

"For Hashem's portion is His people, Yaakov his measured inheritance." (32:9)

Klal Yisrael became a nation while still in the desert -- without a land to live in. Hashem did not permit His people to grow as a nation under the influence of the land of Egypt and its inhabitants. "For Hashem's portion is His people." This people was to be and remain "the people of Hashem." *Horav S.R. Hirsch z.l.* explains that common nations are linked to the soil of their land in the same manner that *Am Yisrael* is linked to Hashem. Other nations view their land as the foundation of their national existence. It serves as the home for their social life. Its climatic influence determines the conditions for the nation's physical, spiritual, moral, and social development. The people, in turn, revere and worship the powers which they feel enhance their national culture.

In contradistinction, *Klal Yisrael* was to bring its spiritual, moral, and social culture, as structured by Hashem, into the land with them. It was not to subject itself and the life of its people to the land. Rather, *Bnei Yisrael* was instructed to subject the land and the life of its people to Hashem's leadership. The national communal life and the prosperity of its people proclaim Hashem as the one real, true source of all national well-being. As Hashem says to us in the cradle of our birth as a nation, "And I will take you to be a people unto Me." Only thereafter, He says, "Will I bring you unto the land" (*Shemos 6:7,8*). By its origin and destiny *Am Yisrael* is the *chelek* Hashem, portion of Hashem.

Horav Hirsch infers this to be the reason that from its very onset this nation is referred to as "Yaakov." This name implies instability, without land and home. "Yaakov" is subjected to the suffering of the homeless and, in the opinion of the nations, without rights anywhere, without the dignity and sovereign power which comes with ownership of land. Yaakov implies "holding on," hanging on to the "heel" without land and without power to subject. Rather, he is to be subjected. Yaakov, however, represents Hashem's *nachalah*, inheritance. Because of Yaakov's apparent poverty and lack of brilliance in appearance, *Bnei Yisrael* is rejected by the consortium of nations and is gathered in by Hashem.

Other nations occupy themselves with establishing their own sovereignty, based upon their land, physical prowess, or political expediency. On the other hand, we, by virtue of our adherence to the dictates of Hashem, our sanctification of the morals of truth, justice, and love, demonstrate and establish the sovereignty of Hashem in the world. Only "Yaakov," who receives his power only from Hashem, has the qualifications to be charged with the mission to become "*Yisrael*." Only Yaakov is able to proclaim the sovereignty of Hashem to the world and to inspire allegiance to Him by abiding a dutiful faithful life.