

Bereishis- Preparation for Receiving the Pristine Torah [From the Toras Chaim of Kossov]

By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

The first Rashi in Bereishis discusses the issue of why the Torah had to begin with the account of the creation of the world. If the Torah is a guide on how to live life, it should have been written as a systematic book of laws and should have begun with the mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh as this was the first mitzvah given to Am Yisroel. Why did the Torah have to begin with the creation and tell us about our ancestors, as illustrious as they were? Clearly the Torah is not written as a book of law.

Rashi answers this question by telling us that the Torah had to first let us know that Hashem created the world and more specifically, Eretz Yisroel. Hashem, as the creator of the world has the right to portion out lands to nations as he sees fit. So regardless of what nations may say, Eretz Yisroel belongs to Am Yisroel as Hashem's gift from the creator.

Many later commentators expand on this Rashi and explain that Rashi never meant that the Torah not to tell us about our illustrious forbears. Rather, it need not be the beginning and the first topic as the guide to life. Various approaches are taken regarding the role of the creation at the very beginning of the narrative.

The Toras Chaim of Kossov explains this issue in the following manner. Our going out of Mitzrayim was our elevation to the nation of kingship. This status of a nation of kingship brought upon us challenges from the other nations and our rights to Eretz Yisroel were questioned, All of this came upon us because of the sin of Adam Harishon when the flow of divine wisdom was damaged. This is what created the need for the permitted and forbidden, pure and impure that we are familiar with. Ideally, there would be such a clear understanding of Hashem's will that everything would be directly understood as to what Hashem really wants from us. Had this seminal sin not taken place, there would be such clarity amongst all humanity of Hashem's will. With this understanding, it would be clear to the entire world that Eretz Yisroel belongs only to Am Yisroel. The Torah had to emphasize that Hashem created the entire world and gives the lands to nation as he sees fit. Unfortunately, the sin of Adam caused confusion in the universe and shattered the clarity. Our job as Am Yisroel is to fix the world through our avodas Hashem eliminate et the confusion. Through this rectification, Eretz Yisroel will ours again.

Furthermore, the Toras Chaim explains that this refinement is our job while we are in exile. We are to elevate the sparks of holiness that went out into the universe at the time of Adam's sin. When we learn Torah, do mitzvos, and serve Hashem showing the world that we are indeed worthy of being Hashem's nation and therefore entitled to Eretz Yisroel again. When this worthiness is reached there will no longer be good and evil as all will be entirely good. This is not to say that we will not follow the same Torah we do now, On the contrary, the Torah will never change. Rather, it means that our primary focus will be on the deeper and more esoteric parts of the Torah instead of the legal aspects as is the main focus now. This is explained by the Baal Hatanya, the first Rebbe of Chabad, in Igros Kodesh 26 that the tree of knowledge, which brought out good and evil into the world through Adam eating its fruit, will no longer have bearing. This eating is what created the need for the legal concepts of permitted and forbidden. Instead, we will only be influenced by the tree of life which is all good. At this time, we will be ready for the pure pristine Torah which began with our going out of Mitzrayim.