

# Parsha Pearls

FROM THE WORDS OF THE GEDOLIM

Behar 5768

**"And if your brother becomes poor and is sold to you, you shall not make him do slave labor. Like a worker and like a resident he will be with you; until the jubilee year he will work with you. And then he will go out from you, he and his sons with him, and he will return to his family, and to his ancestors' land he will return." (25:39-41)**

The Ohr Hachaim explains this as a metaphor for the Jews in exile. G-d is addressing Esav and commanding him not to treat his brother Jacob badly in exile. He will only be in exile until the jubilee – the final redemption – when he, together with his sons, will return to his ancestors' land. The sons symbolize the sparks of holiness that are scattered around the world. In every place where Jews live, the sparks are sorted out through the Jews' suffering, Torah, and mitzvos. And this is one of the reasons for the exile – for if the reason were only for punishment, G-d could have punished the Jews while still in their land.

And what if the Jewish people had never sinned and never gone into exile? Who would have sorted out the sparks in all the lands of the Jewish exile? The Ohr Hachaim answers that if the Jewish people had not sinned, they would have had the power to sort out the holy sparks from afar, without ever leaving the Holy Land.

Rabbi Menachem Azariah of Fano writes that the purpose of every exile, beginning with Adam's expulsion from the Garden of Eden, is to purify the places to which the exiled are sent. This explains why the Jews of Samaria were exiled only to one place, whereas the exiles of Judea were scattered in all directions. The Jews of Samaria were not Torah scholars, and therefore they could only sanctify one corner of the world; but the Jews of Jerusalem were sent everywhere, so that their wellsprings could benefit all of mankind. (Asarah Maamaros 4:13)

The Gemara (Avodah Zarah 10b) relates that there was once a king who hated the Jews. He said to his ministers, "If a man has a painful scab on his foot, should he cut it off and heal, or leave it and suffer?" They said, "Cut it off and heal." But one minister, named Ketia bar Shalom, spoke up and said: "First of all, you will not be able to kill them all, for they are scattered all over the world, as it says, "For like the four directions of the world I have scattered you" (Zechariah 2:10). Secondly, those Jews who remain will call you a murderous kingdom.

The Gemara later comments on the wording of the verse in Zechariah: seemingly, it should read "to the four directions of the earth I have scattered you" and not "like the four directions". The Gemara explains that the word "direction" can also mean "wind" and the prophet was comparing the Jewish people to the wind: just as the world cannot exist without wind, so too it cannot exist without the Jewish people.

But according to this, why does the prophet mention scattering at all? The Maharsha answers that the world exists not just because the Jewish people are in the world somewhere, but because they are scattered around the world, making known the existence of G-d and His Torah.

With all of the above in mind, one cannot say that Jews gathered together in their own country in Eretz Yisroel are truly in exile, fulfilling the purpose of exile.

Furthermore, Rabbi Yosef Yabetz (d. 1507) in his work Chasdei Hashem explains the words of Yishaya 53:8, "He was removed from power and judgment" as a reply to the nations who question the greatness of Israel for suffering their exile. "After all," argued these nations, "Israel is not the only nation in exile. Many Muslims live under Christian governments and many Christians live under Muslim governments." The prophet replies that the non-Jews, even when they live in exile, do not suffer true exile since they know that they have a government of their own people in another part of the world to whom they can turn in time of need. For

example, when King Manuel of Portugal decreed in 1496 that no Jews or Muslims could remain in his country, he did not actually enforce the decree against the Muslims, for fear of reprisals against Christians living in Muslim countries. Thus the Muslims in Portugal were saved by their own governments in other places. By contrast, the Jews are removed from power completely, not relying on any government somewhere else. According to this, if Jews have their own country, even those Jews living under other governments, if they rely on the Jewish country for help in times of need, are not truly living in exile.

Those who do not have e-mail can now receive this sheet free every week by regular mail. To order write to the address below.



True Torah Jews  
183 Wilson St. PMB 162  
Brooklyn, NY 11211

For additional copies of this publication,  
or to sponsor an issue,  
**PLEASE CALL 718-841-7053.**