



Beha'alotecha 5769

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

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Who is the Gadol Ha-Dor (leading Rabbi of the generation)?

[Opening words of Ha-Rav on his radio show]

People are always saying: This Rabbi is the Gadol Ha-Dor or that Rabbi is the Gadol Ha-Dor, etc... Who is the Gadol Ha-Dor? The problematic word is not the word "Gadol – great," we know who the great Torah scholars are. The problematic word is "Ha-Dor – the generation." What is the meaning of "the generation"? Would a great Rabbi of one generation be the leader of another generation? Our Sages explain that Hashem showed the leaders and sages of each and every generation to Moshe Rabbenu until the time of the Messiah, as it says in Shir Ha-Shirim (1:8), "Follow the footsteps of the sheep (ikvei ha-tzon)" (Yalkut Shimoni, Shir Ha-Shirim #982). We learn from this that each generation has leaders which are appropriate for it. The leader of the generation is the right man in the right place at the right time. Everything is therefore dependent on the generation. The Vilna Gaon wrote in his book "Even Sheleimah" (chap. 11) that each generation has its virtues and its limitations, as well as the repentance it must perform based on the way Hashem is directing the world during its time. Each generation is directed differently. There was the generation of leaving Egypt, the generation of wandering in the desert, the generation of entering the Land of Israel, the generation of the Tana'im (the Rabbis of the Mishnah), the generation of the Amora'im (the Rabbis of the Gemara), the generation of leaving the Land and the generation of returning to the Land. Each generation has its role, challenges, obligations, and trials. When we want to speak about who is the Gadol Ha-Dor, we must therefore define the generation.

What is unique about our generation? Anyone who asks this question displays a lack of understanding. Our generation is unique as it is the generation of revival. Haven't you noticed that the Land which was destroyed is now blooming like the garden of Hashem? Maybe it is happenstance? – It is not happenstance! It is the hand of Hashem. And haven't you notice that the Land which was empty is now filled with millions of Jews? By chance? - It is not by chance! And haven't you noticed that in the Exile we were enslaved to the non-Jews and now we are free? And haven't you noticed that in each and every generation the non-Jews rose up to destroy us and now we have an army? - And let us see what happens if our enemies rise up. And you haven't noticed that the economy is strong? And haven't you

noticed that the Torah is flourishing in the Land of Israel? You therefore see that Hashem has decided to return his Divine Presence to Zion. Someone who does not see this does not know this generation and cannot lead the generation. He may be able to lead another generation, but not this generation.

Maran (our revered teacher) Ha-Rav Kook wrote in his letters (#378 and this famous letter also appears at the beginning of his work *Orot Ha-Teshuvah*) that there is a need to write a book of repentance which is appropriate for this generation. Someone who wants to write an innovative work about repentance with holiness and awe of Hashem can do so, but if he does not see the Revealed Redemption and the light of salvation shining, he is not able to bring out the truth of the Torah. This means that someone may be a great Torah scholar and an extremely righteous person, but if he does not notice that Hashem is doing something with this generation, he does not know this generation. It is therefore not by coincidence that the first book that Maran Ha-Rav Kook wrote when he made aliyah is called "Ikvei Ha-Tzon" (Footsteps of the Sheep). "If you do not know the beauty of the women" (*Shir Ha-Shirim* 1:8), i.e. if you do not know how to help this generation repent and how to lead them, "follow the footsteps of the sheep (*ibid.*)," i.e. you must understand the generation. The Torah – and any Torah ruling – must be based on two things: Knowledge of Torah, which is the essence, and knowledge of the reality around you. There is a story about a rabbi who was learning Torah with his father-in-law, who was a great Torah scholar. They would learn, and if someone came with a question, the great Torah scholar would answer and they would return to learning. The great Torah scholar once went out for a bit and a woman entered with a question about her piece of meat. The son-in-law said: "Wait, wait, I am not the Rav, he will be back in an hour." The woman said: "I can't wait. My children are waiting to eat. I need an answer." He had mercy, looked at the meat, found a contradiction between two laws in the *Shulchan Aruch*, came up with a solution, compared it to another ruling and gave a ruling. Just then, the great Torah scholar entered. The rabbi said: "Father-in-law, this lady came in with a liver, I looked at this meat, found a contradiction between these two laws in the *Shulchan Aruch*, came up with this solution, compared it to this particular law and ruled this way." The father-in-law said: "Very good. There is only one problem: That is not a liver, it is a spleen." A Torah ruling has two parts: knowledge of Torah and knowledge of the reality. Maran Ha-Rav Kook wrote in that letter that someone who does not see the light of salvation shining cannot reach the truth of the Torah.

Therefore, if we ask: who is the *Gadol Ha-Dor*? He is the great Rabbi of this generation, the one who knows and understands this generation, the generation of the most horrible catastrophe and the generation of the greatest revival. He is the unique Divine messenger to lead this generation. Baruch Hashem, there are many great Rabbis and we are happy about this fact, but Rav Kook is the *Gadol Ha-Dor*. The teachings of Maran Ha-Rav Kook comprise a system for building the generation which is reviving our Nation in our Land and teaching us how to insert a soul into this revival – a difficult task. One needs patience, as this revival progresses slowly and it can take generations. Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, said that his father is not only the leader of this generation, but the leader of generations. And we hold on to the coattails of Maran Ha-Rav Kook and our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, and continue to toil in the work of the national revival in our Land until the Complete Redemption arrives.



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: What is the halachic problem with boys growing long hair?

A: There are three Torah prohibitions: 1. It is an impediment between one's head and Tefillin, and it causes a blessing recited in vain when putting on Tefillin. 2. Following the ways of the non-Jews (which includes acts of conceit and haughtiness). 3. "Lo Tilbash" (the prohibition of men dressing or appearing as women).

Q: I am 16 years old and I have begun a relationship with a boy and I am concerned that it will develop into something more serious. What is Ha-Rav's opinion about having a boyfriend at this age?

A: Since you are not at a marriageable age for a few years, it is certainly not appropriate. See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch of Ha-Rav Shlomo Ganzfried 152:8-9.

Q: Is it permissible to watch a movie which shows a woman wearing short sleeves? For example, if I watch a comedy because it is funny and not to see the woman.

A: Try not to look at her.

Q: I am taking a lot of exams now and feel great pressure that I will fail. I cry a lot and am in despair. Is this a lack of faith?

A: This is not a lack of faith since it is not against Hashem. But it is always good to recite Tehillim.

Q: Is it an obligation to keep on one's Tefillin during a Dvar Torah after davening? At yeshiva, is it respectful to remove my Tefillin when the Rosh Yeshiva is giving a Dvar Torah?

A: Is it not an obligation. You have to ask the Rosh Yeshiva since there are different opinions.

Q: Is it permissible to eat a sandwich in the street? How about an ice cream?

A: No, just as it is forbidden to eat in the market. Eat on the side.

Q: If a Tzahal soldier is killed by friendly fire, do we still say Hy"d (Hashem Yinachem Damo – May Hashem revenge his blood – as we do for Jews killed by non-Jews)?

A: We should say it, since it occurred because of our enemies.

Q: Is it permissible to have my two year old wear tzitzit even though he is still in diapers?

A: It is permissible. After all, an adult also wears tzitzit in the bathroom.

Q: Is there an obligation to give Tzedakah to anyone who asks?

A: Only if they prove that they are poor. 90% of them are charlatans.

Q: Is it permissible to charge a cell phone in shul?

A: It is permissible; the amount of money involved for the use of the electricity is negligible. Some authorities say it is forbidden because of respect for a shul.

Q: If I am given a counterfeit coin in a store, can I use it?

A: No, only in that store.

Q: My good friend is marrying a non-Jew, and if I do not attend the wedding, she will be offended.

A: It is certainly forbidden to attend. We do not strengthen those who are transgressing. Perhaps she may be hurt, but those transgressing do not have a monopoly on being offended.

Q: Is it preferable to daven with a minyan on a train or on my own afterwards?

A: With a minyan.

Q: If I am full, should I eat what is left in order to prevent "Bal Tashchit" (wanton destroying)?

A: No. "Bal Tashchit" of the body is more important.

Q: Do mitzvot between people, such as honoring mother and father, require "kavannah" (proper intention)?

A: They have great value even without proper intention.

Stories of Rabbenu — Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook

The Struggle Against Missionaries

Our Rabbi waged war against the missionaries. He was a leader of the struggle and the headquarters was centered in his house. Everyone in the country knew that the most attentive ear was found with him, and he urged activity, obviously in conjunction with others.

A Christian missionary from Tiveria would come regularly, and our Rabbi would have him as a guest in his house. The students told him that they could not tolerate him, but our Rabbi sacrificed himself for this cause (by inviting him), because this missionary, out of friendship, would relate to him all of their information. Our Rabbi would pass this information on to "Chever Ha-Pe'ilim" (an organization to protect against missionaries), and as a result many people were saved.

A protest against the missionaries was organized by one of the prize students of the Yeshiva. The protest was illegal, and the protesters were arrested. The next morning our Rabbi's voice thundered against the organizer: "In my darkest dream, I never dreamed about violating the law." After the verdict, the students decided not to pay the fine and to be incarcerated. They were imprisoned in the Damon Jail on Mount Carmel. Our Rabbi went to visit them and upon entering the cafeteria – after everyone calmed down - he said: "One who sees houses of Israel in their inhabited state says: Blessed is the One who establishes the widow's boundary." He generally recited this blessing immediately upon arrival at a new community but when there was the possibility of "publicizing the miracle" [in a multitude of people] he delayed the blessing. This time, he said: "My visit to this place is not because of joyous circumstances, but we must remember that even a jail is an expression of the sovereignty of the Nation of Israel over its Land." And he continued with the words of the Gemara in Berachot (58b): "One who sees houses of Israel in their inhabited state..." and recited the blessing with Hashem's Name and Kingship: "Blessed are you...who establishes the widow's boundary." (Gadol Shimushah p. 38 #1)

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Missionary Literature

Q: I received literature in my mailbox from Jews for Jesus. While I would like to throw it straight in the garbage, I saw that the booklet contains G-d's name. What should I do with it?

A: It should be thrown in the garbage. [MF – note: I have personally seen Rav Aviner act this way during a talk on the subject in the yeshiva!]



Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for

the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

Engagement

Mazel Tov on your engagement! There are three levels of engagement (based on Hoshea 2:21-22):

1. *I will betroth you to me – forever: You are not marrying on condition, but forever. All of the difficulties and conflicts do not undermine this connection. Even if a friend sins, he still remains a friend. This is an eternal connection.*
2. *I will betroth you to me – with kindness, justice, kindness and mercy: Good character traits, good relations. A simple and sincere friendship. Gentleness. "Love your fellow as yourself."*
3. *I will betroth you to me – with fidelity: Mutual trust. Mutual openness. Not contradictory worlds, exploitation and egotism but a true partnership and in-depth communication. Not the quantity of discussion but the quality. Shared experiences, shared thoughts, opinions and outlooks. Partnership in joy. Two who are one.*

*From Rav Aviner's Commentary on Birkat Ha-Mazon,
entitled Shir Ha-Ma'a Lot*

In the days of Mattityahu - addition for Chanukah

It is lucky that the Hasmoneans did not ask politicians, because if they had they would have told them that one must consider the possible international pressure in the overall plan, and they would have sat and deliberated and deliberated.

It is lucky that they did not ask too many military strategists and experts, because they would have told them that there is no chance of delivering "the strong into the hands of the weak," and they would have broken their spirit.

It is lucky that they did not ask statisticians, because they would have revealed to them the secret that we are "the few against the many," and they would have been afraid of the demographic demon.

They also did not ask too many heads of Yeshivot, because if they had, they would have ruled that it is forbidden to cause nullification of Torah learning by yeshiva students who engage in

Torah study, and then there would have not be a delivering of "the heretics into the hands of those involved in Your Torah."

They also did not ask too many Rabbis, because if they had they would have told them, it is forbidden to challenge the nations of the world, and that we do not rely on a miracle, especially where there is a real potential for danger, etc..., etc...

They also did not ask the humanists, because they would have revealed to them the secret that one soul of Israel is worth more than a few kilometers of land and is more costly for the Nation.

They certainly did not ask those who are pure-of-heart, because they would have depressed their spirit, and preached to them that it is not proper to kill or to be killed.

They did not ask deep thinkers, because – within the midst of great depth - they would have confused them and stopped them with discussions of the order of priorities: Perhaps the Nation takes precedence, etc..., etc...

They did not ask the pacifists, because they would have opened their eyes to the greatness of peace, and that one should never use violence, and that goodwill will resolve everything.

They did not ask too many questions, but they fulfilled their national and spiritual obligation and jumped into the lion's den, with amazing self-sacrifice into the great battle which saved Israel. And then all of the politicians, all of the strategists, all of the statisticians, all of the heads of Yeshivot, all of the Rabbis, all of the humanists, all of the pure-of-heart, all of the thinkers and all of the pacifists became sages after the fact, and they lit Chanukah lights as a remembrance of the victory, and these lights illuminate our lives from those days until this time.

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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

