

THE CLAIMS UPON ISRAEL

by Rabbi Daniel Travis

"At first the Almighty created the heavens and the earth." (Bereshith 1:1)

As a result of the letters I received regarding the last class, and the current situation of semi-war in Israel I thought it important to clarify three issues:

- What is the basis of the Torah's outlook to the Arab claim to the land of Israel.
- What is the historical basis for the Palestinian claim to Israel?
- What is the Torah outlook on the current situation of the Jewish People?

In response to the last class Dr. Colin Naturman wrote:

1. If I am not mistaken the traditional understanding of Bereshit 12:6 *"and the Canaanite was then in the land"* is that the land of Israel belonged to Shem, and the Canaanites were invading the land and later took advantage of the enslavement of Jews in Egypt to seize the whole land from the descendents of Shem. Abraham was the rightful heir to the land. This ties up with the traditions of the Phoenicians that they were indeed invaders who had come from the region of the Persian Gulf and Bahrain.

In response to the last class my father wrote:

2. During the Ottoman period which ended during WWI with the British capture of Jerusalem, Palestine was part of the Ottoman province of Greater Syria, together with modern Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. The Hashemites, who now rule in Jordan, were the Turkish religious representatives in Mecca and Medina, the Hedjaz. Hussein, the great grandfather of the late King Hussein, began the Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire around 1916. His son Faisal was promised Damascus by Lawrence and the British. When the French kicked him out of Syria, around 1921, his brother Abdullah marched on Damascus. To placate the two brothers and to serve themselves, Abdullah was given the newly created Transjordan with the title of Emir. His brother Faisal was given Iraq. The concept of a Palestinian state is a myth created by propagandists for the PA. The Arab world rejected the two state solution in 1947 and again last year. In a rational world they should bare the consequences.

From 1919 until the departure of the British in 1948, far more Arabs immigrated to Israel/Palestine than Jews. Arafat's family were from Egypt. They were drawn to the country by

the economic activity stimulated by the Mandate authorities and the Zionists. All of this information is available from the Public Records office in Kew Gardens, London. All the documents are listed in a text labeled Palestine 1918-1948. I made a note of this text some years ago. The Siege by Connor Criuse Obrien is probably as good a text as any to study the subject. The Arab elites have rejected Israel for cultural not political reasons. They constantly harp on their fear of Israel i.e. Jewish cultural hegemony.

3. Rashi ends off his comment to the first verse of the Torah that since God created the world He can give the land of Israel to whoever seems yashar "honest" in His eyes. This being the case it is incumbent for the Jewish people to know the exact parameters of honesty, for without this they are lacking the tools to acquire the optimum place for fulfilling the Torah. Therefore the Torah continues with the rest of Sefer Bereshith which is called Sefer HaYashar in order to teach us how to live yashar and merit the land of Israel.¹

Why is the characteristic of Yashrus so critical for earning the land of Israel? In all other lands, Divine Providence works via emissaries. Israel is unlike any other land in that Divine Providence is direct.² In order to merit to be a constant recipient of this "straight" Divine Providence, one must be straight with God. The name of the land "Israel" in fact comes from the root "straight with God", implying that only one who lives up to that can merit to live there.³

The Jewish People all over the world, and especially in the state of Israel are in a precarious situation. They are in a constant state of danger, and there is almost nothing that they can do to protect themselves from it. What is expected from a Jew at the present time? Our Sages told us that in the Messianic Era, the Jewish People will be brought to a situation where they will be forced to recognize that we have nothing to rely on except for our Father in Heaven (i.e. Hashem). Today He has made this outlook absolutely clear to us, and it is up to us to respond by inculcating this concept into our world outlook. When the Jewish People realize that they have no salvation unless they turn to Hashem, then the redemption will be soon to follow.

1. In fact in Sefer Devarim 9,5 as the Jews are about to enter the land, God tells the Jewish people that it is not because of their Yashrus that they are entering the land, but because of God's promise to the forefathers. This seems to imply that yashrus is the necessary characteristic required for inheriting the land of Israel, and that were it not for the promise to the forefathers the Jewish people would not have gotten it.

2. Commentary of the Ramban at the end of Achrei Mos

3. Commentary of the Alshich 35,10.

Priceless Integrity, Copyright © 2001 by Rabbi Daniel Travis and Torah.org.

Subscribe to *Priceless Integrity* and receive the class via e-mail.