

## תולדות בספר בראשית

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*Sefer Bereishis* is the foundation of the entire בריאה. The first two *parshiyos*, of course, deal with the אבות, the foundations of Klal Yisroel. Starting with פרשת לך לך, we begin the אבות – the foundations of Klal Yisroel. The foundation of the world, both in its creation and of Klal Yisroel, comes in *Sefer Bereishis*. The second half of *Sefer Bereishis* is the beginning of תורה אלפים, defined by the Avos-אברהם, יצחק, and יעקב, and the מעשה אבות סימן לבנים that create the genetic makeup which defines the entire history of Klal Yisroel. *Sefer Bereishis* is very much the *Sefer HaAvos*.

I thought of the גמרא ריש מס' בבא קמא which states, in a different context, "אבות מכלל דאיכא תולדות". If the אבות נזיקין ד' are called *avos* then there must be *toldos*. I wondered that the idea of ספר האבות also implies the *toldos*, which of course is Klal Yisroel. I noticed that the word "תולדות" itself appears with uncanny frequency throughout *Sefer Bereishis*. Then, going a little further, I saw that the word in that specific conjugation ("תולדות") actually appears only two other times in תנ"ך after *Sefer Bereishis*. One is in *Parshas Bamidbar*, "אלה תולדות אהרן ומשה...", when it lists the sons of Aharon. From there Chazal learn an important *limmud*- "כל המלמד בן חבירו תורה כאילו ילדו". The other place "תולדות" appears outside *Sefer Bereishis* is at the end of *Sefer Rus* when it is מייחס, through Rus, Dovid HaMelech back to Yehuda- "אלה תולדות פרץ", to show the lineage of בית דוד as coming through Yehuda.

To focus now on the "תולדות" of *Sefer Bereishis*, it seemed to me another idea which might give us a window into a new way to look at this *sefer*. That is to divide the entire *sefer* based on the תולדות. Each time the Torah says the word "תולדות", it is introducing a new chapter, as it were, in the development of the world and of Klal Yisroel. The words "אלה תולדות" divide different sections of *Sefer Bereishis*.

Let us go through an overview of *Sefer Bereishis* with this perspective:

The first *parsha* of the Torah is the שבת ימי בראשית with שבת. That is not תולדות, that is the Ribono Shel Olam individually and unilaterally being בורא שמים וארץ. The second *parsha* is "אלה תולדות השמים והארץ", which includes the creation of חוה, the placement of אדם in עדן, the חטא of the הדעת, the חטא of קין killing אנוש, the birth of זרה, and the advent of עבודה זרה. The next *parsha*, third in *Parshas Bereishis*, is "זוה" ספר תולדות אדם which leads us through the עשרה דורות מאדם עד נח. *Parshas Bereishis*, then, is broken into three parts. First, the Ribono Shel Olam creating the world; second, the חטאים of אדם, קין, אנוש and זרה; and third, the ten generations of אדם through נח as תולדות אדם.

This week's *parsha*, *Parshas Noach*, begins "אלה תולדות נח" which includes the מבול and its immediate aftermath and ends with מיתת נח. After that begins the second *parsha* of "תולדות" of *Parshas Noach*, which is "אלה תולדות בני נח". This is שם חם ויפת and the description of the שבעים אומות, how the world develops into "יצב גבולות עמים למספר בני ישראל", which includes the דור הפלגה. The third section of "תולדות" in *Parshas Noach* is "אלה תולדות שם" which essentially goes through the ten דורות from נח through אברהם. Just as in *Parshas Bereishis* we have three sections; the same pattern emerges in *Parshas Noach* as well.

For now, we shall skip the next "תולדות" found at the end of *Parshas Noach*, but we will come back to it soon.

Envision, as it were, that there was an "אלה תולדות אברהם". There is none, but if there would be, then the next three *parshiyos* (לך לך, וירא, and חיי שרה) would be the עשרה נסיונות and life of Avraham. Additionally, it would end with מיתת אברהם. Following מיתת אברהם, the end of *Parshas Chayei Soroh* is "אלה תולדות" "ואלה תולדות יצחק בן אברהם אברהם הוליד את יצחק". The three *parshiyos* לך לך, ישמעאלי,

and marrying off Yitzchok to Rivkah. and וירא, and מיתת שרה, עקידה, ארץ כנען to לך לך of the לך לך, and "toldos Avraham" of חיי שרה, and

After Avraham, we have two sets of "תולדות" – the "תולדות" of Yishmael (which is very little, just a few *pesukim*) and the "תולדות" of Yitzchok. "תולדות יצחק" would cover, again, three *parshiyos* – ויצא, תולדות, and יצחק. This would encompass וישלח. This would encompass יעקב ועשו as well as Yaakov receiving the בכורה; Yaakov going to Har Hamoriya; Yaakov running away to Lavan, then marrying Rochel and Leah, and having eleven of the שבטים; having to engage with Lavan; returning to the confrontation with Esav and שר של עשו; מעשה שכם; then מיתת רבקה; then מיתת רחל/לידת בנימין which completes Klal Yisroel. Finally, מיתת יצחק ends "תולדות יצחק". Following that, we have "אלה תולדות עשו", which interestingly enough is mentioned twice (הערה), and finally in "וישב – וישב – ואלה תולדות יעקב". Just like after מיתת אברהם we have Yishmael and Yitzchok, so too after מיתת יצחק we have Esav and Yaakov. "אלה תולדות יעקב יוסף" closes with מיתת יוסף which is how the *sefer* ends. This is how I am suggesting to break-up and view the entire *Sefer Bereishis*.

Of course, the glaring question on this presentation is that there is no "אלה תולדות אברהם", which is an astonishing omission. Now, there is one "תולדות" which I skipped and it is found at the end of "תולדות שם". At the end of this week's *parsha* we find "וואלה תולדות תרח" and the *parsha* ends with his passing. It sounds like Terach has his own "תולדות", yet we are "missing" a תולדות אברהם. Why do we have a "תולדות תרח"? Terach clearly plays a role in the background of Klal Yisroel because not only are the *Avos* מתייחס to Terach, but all the *Imahos* are as well. In the ברית בין הבתרים, the Ribono Shel Olam says, "וואתה תבא אל-אבתך בשלום". It is a central enough idea that Terach did *teshuva* for it to appear in the ברית בין הבתרים.

Still, we have no "אלה תולדות אברהם" which is quite puzzling. Avraham Avinu is the founder of Klal Yisroel and the rebirth of the בריאה. He is the המילה אב, separating *Yidden* from the העולם [צא] אומות העולם. At the same time, he retains a *kesher* with them, as his name אברהם stands for "אב המון גוים נתתיך" – "ונברכו בך כל משפחות האדמה". In fact, Avraham is the source for much of the world subscribing to monotheism. If Avraham is such a central figure, it is astounding why there is no "אלה תולדות אברהם".

It occurred to me, a minor detail, that at the point which we would have "אלה תולדות אברהם", his name was still "אברם" and we would really want it to be "אלה תולדות אברהם" with the "ה". That is a very micro-*teretz* to what seems to be a much more basic and global question.

Rather than abandoning my theory, I would like to be מציע that there is in fact a "תולדות אברהם". The first "אלה תולדות" in the Torah is "וואלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם", which are the אותיות of אברהם. Interestingly, the "ה" is smaller because it is "וואלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם" both with, and without the "ה". Of both אברם and אברהם. Why is Avraham all the way at the beginning of "אלה תולדות", whereas everyone else is more or less in the סדר of where they appear chronologically? The answer is directly because Avraham Avinu is the התחלה of the world anew. After חטא אדם הראשון and ten דורות of humanity not restoring itself to its potential. Then there was the מבול and *churban* of the world, and again humanity fails to achieve its תכלית. Then, the Ribono Shel Olam starts anew with Avraham Avinu. Avraham Avinu is the inception of a new world. This is the "וואלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם". Like in the first world of תוהו אלפים there was עשרה מאמרות of Avraham. In this new world of תורה, אלפים תורה, נברא העולם, בראשית בשביל ישראל, it is with נסיונות of Avraham.

On one level, "אלה תולדות השמים והארץ בהבראם" is the destruction of humanity – the חטא of אדם, of קין, of עבודה זרה (of אנוש), but *light* in that *parsha* is the *tikkun* of Avraham who will be the התחלה which will restart the בריאה to achieve the תכלית of שכונה.