

Overview of the Beginning of the Torah:

1. **Bereishis 1,1:** בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ When God began to create heaven and earth
2. **Rashi:** בראשית ברא אין המקרא הזה אומר אלא דרשני, כמו שדרשוהו רבותינו בשביל התורה שנקראת ראשית (ירמיה ב') דרכו (משלי ח'), ובשביל ישראל שנקראו ראשית תבואתו (ירמיה ב') This verse calls aloud for explanation in the manner that our Rabbis explained it: God created the world for the sake of the Torah which is called (Proverbs 8:22) "The beginning (ראשית) of His (God's) way", and for the sake of Israel who are called (Jeremiah 2:3) "The beginning (ראשית) of His (God's) increase".
3. **Rashi:** אמר רבי יצחק לא היה צריך להתחיל את התורה אלא מהחדש הזה לכם, שהיא מצוה ראשונה שנצטוו בה ישראל, ומה טעם פתח בבראשית? משום כח מעשיו הגיד לעמו לתת להם נחלת גוים (תהילים קי"א), שאם יאמרו אמות העולם לישראל לסטים אתם, שכבשתם ארצות שבעה גוים, הם אומרים להם כל הארץ של הקב"ה — היא, הוא בראה ונתנה לאשר ישר בעיניו, ברצונו נתנה להם, וברצונו נטלה מהם ונתנה לנו: בראשית Rabbi Isaac said: The Torah which is the Law book of Israel should have commenced with the verse (Exodus 12:2) "This month shall be unto you the first of the months" which is the first commandment given to Israel. What is the reason, then, that it commences with the account of the Creation? Because of the thought expressed in the text (Psalms 111:6) "He declared to His people the strength of His works (i.e. He gave an account of the work of Creation), in order that He might give them the heritage of the nations." For should the peoples of the world say to Israel, "You are robbers, because you took by force the lands of the seven nations of Canaan", Israel may reply to them, "All the earth belongs to the Holy One, blessed be He; He created it and gave it *to whom He pleased*. When He willed He gave it to them, and when He willed He took it from them and gave it to us" (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 187).
4. **Question #1:** This only answers why the Torah began with the first section of creation, but does not explain the need for all the chapters until Exodus 12,2 ?
5. **Question #2:** Why is the concept of Midos, which are so important, not explained in the Torah ?
6. **R' Chaim Vital, Shaarei Kedusha Chelek 1, Shaar 2:** ואמנם, מצות, ואמנם, הן הכנות עקריות אל תרי"ג המצות בקיומן או בביטולם, יען כי אין כח בנפש השכלית לקיים המצות על ידי תרי"ג איברי הגוף אלא באמצעות נפש היסודית המחברת אל הגוף עצמו בסוד (ויקרא י"ז י"ד) כי נפש כל בשר דמ"ו בנפשו הוא, ולפיכך ענין המדות הרעות קשים מן העברות עצמן מאד מאד: בזה תבין ענין מה שאמרו רבותינו ז"ל (שבת דף ק"ה ע"ב), כל הכועס כאלו עובד עבודה זרה ממש שהיא היותר שקולה ככל תרי"ג המצות, וכן אמרו (סוטה דף ע"א) מי שיש בו גסות הרוח הוא ככופר בעיקר וראוי לגדעו כאשירה ואין עפרו ננער וכו' וכאלה רבות. והבן זה מאד, כי להיותם עקרים ויסודות לא נמנו בכלל תרי"ג המצות התלויות בנפש השכלית, ונמצא כי יותר צריך ליזהר ממדות הרעות יותר מן קיום המצות עשה ולא תעשה כי בהיותו בעל מדות טובות בנקל יקיים כל המצות: Because of this, the character traits are not included as part and parcel of the 613 mitzvot. Nonetheless, they are essential prerequisites to their fulfillment or negation, for the simple reason that the intellectual soul is powerless to fulfill the mitzvot with the 613 organs of the body except through the agency of the fundamental soul which is connected to the body. This is the secret meaning of the verse, "For the soul of every flesh; its blood is its life." This being the case, ***the bad character traits are actually much worse than the transgressions themselves.*** We may now understand why our sages, of blessed memory, said, "When a person loses his temper, it is as if he is actually worshiping strange gods" – which is a negation of all 613 mitzvot of the Torah! Furthermore, they said, "Whosoever has a haughty spirit is likened to one who denies the fundamental truth of G-d's existence. He is worthy of being cut down like an Asherah grove. There are many such quotes. Contemplate this greatly and consider that ***since the character traits are root causes and fundamental characteristics embedded in the natural soul, they are not counted amongst the 613 mitzvot that depend on the intellectual soul. We, therefore, find that greater caution must be taken to safeguard oneself from bad character traits, than even from fulfilling the positive mitzvot or desisting from committing the negative mitzvot. This is because if a person possesses good character traits, he will not find it difficult to fulfill all the mitzvot.***
7. **Point:** Derech Eretz precedes the Torah

8. **Question #3:** If the Torah does not address the issues relating to Midos, how will we learn them ?
9. **Answer:** The content of the Torah until Shemos 12,2 addresses the issue of Midos and is a complete Torah regarding purity of Midos and teaches fundamentals of service of Hashem.
10. **Talmud Avoda Zora 25a:** **הישר** על ספר הישר הנה כתובה על ספר הישר (שמואל ב א, יח) ויאמר ללמד בני יהודה קשת הנה כתובה על ספר הישר (במדבר נג, מאי ספר הישר א"ר חייא בר אבא א"ר יוחנן זה ספר אברהם יצחק ויעקב שנקראו **ישרים** דכתיב בהו (במדבר נג, י) It is written: "And said: To teach the sons of Judah the bow. Behold, it is written in the book of Yashar" (II Samuel 1:18). The Gemara again asks: What is the book of **Yashar**? Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba says that Rabbi Yohanan says: This is the book of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were called **righteous [yesharim]**, as it is written with regard to them: "Let me die the death of the righteous [yesharim] and let my end be like his" (Numbers 23:10).
11. The description of being "Yashar" is to have purity of Midos.
12. **POINT:** The Torah first teaches us how far reaching the blemish of bad Midos can go.
13. **Pirkei Avos 4, 21:** קנאה והתאנה והכבוד, מוציאין את האדם מן העולם, envy, lust and [the desire for] honor put a man out of the world.
14. 3 Cardinal Sins: Murder, Idolatry, and Immorality - Loshon Hora is equal to all 3 combined

Torah Portion of Bereishis [Beginning] (0-1536):

1. Creation bespeaks Purpose
2. Adam & Eve in Gan Eden is the Purpose to earn ones connection to G-d (Free Will)
3. Sin of Adam & Eve – Effects Relationship between Man & G-d
4. Sin of Cain killing Abel – Effects Relationship between Man & Man (Jealousy / murder)
5. 10 Generations from Adam to Noach
6. **Generation of Enosh: IDOLATRY Honor**

Torah Portion of Noach [New Beginning] (1536 - 2023):

1. **Generation of the Flood: IMMORALITY - Lust (Flood – 1656)**
2. 3 Sons of Noach: Shem, Cham, and Yefes
3. **Generation of the Dispersal / Tower of Bavel: MURDER - Jealousy (Dispersal into 70 nations – 1996)**
4. 10 Generations from Noach to Avraham (**Avraham born – 1948**)

Torah Portion of Lech Lecha [Go From Non-Jew to Jew] (2023 - 2047):

1. First 6 Tests
 2. **Covenant Between the Parts in 2018 – Prophecy of 400 years of Exile to begin in 30 years**
 3. **Generation of Sodom : DISUNITY, LACK OF PEACE, LOSHON HORA**
 4. Birth of Yishmael (Father of Arab World)
 5. Avraham has circumcision at the age of 99
6. Then began the "world of repair" when the light of Avraham began to illuminate the world.
7. The repair of the world comes through the seven shepherds, who drew into the world the repair of the Midos.

Torah Portions from Lech Lecha - Vayechi:

1. Avraham - Chesed - Kindness (hosting guests)
2. Yitzchak - Gevura - Control (binding of Yitzchak)
3. Yaakov - Tiferes (elevating the physical world in the house of Lavan)[Brings Glory to God]
4. Yosef / Yehuda - Malchus (unity) & [Yosef - Yesod - morality]

SUMMARY OF THE DISTORTION & REPAIR OF MIDOS IN SEFER BEREISHIS:

HOLY ATTRIBUTE	DISTORTION	BEHAVIOUR	RASHA	SHEPPARD

CHESED -KINDNESS	LUST	IMMORALITY	DOR HAMABUL	AVRAHAM
GEVURA - CONTROL	JEALOUSY	MURDER	DOR HAFLAGA	YITZCHAK
TIFERES - GLORY	HONOR	IDOLATRY	DOR ENOSH	YAAKOV
MALCHUS - UNITY	DISUNITY	LOSHON HORA	DOR SODOM	YOSEF / YEHUDA

Torah Portions of Shmos, Va'eira, and Bo:

5. Moshe - Netzach - eternity, consistency

6. Aharon - Hod - humility

14. **Question #4:** Why did Hashem decree hardship and slavery upon the Jews in Egypt if they had not committed a sin to deserve it ?

Beginning of Exodus:

15. Physicality is the source of Envy, lust and honor - slavery refines ones focus on the physical.
16. Midos refinement comes from purifying the focus on the physical.
17. **Summary:** The beginning of the Torah until Shemos 12,2 deals with 1) purity of Midos, and 2) refinement of the physical, as that is the preparation for receiving the Torah.
18. **Chesed L'avraham:** "Olam Chesed Yibaneh" - The concept of Midos builds the world.
19. "Ma'aseh Avos Siman Lebanim" - the actions of the patriarchs showed the way for the children.
20. The 7 shepherds opened up the 7 lower Sefiros, but not the 3 higher Sefiros of Keser, Chochma, and Bina.
21. This is why the Jews only were able to inherit 7 of the Canaanite nations.
22. **POINT: Inheriting the land depends on character refinement.**
23. **Rashi 15,19:** עֶשְׂרֵי אַמּוֹת יֵשׁ כָּאֵן וְלֹא נָתַן לָהֶם אֶלָּא שִׁבְעָה גּוֹיִם, וְהַשְּׁלֵשָׁה אֲדוּם וְמוֹאָב וְעַמּוֹן, וְהֵם קִיְנִי, קְנִזִּי, וְקַדְמוֹנֵי עַתִּידִים לְהֵיוֹת יְרֻשָׁה לְעַתִּיד (בראשית רבה), שְׁנַאֲמַר: אֲדוּם וְמוֹאָב מְשֻׁלּוּם יָדָם וּבְנֵי עַמּוֹן מְשֻׁמְעָתָם (ישעיה י"א): Ten nations are listed here, [yet] He gave to them only [the land] of Seven Nations. The three [whose lands were not given], Edom, Moav, and Ammon which are [referred to here as]: Keini, Knizi, and Kadmoni are destined to be possessed in the future, as it is said: "They will overpower Edom and Moav and the Ammonites will obey them."
24. What is true for the nation regarding inheriting the land through repairing our Midos, is true for the individual:
25. **Bamidbar 14,7:** טוֹבָה הָאֶרֶץ מֵאֲדָמָה מְאֹד מְאֹד "The land that we traversed and scouted is an exceedingly good land"
26. **Pirkei Avos 4, 4:** הָיוּ שְׂפֵל רוּחַ מְאֹד מְאֹד be exceeding humble spirit
27. Humility is the root of all good character traits.
28. **Zohar 3, 159b:** translates "Eretz Canaan" as "a land that is given to the humble."
29. This is something we can pray for...
30. **Bereishis 1, 1-3:**
1. בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: When God began to create heaven and earth—
 - Hashem created a world with free -will choice. He created physical, earthly concepts which is the root of bad Midos, and heavenly aspects, which is the root of good Midos
 2. וְהָאָרֶץ הִיְתָה תְהוֹ וּבְהוֹ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water
 - The earthly realm constantly pulls a person only for evil.
 3. וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אֹר וַיְהִי-אֹר: God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.
 - Hashem's advice is to let the Divine light penetrate inside you, and then it will illuminate all the darkness of your soul.
 - "Darkness" is the source for all bad Midos, where a person finds himself in darkness and with constricted intellect. When a person only sees himself, that is where bad Midos come from.
 - When a person raises his vision to see the Divine light, he immediately sees the worthlessness of his bad Midos and starts to purify his Midos.

- If a Jew who finds himself in darkness says, “Master of the Universe, I request from you ‘Let there be light’ how long will I be in the darkness? I, alone, am not capable to escape from it!” Then “And there was light” - Hashem assists him and illuminates his life!
- When a Jew makes a request for something physical, they judge him if he is worthy to have his request granted. But when a Jew makes a request for something spiritual, there can be no prosecution against it.

The Month of Cheshvan - חשוון :

1. Cheshvan, or Marcheshvan, is the only month which does not have any Yom Tov or any special day within it. The contrast to Tishrei is very striking; Tishrei is full of Yomim Tovim.
2. **Rav Hirsch:** Marcheshvan has no other message for us except that after a month of such an abundance of special days, we should start out on the everyday path of Jewish life. However, it is the routine of everyday life which reflects our true existence, preceding and following those festivities from which they receive their value and significance. (Collected Writings of Rav Hirsch Vol. 2 p.181)
3. ***Cheshvan is a month which represents ordinary, daily life. During Cheshvan we see how well we did during Tishrei.*** Tishrei is the month of inspiration, and Cheshvan is the month of application. Life is about serving Hashem well in one’s ordinary daily life.
4. pg. 154: The purpose of Hashem’s sanctuary lies not in your visitation, not in the festivals celebrated within its walls. The Godly aim of the sanctuary lies not in what you bring to it, but in what you carry away from it into life. The strength of the sanctuary lies in the influence it exerts on your daily life outside its confluence. The sanctuary’s ultimate purpose is to inspire our entire lives to serve Hashem.
5. Pg. 159: The root of ‘Cheshvan’ is ‘chashu,’ ches-shin-vav. חשו. The syllable chashu itself indicates silence and quiet. This is the characteristic of the month of Cheshvan which follows directly the festive celebrations of the month of Tishrei. Cheshvan, in contrast to Tishrei, gives an impression of stillness and entrance into quiet, private life. A Jew has to serve Hashem well in his quiet, private life
6. This is why there are no special days in Cheshvan. Cheshvan is supposed to reflect ordinary, daily avodas Hashem in one’s “quiet, private life.”
7. There should have been a festival to inaugurate the First Temple, which Shlomo Hamelech (King Solomon) completed during Cheshvan after seven years of building. However, G-d did not command its inauguration until the following Tishrei some twelve months later. But Cheshvan will eventually lose its bitterness, because it is in the month of Cheshvan that the third, and final, Beis HaMikdash(Temple) will be inaugurated.
8. **Sign:** Akrav (Scorpion) – because the earth is thirsty for water
9. **Other Names:** Mar Cheshvan, Bul, Hachodesh HaShmini
10. **Significance:** Cheshvan is referred to in the Tanach as *Yerach Bul* (Kings I, Chapter 6:38). Bul refers to the idea that during this month the grass withers (*baleh*) and feed is mixed (*bolelin*) in the house for the animals (Rashi). Others think it may come from the word yevul (produce) for ***during this month plowing and planting begin in Israel.*** Still others see a reference to *Mabul*, flood, since according to the Midrash more rain falls in this month since it marks the beginning of the great Flood during the time of Noach.
11. **יִשְׂרָאֵל + גִּחֹן + בְּרֵאשִׁית = בּוֹל** The Torah begins with the letter “Beis”; the Middle letter is “Vav”; the last letter is “Lamed.” This suggests consistency in Torah from beginning to end.
12. Gematriya of **חשוון** with it’s “Collel” of 1 = 365. How you act in Cheshvan is a sign for the entire year.