



Parashat Noach 5770

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On the Parashah ~

[From "Nesichei Adam"]

Those who look at Avraham Avinu as they do other people commit a grave error. This is called learning Tanach "Be-Gova Einayim" (literally, "at the height of the eyes"). This is first and foremost an intellectual error. This shows that they do not understand anything, they did not learn anything, and they did not grasp anything. They do not understand who Avraham Avinu is. The second error results from the first. It is an educational error. If we look at Avraham Avinu from the correct perspective and follow after him, we follow his light. But if Avraham Avinu is the same as us, even when we follow him, we will remain in the same place. We will not be elevated and exalted. We will not have a guide.

Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein related in the preface to the last volume of his responsa, Shut Igrot Moshe, an incident which occurred in his city in Russia. A man became ill with a horrible sickness: his tongue swelled up within his mouth, he was unable to speak and he eventually died. A day before his death, Rav Moshe came to visit him and the man asked that everyone leave the room. He had something private and of great importance to discuss with the Rav. He explained that he had given a class and had discussed Lot's older daughter who named her son Moav – from father. She was the progenitor of the Moabite People, which means that she is the ancestor of Rut, who is the great-grandmother of King David, from whom the Messiah will descend. How could it be, he had asked, that this woman, who had no shame, and therefore publicized her illicit and immoral behavior by giving her son a name that would ever recall here sinful act, was granted such honor? He spared no words in denigrating her behavior. He continued: "That night, two elderly women appeared to me in a dream. Their heads and faces were covered, and they said they were Lot's daughters. They had heard my complaint about their behavior and came from the World of Truth to convey to me a justification for their actions. Since it was well-known that Avraham Avinu, their uncle, was an individual for whom miracles were commonplace, they feared that people might say that their sons were conceived by immaculate conception. There were no men around, so how else could they have been conceived? In order to prevent another religion such as Christianity from being established by this

misunderstanding, they decided to publicize the source of their conception. Their motives were pure and lofty. Since he had spoken ill against them and defamed their character, he was to be punished, just as the spies in the wilderness were punished. Their tongues swelled, and they died an unusual death." Ha-Rav Feinstein said that this seems correct. We are not speaking about the daughters of Lot. We are speaking about our great and holy people, and all the more so the giant of the giants: our Forefathers, Foremothers and ancestors in the Torah.

Rav Aviner on...

The Goldstone Report

The Goldstone Report accuses us of not being ethical in war. If this is so, it is good news. It is a sign that the Messiah has arrived. As is known, the Messiah is accused of the exact same thing as it is written in the prophet Yeshayahu (63:1-6):

"Who is this coming from Edom, from Botzrah, with his garments stained red?" – The Messiah's clothes are stained with blood.

"This one that is gloriously dressed, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save" – The Messiah says: What can I do? I have a role: to save people.

"Why are your garments red, like those treading the winepress? I have trodden the winepress alone, no one was with me from the nations" – Why are my clothes full of blood? Because I am alone. No one is helping me. You are attacking us for what we did in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead. Where have you been the last sixty years? Where were you during all of the wars and terror? Why didn't you yell out? Why didn't you yell when they were shooting rockets and mortars from Gaza for eight years straight? We did not have a choice but to protect ourselves.

Therefore "I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath. Their blood spattered my garments, and I stained all my clothing" – I was victorious and blood spattered on my clothing from the victory.

"For the day of vengeance was in my heart, and the year of my redemption has come" – How long can we wait? How long can we suffer? How long can we sit and not respond?

"I looked, but there was no one to help. I was astonished that no one gave support" – When they strike us, no one cares, but when we protect ourselves, it is a scandal.

I am therefore letting you know "My own arm brought salvation for me, and my own fury has sustained me. I trampled the nations in my anger, made them drunk with my fury, and I poured their blood on the ground."

If so, the Messiah has arrived. In the Exile, the non-Jews struck us, murdered us and expelled us and we were not able to respond like a sheep among seventy wolves. But the sheep now has the strength to respond and attack the wolves. But people say: these are not the rules of

the game. The sheep needs to be attacked. The victim is guilty. If there wasn't a sheep, the wolf would not eat him.

We are therefore telling the world that we are a Nation that desires life. We also desired life in the Exile, but we had little choice. We now have the choice and we choose to protect ourselves. After all, we are talking about war and we are protecting our brothers. The enemy places weapons among the civilian population: in schools and ambulances and shoots. The enemy uses the civilian population as human shields. What can we do?

Colonel Richard Kemp, a British colonel who has spent many years fighting terror, testified before the committee that there were civilian casualties and errors in the war in Gaza but the State of Israel acted to prevent civilian casualties more than any army in history. He said that Tzahal sent two million fliers and hundreds of thousands of text messages warning people where attacks would take place. This is similar to what King Shaul said to the "Keni" (Shmuel 1 15:6): "Go, depart, go down from among Amalek, lest I destroy you with them." This means, even though you are my friend, if you are there, you could get hurt or killed. Tzahal canceled hundreds of missions to avoid civilian deaths. They also brought huge quantities of humanitarian aid. There is no parallel in history. It is possible that there were errors, but one must remember that the essential purpose of the war was to protect our brothers, women and child who are free of transgression.

We are a Nation who loves peace and pursues peace but when forced to wage war, we will fight. Esav loved to wage war: "You will live by the sword" (Bereshit 27:40). We do not live by the sword but we need the sword. This is called: "The clothing of Esav." When there is no choice, we wear the traits of Esav. But there are people in Gaza who are Esav. We saw what happened in Gush Katif. We left there at an incredibly high price: we expelled eight thousand Jews, we destroyed so many families, many of whom have yet to be rehabilitated and we made a huge gap in the Nation. And from the time we have left, they have not built one house or planted one tree. They have sunk all of their money into war. This says that people there think it is more important to murder us than to build their own lives. We therefore have no choice but to wage war.

The Nation of Israel is long-suffering, but we sometimes cannot suffer any longer. The Nation – those on the right and the left – were united that we could no longer take it and we know it was a just war. All of the deceivers did not see the events in their context, they did not take into account all that we did and what others do in the world. And what is the result? It unites the Nation of Israel. The enemy – whether with weapon or word – brings us closer together. Thus the Messiah has arrived who protects the Nation of Israel and unites us.

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

An escort to the Kotel

On one Shabbat during the time of the British Mandate, our Rabbi had an intense yearning to meet the Divine Presence which rests in the stones of the Kotel. But what could he do, the English placed a closure on the movement of the Jews. Our Rabbi decided to go anyway. He went to Yafo Street and began to march in the direction of the Old City. From one of the alleyways, an elderly Sefardic Jew, who looked like a Rabbi, came out to greet him. He asked our Rabbi: "Where are you going?" He responded: "To the Kotel Ha-Ma'aravi." The elderly man said to him: "Let's go together." Our Rabbi said to him: "Does his honor know that there is a closure and there will certainly be many English soldiers at the Yafo Gate of the Old City who will not allow us to pass?" The elderly man said: "When we arrive, recite with me the verses from Tehillim that I tell you and everything will be fine." They continued on together, and they saw eight soldiers standing shoulder-to-shoulder, with rifles in their hands ready to shoot. Our Rabbi said to the elderly man: "How are we going to get past the soldiers?" He said: "I told you, recite the verses with me and do not look at the soldiers at all." They recited the verses together and passed through the soldiers, and it was as if the soldiers did not see them. The Arab market was very crowded at that time and all of the Arabs moved to clear the way, saying: "This is a great master." They thus reached the Kotel.

The students asked our Rabbi how he returned and if the man waited for him. He said that the man disappeared, and returning was no problem. They also asked if he ever saw the man again. Our Rabbi said that he saw him a few times when there was a Brit Milah at "Sha'arei Tzedek" (The Hospital which originally had a building on Yafo Street with an event hall). They further asked which verses he recited, and he said that it does not matter since one cannot rely on such things even in a similar situation. This story was once told to Ha-Rav Rafael Levin, son of Reb Aryeh Levin – the Tzadik of Jerusalem, and he said: "What? You don't know who the elderly man was? It is not clear to you that it was Eliyahu Ha-Navi?"

During the Motza'ei Shabbat classes, our Rabbi in fact spoke about Eliyahu Ha-Navi, who reveals himself throughout the generations, from the earlier generations until now – and he would emphasize – to the most recent of times. (Be-Derech Ha-Torah Ha-Goelet, p. 158-159)

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

"Hashem will bless His People with peace"

Peace will come from strength. In Elul 5690, the British and Arabs pressed us to give away the Kotel. The Arabs threatened more pogroms after those of the previous year. The leaders of the Jewish settlement were inclined to concede. Maran Ha-Rav Kook, stood firmly against them with all force. Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, related

the following: The leaders of the Nation trembled and claimed that we should agree for the sake of the entire settlement in the Land and in order to protect the lives of a myriad of Jews (Le-Netivot Yisrael vol. 1 #64), as if our Master, Rav Kook, did not know the value of Jewish souls, as if he did not place all of his standing on the line in order to save one soul of Israel in the case of Chaim Arlozorov (This leading Labor Zionist was mysteriously murdered in June of 1933. When Avraham Stavsky stood to receive capital punishment for the crime, Rav Kook exerted all of his energies to defend him). Maran Ha-Rav Kook clarified, like a supreme commander, his responsible, decisive opinion that we will not ensure peace by yielding our right to our holy place. Our enemies will not back down by through this act. It is not in our hands to surrender and to relinquish our Divine ownership of this our place (Le-Netivot Yisrael, ibid., 5706 [1946], in which immense pressure was exerted on the Jewish community in Israel to concede the Land). Peace will arrive out of inner strength. And from where will we take this inner strength? From the Torah. There is no strength except Torah (Midrash Tehillim 25).

Family Matters

Ha-Rav writes weekly for the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

Speaking Nicely

Most of the arguments between husband and wife flow from not speaking nicely to one another. Communication is the essential glue between them. One should therefore taken great care in speaking to your spouse – without insults or sharp remarks. Speaking nicely can rectify many issues.

There are treatments for marital counseling in which the therapist does not speak with the couple, but has them sit facing one another and ensures that they speak nicely to one another. The couple then learns to speak nicely and this helps solve the issues.

This reminds us of the practice in the yeshiva of the Ramchal, Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato: If one of the students mistakenly began to speak Lashon Ha-Ra, then another student, who was appointed to do so, would respectfully point it out to him, and he was obligated to stop even in mid-sentence.

If a couple acts properly, there is no need for a therapist or an appointed person. Each one should take care to speak nicely, and if one of them mistakenly does not, the other spouse can lovingly point it out.

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