

# This Land is My Land

## A Breslov Perspective on the Holy Land

### Essay #7—Parshat Matot-Masei 5761

Early in the parshah we already find God's commandment to prepare to enter the Land. God told Moshe to gather his army and battle Midian, the immoral people who incited the Jews to sin (see *Numbers 25*). After this battle, Moshe was told, he would pass away, clearing the way for Joshua to lead the people into the Holy Land. Despite his knowledge of his impending death, Moshe did not hesitate and accomplished the mission—he knew the value of the Holy Land and its importance to the Jews.

Moshe also explains the connection between morality and conquering the enemies who obstruct entry to the Land. And so, we return to the salt mines to begin our essay. (Why “salt mines?” The Torah refers to “a covenant of salt” (*Leviticus 2:13*). The tzaddik is one who guards his covenant and therefore is called “salt” (see *Likutey Moharan I*, Lesson #23:2). Just as salt is used to temper food and make it palatable to the tongue, the tzaddik provides the means to temper our difficulties in order to attain our goals. The more we are willing to dig into the tzaddik's mines, to “unearth” and de-materialize ourselves, the more spiritual minerals we can mine from his bottomless mines and wells of teachings. So, “back to the salt mines.”)

There is holy speech. There is mundane speech. And there is unholy and improper speech. Rebbe Nachman taught:

“The value of the Holy Tongue is very great; with it, the world was created.”  
(*Likutey Moharan I*, Lesson #19:3)

The Rebbe explains the greatness of a holy tongue. He teaches that words of Torah and prayer, kindness and encouragement, are all considered “holy tongue,” even if spoken in a language other than Hebrew (which is known as the Holy Tongue).

There is improper speech: such as profanity, mockery of the pious, of the spiritual, slander, falsehood, etc., all of which are considered unholy, even if spoken in Hebrew. Finally, there is mundane speech, about one's daily needs, livelihood, household necessities, simple conversations, and so on.

Rebbe Nachman explains that perfection is found in holy speech, but only if one learns how to elevate his mundane speech into the realm of holiness. An example is if one speaks about his food, and intends to use the energy from eating that food to serve God. What would have been mundane speech is transformed into holy speech. The same applies to speaking about one's livelihood, sleep, etc. One who learns to channel his energies from the mundane into the realm of holiness, merits perfection, the Holy Tongue. For then, not only is his mundane speech transformed into holiness, but he has such control over speech that even evil speech, if it comes his way, can be elevated and transformed into holy speech!

However, if one is not careful with his mundane speech, then he has opened a path for it to become improper and evil speech, unholy speech. Whatever holy speech he has is vulnerable to attack from the unholy, and any vestige of sanctity he has is subject to assault from the forces of evil, the unholy, which

can trap his speech and devour it, causing it to descend into exile, the realm of the impure.

(It is also important to bear in mind that since a “holy tongue” and morality are linked on one hand, while immorality and impure speech are joined on the other, we can tell a person’s morals by his choice of words.)

Rebbe Nachman calls mundane speech Targum (translation), which is the name of the Aramaic translation of the Bible. Undoubtedly, the spiritual is our goal. Yet the Rebbe stresses the importance of paying attention to our mundane surroundings and our necessities. Since we must engage in them, we must understand how vital they can be in serving God. They can be such a bridge because Targum is such a bridge between the sanctified and the unsanctified. This is the gist of Lesson #19. Reb Noson applies it to the Holy Land.

The tribes of Reuven, Gad and half the tribe of Menasheh took their territory of the Holy Land on the east bank of the Jordan River. This is because there is holiness, the Holy Land, and there is the mundane, which corresponds to Targum. One can only enter into holiness when one subdues evil by sanctifying his mundane acts and speech. Only then can everything else be included in the realm of holiness. Moshe rebuked the Jews when he stood on the east bank of the Jordan River, just before the Jews crossed into the Holy Land. For a person must understand that he cannot attain any true level of holiness until he first separates the good from the evil.

Moshe wanted Reuven, Gad and Menasheh to enter the Holy Land first and then, after they spent time in the Holy Land, return to the east bank and fully sanctify it. But, in truth, one can only attain the Holy Land when he first sanctifies his mundane, which was why the three tribes accepted their portion on the east bank, in “Targum Land.” With their conquering the east bank, the mundane area, all the Jews were able to enter and conquer the Holy Land (see *Likutey Halakhot Sukah*, 2:4).

So too, if we wish to conquer the Holy Land, we must first sanctify our mundane. This includes the places we live in, even if currently we are not dwelling in Israel. Each time a person brings sanctity to his tongue, his deeds, his home, his neighborhood, etc., he elevates the mundane into a state of sanctity. Imagine then, how, if we would do our best, we would actually elevate a “State” into its true form, a Holy Land for a Holy People!

And, when we remember that it was with the Holy Tongue the world was created, then certainly we will be able to take over the Land, which is rightfully ours. On account of the world's being created with the Holy Tongue, each time we sanctify our speech, we create a new world, with a new order, a world which recognizes God as the Creator, Who decreed that the Land is ours (as explained in [Essay #1](#))!

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