

אני לדודי ודודי לי

Come, my beloved, let us go out to the field: Our Rabbis expounded in Eruvin (21b): The Klal Yisroel said, "O Lord of the Universe, do not judge me like the inhabitants of large cities, where there is robbery and immorality, but like the inhabitants of villages, who are craftsmen, and engage in the Torah amidst hardship. **Let us lodge in the villages:** Hebrew: בְּכַפְרִים. Let us lodge among the disbelievers (בְּכַפְרִים). Come and I will show You the sons of Esau, upon whom You bestowed plenty, but who do not believe in You.
(*Shir HaShirim 7:12* with Rashi)

Klal Yisroel seems to be saying to Hashem: *Look how much better we are than Eisav! We are faithful to You despite all our hardships, while the sons of Eisav sin despite the good You bestow upon them!*

This is hard to understand for two reasons:

1. What is so great about being greater than Eisav – the epitome of evil on Earth?
2. Perhaps the very reason why we are faithful, as opposed to Eisav, is our dreadful state, for riches cause one to rebel as the *pasuk* says: *Lest you eat and be sated, and build good houses and dwell therein, and your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold increase, and all that you have increase, and your heart grows haughty, and you forget the Lord, your God... (Devarim 8:12-14).*

Perhaps we can suggest a different interpretation of what Klal Yisroel is saying to Hashem.

The beginning of this *perek* states: **Return, return, O Shulammitte:** *They (the nations of the world) say to me, "Return from following the Omnipresent." O Shulammitte the one who is perfect in your faith with Him, return, return to us. And let us gaze upon you:* We will appoint from you governors and rulers. Throughout the generations of our bitter exile our tormentors offered us a way out: *Join us! Become good Christians and you'll live! In fact, will even bestow upon you great honors!* So we say to Hashem: *Look how faithful we are to You, look at our lot, endless suffering, and look at Eisav's, the pleasures of life, and still we gladly give that up for the greatest afflictions, just to remain loyal to You!*

Gaze from the Heavens and see; we have been scorned and mocked amongst the Nations. We are considered as sheep for the slaughter, to murder, to annihilate, to beat, and to shame! And despite it all we have not forgotten Your name! (Prayer of Tachanun) Perhaps this means: *We have not forgotten You despite that being, many times, the only way which we could have saved ourselves from all our suffering!*

