

פרשת תולדות / Parashat Toldot 5781 by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein on Divrei Torah on Jerusalem

## Yerushalayim and the Blessings

Our parsha tells the dramatic story of Esav and Yaakov struggling to be the recipient of their father's blessing. Despite his wild and uncouth manners, Esav desires these blessings and Yaakov is willing to engage in subterfuge in order to "steal" them from his older brother. What was so special about these blessings? Here are the words of the blessings:<sup>1</sup>

And may the Lord give you of the dew of the heavens and [of] the fatness of the earth and an abundance of grain and wine. Nations shall serve you and kingdoms shall bow down to you; you shall be a master over your brothers, and your mother's sons shall bow down to you. Those who curse you shall be cursed, and those who bless you shall be blessed."

Powerful blessings indeed.

It is fascinating that each of these blessings relates to Yerushalayim. The Midrash<sup>2</sup> identifies "the dew of the heavens" with Yerushalayim, as per the verse "As the dew of Hermon which runs down on the mountains of Zion."<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the Mishna teaches us that when the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed, the dew of blessing stopped falling. This demonstrates a clear connection between the dew of blessing and Yerushalayim. In short, according to certain sources, the first part of the blessing is sovereignty over the city of Yerushalayim.

The next verse speaks of national security – "nations shall serve you." The Zohar<sup>4</sup> explains that this was fulfilled when Shlomo ruled in Yerushalayim and the other rulers of the world would come to the city to pay him homage. Even without leaving his palace or embarking on military

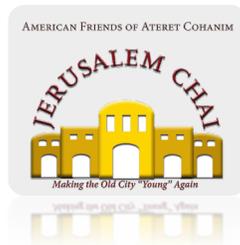
<sup>1</sup> Bereishit 27:28-30. Translation adapted from Chabad.org.

<sup>2</sup> Bereishit Rabbah 66.

<sup>3</sup> Tehillim 133:3.

<sup>4</sup> Cited at

[http://www.aspaklaria.info/010\\_YOD/%D7%99%D7%A6%D7%97%D7%A7%20%20%20%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%AA.htm](http://www.aspaklaria.info/010_YOD/%D7%99%D7%A6%D7%97%D7%A7%20%20%20%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%9B%D7%AA.htm)



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campaigns, Shlomo was able to become ascendant over other nations. Once again, the blessing is fulfilled within Yerushalayim.

Similarly, the third leg of the blessing is that the recipient of the blessing should become a source of blessing himself “those who bless you shall be blessed.” In Tehilim, we find that Yerushalayim is also a source of blessing: “for there the Lord commanded the blessing, life forever.”<sup>5</sup>

In summary, the great object of desire – the blessings of Yitzhak – at least partially revolve around Yerushalayim. The recipient of the blessing will be sovereign over and dwell within Yerushalayim. From this we can see the centrality of Yerushalayim and the significance that Yaakov and Esav placed upon it. Yerushalayim is the conduit between heaven and earth and therefore allows one to live continuously in God’s presence. And what greater blessing can there be.

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<sup>5</sup> Tehillim 133:3.