



Rav Aviner on...

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Letter to a Soldier's Wife

[From "Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah" – Parashat Shemot – translated by R. Blumberg]

This letter is addressed to the soldier's wife, the officer's wife, to the woman who guards the home, who educates the children, who misses her husband.

Your husband is facing the fire of battle. He is not mentally free to worry. He has no time to fear. So you fear enough for the two of you together! But you have to realize that G-d will not abandon His people. He never did in the past, and He never will in the future, especially in these times, when He has decided to bring salvation to His people, through the rebuilding of the Land, the return to Zion, the establishment of the state and the wars of Israel. "Listen, Israel, today you are about to wage war against your enemies. Do not be faint-hearted, do not be afraid, do not panic, and do not break ranks before them. Hashem your G-d is the One who is going with you. He will fight for you against your enemies, and He will deliver you" (Devarim 20:3-4). We are not alone. This is not a war of conquest of a foreign power, but a war of defense, a war that is a mitzvah, a war of G-d. Whoever does a mitzvah enjoys G-d's protection. And what greater mitzvah is there than to save the Jewish People, to save the Land and to sanctify G-d's great Name? Performing such a mitzvah is a recipe for a long life.

We believe in Divine providence. The Master-of-the-Universe is the One who decides on every detail of a person's life, let alone his very existence. We therefore go off to war with joy, strength and valor. And the same lot of him who goes off to war is shared by his wife who sits at home (see I Shmuel 30:24). That spiritual strength leads to national fortitude, and that national fortitude to military valor. Military valor is for men, but spiritual strength and national fortitude belong to women as well, such as the Prophetess Devorah, who imbued the Nation with strength and valor.

The military front defends the rear and draws strength from it. We are a stiff-necked people, chiefly in a positive sense of unswerving devotion to the truth, as the Maharal writes in Netzach Yisrael. Our army is strong and mighty, it must claim victory, and it will. In every home there is a little Prophetess Devorah, whose husband tells her, [as the General Barak said to Devorah], "If you go with me I will go, and if you don't, I won't" (Shoftim 4:8). And you accompany your husband all along the way.

An American soldier wears a steel helmet, with a soft scarf under it, containing his wife's perfume. You don't need that. Your gentle fragrance accompanies your husband everywhere. You say to him, "This is the day on which G-d has placed Sisera in your hand" (ibid., verse 14). Regarding the words, "When breaches are made in Israel, when the people offer themselves willingly, bless Hashem" (5:2), Metzudat David comments that it is due to this combination, the wickedness of our enemies' making breaches in Israel, coupled with our soldiers' volunteering, that we enjoy G-d's blessing. "Hashem dominated the strong for me" (5:13). It is G-d who grants strength. And you, the soldier's wife, "come to G-d's aid" (ibid., verse 23). You are a partner in G-d's handiwork. Therefore, "So may perish all Your enemies, O Hashem; but His beloved shall be as the sun when it goes forth in its might" (verse 31). This refers to the love between G-d and us, and the love between you and your husband. That love is fiercer than all the wickedness of Gaza's demons of death (see Shir Ha-Shirim 8:6).



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