



5783 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Toldot / פרשת תולדות

Yerushalayim: The Dew of the World

Torah sources highlight the uniqueness of dew as a sui-generis form of blessing. There are two primary qualities of dew's blessing. First, dew is constantly being replenished and renewed. The midrash notes that even when God punishes the Jewish people by withholding rain, nonetheless, dew never ceases.¹ Second, as opposed to rain which is unwelcome for some people such as travelers, the constant replenishing of dew is celebrated by all.² In short, dew represents a constant and expansive blessing from God.

This idea is hinted to in our parsha. The second half of the parsha revolves around the blessings that Yitzhak is to give to one of his sons. From the seriousness with which the various parties treat these blessings, we see that they are of the utmost significance.

What is the content of these blessings? When Yitzhak dramatically gives them to Yaakov we find that they begin with the bestowment of dew: "And may the Lord give you of the dew of the heavens and [of] the fatness of the earth."³ Dew is considered such a blessing that it is the first item mentioned in these epic blessings. On this note, Rashi highlights the fact that the Hebrew words "may the Lord give you" indicate that Yitzhak's blessings are constantly being renewed - "May he give and repeatedly give." This underscores the unique quality of dew, the constant and expansive blessing.

With this background we can appreciate the following comments of the midrash to our parsha:⁴

"From the dew of the heavens" – this is Zion as the verse states "As the dew of Hermon which runs down on the mountains of Zion, for there the Lord commanded the blessing, life forever."⁵

¹ Taanit 3a.

² Rashi to Devarim 32:2.

³ Bereishit 27:28. Translation adapted from Chabad.org.

⁴ Bereishit Rabbah to above verse.

⁵ Tehillim 133:3.



5783 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Toldot / פרשת תולדות

According to this understanding of the verses, Yitzhak blessed Yaakov not only with physical dew, but with ownership over Yerushalayim. It seems that Yerushalayim is a parallel blessing to dew. The same qualities of constancy and expansiveness that exist regarding dew are also true regarding Yerushalayim.

Regarding the constancy of Yerushalayim's blessings, we need to look no farther than the very verse cited above by the midrash. The blessing of Yerushalayim lasts forever.

Similarly, the blessing of Yerushalayim is expansive and exists for everyone. Every Jewish person has a place in Yerushalayim and can benefit from its unique qualities. More universally, even non-Jews are enjoined to travel to Yerushalayim and learn about the ways of God and to connect to Him.

In short, Yitzhak opens his blessings with an item that consists of constant and expansive goodness. In the physical realm, this is dew. In the spiritual realm, this first blessing refers to the gift of Yerushalayim.