet or does he derive joy from the portion he was given?

Shlomo Hamelech says further in *Kohelet*, "I've seen a great difficulty in the world that the one who loves money will never be satiated by it." Rabbeinu Yonah explains, if you have a desire to acquire wisdom and you study, the knowledge becomes a part of you. If you have a desire to become strong and you exercise your muscles, the strength you achieve becomes a part of you. But with money it never becomes a part of you, it always remains external and untouchable. The more you want it, the emptier it makes you feel. The more you have, the more you need to feel happy. So, in fact the less you have the easier it is to be joyous.

Tehillim 89: Chesed and Emet- The Eternal Covenant Part III

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

"Who can be like Hashem among the sons of the mighty; He is exalted in the mystery of the holy ones." Rav Hirsh explains, he is esteemed in the mysterious strength of those who were willing to give up their lives for His name. Is there a greater exaltation of Hashem than someone who is willing to remain faithful no matter?

"He is awe inspiring to all around Him." A *tzeva* is an army. Hashem commands all the natural forces. "You are surrounded by faithfulness." Commentators explain – "You are surrounded by those who are faithful to you." Not only has Hashem been faithful to the Jewish nation but they have been faithful to Him.

From the 10th verse, the chapter shifts to explore how Hashem manifests himself in nature. "You rule over the rising of the sea; when it raises its waves, You humble them." This refers to the force Hashem created in nature. There's the constant struggle between the sea and land. The world was originally covered by water and out of it emerged dry land. All the land we see is actually floating on water. The waters try constantly to move in and erode the land but they are held back by

the forces of nature. Every so often there's a tidal wave or a typhoon and it reminds us of the incredible power of the sea. When flooding takes over, it doesn't differentiate between good and bad, it does what it does. Might makes right and the big swallows the little. That's the sea. But, "*Olam chesed yibaneh*-The land was built on kindness." It has moral law not natural law. When the land began to act like the sea and there was no chesed but rather immoral corruption, it could no longer hold the sea back and then it moved in and swallowed it. After the Great Flood, Hashem made a covenant with Noach and promised him he would never again destroy all of the earth, never again would there be a cessation of day and night, summer and winter. The seasons would remain steadfast except when Hashem himself would intervene as he did in *Mitzrayim*.

"Your hand is mighty, Your right hand is high." Hashem is the force that created nature and continues to act and manifest within it. These are hidden miracles because we think of them as natural not recognizing that's there's actually a force that keeps the world going. "Righteousness and judgment are the basis of Your throne; kindness and truth come before

Your countenance." *Tzedek* is law tempered with mercy. It's examining not only what was done but what the motivations and circumstances were.

"Fortunate is the nation that knows the trumpeting of the shofar, Hashem may they walk in the light of your countenance." Trumpeting was the way kings were coronated. The light that shines from Hashem to us comes through the *Torah*. The people who follow Hashem's path are those who coronate and make Him king. "With your name they rejoice every day, and with Your righteousness they are exalted." The term used is *gil* which can mean happiness or revelation. One who seeks to reveal Hashem in the *Torah* is joyous.

"For You are the glory of their might, and with Your favor our horns will be raised." If we praise the great things Jews have done, we are really praising Hashem. The strength of *Am Yisrael* comes from Hashem and when we forget and become arrogant, Hashem reminds us. When *Am Yisrael* is denigrated, it's a *Chilul Hashem*. When they are lifted, Hashem is lifted.