

# **With Might and Spirit**

**Studies and Reflections on  
Matters of War, the Military, and Security  
in our Times**

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**A selection of chapters for daily study**

In memory of the murder victims of  
the Simchat Torah 5784 (October 7, 2023) terror attack  
and the IDF soldiers who fell in the Swords of Iron War



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# Table of Contents

Day 1: The Vision of True Peace.....	13
Day 2: Struggle Against the Nations—or a Blessing to the Nations?.....	16
Day 3: War to Protect the People.....	19
Day 4: Israel’s Wars—Hashem’s Wars .....	22
Day 5: War to Conquer Eretz Yisrael.....	25
Day 6: The Connection between Israel and its Land .....	28
Day 7: War for Israel’s Independence .....	31
Day 8: The Importance of Israel’s Independence .....	34
Day 9: Obligatory War ( <i>Milchemet Mitzvah</i> ) and Optional War ( <i>Milchemet Reshut</i> ) .....	37
Day 10: A Soldier at his Post as one Standing in Prayer.....	40
Day 11: Eretz Yisrael is Acquired through Suffering .....	43
Day 12: Do not Let your Hearts be Soft!.....	45
Day 13: Faith in the Justness of our Path.....	48
Day 14: Recognition of Our Right to the Land.....	51
Day 15: Trust in Hashem and Human Effort.....	54
Day 16: The Source of the Army’s Strength.....	57
Day 17: The Danger of “My Strength and the Might of my Hand” .....	61
Day 18: Torah Study or Military Service?.....	64
Day 19: Going Forth into Battle—Specifically Torah Scholars!.....	67
Day 20: Sharing the Burden of the Community.....	69
Day 21: The “Hesder Yeshivot” .....	72
Day 22: The Redemption of Israel, Little by Little.....	76

# DAY 1

## The Vision of True Peace

### “...nor shall they learn war anymore”

Before addressing the great value of an army in Israel and the true significance of Israel's wars, it is necessary to emphasize and reiterate that the purpose of war is not the war itself—but rather **peace**. Wars are merely a means to achieve true peace, which will bring blessing to humanity and to the entire world.

But how is it possible that specifically wars will lead to peace—and not just any peace, but everlasting peace?! In order to explain this, one must understand the fundamental difference between the wars of other nations and the wars of Israel.

The wars in which the nations of the world participate are generally driven by selfish needs—property, territory, revenge, and honor; the imposition of a religion and a way of life upon the adversary; and so forth. The wars of Israel have a completely different meaning, as Rambam writes in *Mishneh Torah*, in *Hilkhot Melakhim U-Milchamoteihem* (7:15): “He should realize that he is fighting for the sake of the oneness of Hashem's name... with the sole intention of sanctifying Hashem's name.”

The Jewish people is Hashem's people, and its wars are Hashem's wars. The grand mission assigned to the Jewish people is to bring all of humanity to the recognition of Hashem's existence—“This people I have formed for Myself—they shall declare My praise” (Yeshayahu 43:21). Just as the *kohanim* among the people of Israel must lead the entire nation to cleave to Hashem, so too, the people of Israel is required to lead all of humanity to cleave to the Creator of the world: “And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests (*kohanim*) and a holy nation” (Shemot 19:6).

Since this is the case, Israel's wars have a direct impact how Hashem is seen in the world: when Israel is victorious, the name of Hashem is sanctified, and Heaven forbid, when Israel is defeated, the name of Hashem is desecrated. It thus emerges that **wars specifically can pave the way for world peace**, for which the entire world yearns. This does not refer to a false peace, where nations desire war but fear its destructive consequences. Rather, it refers to the conditions of true peace, where the possibility of war is not even considered.

This is the great vision of Israel: **bringing world peace** based on brotherhood and camaraderie among all the peoples of the world. In order to realize this vision, there is much that must be done—and that sometimes includes conflicts and wars—but the aspiration is always true world peace.

## The path to peace: Israel's sovereignty in its land

In order for the people of Israel to fulfill their great destiny of leading all of humanity to everlasting peace, which is the gateway to the greatest happiness, they must live in accordance with the Torah in the most complete manner.

However, as long as the people of Israel do not lead an independent life in their land, the Torah is not realized in full, since Israel dwelling in its land is the key to the manifestation of the most sublime values in existence. Prophecy, which is the pinnacle of human elevation, manifests only in Eretz Yisrael (*Kuzari* 2:14). Likewise, many *mitzvot* of the Torah can be fulfilled only in Eretz Yisrael; in truth, the complete fulfillment of all *mitzvot* of the Torah is specifically in Eretz Yisrael.

It emerges that the settlement of Eretz Yisrael is what enables the revelation of the word of Hashem most powerfully, and the revelation of Hashem's word is, as stated, the key to the manifestation of everything good in the world.

The purpose of Israel is to illuminate the world with the light of Hashem, to bring happiness and blessing to all of humanity. The primary way to fulfill this purpose is through the renewal of the powerful, living connection between each person and his G-d, and this is only possible through the settlement of Israel in its land.

Our struggle for full independence in our land is not a self-serving struggle for our **particular** national existence. In truth, **Israel's independence in Eretz Yisrael is the key to true goodness and happiness for all of humanity**, for a world of true peace, as stated in the vision of the end of days:

It shall come to pass at the end of days, that the mountain of Hashem's house shall be established atop the mountains and exalted above the hills, and all nations shall stream to it.

And many peoples shall go and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of Hashem, to the house of the G-d of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths"—for out of Zion shall go forth Torah, and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem.

And He shall judge among the nations and arbitrate for the many peoples. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor shall they learn war anymore. (Yeshayahu 2:2-4)

Only once the people of Israel achieves national sovereignty in its land and becomes strong and powerful enough, with the Beit Ha-Mikdash standing in its place on the Temple Mount—only then will all the nations awaken to come to Israel to seek Torah. From there, wars will cease throughout the world, and true peace will prevail among humankind.

In order for the Beit Ha-Mikdash to be rebuilt, for the *Shekhinah* (Divine Presence) to be revealed completely, and for holiness to be revealed fully, it is crucial that Eretz Yisrael be under our control, as Rabbi Avraham Azulai wrote about four hundred years ago: "Just as the *Shekhinah* is not complete as long as the place of the Beit Ha-Mikdash is not complete upon

its foundations, so too, the *Shekhinah* is not complete as long as Eretz Yisrael is not whole in its borders” (*Chesed Le-Avraham* 3:7).

It is important to emphasize that the manifestation of the *Shekhinah* through the settlement of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael is not an extrinsic matter, but a condition of **life**. A powerful electrical device requires a connection to electricity in order to function. The device’s plug cannot be inserted into just any hole in the wall... Only a socket with electricity running through it can bring the device to life and allow it to express its inherent capabilities.

The people of Israel is an exceedingly powerful ‘electrical’ instrument, capable of bringing about the manifestation of the *Shekhinah* in the world. However, in order to fulfill its purpose and reveal holiness in this world, it must connect to the appropriate socket—settling in Eretz Yisrael and living there independently. It emerges that **the settlement of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael is the basis for the revelation of holiness in the world!**

It is important to emphasize that the mitzvah of settling the land is not limited to its physical construction. To build it perfectly, it is necessary to establish, alongside the **material** status of the settlement endeavor, its **spiritual** stature as well, infusing a spirit of holiness into Jewish settlement of Eretz Yisrael, to strengthen the spiritual aspect of the State of Israel. It is incumbent upon us to strengthen all aspects of Jewish settlement in the land, private and public alike. This path is what will ultimately lead us to complete redemption.

The wellbeing of all humanity will come only when we reach “the resting place and the inheritance” (Devarim 12:9). The true and absolute good of mankind and of the entire world is thus rooted in our complete redemption. Our struggles and wars are significant stages in the great process of revealing divine truth in the world. It follows that precisely through our wars we advance towards the fulfillment of the wonderful prophecy: “nor shall they learn war anymore.”