



## On the Air with Rav Aviner - #69

From Ha-Rav's weekly radio programs in Israel

---

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

Visit our blog: [www.ravaviner.com](http://www.ravaviner.com)

Questions in this issue:

1. Rachel Imenu (Our foremother Rachel) in the Gaza War Against Hamas
2. Satmar Chasidim and Neturei Karta
3. "One who is fearful and fainthearted"
4. Setting the Yahrtzeit
5. Donation for a wedding
6. The obligation of "Sheva Berachot"

### Rachel Imenu (Our foremother Rachel) in the Gaza War Against Hamas

[Q&A from Rav Aviner's video blog]

Question: Rumors have spread about a woman presenting herself as our foremother Rachel appearing to Tzahal soldiers and warning them of explosives, booby-trapped houses and terrorist ambushes within the Gaza Strip during the war. Is this true?

Answer: In truth, Rachel Imenu was certainly with us during our long Exile as the Maharal explained in his book "Netzach Yisrael" (end of chap. 1 and beginning of chap. 34). He wrote that Rachel is the power that sustained the Nation of Israel during the course of the Exile and returned us to our Land as it says: "Withhold your voice from crying...and your children will return to their border" (Yirmiyahu 31:15-16). And Rashi explained at the beginning of Parashat Va-Yechi (Bereshit 48:7): Why wasn't Rachel buried in the Cave of Machpelah or even in Beit Lechem, but by the side of the road? In order for her to protect the Nation of Israel while we were on the way. This is the inner power which binds the Nation together. After all, it is a miracle and wonder that we were able to remain steadfast for two thousand years in the Exile. We were a lamb among seventy wolves and we are now returning to our Land. But regarding the idea that Rachel personally revealed herself to this person or that person, on such matters it is said: "A fool will believe anything." There are

two types of extremism: one type of extremism is to deny miracles, and another type of extremism is to believe that when someone tells you about a miracle that there really was one. We need to check. It is possible that they may have been imagining. Sometimes a person imagines things, even a sane person. Sometimes one is under pressure, tired, hungry, and thinks he sees something that isn't there, and later fosters it in his memory. This is called FMS – false memory syndrome. It may have been a non-Jewish woman. There are also good Arab women – not all of them are, but there are some. And maybe someone dreamed up this idea to strengthen faith, and to say: "You see? There are people that go to war and there are people that don't go to war but they pray, and Rachel came to save us on account of their merit." Therefore, we need proof for such matters. There were soldiers who fell in battle and Rachel was not there. There were also soldiers who won battles due to their great dedication and wisdom and courageousness to fight, and Rachel was not there. This means that Rachel was not there in the image of a woman guiding them and telling them go this way or that way, shoot here or shoot there. But Rachel was certainly there in the sense in which we explained: the inner power which sustains the Nation of Israel and returns us to our Land. [There was a news story that Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Mordechai Eliyahu prayed for Rachel Imenu to help. Rav Aviner gave this answer before this story has spread about Rav Eliyahu.]

#### Satmar Chasidim and Neturei Karta

Q: How should we relate to Satmar Chasidim and Neturei Karta who pray for the downfall of Israel when we are at war?

A: First of all, it is not certain that it is all Satmar Chasidim and all Neturei Karta. We need to be very careful about making generalizations, which is something which Anti-Semites do. I am sure that there are many Satmar Chasidim who do not think this way and many Neturei Karta who do not think this way. And if you ask them, they will respond that those who act this way are "meshugena – crazy" and they do not represent anyone. Regarding those who do pray for the downfall of Israel, who protest against Israel and who meet with the President of Iran, they are "meshugena." They are confused. In the language of Halachah, they are "Tinokot She-nishbu" (literally Jewish children captured and raised among non-Jews). The Rambam explains in Hilchot Mamrim (3:3) that a "tinok she-nishba" is a Jew who did not receive a proper Jewish upbringing and education. Even though he sees other people acting differently, he is captive to his education. I do not understand how someone can be so confused but people are sometimes filled with distorted views. He lives in a closed society and everyone sustains one other. As a result, it is a situation in which one cannot liberate himself. They are truly confused. We therefore need to pray that Hashem illuminates their eyes and they repent.

### "One who is fearful and fainthearted"

Q: What does a soldier do if he is afraid to go into war?

A: Although in an optional war "one who is fearful and fainthearted" may remain at home, we are now in an obligatory war and "one who is fearful and fainthearted" also goes to battle. But why would we want "one who is fearful and fainthearted" in battle? Answer: When the Land of Israel is in danger and the Nation of Israel is in danger, a person who is weak also says: "I have courage!" It is true that a soldier is sometimes scared, but this is until he shoots the first bullet and then he is filled with strength and courage. He has no time to be scared. He is constantly active. A person once caused some mayhem on the Temple Mount and there were a multitude of Arabs on the street. At that exact time, I was driving by the Old City with other people in the back. The Arabs attacked the car, broke the windows and started to hit me inside the car. I continued driving in a zigzag between the Arabs. I arrived at the Dung Gate, turned off the car, took out the key and promptly fainted. I woke up in the hospital with a pleasant doctor with a kippah and a short, pointy beard stitching my head. I said: "What a miracle that I passed out after I stopped the car. If I would have fainted before that, they would have slaughtered me and the others." He said: "It is not a miracle. When a person is exerting effort, he will not pass out. When he finishes exerting effort, he passes out." A person in the midst of a war is therefore not emotionally free to be scared. He is trembling with fear when he is waiting to go into battle because he is not doing anything. When he is active, he is not worried because he is doing something.

### Setting the Yahrtzeit

Q: When is the first yahrtzeit: on the day of death or the day of the burial?

A: In Israel, the maximum time between the death and burial is a day. Therefore, the first Yahrtzeit should also be on the day on the death. Outside of Israel, there is sometimes a delay of three days for various reasons. If this is the case, the first Yahrtzeit should be observed on the day of the burial. If there was only a day or two between the death and burial, it is considered close to the death and the Yahrtzeit should be on the day of the death.

### Donation for a wedding

Q: If someone does not have money for Shabbat or a wedding, should he collect donations?

A: He certainly should not collect donations. Collecting donations is only legitimate for necessary needs like food or medicine, but not for non-essential things. This is written at the end of the Mishnah in Pe'ah (8:9): "Anyone who does not need (to take tzedakah) and does so anyway will not leave this world before being in need of other people (because he is poor); and anyone who needs to take (tzedakah) and does not do so will not die from old age

before supporting others from what he has acquired." This means that a person should not ask for donations for extras. The Gemara says: "Make your Shabbat like a weekday and do not require [the help] of others" (Shabbat 118a, Pesachim 112-113), i.e. it is better to eat simple food such as bread and salt than to receive tzedakah. But if he does not have anything to eat, he should ask for tzedakah. The same applies for a wedding; a person needs to get married but he does not have to make a fancy wedding if he does not have the money to do so. I have friends who do not have a lot of money. one made a wedding in a nice outside area and brought sandwiches and the entire wedding cost 50 shekels. Another friend invited ten of us to the building of the Rabbinate which has a small hall. We drank coke and ate some cake and the entire wedding cost 20 shekels. Getting married is a mitzvah, but there is no obligation to have a fancy wedding. In Jerusalem in the Old Settlement as well as in Poland, people were poor and they made a wedding an hour before Shabbat, then davened ma'ariv and ate their Shabbat meal which was also the wedding meal. If a person wants to live with extras it is a personal decision, but living with extras with other people's money is unheard of.

#### The obligation of "Sheva Berachot"

Q: Is there an obligation to make "Sheva Berachot"?

A: There is no mitzvah to make "Sheva Berachot." "The purpose of the "Sheva Berachot" is to bring joy to the groom and bride and there is no obligation to make "Sheva Berachot" at every meal and twice a day. Sometimes a couple wants to have one "Sheva Berachot" with family, another with the groom's friends, another with the bride's friends, etc... In earlier times, as written by the Chatam Sofer in his responsa (Even Ha-Ezer #123) people would only make one "Sheva Berachot" at the wedding meal. A groom once had "Sheva Berachot" on Shabbat and everyone mocked him. In other words, there is no obligation to organize "Sheva Berachot" rather if there are ten men who gather together to bring joy to a groom and bride then they say "Sheva Berachot." The deciding principle is how to bring joy to the bride and groom.

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing "On the Air"



**Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim** P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528  
[www.ateret.org.il](http://www.ateret.org.il) To subscribe, send e-mail to: [mororly@bezeqint.net](mailto:mororly@bezeqint.net)

