



Vaetchanan 5769

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

Visit our blog: www.ravaviner.com

Would you like to ask Rav Aviner a question? E-mail mororly@bezeqint.net

Four Years Later

A collection of "Text Message Responsa" before, during and after the Expulsion from Gush Katif which highlight the emotions, difficulties, and stresses which were experiences and many still experience (From Aturei Cohanim # 254)

Q: Is it permissible to damage army vehicles and similar things in order to prevent the expulsion?

A: God forbid. It is not a personal vehicle. It is needed for protection. This also distances the Nation from the Land of Israel.

Q: Is there reason to head in the direction of the Gush?

A: It is a great mitzvah, but without confrontation with security forces.

Q: Is a son obligated to help his parents pack in Gush Katif because of honoring father and mother, or is he allowed to refuse?

A: He is required to help, even if he thinks this is a mistake, on account on the law of helping parents. He is at least obligated to go beyond the letter of the law.

Q: I have seen horrible scenes. How do I strengthen myself?

A: The Land of Israel is acquired through suffering, but this is true acquisition.

Q: I completely despair of trying to stop the disengagement. I am in the Gush a week, I am trying, but it seems lost, how do I strengthen and encourage myself?

A: Take an example from the residents of the Gush who have been there for twenty years and hold their ground. Even if a sharp sword rests on one's neck he should not despair from mercy. If The Holy One, Blessed Be He, decides to perform a miracle, we are obligated to be here, in order that someone will be able to receive it. And there is hope even within the ways of nature.

Q: What about refusing an order?

A: Do not refuse an order, but do not take initiative.

Q: Is it permissible to begin packing?

A: Yes, in order not to lose possessions. Righteous people's money is dear to them.

Q: What should we do when the Army comes to the settlement? What is our goal? To stop by force? Protest?

A: Protest by force will not work. Only light will win.

Q: The spiritual situation is declining and I am beginning to fall apart since the struggle is not progressing.

A: We must perform our obligation and Hashem will do what is proper in His eyes.

Q: My strength is totally leaving me. This living from night to night; perhaps it is better for me to sit at home and learn Torah.

A: Yes, since the essence of the struggle is spiritual and it is a long one.

Q: What is the benefit of heading south at this stage? Especially since the struggle is much deeper and lengthier.

A: It is best to learn Torah. Second best is to engage in face-to-face meetings, since at its foundation, this is a spiritual struggle.

Q: A person who evacuates, does his wine turn to forbidden wine (yayin nesech - wine touched by an idol-worshipper or a heretical Jew) since the Land of Israel is more strict than Shabbat (Orach Chaim 306:11), and this is also a public act?

A: It does not turn [to forbidden wine] for various reasons.

Q: If they arrest me, should I identify myself and cooperate with the investigators, or should I reserve the right to remain silent?

A: Cooperate. They are not enemies. This is our police.

Q: Is it permissible to sleep in an orchard which belongs to someone else?

A: If you can definitely assume that he would agree.

Q: How many prohibitions does a person violate who lights a garbage can on fire?

A: He definitely violates various ones.

Q: Should we try to block the evacuation with physical force or already leave from the Gush today?

A: Remain as long as possible without using physical force.

Q: I am twenty years old. Should I listen to my parents, or prevent the evacuation of the Land of Israel which is equal to all of the other mitzvot.

A: Work for the sake of the Land of Israel but without confrontation.

Q: Should we march to Kisufim (border crossing into Gush Katif), when there is a good chance of being arrested?

A: Do not do things for which you will be arrested.

Q: A group is organizing to go to Kisufim to block the access road. I am a young woman. Is it modest for me to go?

A: The essential thing is not to provoke confrontation with the security forces.

Q: I am not able to go to Kisufim. What should I do?

A: Stand in any place in the Land on the side of the road in a legal manner and protest.

Q: Should young women lie down on the road in order to block the access road?

A: This is definitely self-sacrifice, but for a young woman it is immodest.

Q: If my parents do not want me to go to the Gush?

A: Promise that you will not do anything illegal and report to them about everything.

Q: If I remain in the Gush I will have a terrible broken soul. Should I remain?

A: If there is danger to one's soul, leave.

Q: How should we act at this moment?

A: We should do what we are commanded, and Hashem will do what is proper in His eyes.

Q: There are those who want to puncture the tires of the vehicles to block the expulsion. Is this good?

A: This is not good. Explain to your friends, but without arguing.

Q: Should we remove the mezuzot?

A: Yes, so that they do not fall into the hands of the murderers.

Q: Should we remove the children from the Gush?

A: From the beginning, they should remain as long as possible, since they are partners, unless we are discussing overly difficult scenes.

Q: Is it permissible to damage the army equipment or civilian equipment which they brought?

A: It is forbidden to damage the possession of another! This also will not help.

Q: As young women performing National Service (performed by religious in place of Army service), can we aid the expelled families in hotels, on behalf of "Sela" – the Disengagement Authority?

A: It is a great mitzvah, but do not say that you are on behalf of "Sela," so that they will trust you.

Q: Where are the results of all of the prayers, Tehillim and self-sacrifice?

A: Do not make your prayers demands (From Mishnah Berachot) – to say that The Holy One, Blessed Be He, is obligated to grant your request - rather they should be supplications. And do not engage in self-sacrifice for a miracle to occur (Rashi on the verse "I will be sanctified amongst the children of Israel").

Q: If I am not there, am I required to tear my garment (as a sign of mourning)?

A: Yes. Recite the blessing "Dayan Ha-Emet" (Blessed is the True Judge) as on bad tidings.

Q: I am not a resident. Is it preferable to leave willingly and without a criminal record?

A: Without a record, because this disturbs the worship of Hashem.

Q: Should one tear his garment upon seeing the sights on television?

A: Yes, as on bad tidings. And recite the blessing "Dayan Ha-Emet" with Hashem's Name and Kingdom.

Q: Is it permissible to throw sand in the eyes of the soldiers who are trying to climb on the roof?

A: God forbid!! How did you think of this!!

Q: Is it permissible to leave with the soldiers without protesting?

A: It is permissible. This is not called willingly.

Q: I am a young woman. If a policewoman or female soldier comes to evacuate me, should I leave or protest?

A: It is possible to leave or allow them to escort you but without struggle.

Q: Should one tear his garment and bless "Dayan Ha-Emet" on a Jewish settlement which has been destroyed? On every settlement?

A: One time on all of them, since everything is one destruction. Perhaps one is not required to tear one's garment, but this is the ruling of the Rabbis of the Gush. One is obligated to recite the blessing "Dayan Ha-Emet" as on bad tidings.

Q: Is a soldier who comes to evacuate also required to tear his garment?

A: Yes. It is permissible to tear one's Tzahal uniform since they gave it to him for his own use, and acting according to the Halachah is included in this use, as Ha-Gaon Rav Shlomo Goren ruled.

Q: I am 17 years old. Which book should I learn in light of the situation?

A: Mesillat Yesharim (Path of the Just) and Chovot Levavot (Duties of the Heart) - Sha'ar Ha-Bitachon (Gate of Trust) and Sha'ar Ha-Keni'ah (Gate of Humility).

Q: Should we protest the evacuation by the Army with forceful means, such as throwing stones at soldiers, so that they will thus remember that there was self-sacrifice?

A: God forbid that one should injure soldiers! And self-sacrifice – those who live there have years upon years of self-sacrifice.

Q: Is it permissible to join a minyan of "Yasamnikim" (Police unit trained to evacuate the Jews)?

A: Certainly. What a question!

Q: Is it permissible to help disperse a "hot" situation (between protesters and soldiers)?

A: It is a great mitzvah to help save.

Q: A great Rabbi said in the last few weeks that the Disengagement will not come to pass. It is somewhat difficult for me to understand how this fits with the reality.

A: I did not hear this. I also do not understand. But if he said this, perhaps his intention was to strengthen the struggle.

Q: The public needs to hear the words of the Rabbis, since people feel terrible and that they have been betrayed, and they only hear the words of the media all day.

A: Correct. But since the Rabbis are not given a place in the media, you must turn to them.

Q: Is it permissible to pray that Ariel Sharon dies?

A: Don't ask questions of this type which will be answered that it is forbidden.

Q: This is Torah and this is its reward?! The beginning of the sprouting of our Redemption?!

A: There is justice and there is a Judge but not so quickly.

Q: Is it permissible to listen to music during these days of expulsion?

A: Each according to his feelings.

Q: How should we relate to the Prime Minister?

A: As an Evil one. But do not hate.

Q: Is it permissible to use part of Ma'asar Kesafim (tzedakah money) for the purchase of candy and activities for the expelled children of the Gush?

A: Definitely.

Q: Is a soldier or officer an evil person? A member of Knesset?

A: Not a soldier or officer - he is torn between ethics and an order. A member of Knesset is free, and if he voted to throw people into the street, he is an evil person.

Q: Should one join the convoy on foot which is leaving in the direction of Chomesh and Sa-Nur (in the Shomron which were also slated for expulsion)?

A: Yes, but do not endanger yourself by entering Arab villages, because this is actual danger to life.

Q: Is it proper for a person during these days of expulsion to refrain from marital relations?

A: It is a personal decision of both members of a couple together.

Q: I suggest changing the Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel, and in place of "And send Your light and Your truth to its leaders, its ministers and its counselors," to say: "Remove the Government of malice and establish a Government of faith" and similar things.

A: Do not change the version. It is therefore preferable to add this version at the end. It is, however, better not to change anything because now this is our Government, and we should therefore pray that Hashem sends His light and truth, in order that it not perform nonsense. This automatically includes the transformation from a Government of malice to a Government of truth.

Q: I tore my clothes over the destruction of Gush Katif, am I obligated to leave this shirt on for a few days?

A: We are not obligated, as for other relatives. For one's father and mother, one tears on the left side, and is required to leave it on for the whole week, and if he changes clothes, he tears again because the mitzvah is to see the tear. For other relatives, one tears on the right side, and it is permissible to change the clothes, because the mitzvah is to tear.

Q: When they expel us should we uproot fruit trees because of "Do not show them favor" ("Lo techanem" - Devarim 7:2), so they do not fall into the hands of the murderers?

A: There is a prohibition of wanton destruction (bal tashchit). And there is also a spiritual danger (in destroying fruit trees). And who is the one who violates "Do not show them favor" - this is the Government. We leave trees out of the complete faith that we will return.

Q: Should we burn the flag of the State?

A: God forbid. The flag is completely fine, the Prime Minister is not fine.

Q: I do not believe in the Supreme Court, the Government or the Police. How can I send my son to the Army?

A: The Prime Minister expelled us from Gush Katif and from Northern Shomron. Don't allow him to expel us from the Army. On the contrary, we will show him that this is the Army of all of us.

Q: Is it permissible for a soldier to protect those that engage in destroying houses in Gush Katif?

A: Yes, to our distress, he must always protect a Jew in any situation.

Q: From where does the encouragement flow during broken times?

A: From what remains and not what is broken.

Q: I am not succeeding in focusing in learning Torah.

A: This is because you are mourning.

Q: The expulsion has opened within me a deep wound. Is it permissible for me to engage in something extreme which will injure me?

A: Increase extreme Torah learning.

Q: For a few months, I joined a community in Gush Katif with my family. We lived in a house of the Office of Housing Development, and we used water and electricity. Are we obligated to pay?

A: You are not the one who should be asking these questions, rather the secretaries of the settlement, since they invited you. If you want, however, donate to a fund for the sake of the expelled.

Q: Why isn't there an issue of forgiveness in the statement: "We will not forget and we will not forgive"?

A: If they repent, repair, atone, and request forgiveness, then we will forgive (see Yoma 22b-23a).

Q: Does this mean that we should not love them?

A: We should love everyone, including the wicked.

Q: I heard in the name of the Kabbalists that there is a need for "breaking" before the appearance of light. Perhaps Divine Providence is preparing a great light for us - the appearance of our righteous Messiah?

A: One should be very cautious about all types of prophecy, which brings disillusionment in its wake. Nonetheless, this depends on our efforts.

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

Humility – Part 3

Young students were once sitting around our Rabbi's table and they were discussing ideas that he had been presented. When one student mentioned a particular idea, our Rabbi started beaming and said: "Did you hear what he said," and he repeated the idea as if he was not the one who came up with the idea but the student. (Gadol Shimusha of Ha-Rav Avraham Remer, p. 87 #36)

Our Rabbi did not have personal demands. He was modest in every realm of life. He did not leave his four amot (cubits) and hardly ever left Jerusalem. He made do very little. He greeted important and famous people at his humble home. They sat at his old table and on old benches and chairs.

When our Rabbi was called up to recite a blessing under the Chupah as: "Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon (lit. The genius, meaning a great Torah scholar) Tzvi Yehudah," he said: "The Vilna Gaon is called a 'Gaon.'"

Our Rabbi related: "I was once walking in the street here, nearby, to go to daven. On the way, I met the Gerrer Rebbe ['Beit Yisrael']. He was walking as per the doctor's orders. He was accompanied by attendants and gaba'im. When we met, obviously in friendship, he asked those around him to clear away, and he asked me, why I am walking alone in the street. I responded: 'There are those who require attendants and gaba'im, but I do not.' He said to me: 'But you had a father who was so great!'"

(From "Ha-Torah Ha-Goelet" of Ha-Rav Chaim Schwartz, vol. 4, p. 206).

When people suggested that our Rabbi travel in a taxi, he would refuse and would ride on the bus or walk, even if it took considerable time.

Our Rabbi did not agree to travel from his house to the yeshiva, when it was housed in the old building on Rav Kook Street, even though it was a lengthy walk of fifty minutes. He said: "'The Torah spares the money of Israel' (Chulin 49b), and Israel must spare the money of the Torah" (i.e. the money of the yeshiva).



Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Exercising in a pool during the Nine Days

Q: Is one permitted to swim in a pool as part of a health exercise program during the Nine Days?

A: Yes, only pleasure bathing is forbidden.

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

Fourth Blessing of the Birkat Ha-Mazon – Part 2

And one could ask further: what is the connection between the heroes of Beitar and the blessing after eating? We already mentioned in the name of Maran Ha-Rav Kook that "it is appropriate for a member of [the Nation of] Israel to realize the value of his

personal food, because with it he places one stone in the building of the more communal and more exalted world" of the Nation of Israel, and with this, of the entire world, and through it he will realize "that he is sitting at the table before Hashem." This is in contrast to the wretched state of the Nation of Israel in Exile where one is capable of being seized by despair and fear lest he labor for naught. Our Sages' establishment of "Who is Good and Who Does Good" for the slain of Beitar therefore serves as a sign for all generations not to despair. Since the slain preserved their form, and "we are like those who are devoid of the power of life...but preserved within us is an amazing power of life," i.e. we are certain that we will arrive at our goal, "if it is very distant, it will surely come at its time" (Olat Re'eyah vol. 1, pp. 365-367).

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parshah Sheet



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

