

I originally thought I would not have sufficient time to prepare my DT for this Shabbat-but, somehow, b'siyata Dish'maya- I did manage to fit it in.

"Bereishit bara Elokim et Ha-shamayim v'et ha-*aretz*. (1:1). Rashi, quotes Chazal (Yalkut Shimoni, Parashat Bo-187), who asks why the Torah begins with Creation, and not with the first Mitzvah, in Parashat Bo, with the Mitzvah of Kiddush Ha-Chodesh, sanctifying the new moon. Rashi cites the explanation that the Torah begins with creation of the world in order to reinforce the Jewish claim to Eretz Yisrael. "If the nations of the world will say to Israel 'you are bandits' for you took the land of the "Seven Nations", we can reply that HaShem is the Creator of the world-He gave the Land of Israel to the "Seven Nations" and therefore He had the right to take it away from them and give it to us, the Nation of Israel.

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik found this a bit startling. According to this, the "Shiva Amim, the "Seven Nations were divinely sanctioned as the initial inhabitants and rulers of Eretz Yisrael! From what we know about the immorality of these nations and, conversely, about the Kedusha (sanctity) of the land, this appears to be a shocking phenomenon. Why in the world would the holy Eretz Yisrael be given to these wicked people, and why would such Kedusha be entrusted to morally corrupt nations??

The Rav suggested, that this startling contrast was intended to foreshadow a powerful historical pattern, a law and truth of history-that sanctity arouses violent opposition. We might have imagined that immoral and anti-religious people would simply ignore religious holy places, but in truth, throughout history, that has not been the case. On the contrary, forces of evil and impurity are perversely drawn to holy sites. They seek to suppress sanctity by gaining sovereignty over such places. For example, Titus, who chose the Menorah and other lootings of Jerusalem, to be singled out from all of his conquests, and engraved them upon the "Arch of Titus" in Rome. So too, because of its Kedusha, would the Land of Israel, in future generations, become the focal point in the struggle between Good and Evil.

Rav Soloveitchik suggested that this is the underlying message of the Gemara Makkot (24b). The Gemara recounts the story of several great Sages walking in close proximity to the ruins of the Beit Ha-Mikdash shortly after the Churban Ha-Bayit. The rabbis witnessed a "shu'al, a fox, rummaging around the area where the Kodesh Ha-Kedoshim, the Holy of Holies, used to stand, and that sight made them become overwhelmed with grief, and so, they broke down in tears. On the other hand, the Gemara continues, R' Akiva had the opposite reaction and laughed.

The Rav wandered about the significance of the "shu'al". Was there nowhere else for the fox to scurry? Could it be nothing more than a coincidence that the fox was in, of all places, the Holy of Holies? No, the presence of the fox demonstrates the significance of the Beit Ha-Mikdash. The fox-symbolizes the Ko'ach ha-tumah, spiritually impure forces-are instinctively drawn to this place; that there is nowhere the shu'al would rather be than in the Beit Ha-Mikdash. Tumah is attracted to Tahara (purity)! From the halls of the U.N., the worlds preoccupation with Israel is just the latest example of the historical pattern that Rashi alludes to in his opening commentary. Their perverse obsession with us is a result of the fact

that they recognize –consciously or otherwise-the true holiness of our homeland and that it is rightfully ours-forever!

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim, Rabbi Aharon Ziegler

KOL HA-KAVOD TO THOSE WHO ANSWERED THE QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT HA-AZINU

Rabbi Levi VanLeeuwen-Elazar, Israel// *Rabbi Jay Karzen-J'lem // *Rabbi Charles Meisels-Far Rockaway, NY// *Pechman Family-J'lem// *Yaakov Doerrchuck-Kollel Member-Germany// *Dr Joseph Taitelbaum-Staten Island, NY // *Cheryl & Rabbi Norman Meskin-J'lem

REFU'AH NEEDED FOR: Yosef Zev ben Shprintze// Yocheved bat Yitte // Avraham Yosef ben Sheindel/ Shmuel Binyamin ben Sarah// Tzuriel ben Yehudit Leah//

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT BEREISHIT:

1-Which day of Creation do we not find the expression that “Gd saw it was good?” and which day do we find that expression twice on the same day?

2-The Vilna Gaon noticed a “hint” of Chanukah in the 25th word of this parasha. Can you find this connection?

3- King Talmai placed 70 Sages in individual room and ordered them to translate the Torah. They each made the same changes in the first pasuk of our parasha. What change did they make, and why? (see Gemara Megilla 9a) What change did they make in the 26th pasuk?

4-In Judaism, all holidays begin on the night before, because night precedes the day. From where in the parasha do we derive this concept?

5-There is only one Mitzvah in this parasha. What is that Mitzvah?

