JERUSALEM AND THE FIGHTING ROOSTERS

My uncle, Hakham Yosef Faur, z”l, told me this story when I was a child.

One day, the Sultan of Turkey—the most powerful man on earth—summoned a rabbi and said to him:

“You Jews are few and weak. You have no country and no sovereign government. You have no soldiers and no army, and you are persecuted everywhere. How is it possible that you still believe in the prophecies that say you will one day return to Jerusalem? Jerusalem is the most important city in the world. Everyone desires it. We, the Ottomans, fought the Christians for centuries to rule this city. What you claim—to return to Jerusalem and govern it—is absurd… and arrogant. I want you to explain to me how, in your view, those prophecies could ever come true. And I do not want to hear about miracles. Explain it to me from a military, earthly, natural point of view.”

The sage thought for a few moments and replied:

“I need three days to prepare my answer. But first I must ask you something: if my arguments displease you or offend you, promise me that you will not punish me.”

The Sultan, intrigued, agreed.

Three days later, the rabbi returned to the palace and asked that a small cockfighting ring be prepared. He had brought five fighting roosters, which he had kept without food for two days, and also a small chick—weak and defenseless.

He placed the roosters and the chick inside the ring. Then he took a few grains of corn from his pocket and scattered them

in the center.

Immediately, the roosters began to fight with incredible fury. They pecked at each other viciously, wounding one another without mercy. One by one they fell, exhausted and bloodied. The last rooster, covered in wounds, finally collapsed to the ground, unable to move.

Then, from a corner, the timid chick appeared. And with no rooster left to bother it, it calmly began to eat the corn.

The rabbi turned to the Sultan and said:

“Jerusalem is the corn. The great powers are the fighting roosters, violently battling one another to control it. They wear themselves down, they wound each other, and they destroy one another. And when they no longer have strength, the people of Israel—the smallest and seemingly most vulnerable nation—enter the scene like the timid chick… and in the end, they are the ones who take the corn.”

The Sultan remained silent. For he understood that there are peoples who do not rise from the ashes by the power of weapons, but by the power of Emuna, faith, and resilience.