



PO Box 1076 Jerusalem 91009 * Tel. 972-2-628-4101

Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner on...

24 Kislev 5768

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

RavAviner-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

archived at www.ateret.org.il/new/home.php

Rav Kook's Torah on One Foot:

Unity, Wholeness, Perfection

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, on the Twenty-fifth anniversary of the departure of our Master, Rav Kook (Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Bereshit, p.88, arranged by Rav Aviner)

Question: If someone came and asked: Teach me the Torah of Rav Kook while standing on one foot, how would you respond to him?

Answer: To a certain extent, it is possible to say while standing on one foot that the Torah of father, Ha-Rav ztz"l is: unity, wholeness, perfection – unity of Hashem, wholeness of the Nation and the Land and perfection of the Torah. "The Torah of Hashem is perfect, restoring the soul" (Tehillim 19:8). Our Sages explain this verse: When it is perfect, it restores the soul (Socher Tov ibid. and see Yerushalami Berachot 5:3). Just as we are obligated to see the unity of Hashem before our eyes and the Torah in its perfection and all of its wholeness, so too are we to see the Nation, to its full and complete extent, in all its wholeness. The Gerrer Rebbe ztz"l – the author of "Sefat Emet" – would explain our Sages' teaching, "Judge all of the person favorably" (Pirkei Avot 1:6), in this way: At a time when you judge the entire person, when you observe a person from all of his sides – then he will be "favorable," and aspects of merit will be revealed before your eyes. This is the fundamental outlook of the Torah. And you find the exact opposite with the wicked Bilaam: "However, you will see its edge, but not see all of it" (Bamidbar 23:13). Observing the edge, only part of the Nation, without looking at the entirety, obstructs the sight and distorts the image. If it sometimes seems that there is some flaw in the Nation of Israel, it is because you are only looking at a particular issue or an isolated occurrence, without observing the issues with a complete and encompassing perceptiveness. In Parashat Eikev, we find the expression "all of the mitzvah"

(Devarim 8:1), meaning, the entire Torah is one mitzvah, one matter, one complete entity ("The entire Torah is only one Name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, one Name, one utterance, one saying, without any other, which has everything included in it" – Orot Ha-Torah 4, 1). A living being is a complete entity, and we cannot divide it. "Commandment by commandment, commandment by commandment, measure line by measuring live and measure line by measuring line, a bit here and a bit there" (Yeshayahu 28:13) – this is a failed and distorted outlook. One must perceive matters in their unity and in their completeness, in their entire revelation and in all their aspects, and then the Torah is perfect and restores the soul. This is true not only regarding the Torah, but also regarding the Nation and the Land. Just as the Torah, when it is perfect restores the soul, so too the holiness of Israel and the holiness of the Land of Israel, when they are perfect, whole, when we observe them within a whole and all-compassing perceptive, they restore the soul.