

Parshas Vayeitzei – The End of Golus Edom - Dr. J. H. Freilich

ז' כסלו תשע"ה – 28 November 2014 – שבת פ' ויצא

At the start of this week's sedra, we read **וַיַּחְלֹם וְהִנֵּה סֹלֶם...וְהִנֵּה מַלְאכֵי אֱלֹקִים עֹלִים וְיֹרְדִים בּוֹ**. There is a Medrash brought both in the Yilkut and the Tanchumah that says that this refers to the Guardians of the nations of the world. Hashem showed Yaacov the Guardian of Bavel going up 70 rungs and coming down, that of Modai going up 52 rungs and coming down, that of Greece going up 180 rungs and coming down and that of Edom going up an undefined number. At that point, Yaacov became afraid and said this one is surely not descending. Says **וְהַקֵּב"ה** to him **וְאַתָּה אַל תִּירָא עַבְדִּי יַעֲקֹב וְאֵל תַּחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל** (Jeremiah 30). Hashem says to Yaacov that to whatever height he ascends, I will bring him down from there. Now the number of rungs would seem to indicate timelines for these nations to dominate over Israel. But why isn't that of Edom specified and why should Edom deserve a longer time than the others?

As a preliminary to answering this, the Dubna Maggid, in his sefer Ohel Yaacov on Chumash, says the following. There is a Medrash in Beshalach where it says that Yisroel asks Hashem how can we see your face when we have been put into the hands of Edom. He answers, do not fear from them because in the future you will ask "where are they?" The Maggid explains that there is a purpose why Hashem delays the tranquillity due to Yisroel and gives first of all to the other nations. Namely, the other nations have no long-term existence before Hashem and are due to disappear, therefore they need to be paid-off their deserts quickly. On the other hand, the seed of Yaacov is established forever, so they can afford to wait to receive their portion. That is why we say in our daily prayers in Psalm 149: **יִשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּעֲשֵׂיו בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן יִגְלוּ בַּמֶּלֶכִּים**, Yisroel will rejoice in its Maker, with the emphasis on the future tense. Yisroel will rejoice, since its eternal existence is confirmed. Consequently, Hashem is in no hurry to repay its reward. Similarly we say in our daily prayers, the verse in Psalm 104: **יְהִי כְבוֹד ה' לְעֹלָם יִשְׂמַח ה'** **יְהִי כְבוֹד ה' לְעֹלָם יִשְׂמַח ה'**. The glory of Hashem is forever, therefore He can await to rejoice in those He has made viz Yisroel. Now we can better appreciate what the Medrash means when it says, in the future you will ask "where are they?" The other nations will have already been paid-off, in this world, while we will be basking in Hashem's glory. We still need to resolve our original questions.

There is a Possuk in Amos 7 **הוּא כִּי קֵטַן הוּא**. The prophet asks "How will Yaacov be able to rise up, when he is on such a low *madrega*?" Hashem responds, saying, through Golus. The Maggid explains that we were too low to absorb the lofty blessings from our forefathers, and we would only have gone astray. As it says in Ha'azinu **וַיִּשְׁמַן יִשְׁרוּן וַיִּבְעֵט**. Yeshurun grew fat and struck out. However, in the future, after suffering Golus, we would be able to receive the goodness of Hashem without rebelling. Thus the good things of **עוֹלָם הַזֶּה** were given to the nations to be shared out in turn until Am Yisroel were ready to receive them. Each nation was allocated a fixed time period, with a start and a finish, until the time would come to lift up the horn of His anointed one. The end of the rule of one nation would signify the start of the rule of the next nation. This applied though only to the kingdoms up to Edom. As Edom was the last kingdom to have dominion, it was then a matter of whenever the King Of Kings saw fit to take over the final kingship of the world. As it says (Ovadiah 1:21), **וְהָיְתָה לַה' הַמְּלוּכָה**, Hashem assured Yaacov that at the end, it would be Himself that would bring down Edom and therefore there was no need to provide a timespan for that Golus.

To answer the second question, regarding the merit of Edom, the commentary Anaf Yosef on the Tanchuma makes two noteworthy suggestions. One is the Mitzva of honouring one's parents, which the Torah testifies Esav performed by providing them with food and the other is the merit of living in Eretz Yisroel. However, in both cases there were deficiencies which would eventually result in his downfall. In the first case, Esav used abrupt language in addressing his father and in the second case, Esav sold out his rights in Eretz Yisroel and moved elsewhere. Important lessons here for all of us.

In memory of Rev E. Freilich נתן ז"ל whose yahrzeit is on 7th Kislev.
