

"Reuven, the first-born of Yisrael, the sons of Reuven (of) Chanoch the family of the Chanochi." (26:5)

Rashi explains the *Torah's* intent in emphasizing *Bnei Yisrael's* genealogy. The gentile nations might think that they would be able to dominate the Jewish mothers, just as the Egyptians dominated the Jews' lives. Hashem, therefore, placed His Name upon them in everlasting testimony to their pure lineage. This statement seems puzzling. Do the gentiles study *Torah* so that they can become versed in our genealogy? Even if they were to study *Torah*, would they believe, as we do, in the *Torah's* immutability?

Horav Chaim Elazary, z.l., explains that the *Torah* was given to *Klal Yisrael* to study and believe. Hashem did not intend to teach its profundities or truths to the gentiles. Indeed, the *Torah* has frequently stimulated anti-semitism throughout history. *Chazal* state that *Har Sinai* was the place from which "*sin'ah*," enmity toward *Yisrael* emanated. *Torah* will protect us only to the extent that it remains the source of our confidence and pride. Armed with this resource, we are enabled to confront the philosophical challenges that we face from external and even internal origins.

It is human nature to be affected by talk and innuendo. If the gentile nations slander our lineage, we may subconsciously begin to believe them. Such aspersions, can succeed in causing depression and disbelief among the uneducated and spiritually weak. Therefore, the *Torah* seeks to counteract this negative inference and to affirm our belief in Hashem by clearly stating our genealogy.

The notion that we are transformed by the beliefs of others is very real. If people say something often enough, we will slowly begin to accede to their chatter. Although we may express total disdain and vehemently deny their allegations, our subconscious minds will begin to raise questions. This fear of subconscious impression can only be counteracted by total immersion in *Torah*. As the source of our pride and the benchmark of our identity, the *Torah* will give us the tools to face the challenges we confront throughout life.