

And he trusted in Hashem, and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. (15:6)

Rashi notes that, concerning Hashem's promise to Avraham that he would be blessed with offspring, the Patriarch did not ask for a sign. Concerning the promise that he would take possession of *Eretz Yisrael*, Avraham *Avinu* asked, *Bama eida*, "Whereby shall I know?" requesting a sign from Above that he would inherit it. Why did the Patriarch ask for affirmation regarding the Land and not regarding the offspring?

Horav Yitzchak Volozhiner, zl, explains this with an analogy that goes to the very crux of the issue which continues to haunt us until this very day. A king was once traveling on the road when he chanced upon a poor person begging for alms. Something about this poor man impressed the king. He invited him into his carriage and gave him a large quantity of money, enough to solve his financial problems. The king continued along with his travels. Sometime later, he came upon a drunkard lying in a pile of garbage, yet covered with a fur coat. The king saw this and instructed his driver to remove the fur from the drunk and give it to the poor man.

The poor man accepted the coat gladly – as he did the money which he had received earlier. He did have one request of the king, 'My lord, I humbly request of his honor a letter stating that I received the fur from his honor as a gift.' The king acquiesced, but was stymied that the poor man wanted a letter to cover the coat, but not regarding the money that he had given him. Certainly, the money had greater significance than the coat. The poor man replied, "No one will question me concerning the money, since it came from the king. Everyone will believe that I was the recipient of good fortune from a benevolent king. The fur, however, belonged to another man, albeit taking it was well within the king's purview. Nonetheless, I am afraid that, if and when the drunk sobers up, he might come with a claim that I stole his fur. He will not believe that his highness gave it to me. Thus, I request a letter confirming my right to the fur."

The *nimshal*, resemblance, to the blessings Avraham received from Hashem is clear. Concerning the blessing of children, he did not require affirmation, because no one would complain if the elderly Avraham were to be blessed with offspring. Regarding the promise of the land, there was an issue. It was presently inhabited by nations who felt that it belonged to them. The fact that Hashem created the world and gave *Eretz Yisrael* to His People would not seem to sway them. Avraham would need some assurance, *Bama eida*, that it would revert to him.

Until this very day, there are those who feel that they have a right to contest our gift from Hashem. Reading about it in the Torah does not seem to impress them. One who peruses history will note that, during the periods that *Klal Yisrael* did not inhabit the Holy Land and it was instead inhabited by Christians and Muslims, it was not agriculturally productive. The land will only "work" for the nation to whom it was gifted. *Eretz Yisrael* has maintained its fidelity to *Am Yisrael*. We should reciprocate.