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## Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

### The Torah of Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner

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Parashat Vayikra 5768

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Would you like to ask Rav Aviner a question? E-mail [mororly@bezeqint.net](mailto:mororly@bezeqint.net) and the question will be brought to Ha-Rav and I will e-mail you the answer.

## An Attack on the Heart

[These were Rav Aviner's opening thoughts on his Thursday night radio show a few hours after the terrorist attack at Yeshivat Mercaz Ha-Rav, followed by the questions from the show]

The heart of our State has been wounded – the spiritual heart. Mercaz Ha-Rav is the mother of all National-Religious Yeshivot, Zionist Yeshivot and the largest of all of the Yeshivot. It was established by Maran (*Our Revered Teacher*) Ha-Rav Kook to spread a grand vision of the revival of the Nation of Israel in its Land. Any attack is dreadful and all the more so an attack on the heart. This is the yeshiva where I learned and everything within me is from this yeshiva. It is not by chance that they chose this holy place. The forces of evil wanted to attack the heart, even though they will obviously not succeed in their goal. The Nation of Israel is certainly stronger than the forces of evil, and Yeshivat Mercaz Ha-Rav is certainly the strongest of all.

We must remember that we are dealing with an enemy. We are at war. During war we are not merciful to the cruel. One who is merciful to the cruel is cruel to those who require mercy (Tanchuma, Parashat Metzora 1; Yalkut Shimoni Shmuel 1 #121). We are the merciful and they are the cruel, and when you are merciful to the cruel, you are cruel to your brothers and sisters. This is a war like any other war. There is a concept of the total war which means that, while we do not look for wars (we are a Nation which loves peace, searches for peace, and loves all people), if someone attacks us, we respond with all our might. When the enemy simply shaved half of the beards of some of King David's soldiers and tore their clothes, he went to war. In a war, the most important aspect is deterrence. You cannot place a soldier on every square meter. The Rambam in the Moreh Nevuchim (vol. 1 #41) discusses his national philosophy and writes that the secret to security is deterrence. One must therefore strike his enemy with all his might. It makes no sense to provide terrorists, evil people and murderers with electricity, gas and weapons! Are you crazy providing terrorists and murderers with weapons?! The Gemara in Avodah Zarah (15-16) says that it is forbidden to provide regular murderers with weapons, and you give weapons to these people, not only in the past but now. Have you lost your mind?! This mercifulness towards the enemy is harming us. Other

countries understand that we need to fight with all our might. Perhaps they will yell and scream, but they would do that regardless of what we do. I remember a joke – although it is certainly not a night for jokes – from Meir Uziel, a comedian and grandson of former Chief Rabbi Rav Uziel: in the competition for Ms. Ethical among the 200 nations of the world, we always come in last place, since we are the only ones who show up! We must certainly be ethical, but to our brothers, not the enemy. During the Second World War, the Allied power destroyed neighborhood after neighborhood in Berlin, because everyone understood that there was no other way to wage war. Did King Hussein of Jordan deal with Black September with child gloves? No, he killed 17,000 Palestinians and ended his Intifada once and for all. President Assad killed 21,000 Palestinians in one month when there was an uprising in Syria. And when Hamas wanted to take over Gaza, they killed many, many people. This is the language they speak and understand. This is how we must deal with them.

I remember that a terrorist once attacked a woman in Neveh Dekalim. She lay down on the baby carriage to protect her baby, and he stabbed her fifteen times in the back. By some miracle, someone came and shot him and saved her. Later, an unethical reporter interviewed the rescuer on the radio and asked: "How do you feel after killing a person?" He responded: "The thing which I killed was not a person." I remembered this and quoted it various times. I once met someone and I said "shalom." He said: "You don't know me but you quoted me. I am the person who killed that thing which was not a person." I said: "Yashar Koach – Way to go. Your actions followed what the Rambam says in Moreh Nevuchim (vol. 1 #7)." The Rambam discusses the "demons" mentioned in the Gemara. He says that a "demon" looks like a person on the outside, but is a wild animal on the inside. It is more dangerous than a wild animal in that it has intellect. People periodically ask me: Is the theory that we came from animals true? I answer: "I do not know. I was not there. The question, however, does not bother me. What bothers me is whether we have left being animals." We must therefore wage war with strength and courage and strengthen the Nation of Israel in our Land.



### **Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law**

#### "When Adar enters" and the attack on Mercaz Ha-Rav

Question: Our Rabbis say "When the month of Adar enters joy increases." How then could this attack occur on Rosh Chodesh Adar?

Answer: There is no connection. This month of Adar is a month of joy and we are bereft and broken over what has occurred. We have mixed feelings. Educators have called me and said: We are going to go ahead with the activities we planned (many schools have fun events for the beginning of Adar). We will continue to dance and sing because the enemy wants to break our morale, but they will not succeed. Terror cannot destroy a country, but it can lead it to despair. A Chinese aphorism: Kill one person and cause thousands to fear. The principals of the schools said: On the contrary, we will dance and rejoice. They asked: What do you think? I said: You are right, but you should begin with prayer, Tehillim and somber words. Adar is Adar and we are also sad – both. In Parashat Shemini, Aharon's sons are killed during the dedication of the Mishkan and Moshe Rabbenu said: Remove them. Rashi explains: Take the deceased away from the bride. This is the great wedding of the Nation of Israel with the Land of Israel which has continued for more than 120 years. There are highs

and lows during a wedding as the Gemara (Shabbat 130a) says: There is no ketubah without issues. There are precious deceased ones at the wedding and after we mourn we will return to the bride.

#### Harm will not befall one on the way to perform a mitzvah

Q: How could this attack have occurred to yeshiva students while they were learning Torah when we say "Harm will not befall one on the way to perform a mitzvah?"

A: See the Gemara in Pesachim 8b. "Harm will not befall one on the way to perform a mitzvah" is said in regard to an infrequent occurrence. The example given there is one who is checking for chametz and perhaps he should check under rocks. No, he should not check because there may be snakes or scorpions under the rocks. The Gemara asks – how so, harm will not befall one on the way to perform a mitzvah. Answer: This is a frequent occurrence and there is therefore a chance that he may be harmed. Another example: A person has a joint wall with a non-Jewish neighbor, and perhaps he should stick his fingers into the cracks in the wall to search for chametz. No, he should not check because the neighbor may accuse him of witchcraft and causes him terrible problems. The Gemara asks – how so, harm will not befall one on the way to perform a mitzvah. Answer: This is an evil neighbor and it is considered a frequent occurrence. We do not apply this principle when there is a frequent occurrence. This is discussed at length in the book "Mesillat Yesharim" at the end of chapter 9. It is obvious that if a terrorist enters and shoots in every direction this is a frequent occurrence and even people performing a mitzvah are harmed.

#### Birchat Ha-Gomel

Q: I learn at Mercaz Ha-Rav, but was not there during the attack. Should I recite Birchat Ha-Gomel (for having been saved)?

A: No, you were not there.

#### Reciting Tehillim at night

Q: Is it permissible to recite Tehillim at night for those who were injured?

A: It is well known that people say not to recite Tehillim at night, but this is not precise. 1. There is a ruling not to learn Chumash at night brought by the Mishnah Berurah chapter 239 in Shaar Ha-Tziyun #1. This ruling, however, is not in the Gemara, Rambam, Shulchan Aruch and not even in the Mishnah Berurah. From this source, we learn that it is not an obligation, but a stricture based on mysticism. There is also a midrash that when Moshe Rabbenu was in Heaven he learned Chumash during the day and Oral Torah at night. This, however, is a stricture and it is certainly permissible to learn Chumash at night. 2. Many authorities point out that Tehillim is not Chumash, it is Nach – part of the Ketuvim. 3. Reciting Tehillim is not learning Torah, it is prayer. There are therefore three reasons which can be joined together to allow it. Maran Ha-Rav Kook writes in one of his responsa that people sometimes do not use their brains – instead of learning Torah at night, they waste their time. This is certainly not our Rabbis' intention. It is therefore permissible. Furthermore, we do not recite Tehillim on Shabbat for the sick because we do not plead with Hashem on Shabbat. In cases of a life-threatening situation, however, we desecrate Shabbat in that manner and in this case it is therefore permissible to recite Tehillim.

#### Religious-Zionists harmed more often

Q: Why are Religious-Zionists harmed more often than Charedim (Ultra-Orthodox) by terrorists? Perhaps this is a sign that we have erred in our position.

A: On the television station of Hizbullah – Al Manar, they said that Yeshivat Mercaz Ha-Rav was attacked precisely because it produces many soldiers. It is obvious that a combat soldier is harmed more than a soldier in a support unit – although the latter are also important. And someone who goes to the army is obviously harmed more than someone who does not go to the army. And someone who lives in a dangerous place is obviously harmed more than someone who does not live in a dangerous place. They attacked Mercaz Ha-Rav because it produces courageous and strong soldiers. They are therefore afraid of it and with good reason. This is certainly a sign, since the forces of evil always attack the strongest point and that which threatens them the most.

## **Text Message Responsa**

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah" and "Olam Ha-Katan." Here's a sample:

Q: Is it permissible for a yeshiva student to enjoy the benefits from stores or companies for being a yeshiva student or is this prohibited because one should not use the Torah "as a spade with which to dig" (Pirkei Avot 4:5)?

A: It is permissible. See Rambam ibid. and the reason is that stores give discounts to all types of people, not only yeshiva students.

Q: I lost a calculator in class a few months ago and now I found one just like it, can I keep it?

A: You should first announce that you found it for a few months. If no one comes forward, write the details down in a notebook (i.e. what it looks like, approximate value, etc...) and you may use it.

Q: Is it permissible to enter a church to visit and learn? Why or why not?

A: It is forbidden, since Christianity is considered idol worship. The Rambam even rules that it is forbidden to live in a city which has a church (although we do not rule this way).

Q: I lent my father a large amount of money and he has not repaid me in a long time. What should I do?

A: You may request it with humility. Obviously, it is a different if they are poor and are strapped for money.

Q: I will be in the army for Purim. How can I perform the mitzvah of mishloach manot?

A: You can send it to another soldier, even from that which you receive from Tzahal.



## Stories of Rabbenu – Our Rabbi

### Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

#### The Struggle Over the Land of Israel – Part 1

After the Six-Day War, our Rabbi placed the issue of the wholeness of the Land of Israel at the forefront of his public activities. He repeated over and over that it is a clear Torah prohibition to give any territory of the Land of Israel to non-Jews. He wrote and publicized

hundreds of letters and proclamations, in calls to the public and the heads of the State - since he remained in close contact with them – to stand firmly for the wholeness of the Land and settling in all parts of the Land.

Our Rabbi distributed many broadsides on the subject of our holding on to the Land of Israel. He never based his argument on issues of security with the Arabs; the broadsides were always built on Torah foundations:

1. "Do not show them favor" (Devarim 7:2) - Do not give them a holding in the Land (Avodah Zarah 20a).
2. "The Land shall not be sold in perpetuity" (Vayikra 25:23).
3. Annulling the mitzvot dependent on the Land.
4. A legal argument that the Land not only belongs to those who live there now, but to all of the Jews in the past, present and future. Therefore no one has the authority to forfeit parts of the Land of Israel to the non-Jews, and there can be no referendum on Yehudah and Shomron, just as there can be no referendum on any mitzvah in the Torah. He also emphasized the need for self-sacrifice for the Land of Israel which should ideally be self-sacrifice in life.

The first broadside was "Do Not Tremble" after the Six-Day War. Our Rabbi told the students: "You are to close the Gemara now and go out for a few weeks to distribute this broadside in the entire breadth of the Land." The broadside was distributed in thousands of copies throughout the world, translated into English and even Arabic. This broadside was written after the Six-Day War in light of the discussion of the Government about relinquishing parts of the Land which were conquered. Those who supported the idea of the Greater Land of Israel signed a different document, with the statement that now all of the Land of Israel has returned to our control. Our Rabbi refused to sign it because the East Bank of the Jordan was still not under our control. He therefore wrote his own document. (Sefer Eretz Ha-Tzvi, pg. 19)

To the claims that he placed exaggerated importance to the issue of the Land of Israel, our Rabbi responded, "The words of our Sages are holy that the mitzvah of settling the Land of Israel is equivalent to all of the mitzvot of the Torah" (Letter, Iyar 5735).

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