



Rosh Hashanah 5770

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*Shana Tova to all Am Yisrael!
From Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim*

Two announcements:

1. We are making a few changes in sending out Rav Aviner's Torah. From now on an article on the Parashah or Haftarah will appear each week and all of the questions (Text Messages Responsa, Shut Sheilat Shlomo, Q&A from the radio and blog) will appear in On the Air.

2. Kaddish at the Kotel

New Service:

A student from our Yeshiva – the closest Yeshiva to the Temple Mount – will say Kaddish three times a day at the Kotel – the holiest spot today available to us – for your loved one(s). We request a donation to the Yeshiva.

If you are interested, please be in touch and send us the name(s).

On the Haftarah

Haftarah for Rosh Hashanah
The Prince of Hope

The Haftarah for the first day of Rosh Hashanah describes the birth of the prophet Shmuel, the great judge who saved the Nation of Israel from a period of terrible darkness. What a dreadful period of "When the judges judged" (Rut 1:1), which is explained by our Sages: "Woe to the generation when their judges are judged" (Bereshit Rabbah 42:4). The judges did not commit any shameful transgressions, rather they simply despaired of that generation. They were convinced that the spiritual struggle was lost from the outset (see Yalkut Shimoni, Shoftim 68). Out of this darkness shone the light of the spiritual giant, the prophet Shmuel, who succeeded in bringing the Nation of Israel back to the proper path, while liberating us from our permanent enemy: the Philistines. This is the great message he gave to us: Never despair (see Maamrei Ha-Re'eiyah, p. 450).

Who fashioned the wonderful personality of this judge and prophet? As in many cases, it was his parents. His mother, Chanah, is famous enough that there is no need to describe her spiritual level. But his father, Elkanah, was also a spiritual giant. How do we know this? We turn to a story related by Ha-Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriya about Maran Ha-Rav Kook.

A Torah scholar who made aliyah from America came to Maran Ha-Rav Kook and complained about the state of Judaism in the Land of Israel. He was so distressed that he was considering leaving Israel. Maran Ha-Rav Kook said to him: Doesn't your honor remember the learning of his youth? The Book of Shmuel relates about Elkanah: "This man would ascend from his city every year to prostrate himself and to bring sacrifices to Hashem, Master of Legions, in Shiloh, and the two sons of Eli, Chofni and Phinchas, were cohanim to Hashem there." Rav Kook asked two questions about this verse: 1. Why are we told in this verse that Chofni and Phinchas were there? 2. Our Sages say that Elkanah would not only go up to Shiloh, he would go around and encourage others to do so as well. Why did he have to do this? After all, isn't ascending to the Mishkan on the holidays a Torah mitzvah? Why weren't people following this mitzvah? Rav Kook explains that the first question is in fact the answer to the second question. The fact that Chofni and Phinchas were the cohanim in Shiloh caused people not to make the pilgrimage there, since they were corrupt. People said that if there were cohanim like this in this holy place, it was better not to go and see this ugliness and meet such sinners. Elkanah then came and convinced them that despite the sons of Eli and despite the sins at this holy place, they should not give up on this mitzvah of Hashem. They should strengthen this holy place. Right now there are not great people there, but later there will be. Do not give up because of the difficulties. As a reward for this act, Elkanah was blessed with a son, the prophet Shmuel, who served in the Mishkan. Rav Kook said to the Torah scholar that the same applies in relation to the holiness of the Land of Israel. Why are you mad at the Land of Israel? There are problems, therefore exert yourself and everything will work out. Although there are sinners, this is not a reason not to make aliyah and, all the more so, not to leave the Land of Israel. The more people committed to the Torah and mitzvot in the Land of Israel, the more holiness will be added to it (Chayei Ha-Re'eiyah pp. 211-212).

This story provides us with deep understanding and an important contemporary lesson. The Nation sometimes loses its path, but we are told to act like Elkanah, who guided the Nation to follow him to the Mishkan on the holidays (Yerushalami

Berachot at the end of chap. 9). But Elkanah did not spend time giving speeches on proper behavior. In his commentary on the Jerusalem Talmud, Rabbi Eliezer Azkari, who was one of the leading sages in Tzefat during its golden period, explains that Elkanah had an influence on those of his generation mainly by his example: he would go up to Shiloh with such excitement, cleaving to Hashem and joy that it awakened a desire among others to join him. He loved the Nation of Israel, and respected it despite what he saw, and he was therefore successful in sharing his unshakeable faith with them. In the end, he merited a son who followed his path: he brought the Nation of Israel from darkness to great light.

Rav Aviner on...

Do Not Say: Traitor!

[From Ma'ayanei Yeshu'a – Parashat Netzavim-Vayelech 5769]

Don't call a leftist a traitor, because if you call him a traitor, then you are a traitor.

Don't call a leftist a traitor, because he loves the Nation of Israel no less than you, but he has different consideration about what should be the correct path for the Nation, the Land and the State.

Don't call him a traitor, because he wears the Tzahal uniform, he endangers himself for your sake, is killed for your sake and is buried for your sake with blood stains on his holy olive-colored uniform.

Don't say: traitor, because you cannot call half the Nation of Israel, more or less, by this name.

Don't say: traitor, because you hurt the Nation of Israel, you destroy the State of Israel.

I'll tell you a secret, do you know what he thinks of you? That you hurt the Nation and destroy the State of Israel. It is truly unbelievable that he thinks this, it is unbearable and unjust. I'll tell you another secret – he thinks your opinion is unbelievable, unbearable and unjust. This will certainly insult you that he dares not to see things like you – but he is also liable to be insulted by what you think. Sometimes, a small amount of objectivity is quite helpful in life.

And who is the enemy? The one who wants to kill you and eradicate the State. He is the enemy, not the Jew who does not agree with you – he is your brother.

It is possible that he is mistaken. It is possible that he is confused. It is possible that he is a "Tinok She-Nishba" (a Jew who did not receive a proper Jewish upbringing and education) because of the foreign winds which blow today – it is almost certain, but he is not a traitor.

Be careful with your temper, if you call him a traitor, perhaps you are the traitor.

Perhaps it is preferable to call him: my brother, my friend.

Perhaps it is preferable to remember that we are one Nation.

Perhaps it is preferable to search for the positive in each person.

Perhaps it is preferable to listen to what he has to say – not through the media, but directly, face-to-face.

You should know, the Nation will continue with all of us together. The State will continue with all of us together – and you will remain alone outside the camp.

Therefore, don't say: traitor.

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

Maran Ha-Rav Kook's honor – part 2

Visits to the Brisker Rav

Our Rabbi would go to hear the Divrei Torah of the Brisker Rav, Ha-Griz - Ha-Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik, and when he was there, the "zealots" (extreme anti-Zionists) would insult him. When Ha-Rav Shabatai Shmuely, the Yeshiva's secretary, heard about this, he was shaken and turned to our Rabbi to stop going there. Ha-Rav Avraham Shapira also attempted to convince our Rabbi to stop, but he wanted to hear Divrei Torah from Ha-Griz. Ha-Rav Shmuely and Ha-Rav Shapira requested that Reb Aryeh Levin - who frequented there – speak with our Rabbi. He agreed and said to him: "Reb Tzvi Yehudah, you must cease going there. It does not bring honor to the Torah. It is also insulting to Maran Ha-Rav ztz"l." Our Rabbi tried to justify continuing the visits by saying that it does not affect him, and Ha-Griz is one of the great Rabbis of the generation etc., but Reb Aryeh interrupted him and said harsh thing about the "zealots," even though there was a great loss in not hearing Ha-Griz. When our Rabbi heard this from the mouth of Reb Aryeh, he did not return (It was

quite rare for Reb Aryeh to speak this way since he had incredible patience and was able to endure anything. If our Rabbi had heard insults about Maran Ha-Rav Kook he would not have remained quiet). (Imrei Shefer of Ha-Rav Yitzchak Dadon, pp. 236-237)

A deep understanding of the love of Israel

A Torah scholar was delivering a eulogy for a great Rabbi and he spoke about Maran Ha-Rav Kook without explicitly mentioning his name. After mentioning his greatness, he added "But his love of Israel is contrary to normal behavior" (see Bereshit Rabbah 55:11 and Rashi to Bereshit 22:3). Our Rabbi explained that Maran Ha-Rav Kook's love of Israel was not in the usual sense, but came from a deep understanding of the love of Israel from which his own love flowed. And regarding the Torah scholar's words, our Rabbi cited the teaching: "One who prays: 'May Your mercy reach the bird's nest,' we silence him" (Berachot 33b). (Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Devarim p. 334)

Love of Eretz Yisrael

A Letter from Eretz Yisrael

Maran Ha-Rav Kook was appointed Rav of Yafo and the surrounding settlements (i.e. Petach Tikva, Rishon Le-Tzion, Gedera, Rechovot, etc.) in the year 5664. After lengthy and exhausting negotiations with the community, the final letter with the travel expenses arrived, and Maran Ha-Rav Kook left a note for his daughter to pick up the letter. But our Rabbi, out of a love of Eretz Yisrael, rushed to get the letter himself in order to receive a letter from Eretz Yisrael. Our Rabbi made aliyah with his family shortly after his bar mitzvah.

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

The fallen Sukkah of David - addition for Sukkot

In the Talmud, it is told that one Sage asked his colleague:

- Have you heard when "Son of the fallen" [Bar Nafleh] will come, from among the fallen?
- Who is "Son of the fallen"?
- The Messiah.
- You call the Messiah "Son of the fallen"?!?
- Yes, as it is written: On that day I will raise up the sukkah of David which is fallen [ha-nofelet] (Amos 9:11, Sanhedrin 96b).

Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzhak Ha-Cohain Kook explained that these fallen are all kinds of messiahs who arose and fell, and the true Messiah comes as a continuation of them (Le-Netivot Yisrael vol. 1, 37). The common denominator between them is the protest against the essence of the Exile, its subjugation and its darkness, its impurity

and its decay (ibid.). The true Messiah will sprout from the midst of the experiences of falling.



Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for

the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

Before You Go to Sleep

What do you do before you go to sleep? Romance, gentle words, sweet words, loving words?

Perhaps you will say: We are grown up already, it is not right for us. We are embarrassed. Incorrect! It is definitely correct.

Perhaps you will say: We are tired, we work hard, we fall off our feet, we don't have time. Incorrect! You have time. Do you also not have time to live? This is life.

Perhaps you will say: We had a fight today, like all days. We are experts in creating disputes, so we don't have the heart to be loving to one another. Incorrect! On the contrary, before you go to sleep, make up.

Perhaps you will say: It is already too late... Than it is even better, even more romantic. This is how you will have pleasant dreams, since reality is even sweeter than dreams.

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