

This Land is My Land

A Breslov Perspective on the Holy Land Essay #41—Parshat VaYeishev (3) 5762

It's happening! It's happening! It has finally come to pass. I was startled and pleasantly surprised to hear that the American government gave its approval for Israel to handle the Palestinian terrorist situation as it deems necessary. Imagine, the sovereign United States gave permission for Israel to protect itself against senseless murderers! Mashiach must be on his way. Oh, he definitely is—if we make that little bit of effort required of us.

A few weeks ago, we spoke about the ability to vanquish the enemies of the Land, by receiving the power of the sword from Esav's sword ([Essay #34](#)). The following are some excerpts from that essay.

In the merit of the Torah which we draw, we merit to the Land of Israel, as in (Psalms 105:44), "And He gave them the lands of the gentiles." But the Land of Israel is one of the three things which are acquired through suffering...And the main suffering is the detractors, the wicked people, those "who had given a bad report about the land." The first thing that has to be done is to subdue these wicked people, and to punish them with the sword and with death. By doing this, it is afterwards possible to go to the Land of Israel. Yet, it is impossible to acquire the power to punish the wicked except when this power is received from Edom/Esav. For this is his power..."But you shall live by your sword." And know! The spiritual forces which are created from the letters of the Torah are bona fide angels... (see *Likutey Moharan* I, 20:1-9).

So, thank God, we've reached a point in our history where our Torah study is beginning to make a major effect upon our lives. We want the Holy Land, of course—we've been praying for it for approximately two thousand years. However, we require Torah study to create the angels to receive the power of the sword from Esav. This enables us to stand up to our enemies who wish to forbid the Land to us. Then, wonder of wonders! Miracle of miracles! The United States government has "given" Israel "permission" to use the "sword" in order to vanquish its enemies and protect itself from terrorists and murderers.

So let's keep on going. This week's parshah has a very strong message for us which applies to these ideas. "And Yaakov dwelled in the Land of his fathers..." Rashi comments: In the previous chapter (*Genesis* 36), the Torah details Esav and his family, the *alufei* Esav, the multitudes of Esav. Yaakov saw how many souls Esav's families comprised and was afraid. "Who is capable of vanquishing so many?" The Midrash offers an analogy of many camels laden with tremendous bundles of flax. A blacksmith, sitting nearby, was amazed at the load and asked, "Who has place to store so much flax?" A clever man remarked, "One spark from your smithy will set fire to the entire bundle." Yaakov worry about Esav's hordes was addressed by the prophet Ovadyah, "The house of Yaakov will be fire and the house of Yosef will be the flame, while the house of Esav will be straw; they shall kindle them and they will be devoured, nothing will remain of Esav...for God has spoken" (*Obadiah* 1:18). Yaakov represents the Jewish nation. Yosef represents the tzaddik, the righteous deeds and moral behavior of the Jew. When we get our act together, Esav goes up in flames and is gone.

If we want our voices to be heard that the Land is ours and that we alone are entitled to it, then we must strengthen our study of Torah. Reb Noson writes that Rebbe Nachman's teaching about "drawing Torah insights" refers mostly to one's own original Torah insights. It would seem, therefore, that this lesson's audience is limited to those who are learned in Torah. This is not so. An "original Torah insight" also refers to one's renewed commitment to Torah study (*Likutey Halakhot, Gezeilah 5:6*). Therefore, it's up to us to renew our commitment to Torah; it's up to us to study more and engage more in Torah and in supporting Torah. For we, who represent Yaakov, the Jew, are now at the threshold of salvation. We are awaiting Mashiach, we are allmmooooost there. What we need right now is for the spark of Yosef to strike from our smithy, our bellowing of Torah, prayer and mitzvot.

Bring up our righteousness, bring forth those few good deeds that we need to go over the top, and we'll be there. Opportunity has just knocked. Let's not let the opportunity pass us by. But, you may ask, how can we really do it? Are we that strong? Isn't it a fire of Yaakov (the burning desire to serve God) accompanied by the flame and spark of Yosef (who is righteous and moral) which devours Esav and Co? Are we on a level to accomplish this? A similar question was put to Reb Noson: Seeing that Mashiach hasn't yet come, despite all the efforts of all the very great tzaddikim in each of the previous generations, how can we, who are spiritually much weaker, expect to bring him? Reb Noson answered this paradox with a parable:

There was once a city that was very well fortified. It was enwalled by an extremely thick stone wall, that was seemingly impenetrable. Many of the world's kings and rulers had tried to conquer the city but found it impossible. Their warriors and soldiers were killed before they could make even a dent in the wall. Finally, a wise king came and decided to conquer this fortified city. After inspecting its fortifications, he sent his mightiest soldiers to bring down the wall and attack the city. They pounded and pounded on the wall, but were unable to breach it. Soon, these soldiers fell. The king sent a second wave of mighty soldiers, and then a third wave, and so on. Before long, his entire army had been depleted and the wall had not come down. But the king did not give up. Once again he circled the city, inspecting its walls.

"How can you expect to capture this city if all your mighty soldiers are gone?" he was asked. The wise king smiled. "If you look closely, you will see that though the soldiers could not breach the wall, they did succeed in cracking it. It is no longer as strong and as impenetrable. Now, with even the weak and wounded, with the women and children, I can bring down the wall." The king then sent the last of his conscripts and they were able to tear down the "impenetrable" wall and conquer the city.

Reb Noson concluded: Who captured the city? The old and infirm? How could they have even attempted the battle, if the mighty warriors had been destroyed to a man? Even if they had fought for a thousand years, they could never have brought down that wall! They won the battle because of the strength of the earlier soldiers, who were mightier and stronger.

The same is true of us. We are weak, tired and drained of spiritual greatness. But the earlier tzaddikim—Moshe Rabbeinu, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the ARI, the Baal Shem Tov and Rebbe Nachman, all the tzaddikim—though they did not succeed in bringing the Mashiach, did succeed in cracking the wall of obstacles which stand in the way. Now, even we can mount that final attack and bring Mashiach (*Maasiot U'meshalim* p. 36-37).

May God grant that we merit to study and fulfill the Torah and bind ourselves to the true Tzaddikim, following their advice. If we do, we will merit seeing the Coming of Mashiach, the Ingathering of the Exiles and the Rebuilding of the Holy Temple. May it come speedily, in our days, Amen.

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