

Longing for the Land

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For forty years, the Rabbi of Volochisk's yearning to go to the Land of the Israel was the recurring theme of his conversation.

There was once a prisoner sentenced to a very long time in jail. Although he had left behind a comfortable, well-furnished home, he became so used to his life in prison that when asked where his home was, he pointed to his cell.

When this prisoner took a careful account of his life, however, he remembered that he had a beautiful home waiting for him on the outside. He felt pained and filled with homesickness. At such times, when people would ask him where he lived, he would tell them about his home outside the penitentiary. He would wax eloquent: "My house is so beautiful. It's in such and such place, and is very large and

well-appointed. To my regret, I am imprisoned in this hard, cold place...for now."

Reb Levi Yitzchok Bender told this parable to explain the mistaken mentality of those who live outside of *Eretz Yisrael* and never long to leave their *galut* (exile) and come to their real home.

One of Rebbe Nachman's daughters was married to the Rabbi of Chmelnik. Another daughter wed the son of the Rabbi of Volochisk.

The Rabbi of Volochisk was constantly yearning to go to *Eretz Yisrael*. For forty years, his yearning for the Land was the recurring theme of his conversation. But this yearning did not find favor in the eyes of the Rabbi of Chmelnik. "What's the big outcry—yearning for forty years?! If he genuinely wants to go, let him get some money together, buy a ticket and go already!"

When this remark was repeated to Rebbe Nachman, he said, "The Rabbi of Volochisk, who is yearning so fiercely for forty years, will make it to *Eretz Yisrael*. But the Rabbi of Chmelnik, who said that one merely takes money and travels, will never step foot in the Holy Land!"

That is exactly what happened.

May we all yearn and finally merit returning "home," very soon. Amen!

Based on Siach Sarfey Kodesh VI:388, II:122, III:542