חסידות

From the Chassidic Courts

UJHELY · YISMACH MOSHE, LECH LECHA

Why Israel's survival became a law of nature

Yismach Moshe

Since Torah itself is the sustaining force of all existence, and existence is sustained only through Israel's bond with Torah, the survival of Israel became woven into the very fabric of nature itself — for everything in creation is driven to preserve its own existence and flee its nullification, and since Israel's nullification would mean Torah's nullification and thus the nullification of all being, nature itself now resists it. This is why the promise "I will make you into a great nation" is tied by the midrash to the giving of the Torah: only then did Israel's transformation into an enduring, ever-fruitful people become fixed as an unshakable law of nature, rather than a temporary change liable to revert. AI SUMMARY

"And I will make you into a great nation" (Bereishit 12:2) — at the giving of the Torah (Bamidbar Rabbah 11:2). And the above may be understood by first resolving the difficulty concerning the Ten Utterances (of Creation) — namely, that a change [wrought in nature] would not endure permanently. It seems to me that once the Torah was given to Israel, the change became [fixed as] nature itself.

For the Creator of the universe implanted in every thing the drive to run after its own continued existence and to flee from its own nullification. Now the Torah is the sustaining force of the world, as it is said (Yirmiyahu 33:25), "Were it not for My covenant [by day and night, I would not have established the laws of heaven and earth]."

And behold, if I were to turn this statement around to its true intent — that is, if, Heaven forfend, there were no Israel, there would be no Torah, and that would mean the nullification [of Torah] and the nullification of all existing things — then it follows that it is [now] in the very nature [of existence] to flee from this [possibility]. Understand this, for it is a wondrous resolution, with Heaven's help.

And this is what the midrash means by "And I will make you into a great nation." For the midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 39:11) explains: "From the time that I make you into a new creature, you will be fruitful and multiply." And lest you say that such a change would not endure, Scripture therefore says "at the giving of the Torah" — for then it became [fixed as] nature, as explained above. This is correct, with Heaven's help.

(And see what I have written on this matter in Parashat Balak, on the verses (Bamidbar 23:7) "From Aram…") And understand this.

Translation: translated by AI (anthropic/claude-sonnet-5)