

Parshas Bereishis

This week's Parsha is Bereishis- genesis, the restart of the Chumash as we embark on the new cycle of reading the weekly Parsha. If anyone was looking for a sign of the eternality of the Torah, look no further than the first posuk and the first Rashi on the Parsha. If anyone is looking for a sign to make sense of the events unfolding in Eretz Yisrael, look no further than the first Posuk of the Torah.

Rashi famously asks why the Chumash begins with creation when it could easily have begun with "Hachodesh Hazeh Lochem," the first Mitzvah given to the newly formed Jewish Nation (after leaving Egypt). Rashi explains from Rabbi Yitzchak that the Torah begins this way to show us our heritage. Should people of the world say to us you are robbers because you took the land of Israel, we can respond that since the world belongs to Hashem, and He created it and can give it to whom he pleases, He gave it to us..."

The Gemara in Sanhedrin 91a recounts that the people of Afrikiya came to Alexander Macedon (Alexander the Great) and stated that Israel belonged to them. Geviah Ben Pesisa asked the sages permission to debate them on the matter. In conclusion, their claim was debunked, and they ran away. The People of Egypt did the same thing, and Geviah Ben Pesisa debunked their claim. The descendants of Yishmael and Keturah also laid claim to the land, but their claim was also debunked. For thousands of years, the Jewish lineage and connection to the land of Israel have been debated.

Where are all the empires and claimants and their descendants? They have been forgotten in the annals of history because their claims were based on lies. Something authentic and eternal will always be true, no matter the context or the environment. All the lies we see in social media by people to justify the horrendous acts committed against our people are but a morally bankrupt multitude of people (that, in this moment of history, are very dangerous). Because their entire outlook is predicated on falseness, we can be confident that they will also be forgotten in the annals of history.

History shows that this story is not new for our people, unfortunately. But history shows that truth will prevail, and lies will dissipate into the ether of the forgotten. Imagine being part of a group (the anti-Israel terrorist supporting group) whose entire outlook is predicated on a false identity. Now imagine yourself, a Jew, with an eternal connection to the Torah. We will be rereading the Parsha this week in Shul. We will be reminded of our eternal connection to the Torah because Hashem chose to remind us that we are directly connected to creation, a world formed by Hashem that belongs to Hashem, and a world in which He gave us the land of Israel. As stated in Devarim 11:12, "It is a land which your God looks after, on which your God always keeps an eye, from year's beginning to year's end."

In the short run, a week ago, we were maimed and wounded as our brothers, sisters, and children were murdered and hurt, and our siblings are now in a real fight on the ground. This pain is brutal. We

cannot help but feel hopeless that we are still in such a fight. But more than the physical threat in the Land of Israel. What about the antagonism for global Jewry? What about the fact that we must be on high alert just because we are Jewish? It makes sense to want to cower, hide, and be less proud...but the first posuk of the Parsha reminds us that we have what to be proud of. That is, we have truth on our side, we have history on our side, we have Hashem on our side, and we have the Torah. As we say in Brich Shmei, after opening the Aron before taking the Torah out, "I am a servant of the Holy One, blessed is He, I bow before Him and before the honour of His Torah at all times. Not in man do I put my trust, nor do I rely on any angel; but only in the God of heaven Who is the true God, Whose Torah is truth, Whose prophets are true, and Who performs many deeds of goodness and truth. In Him, I put my trust, and to His holy, honoured Name, I utter praises. May it be Your will to open my heart to Torah and to fulfill the desires of my heart and of the heart of Your people, Israel, for goodness, for life, and for peace."

So what do we do with this information and knowing what we have on our side? We look at our history and boldly declare a desire to cleave to the truth. We do this by saying a bracha with more fervour or consciously performing a mitzvah with more enthusiasm. What we didn't do yesterday, we take on today and do again tomorrow.

This week, in honour of our history and anticipation of our inevitable long-term win, let us perform the Mitzvos of Shabbos, being mindful of the Mitzvos of the day (i.e., lighting candles, making kiddush, etc.). Close your eyes when you do this Mitzvah

and let your soul connect to everything true.

Good Shabbos, and may the fighters of Israel be safe, and may the nation be delivered into the final redemption with Mashiach Now.