

תפארת ישראל The Splendor of Israel Chapter 17

Introduction

This powerful discourse by the Maharal of Prague (Rabbi Yehuda Loew, c. 1520–1609), explores the foundational question: why was the Torah not given to the Avos (the Patriarchs) and only to the nation of Israel as a collective? The Maharal, famed for his deeply structured logic and metaphysical clarity, was the chief rabbi of Prague and one of the most influential Jewish thinkers of the 16th century. He viewed Torah as the blueprint of creation and offered a philosophical framework for understanding the timing and audience of Matan Torah (the giving of the Torah). This discourse offers a masterclass in Jewish metaphysics, divine order, and the concept of Israel as the true vessel for divine truth.

הַסְבָּה שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה לֹא נִתְּנָה לָאָבוֹת The reason why the Torah was not given to the Patriarchs	
The question that should be asked is: why was the Torah not given in its entirety at the beginning of the world, when He created and arranged the creations—since the Torah is the order of the creations?	הַשְׁאֵלָה אֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ לִשְׁאל, לָמָה לֹא נִתְּנָה הַתּוֹרָה בִּכְלָלָה בִּתְחָלַת הָעוֹלָם, כַּאֲשֶׁר בָּרָא וְסִדֵּר הַנִּבְרָאִים,
For nothing that is an order is by coincidence, and therefore one cannot say in this case that it happened by chance.	אַחַר שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה הִיא סֵדֶר הַנְּבְרָאִים. וְאֵין דָּבָר שֶׁהוּא סֵדֶר הוּא בְּמִקְרָה, וּלְכָךְ אֵין לוֹמֵר בָּזֶה כִּי כָּךְ מִקְרָה קָרָה.
And the answer to this is not distant from us at all.	ָרְהַתְּשׁוּבָה עַל זֶה אֵינָה רְחוֹקָה מִמֶּנוּ כְּלָל.
Since it has already been explained in previous chapters that this Torah is not fitting for any except Israel.	אַחַר שֶׁהִתְבָּאֵר בַּפְּרָקִים הַקּוֹדְמִים כִּי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת בִּלְתִּי מוּכָנִים אֵלֶיהָ כִּי אָם יִשְׂרָאֵל.
And if so, the question is removed—why was the Torah not given at the beginning of the world, when Israel did not yet exist.	וְאִם־כֵּן הוּסַר הַשְׁאֵלָה לָמָה לֹא נָתַן הַתּוֹרָה בִּתְחִלַת הָעוֹלָם כַּאֲשֶׁר עֲדַיִן לֹא הָיוּ עַם יִשְׂרָאֵל.
And if you say the question is: let Israel have existed at the beginning of the world—the people who are fit to receive the Torah—and let the Torah be given to them.	וְאָם אַתָּה אוֹמֵר, הַשְּׁאֵלָה הִיא שֶׁיּהְיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּּתְחָלַת הָעוֹלָם – הָעָם אֲשֶׁר רָאוּיִים לְקַבֵּל הַתּוֹרָה – וְתִנָּתֵן לָהֶם הַתּוֹרָה
This too is not a question at all.	גַם דָּבָר זָה אֵינוֹ שְׁאֵלָה כְּלָל.
For the Patriarchs, who are the forefathers of the nation, and likewise Israel themselves, are not fit to have been created at the beginning of creation.	כִּי הָאָבוֹת, שֶׁהֵם אֲבוֹת הָאֵפָּה, וְכֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַצְמָם, אֵין רָאוּי שֶׁיִהְיוּ נִבְרָאִים בִּתְחַלַת הַבְּרִיאָה.

Because Israel, in and of themselves, are not suited to be created at the beginning.	פָּי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִצַד עַצְמָם אֵין רָאוּי בְּרִיאָתָם בַּהַתְחָלָה.
And this was explained above: that Israel are only fit to be created at the end, after all the nations.	וְדָבָר זֶה נִתְבָּאֵר לְמַעְלָה כִּי אֵין רָאוּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל רַק הַבְּרִיאָה בַּסוֹף, אַחַר כָּל הָאָמוֹת.
And this follows the nature of creation.	ָוְדָבָר זֶה נִמְשָׁךְ אֶל טֶבַע הַבְּרִיאָה.
For man, who is the choicest of the lower beings and for whose sake everything was created, was created last.	כִּי הָאָדָם שֶׁהוּא מִבְחַר הַמִּינִים הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים, וּבִשְׁבִילוֹ הַכֹּל נִבְרָא, הוּא נִבְרָא בָּאַחֲרוֹנָה.
And you will not find any nation in the world that was created after Israel—rather, all of them preceded them.	וְלֹא תִּמְצָא שׁוּם אֲמָה בָּעוֹלָם שֶׁנִּבְרֵאת אַחַר יִשְׂרָאֵל, רַק כַּלָּם קוֹדְמִים לָהֶם.
For even Edom and Ishmael, and likewise Ammon and Moav, were great nations before Israel became a nation.	שֶׁאַף אֱדוֹם וְיִשְׁמָעֵאל, וְכֵן עַמוֹן וּמוֹאָב, הָיוּ אֲמוֹת גְדוֹלוֹת קֹדָם שֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַם.
As if the nature of creation demanded this thing.	פָּאִלּוּ טֶבַע הַבְּּרִיאָה חִיֵּב דָּבָר זֶה.
For in something that is the completion of all, it is fitting that in it everything is completed.	פִּי בְּדָבָר שֶׁהוּא שְׁלֵמוּת הַכּּל, רָאוּי שֶׁבּוֹ יֵשְׁלַם הַכּּל.
And just as man is the completion of all the acts of Creation, and in him all the acts of Creation are completed,	וּכְמוֹ הָאָדָם שֶׁהוּא שְׁלֵמוּת כָּל מַצְשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, וּבּוֹ נִשְׁלַם כָּל מַצְשֶׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית.
So too Israel were the completion of the whole world; in them, everything is completed.	ָבָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיוּ שְׁלֵמוּת כָּל הָעוֹלָם, בָּהֶם יֵשְׁלַם הַכּּל,
And this is what is said (Yevamos 60a): "You are called Adam, and the deniers of God are not called Adam."	וְזֶה אֶמְרֶם (יְבָמוֹת ס, א): 'אַתֶּם קְרוּיִם אָדָם, וְאֵין מַכְחִישֵׁי ה' קְרוּיִם אָדָם'.
And this is seen in Israel, since the concept of "man" (adam) belongs to Israel in their creation—	וְזֶה נִרְאֶה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, אַחַר שֶׁעִנְיַן הָאָדָם יֵשׁ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בָּרָרִיאָתָם,
for behold, they were created at the end—if so, they are the "man," and not the deniers of God.	שֶׁהָרֵי הֵם נִכְּרָאוּ בָּאַחֲרוֹנָה, אִם־כֵּן הֵם הָיוּ הָאָדָם, 'וְלֹא מַכְחִישֵׁי ה'.
And this is not the place [to elaborate], since we have already explained this above as well.	וְאֵין כָּאן מְקוֹמוֹ, כִּי כְּבָר בַּאַרְנוּ זֶה לְמַעְלָה גַּם־כֵּן.
In the end, there is no question why Israel was not created at the beginning of the world—everything follows the proper order.	סוֹף סוֹף אֵין כָּאן שְׁאֵלָה לָמָּה לֹא נִבְרָאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בִּתְחָלֵת בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַכּל הוּא כַּסֵדֶר הָרָאוּי

But this is a [valid] question: since the Torah is fitting for the seed of Avraham, why was the Torah not given to Avraham himself?	אֲבָל דָּבָר זֶה הוּא שְׁצֵלָה; אַחַר שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה הִיא רְאוּיָה אֶל זֶרע אַבְרָהָם, לָמָה לֹא נִתְנָה הַתּוֹרָה לְאַבְרָהָם עַצְמוֹ
And even more than this: since the mitzvah of milah was given to Avraham (Bereishis 17:11), and the prohibition of the sciatic nerve to Yaakov (Chullin 100b), why was the Torah not given to them in its entirety?	וְיוֹתֵר מָזֶּה, אַחַר שֶׁנִּתְנָה לְאַבְרָהָם מִצְוַת מִילָה (בְּרֵאשִׁית יז, יא), וְגִיד הַנָּשֶׁה לְיַעֲקֹב (חַלִּין ק, ב), לָמָּה לֹא נִתַּן לָהֶם הַתּוֹרָה בִּשְׁלֵמוּת.
And in the Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 30:9): "He declares His word to Yaakov, His statutes and His judgments" (Tehillim 147:19),	וּבַמִּדְרָשׁ (שְׁמוֹת רַבָּה לֹ, ט) "מַגִּיד דְּבָרָיו לְיַעֲקֹב (חַקָּיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו" וְגוֹ' (תְּהָלִים קמז, יט,
said Rabbi Abahu in the name of Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina: this is compared to a king who had a beautiful orchard, and he would plant in it all kinds of trees, and no person was permitted to enter it except he himself who guarded it.	אָמַר רַבִּי אַבָּהוּ אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסֵי בַּר חֲנִינָא: מָשֶׁל לְמֶלֶּהְ שָׁהָיָה לוֹ פַּרְדֵּס נָאָה, וְהָיָה נוֹטֵעַ כָּל מִינֵי אִילָנוֹת, וְלֹא הָיָה נִכְנָס [אָדָם] לְתוֹכוֹ, אֶלָּא הוּא שֶׁהָיָה מְשַׁמְּרוֹ.
Once his children matured, he said to them: My sons, this orchard I used to guard, and I did not permit any person to enter it—now you shall guard it just as I did.	מִשֶּׁעָמְדוּ בָּנָיו עַל פִּרְקָן, אָמַר לָהֶם: בָּנַי, הַפַּרְדֵּס הַזָּה אָנִי הָיִיתִי מְשַׁמְּרוֹ, וְלֹא הִנַּחְתִּי לְאָדָם לִכָּנֵס בּוֹ. עַכְשָׁיו אַתָּם תִּהְיוּ מְשַׁמְּרִים אוֹתוֹ, כְּדֶרֶךְ שֶׁאֲנִי הָיִיתִי מָשַׁמְרוֹ.
So too, said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Israel: Before I created the world, I created the Torah, as it is said (Mishlei 8:30), "And I was with Him as a craftsman (amon)."	כָּדְ אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ־בָּרוּדְ־הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל: עַד שֶׁלֹא בָּרָאתִי הָעוֹלָם בָּרָאתִי הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁנָּאֱמַר (מִשְׁלֵי ח, ל): ,''''ָאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אָמוֹן
What is "amon"? A craftsman (uman), as it is said (Bamidbar 11:12), "As the nurse (omen) carries the suckling."	מָה "אָמוֹן" – "אוּמָן", שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר (בְּמִדְבַּר יא, יב): ""כַּאֲשֶׁר יִשָּׂא הָאֹמֵן אֶת הַיֹּנֵק.
And I did not give it to any of the nations, only to Israel.	וָלֹא נְתַתִּיהָ לְאֶחָד מִן הָאֵמּוֹת, אֶלָּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל,
For once Israel stood at Mount Sinai and said (Shemos 19:8), "All that Hashem has spoken we will do," immediately it was given to them.	שֶׁבְּכֵיוָן שֶׁעָמְדוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל הַר סִינַי וְאָמְרוּ (שְׁמוֹת יט, ח): "כֹּל אֲשֶׁר דָּבֶּר ה' נַעֲשֶׂה", מִיָּד נִתְּנָה לָהֶם.
Thus, it is said: "He declares His word to Yaakov" and "He has not done so for any nation"—rather, to whom? To Yaakov, whom He chose from among all [those who worship the stars].	הָנֵי אוֹמֵר: "מַגִּיד דְּבָרָיו לְיַעֲקֹב" וְגוֹ' "לֹא עָשָׂה כֵן לְכָל גוֹי" וְגוֹ', [אֶלָּא] לְמִי – לְיַעֲקֹב, שֶׁבְּחָרוֹ מִכָּל ,[[הָעוֹבְדֵי כּוֹכָבִים
And He gave them only part: He gave Adam six commandments, Noach seven, Avraham eight, Yaakov nine—	וְלֹא נָתַן לָהֶם אֶלָּא מִקְצָת; נָתַן לְאָדָם שֵׁשׁ מִצְוֹת, לְנֹחַ הַשֶּׁבָע, לְאַבְרָהָם – שְׁמוֹנָה, לְיַצְקֹב – תִּשְׁעָה –
But to Israel, He gave everything.	אַבָל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל נָתַן הַכֹּל.

Rabbi Simon said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: This is compared to a king who had a prepared table before him.	אָמַר רַבִּי סִימוֹן בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: מָשֶׁל לְמֶלֶךּ שֶׁהָיָה לְפָנָיו שֶׁלְחָן עָרוּךִּ.
His servant entered, he gave him a portion; a second came in—he gave him an egg; a third—he gave him a thigh; and so with each and every one.	נְכְנַס עַבְדּוֹ, נָתַן לוֹ חֲתִיכָה. שֵׁנִי – נָתַן לוֹ בֵּיצָה. שְׁלִישִׁי – נָתַן לוֹ יָרֵךְ; וְכֵן לְכָל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד.
His son came in, he placed the entire table before him and said: To those I gave portion by portion, but to you—I gave everything into your possession.	נְכְנֵס בְּנוֹ, נָתַן כָּל הַשֶּׁלְחָן לְפָנָיו, אָמֵר אֵלָיו: לְאֵלוּ נָתַתִּי מָנָה מָנָה, אֲבָל אַתָּה - הַכֹּל נָתַתִּי בִּרְשׁוּתְדְּ.
So too the Holy One, blessed be He, did not give [the nations] anything but partial commandments.	בָּך הַקָּדוֹשׁ־בָּרוּךְ הוּא לֹא נָתַן לָהֶם רַק מִקְצָת מִצְוֹת.
And when Israel stood [at Sinai], He gave them the entire Torah, as it is said (Tehillim 147:19): "He did not do so for any nation, and His laws they do not know."	וּכְשֶׁעָמְדוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל נָתַן לָהֶם כָּל הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁנָּאֱמֵר (תְּהָלִים קמז, יט): "לֹא עָשָׂה כֵן לְכָל גּוֹי וּמִשְׁפָּטִים ."בַּל יְדָעוּם
Rabbi Elazar said: This is compared to a king who went out to war, and his legions were with him.	אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: מָשָׁל לְמֶלֶךְ שֶׁיָּצָא לַמִּלְחָמָה, וְהָיוּ הַלְּגִיוֹנוֹת עַמּוֹ.
He would slaughter an animal and divide [the meat] to each one so they would toil.	וְהָיָה שׁוֹחֵט בְּהֵמָה, וְהָיָה מְחַלֵּק לָהֶם לְכָל אֶחָד וְאָחָד בְּדֵי שֶׁיָּגַע.
His son came and said: What will you give me? He said to him: From what I have prepared for myself.	בָּא בְּנוֹ וְאָמֵר: מָה אַתָּה נוֹתֵן לִי. אָמַר לוֹ: מִמַּה שֶׁהִתְקַנְתִּי לְעַצְמִי:
And therefore, the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the idol-worshiping nations general commandments so they would toil in them,	וּלְפִיכָּךְ הַקָּדוֹש־בָּרוּדְּ־הוּא נָתַן לָאֻמּוֹת עַכּוּ"ם מִצְוֹת ,גְּלוּמוֹת, שֶׁיִּינְעוּ בָּהֶן
but He did not distinguish in them between the impure and the pure.	וְלֹא הִפְּרִישׁ בָּהֶן בֵּין טַמֵּאָה לְטָהָרָה.
Israel came, and He explained to them the commandments—each one with its punishment and its reward,	בָּאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּפֵרֵשׁ לָהֶם הַמִּצְוֹת כָּל אַחַת וְאַחַת ,עָנְשָׁה וּמַתֵּן שְׂכָרָה
as it is said (Shir HaShirim 1:2): "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth."	שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר (שִׁיר־הַשִּׁירִים א, ב): "יִשֶּׁקֵנִי מִנְשִׁיקוֹת "פִּיהוּ
Therefore it says: "His statutes and judgments to Israel" and so forth—until here.	לָכָדְ נֶאֱמַר: "חֻקָּיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו לְיִשְׂרָאֵל" וְגוֹ', עַד כָּאן.
The explanation is: Just as Hashem, blessed be He, necessitates existence, so too the Torah—its words necessitate and compel from Hashem, blessed be He, who arranged and decreed so.	בַּאוּרוֹ כִּי כְּמוֹ שֶׁהַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ מְחַיֵּב אֶת הַמְּצִיאוּת, כֵּן הַתּוֹרָה – דְּבָרֶיהָ מְחַיְּבִים וּמַכְרִיחִים מִן הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ, אֲשֶׁר סִדֵּר וְגָזַר כָּךְ

Therefore, no creature in the world could enter into it, only Hashem, blessed be He, who necessitates existence.	וּלְפִיכָךְ לֹא הָיָה נִכְנָס לְתוֹכוֹ שׁוּם בְּרִיאָה בָּעוֹלָם, רַק הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ אֲשֶׁר הוּא מְחַיֵּב הַמְּצִיאוּת.
And all created beings are, by themselves, merely possible [to exist], for they were only created to serve something else—but in themselves, they are contingent.	וְכָל הַנִּבְרָאִים הֵם אֶפְשָׁרִים מִצַּד עַצְמָם, כִּי לֹא נִבְרְאוּ כִּי אָם לְשַׁמֵשׁ זוּלָתָם, אֲבָל מִצַּד עַצְמָם אֶפְשָׁרִיים.
But it is not so with the Torah, which is arranged from Hashem, blessed be He, Himself.	ַןלֹא כָּךְ הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁהִיא מְסַדֶּרָת מִן הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַה בְּעַצְמוֹ
And likewise Israel—they are necessitated from the cause itself.	ָרְכֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵם מְחָיָבִים מִצַּד הָעִלָּה בְּעַצְמָה.
For every effect, even though it is contingent by itself, is necessitated from its cause, blessed be He.	כִּי כָּל עָלוּל אַף שֶׁהוּא אֶפְשָׁרִי מִצַּד עַצְמוֹ, הוּא מְחֵיָב מִצַּד עִלָּתוֹ יִתְבָּרַדְּ.
But all other created beings and deniers of God are not necessitated by the cause, because they were created to serve something else, and that is not something necessitated.	אֲבָל שְׁאָר הַנִּבְרָאִים וּמֵכְחִישֵׁי ה' אֵינָם מְחַיָּבִים מִצַּד הָעִלָּה, כִּי הֵם נִבְרְאוּ לְשַׁמֵּשׁ זוּלָתָם, וְאֵין זֶה דָּבָר שָׁהוּא מְחַיָּב.
And therefore it said that He would not allow anyone to enter there, because they are not connected to it.	וּלְפִיכָך אָמַר שָׁלֹא הָיָה מַנִּיחַ אֶחָד לְכָּנֵס לְשָׁם, כִּי אֵינָם שַׁיָּכִים לָזֶה.
Until Israel came, who are necessitated by the Cause, blessed is He, just like the Torah which is necessitated by the Cause, blessed is He.	עַד כִּי בָּאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר הֵם מְחֻיָּבִים מִצַּד הָעִלָּה יִתְבָּרַדְּ, כְּמוֹ הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא מְחַיֶּכֶת מִצַּד הָעִלָּה יִתְבָּרַדְּ
For Israel are called sons to the Omnipresent, as it is written (Devarim 14:1): "You are sons to Hashem your G-d."	כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִקְרָאוּ בָּנִים לַמָּקוֹם, כְּדִכְתִיב (דְּבָרִים י״ד, א): "בָּנִים אַתֶּם לַה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם".
For a son is not created to serve another; therefore Israel is judged as an effect that is necessitated by its Cause.	פִּי הַבֵּן אֵינוֹ נִבְרָא לְשַׁמֵּשׁ אֶת אַחֵר; וּלְכָךְ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל מִשְׁפַּט הָעָלוּל, שָׁהוּא מְחֻיָּב מְצֵּד הָעִלָּה.
But not so with the angels, whose name indicates that they are "mal'achim"—messengers, serving others.	ַןלֹא כֵן הַמַּלְאָכִים, אֲשֶׁר שְׁמָם יוֹרֶה עֲלֵיהֶם שֶׁהֵם מַלְאָכִים' שְׁלוּחִים מְשַׁמְּשִׁים לְזוּלָתָם'.
Therefore, the Torah is particularly fitting for Israel and not for others. And this matter is clarified.	וּלְכָךְ רְאוּיָה הַתּוֹרָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בִּפְרָט, וְלֹא לְזוּלְתָם. וְדָבָר זָה מְבֹאָר.
And Rabbi Simon said: This is compared to a king who has a prepared table before him, etc.	וְאָמֵר רַבִּי סִימוֹן: מָשֶׁל לְמֶלֶךְ שֶׁיֵשׁ לְפָנַיו שֶׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ יְכוּ'
The explanation is that even though He gave to the nations some mitzvos—because there is in them somewhat of the level of "man," according to their level He gave them some mitzvos.	בַּאוּר זֶה, כִּי אַף שֶׁנָּתַן לָאֲמוֹת מִקְצָת מִצְוֹת, בַּמָּה שָׁיֵשׁ בָּהֶם מַדְרַגַת הָאָדָם בְּמִקְצָת, וּכְפִּי מַדְרַגָּתָם נָתַן לָהֶם מִקְצָת מִצְוֹת.

But Israel, who are completely "man," not partially, He gave them everything, according to what was fitting.	אֲבָל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהָיוּ אָדָם בַּכֹּל, לֹא בְּמִקְצָת, נָתַן לָהֶם הַכֹּל כְּפִי הָרָאוּי.
And Rabbi Elazar added, that it is not appropriate to say that the distinction between Israel and the deniers of Hashem is that they [the nations] received some, and Israel received all—	ְהוֹסִיף רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר לוֹמַר, שֶׁאֵין רָאוּי לוֹמַר כִּי הַחָלוּק שָׁיֵשׁ בֵּין יִשְּׂרָאֵל לְמַכְחִישֵׁי ה' שֶׁלָּהֶם מִקְצָת, וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל הַכּּל
for if so, the difference would only be in the quantity of the mitzvos, and not in the quality of the mitzvos.	וּלְפִי זֶה לֹא יִהָיֶה הַחִלּוּף רַק בְּכַמּוּת הַמִּצְוֹת, וְלֹא בְּאֵיכוּת הַמִּצְוֹת.
But the difference is also in the quality of the mitzvos.	רַק בְּאֵיכוּת הַמִּצְוֹת גַּם־בֵּן הַחָלוּף.
For to the deniers of Hashem, He gave only general mitzvos, without distinguishing between impure and pure.	פִּי לְמַכְחִישֵׁי ה' לֹא נָתַן לָהֶם הַמִּצְוֹת רַק גְּלוּמוֹת, וְלֹא הָפְרִישׁ בֵּין טַמֵּאָה לְטָהָרָה.
And this indicates that the Torah is not suitable for them in the clarity of wisdom and understanding at all.	וְזֶה יוֹרֶה עַל שֶׁאֵין רָאוּי לָהֶם הַתּוֹרָה בְּבֵרוּר הַחָּכְמָה וְהַשֵּׂכָל לְגַמְרֵי.
And therefore, even though He gave them mitzvos, they were not given to them with the capacity to distinguish between thing and thing—which is the clarity of intellect in the Torah, that it distinguishes between one thing and another.	וּלְכָדְּ אַף אָם נָתַן לָהֶם מִצְוֹת, לֹא הָיוּ הַמִּצְוֹת לָהֶם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין דָּבָר לְדָבָר, שֶׁזֶהוּ בֵּרוּר הַשֵּׂכֶל שֶׁבַּתּוֹרָה בַּאֲשֶׁר מַבְדִּיל בֵּין דָּבָר לְזָבָר.
And therefore it is compared to a king who gave his servants meat from an animal—which is coarse and fatty—but to his son, he gave the foods appropriate for a king.	וּלְכָּדְּ מְדַמֶּה לְמֶלֶדְּ שֶׁנָּתַן לַעֲבָדָיו לֶאֱכֹל מָן הַבְּהֵמֶה, שָׁהוּא בָּשָׂר גַּס וְעָב, וְלִבְנוֹ נָתַן מִמַּאֲכָלִים הַשַּׁיָּכִים לַמֶּלֶךְ
So too, the Torah—clear intellect and the distinction between thing and thing—was not appropriate for the nations, but only in a general and superficial sense.	ְרֵבֵן לֹא הָיָה רָאוּי לָאֻמּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה, הַשֵּׂכֶל הַבָּרוּר, וְהוּא הַהֶבְדֵּל בֵּין דָּבָר לְדָבָר, רַק בְּעִנְיָן גַּס לְבַד.
But to Israel, He gave the true paths of Hashem in clarity.	אַבָל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל נָתַן אָמָתַת דַּרְכֵי ה' בְּבֵרוּר.
And this is hinted in the verse (Tehillim 147:19): "He tells His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His judgments to Israel."	וְזֶה נְרְמָז בַּכָּתוּב (תְּהָלִים קמז, יט): "מַגִּיד דְּבָרָיו "לְיַעֲקֹב חֻקָּיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו לְיִשְׂרָאֵל.
Explanation: "He tells all His words to Yaakov, His statutes and His judgments with complete clarity to Israel."	פַּרוּשׁ: "מַגִּיד כָּל דְּבָרָיו לְיַעֲקֹב, חֻקָּיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו "בַּבֵּרוּר הַגָּמוּר לְיִשְׂרָאֵל
"He did not do so for any nation"—that He did not tell them the Torah in completeness.	לא עַשָּׂה כֵן לְכָל גּוֹי" – שֶׁלֹא הָגִּיד לָהֶם הַתּוֹרָה" בִּשְׁלֵמוּת
For regarding mitzvos, "and His judgments they have not known"—that is, in the clarity of the matter which He commanded to Israel.	כִּי מִצְוֹת "וּמִשְׁפָּטִים בַּל יְדָעוּם", הַיְינוּ בְּבֵרוּר הַדָּבָר מה שָׁצִוָּה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל.

And in this discourse it has been clarified to you: that even though He gave to Avraham circumcision, and to Yaakov the prohibition of the sciatic nerve,	וּבַמַּאֲמָר הַזֶּה הִתְּבָּאֵר לְךָּ, כִּי אַף נָתַן לְאַבְּרָהָם הַמִּילָה, וּלְיַעֲקֹב גִּיד הַנָּשֶׁה,
according to Rabbi Yehudah in Perek Gid HaNasheh (Chullin 100b), this was given to them because that particular mitzvah was uniquely relevant to them,	לְדַעַת רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בְּפֶּרֶק גִּיד הַנָּשֶׁה (חֻלִּין ק, ב), דָּבָר זָה נָתַן לָהֶם מִצַּד אֲשֶׁר הַמִּצְוָה הַהִּיא שַׁיָּךְ לָהֶם בִּפְּרָט
as explained earlier in this work (Perek 20).	ָרָמְל שֶׁהָתְבָּאֵר בְּסָמוּךְ דָּבָר זֶה (בֶּּרֶק כ).
And therefore He gave them specifically individual mitzvos—namely, mitzvos which are particularly suited to them.	וּלְכָךְ נָתַן לָהֶם מִצְוֹת פְּרָטִיִּים דַּוְקָא, דְּהַיִינוּ בְּמִצְוָה שָׁהִיא שַׁיָּךְ לָהֶם בִּפְרָט.
But to Israel He gave the mitzvos because the Torah is inherently suited to them.	אֲבָל לְיִשְׂרָאֵל נָתַן הַמִּצְוֹת מִצַּד כִּי הַתּוֹרָה רְאוּיָה לָהֶם מָצַד עַצְמָה.
And this was when they went out from Egypt, for then the name "Israel" was upon them.	וְזָה הָיָה כַּאֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מִמָּצְרַיִם, שֶׁאָז שֵׁם 'יִשְׂרָאֵל' עֲלֵיהֶם
And this name remained with them without change for all eternity.	וָזֶה הַשֵּׁם נִשְׁאַר לָהֶם בְּלִי שִׁנּוּי לְעוֹלְמֵי עוֹלָמִים.
And therefore the Torah that is eternal and everlasting, which has no change at all, is fitting for them.	וּרְאוּיָה לָהֶם הַתּוֹרָה הַתְּמִידִית הַנִּצְחִית, אֲשֶׁר אֵין לָה שִׁנוּי כְּלָל.
And how could the eternal order—which has no change—be given to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov?	וְאֵיךְּ יִהְיֶה נָתָּן הַסֵּדֶר הַתְּמִידִי, אֲשֶׁר אֵין שִׁנּוּי לוֹ, לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיִעֲקֹב.
For inasmuch as they are individuals—and the individual is subject to change—	פִּי בַּמָּה שֶׁהֵם פְּרָטִיִּים, וְהַפְּרָט יֵשׁ לוֹ שִׁנּוּי.
for once Avraham dies—Avraham is no longer present; and so with Yitzchak and Yaakov—	כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר מֵת אַבְרָהָם – אֵין כָּאן אַבְרָהָם. וְכֵן יִצְחָק, וְכֵן יַצְקֹב,
therefore the ways of Hashem—which are unchangeable—are not fitting for them.	אֵין רָאוּי לָהֶם דַּרְכֵי ה' אֲשֶׁר אֵין שַׁיָּךְ שָׁנוּי בָּהֶם כְּלָל.
For the Torah—which is the order of Hashem, blessed be He, and is eternal—is only fitting for a recipient who also stands without change.	כִּי לֹא שַיָּךְ הַתּוֹרָה, שֶׁהִיא סֵדֶר הַשֵּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְּ אֲשֶׁר הוא תְּמִידִי, רַק אֶל הַמְקַבֵּל אֲשֶׁר עוֹמֵד בְּלִי שִׁנּוּי,
For the collective name remains always.	פִּי שֵׁם הַכְּלָלִי שָׁמוֹ נִשְׁאָר תָּמִיד.
And there is no national name that is a collective name for Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.	וְאֵין שֵׁם 'עָם' שֶׁהוּא עָם כְּלָלִי עַל אַבְרָהָם וְיִצְחָק וַיַעַקֹב.
Only when they went out from Egypt did they become a people.	רַק כַּאֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם אָז הָיוּ לְעָם.

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And for this reason, the Torah was not given until they were sixty myriads (600,000),	וּבִשְׁבִיל זֶה לֹא נִתְּנָה הַתּוֹרָה עַד שֶׁהָיוּ שִׁשִּׁים רְבּוֹא,
because the number sixty is a complete number, as explained at length in the work <i>Gevuros Hashem</i> .	כִּי מִפְנֵי כִּי מִסְפַּר שִׁשִּׁים הוּא מִסְפָּר שָׁלֵם, כְּמוֹ שָׁהִתְבָּאֵר בְּחִבּוּר גְּבוּרוֹת ה' בַּאֲרִיכוּת.
And in a part there is change—not in something that is not a part.	וּבְחֵלֶק יֵשׁ שִׁנּוּי, לֹא בְּדָבָר שֶׁאֵינוֹ חֵלֶק.
And also, it is explained in the work <i>Be'er HaGolah</i> , in several places, that the number sixty is a collective number.	וְגַם נִתְבָּאֵר בְּחָבּוּר בְּאֵר הַגּוֹלָה בְּכַמָּה מְקוֹמוֹת מִסְפַּר שִׁשִׁים, שֶׁהוּא מִסְפָּר כְּלָלִי.
And this matter is a clear proof and demonstration concluding the eternal nature of the Torah—that it will never be changed for us for all eternity.	וְדָבָר זֶה רְאָיָה וּמוֹפַת חוֹתֵךּ עַל נִצְחִיוּת הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁלֹּא הִשְׁתַּנֶּה אָצְלֵנוּ לְנֶצַח נְצָחִים.
For if the Torah were subject to change, why then was it not given to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov?	כִּי אָם הָיְתָה לַתּוֹרָה שָׁנּוּי, לָמָה לֹא נִתְּנָה לְאַבְרָהָם וִיצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב.
And you will not find sufficient reason or logic in this matter, other than that Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov are individuals,	וְאֵין מַסְפִּיק לְדָּ שׁוּם טַעַם וּסְבָּרָא בְּזֶה הָעִנְיָן, רַק כִּי מָפְנֵי שֶׁאַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב הֵם פְּרָטִיִּים,
and the Torah—which is eternal, immutable, and everlasting—was not given until there was a recipient that is unchanging altogether.	ָוְלֹא נִתְּנָה הַתּוֹרָה שָׁהִיא תְּמִידִית נִצְחִית בְּלִי שִׁנּוּי, רַק כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵשׁ מְקַבֵּל שֶׁהוּא בְּלִי שָׁנּוּי כְּלָל.
And this clear proof cannot be refuted—unless by those blind of heart, who have never seen the light of wisdom.	וְלֹא יָפֶּכְרוּ רְאָיָה בְּרוּרָה זֹאת אָם לֹא עִוְרֵי לֵב, וְלֹא רָאוּ מָאוֹר הַחָּכְמָה מֵעוֹלָם.
End of the chapter.	סְלִיק פָּרְקָא

NOTE Summary

The discourse begins by asking: if the Torah is the orderly system underlying all of creation, why was it not given at the beginning of time, and why was it not given to the Avos, who were righteous individuals? The Maharal argues that the Torah could not be given until the existence of Klal Yisrael as a full nation, because the Torah is not meant for individuals—it is a complete and eternal system that requires a complete and eternal collective to receive it.

He explains that everything in creation is structured with purpose. Just as man, the pinnacle of creation, was created last, so too Israel—who represent the completion of the world—were only formed as a nation at the end. The Torah was not withheld randomly; it awaited the right vessel. The Avos, though righteous, were individuals (פֿרטײם) and subject to mortality and change, while the nation of Israel, formed at Yetziyas Mitzrayim, received a collective name ("Israel") that remains eternally unchanged.

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Through Midrashic metaphors, the Maharal clarifies that Hashem gave individual mitzvos (e.g., milah to Avraham, gid hanasheh to Yaakov) only where they matched those individuals specifically. But the full Torah—with its detailed laws, its structure of reward and punishment, and its differentiated wisdom (e.g., tamei vs. tahor)—requires a collective that is metaphysically stable and permanent.

Angels and gentile nations are not suited to receive Torah, because they either exist to serve others (like malachim) or lack the internal structure and clarity necessary for divine intellect. Only Israel, whose existence is rooted in the "Cause Itself" (העילה יחברך), and who remain a constant nation through all generations, can house the unchanging, eternal system of Torah.

Ultimately, the fact that Torah was only given when Israel reached 600,000 souls—the complete number—underscores that Torah is meant only for a klal, never a private person. The eternal nature of Torah demands an eternal bearer, and that is Israel alone.

Practical Takeaway

Torah cannot be lived fully in isolation—it demands community, continuity, and collective identity. Our commitment to the Torah is not just a personal spiritual journey, but a national inheritance rooted in our unchanging essence as Klal Yisrael. To be worthy vessels of Torah, we must see ourselves not as fragmented individuals, but as part of an eternal people with an eternal mission.

Chassidic Story

Source: Sefer HaSichos 5704, p. 82

When the Frierdiker Rebbe (Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn) was arrested in Soviet Russia for spreading Torah, he told his interrogators: "You cannot touch my essence, for I am not an individual. I am part of the eternal people of Israel. Just as you cannot extinguish the nation, you cannot extinguish me."

This profound statement embodies the very message of the Maharal: Torah and Israel are inseparable, eternal, and indivisible. A single Jew, even under threat, draws strength not from his individuality but from being part of the unchangeable collective that is Klal Yisrael.

END NOTE