

Reflections of Redemption

Essays on the Weekly Torah Reading and Moshiach,
Based on the talks of the
Lubavitcher Rebbe,
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

Reprinted for Parshat Pinchas, 5775
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IN LOVING MEMORY OF
 Horav **Schneur Zalman Halevi** עי"ה
 ben Horav **Yitzchok Elchonon Halevi** הי"ד
Shagalov
 Passed away on 21 Tamuz, 5766

Reb **Dovid Asniel** ben Reb **Eliyahu** עי"ה
Ekman
 Passed away on 5 Sivan - Erev Shavuot, 5765

Mrs. **Devora Rivka** bas Reb **Yosef Eliezer** עי"ה
Marenburg
 Passed away on the second day
 of Rosh Chodesh Adar, 5766

Reb **Yitzchok Moshe** (Ian)
 ben Reb **Dovid Asniel** עי"ה
Ekman (Santiago, Chile)
 Passed away on the 24th day of Shevat, 5769
 ה. נ. צ. ג. ה.

AND IN HONOR OF
 Mrs. **Esther Shaindel** bas **Fraidel Chedva** שתח"ל
Shagalov

DEDICATED BY
 Rabbi & Mrs. **Yosef Y.** and **Gittel Rochel** שיחי
Shagalov

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by
Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

Pinchas

OUR PORTION, OUR LOT, OUR HERITAGE

The mitzvah of inheritance is listed last in Maimonides's book of commandments. This indicates that the laws of inheritance complete the laws of the Torah. The laws of inheritance will only be fully applicable in the times of Moshiach, which completes the purpose of giving the Torah. There are three methods of dividing the land – by tribal size, by lot, by inheritance. Dividing by tribal size resembles a sale, where there is a rational basis for the exchange; assigning land by lot resembles a gift, where the apparently random selection reveals a deeper, non-rational relationship; dividing by inheritance reveals unity of being, a oneness between the generations. These three methods correspond to three parts of the morning Ashreinu prayer and the three stages of Jewish history.

This week's Torah reading contains the laws of inheritance. Maimonides, in his list of the six hundred thirteen commandments, places this as the last positive mitzvah. This parallels a reference to the inheritance which occurs in the last Mishneh in the last of the six Orders. (Uktsin 3:12 begins: "Rabbi Joshua ben Levi said, "The Holy One, blessed be He, will at a future time cause all the righteous to inherit three hundred and ten worlds [and he quotes Proverbs 8:21].") The commentators explain that the six Orders of the Mishnayos end this way because that Mishneh speaks about the ultimate reward for learning Torah and observing mitzvos. Similarly, Maimonides concludes the listing of the six hundred thirteen commandments with the mitzvah of inheritance because completion, or perfection, of the mitzvos is connected with inheritance, as will be explained.

In general, something comes last because it completes and

culminates all that comes before. Just as the first object in a series comes first because it is the most fundamental element, the foundation and source for all that follows, so that which comes last concludes and perfects all that came before. In our case, the first positive mitzvah is to know that G-d exists. This is the source for all other mitzvos and the most important principle. By the same token, the law of inheritance comes last because with the observance of that mitzvah, Torah – and thus Creation – is complete. The mitzvah of inheritance is the final fulfillment of the Torah's purpose.

Now, we know that Revelation occurred for the sake of Redemption: G-d gave the Torah, so that the Jewish people, through their Torah-study and mitzvah-observance, could bring Moshiach. With and through Moshiach comes universal recognition of G-dliness. Thus, if there is one mitzvah that culminates and concludes the entire order and process, that mitzvah must obviously have a connection to Moshiach and Redemption.

On the simplest level, the law of inheritance comes last because it is the last stage of Redemption. The final verification of Moshiach is gathering in the exiles. Moshiach's conclusive act will be to bring the Jewish people back to Israel. (After that, the rest of the world will automatically recognize G-d's sovereignty, and G-dliness will fill the world as the waters cover the ocean bed.) Obviously, the people cannot take possession of their land – they cannot inherit it – until they once again dwell on and occupy it. When the Jewish people return to the land of Israel, only then will the law of inheritance become finally and fully operative. Since bringing the Jewish people back to the land of Israel is the last thing Moshiach must do, the law of inheritance will be the last mitzvah to be fully and properly observed.

However, the connection between inheritance and Moshiach goes deeper: Moshiach is the culmination of Jewish history. Inheritance

is the culmination of Jewish law. Moshiach's ultimate purpose is to facilitate and enforce Jewish law. Inheritance, the last law, cannot be truly implemented until the pre-conditions – associated with Moshiach – have been truly met. Only after Moshiach successfully brings the Redemption, will the Jewish people inherit the land.

Now, the laws of inheritance were instituted in conjunction with the division of the land. During the discussion of how the Jewish people are to divide the land of Israel, a problem arose. Z'lafchad, from the tribe of Menashe, had died without sons. His daughters came to Moses and asked, "Why should our father's name be removed from his family because he did not have a son? Give us a portion of land along with our father's brothers." In response, G-d told Moses to instruct the Jewish people concerning the laws of inheritance.

Ultimately, the Jewish people would live in the land of Israel, where all the mitzvos could be observed fully and completely. The land itself had to be divided among the tribes and their families. As a natural consequence, the Torah had to establish the laws of inheritance.

But inheritance was only one of three ways by which land was acquired. Based on the description of the division and the response to the daughters of Z'lafchad, we learn that three methods determined possession: inheritance, the size of the tribe or family and the drawing of lots. On the simplest or lowest level, there was a logical division to the land: the larger the tribe, the greater the area it received. There was also a division that went beyond logic and depended on a more fundamental relationship: the portions were chosen by lot, indicating a basic connection between that part of the land and that particular family. This connection had nothing to do with size or other rational considerations. It was an internal connection that could only be revealed in a non-rational, apparently random manner.

However, both of these methods involved transferring the property from one owner to another. In this, they resemble a sale and a gift, respectively. That is, a sale occurs when the buyer pays the price for the item. Here, there is a logical exchange of value, initiated by the buyer's efforts. This corresponds to the division according to the size of the population. We can rationally evaluate the worth of the exchange.

A gift is apparently arbitrary, given without a logical reason. The giver simply has a desire to bestow something on another person. A gift thus depends on the will of the giver. This corresponds to choosing a portion by lot: the apparent randomness of the selection indicates a deeper, more fundamental relationship than logic allows.

Still, in both cases, there is a transmission, either from seller to buyer or from giver to receiver. Whoever initiates the exchange, there are two separate beings involved; whatever the nature of the connection, each participant stands apart from the other. The third method, that of inheritance, is different. Here, the inheritor stands in place of, and thus is unified with, the owner. In order for an heir to take possession, no transfer is necessary. Rather, succession is automatic and inherent, because the heir simply manifests the essence, the true nature of the one from whom he inherits. Inheritance indicates a unity of being, a oneness between the generations.

Interestingly, this distinction is recognized in the morning prayer service. In reference to the Torah and the relationship of the Jewish people with G-d, the following is recited: "How good is our portion, how pleasant our lot, and how beautiful our heritage." The first phrase, "how good is our portion," corresponds to the logical division of the land of Israel; our "portion" we receive according to our efforts, the work we put into Torah and mitzvos. The second

phrase, "how pleasant our lot," refers to the deeper relationship. We cannot earn "our lot" through our labors; G-d apportions it to us simply because He chooses to do so. Distribution by lot is only apparently random; lots are actually assigned according to G-d's Will.

The last phrase, "how beautiful our heritage," indicates that the Jewish people are united with the essence of G-d. As the *Zohar* expresses it, Israel and the Holy One, blessed be He, are entirely one entity. Moshiach makes this third level manifest.

These three concepts are connected with the three general periods of Jewish history. The first stage, before the giving of the Torah, corresponds to division by logic, "how good is our portion." The holiness and relationship with G-d came as a result of the personal efforts of the Patriarchs and their descendants. The second stage, beginning with the giving of the Torah, corresponds to G-d's choosing the Jewish people, simply as a matter of the Divine Will. "How pleasant our lot."

The third stage will occur with the complete fulfillment of the Torah and mitzvos. Then, "how beautiful our heritage." The third stage is the period of Moshiach and Redemption, when we will truly inherit the land, and the unity of the Jewish people with the Essence of G-d will be truly revealed.

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 28, pp. 174-181)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR FATHER
Horav Hachossid Reb Meshulam Dov
 ben Reb **Yaakov Yoel** ע"ה **Weiss**
 Passed away on 25 Tamuz, 5774
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