

## FROM SIGNIFICANCE TO GREATNESS

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### BEREESHES

Today we commence once more the eternal cycle of the Torah. Again we plunge into the refreshing stream of wisdom — the — “mayim chayim” . . . “the lively waters, the waters of life.” We uttered the words which unveil the cornerstone of religious faith; “בראשית ברא אלקים” . . . “In the beginning G-d created;” G-d exists, G-d created. It is the first breach in the Iron Curtain of man’s senses through which he can perceive a glimpse of existence beyond what he sees, hears or feels — a transcendental tone scale, a transcendental spectrum of colors and sublime sensations.

This is only the overture to the religious experience. Men’s soul becomes moved. His heart throbs; he yearns for the eternity and the infinity beyond this Iron Curtain. He begins to flex his weak muscles as he endeavors helplessly to crash through it. Frustrated he cries out “mayein yovo ezri” “Whence shall come my salvation;” I, little insignificant man how can I insert myself into the cosmic drama of creation and existence. As our great commentator on the Bible, Rashi, puts it in his first paragraph on our text — “אין הכתוב הזה אומר — אלא דרשנו” This opening sentence “In the beginning G-d created” pleads with us and demands of us — explain me, interpret me — give me meaning for you, man, so that you may understand yourself in me.

For the answer to this perplexing question we turn once more to Rashi as he continues, “Bishvil haTorah shenikro

## TORAH & SERMON MANUAL

raishis" . . . "For the sake of the Torah which is called beginning." To use Aristotelian terms: G-d is not only the first cause of being but also the final cause — G-d not only created the universe but He also revealed Himself as the all-encompassing and absolute purpose of existence by His manifestation at Mt. Sinai and as embodied in the Torah. Torah spreads under man "כנפי נשרים" . . . "eagle's wings" which carry him firmly and securely over all obstacles into the clear skies illuminated by the rays of the eternal light. In creation man is diminutive, in revelation man soars high and above all creatures to places inaccessible to angels.

The story is told of a famous preacher who disclosed to his students that he derived the inspiration for his famous sermons and lectures in his garden. One day a group of students paid a visit to his home. Immediately they asked to be shown the wonderful garden expecting to find it to be large and exquisite, with flowers of breathtaking beauty filling the air with their tantalizing scent. Great was their disappointment upon finding it to be a small piece of land with a meager sprinkle of grass here and there surrounded by high walls. "Surely," the exclaimed "this is not the garden of your inspiration!" "Oh, yes," said the preacher. "But, look how small it is" the students protested. "True" he replied "but look how high it is! !" The same we can say of man. How terribly small he is. An unimpressive speck in the vast universe; but he can become great through G-d and Torah. True he is small surrounded by the high walls of his physical limitations **BUT LOOK HOW HIGH HE IS! !**