



Parashat Vayera 5770

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Observations regarding Yaakov Teitel and Poor Aristotle [from Ha-Rav's Blog]

A difficult matter has arisen regarding Yaakov Teitel and it causes us double pain: 1. For all of the horrible accusations of murder and attempted murder – horrific in itself. 2. For all of the prejudice it is bringing in its wake. This is terrible since throughout our exile, when one Jew did something bad, the Anti-Semites blamed all of the Jews.

But what could we do? – The non-Jews are not our brothers. We did not have great expectations. But now our brothers are doing the same thing.

What does this have to do with Aristotle? Approximately 2,200 years ago, Aristotle tried to teach us about logical deduction. An example of proper logical deduction: Moshe is a person. People have legs. Conclusion: Moshe has legs. But sometimes people make improper deductions: Moshe is bald. Moshe is a person. Conclusion: All people are bald. This is incorrect. But people make such deductions. Yigal Amir murdered the Prime Minister, z"l. Yigal Amir is a Religious-Zionist. Conclusion: Religious-Zionists are murderers of the Prime Minister. There can obviously be further incorrect logical deductions regarding Herzeliya from where Yigal Amir came or regarding Bar Ilan University where he studied, etc.

In our case, there are those who make the incorrect deduction: Yaakov Teitel stands accused of being a murderer. Yaakov Teitel lives in the settlement of Shevut Rachel. Conclusion: The residents of Shevut Rachel are murderers. Or even broader: He is a settler, so all settlers are murderers. Or even broader still: He is a Religious-Zionist, so all Religious-Zionists are murderers. Aristotle has tried for 2,200 years to convince us of the faulty nature of such deductions. Poor Aristotle.

It is one thing when we are concluding that all people are bald, but here such deductions destroy the most important thing we have: Love and brotherhood, peace and friendship. When we are united, we can overcome any challenge from within or from without. When we look for blemishes among others, we only hurt ourselves.

We are forgetting that the residents of Shevut Rachel, the Settlers and Religious-Zionists are good people, as are Jews who are not residents of Shevut Rachel, who are not Settlers and who are not Religious-Zionists. We are obligated to increase love and brotherhood, peace and friendship among the Nation of Israel.

On the Parashah ~

One Difference between Avraham Avinu and Lot

[Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Bereshit p. 171 – edited by Rav Aviner]

Both Avraham Avinu and Lot welcomed in guests in our parashah, but there is a major difference between them. There is a story about a great Rabbi who was delayed in his travels and was unable to find lodging at such a late hour. He knocked on the doors of the Jewish houses, but did not reveal that he was an important person. He knocked on the door of a wealthy person and the owner yelled at him: "This is not a hotel! This is a private home! No and no!" In the end, a simple Jew welcomed him in. His identity became known in no time and word quickly spread throughout the city that the famous Rabbi was there. Everyone came to visit him, including the wealthy man who had said that his house was not a hotel, and he jumped forward and said: "Rabbi, Rabbi, come with me. I will provide you with a spacious room." This is the difference between Avraham Avinu and Lot. Avraham Avinu welcomed in "men" (Bereshit 18:2), while Lot welcomed in "angels" (ibid. 19:1). It is certainly worthwhile to welcome in angels, they are important, but Avraham Avinu welcomed in men. We clearly see the humanity and righteousness that we must possess in

relation to simple people. The incredible greatness Avraham Avinu possessed toward Hashem flowed directly into his humanity towards human beings.

Rav Aviner on...

The Honor of the Temple Mount

[from the Israeli newspaper "Makor Rishon"]

Like many other things, the subject of the Temple is beyond all human intellect. We must therefore stand before it in trembling and not assume that we can understand its holiness with our human capabilities. But the opposite extreme is also destruction, and we must learn with our intellect as much as we can, to try to understand, to study and analyze. We must learn about the Temple from the perspective of Halachah and thought as individuals and in conference and public lectures.

Many great Torah scholars expressed their opinion in a clear and unambiguous manner that one should not even touch the Temple Mount. For example, our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, was not less idealistic, courageous and dedicated than those pushing to allow visits to the Temple Mount, and he spearheaded the entire settlement enterprise, and at the same time, he ruled that it was forbidden to touch the Temple Mount. One who says to stay away from the Temple Mount is not necessarily weak, and one who is passionate about going up is not necessarily strong.

The claim that in relation to the Temple Mount we are like the G-d-fearing, Anti-Zionist Jews in relation to the Land of Israel is correct. But what does it matter? Is everything of equal value? Have we reached the state that we are incapable of distinguishing between different levels of holiness? There are certainly many great things about those who are passionate about going on to the Temple Mount, but the idea itself – in my view – is a complete mistake and dangerous.

The Temple Mount – it time has not arrived yet. What time has arrived? To increase building the Nation through love and faith.

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

Military Exemption for Yeshiva Students

Rav Shear Yashuv Cohain, son of the Nazir and Rav of Haifa, related that during the War of Independence, there was a major dispute between Rabbis – including within Yeshivat Mercaz Ha-Rav, if yeshiva students should be drafted into the military. The students followed the path of our Rabbi and the Nazir and were active in the Haganah, Etzel and Lechi. During the waiting period, after the UN votes and before the end of the British Mandate, Rav Shear Yashuv would learn in the yeshiva. One day he left the yeshiva and saw a broadside with the huge title that Maran Ha-Rav Kook opposed drafting yeshiva students into the army, and it included harsh quotes from one of his letters regarding this issue. He was unsure what to do and left deep in thought when he bumped into our Rabbi. Our Rabbi, who recognized his state, said: "Shear Yashuv, what happened? Why are you so upset and pale?" He told him what

happened and pointed to the broadside. Our Rabbi roared: "This is a distortion! This is a total distortion!" over and over.

After he calmed down, he explained that these quotes were taken from a letter of Maran Ha-Rav Kook to Rav Dr. Hertz, Chief Rabbi of England, regarding being drafted into the British army, which the latter presented to the government. Yeshiva students who arrived in London from Russia and Poland as refugees of World War One and were learning Torah were left off the list of those exempt from military service (for example, priests, who were exempted). Maran Ha-Rav Kook admonished him, and said that this has nothing to do with the war for Jerusalem. Rav Shear Yashuv encouraged and aided our Rabbi to publish a booklet clarifying this issue.

During the difficult battle for the Old City in Jerusalem, the Jewish community was defeated and Rav Shear Yashuv, who was badly wounded on his leg, and the surviving fighters were taken into Jordanian captivity. He thus did not merit seeing the publication of the booklet he initiated. After approximately eight months and the establishment of the State, Rav Shear Yashuv was released and taken to Zichron Yaakov for rehabilitation. Within a day, at a time when buses were rare, our Rabbi appeared outside his window. He entered the room, hugged and kissed him and burst out crying. He removed a small booklet from his pocket and gave it to him. It was dedicated to Rav Shear Yashuv.

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

On the Sheva Berachot – "He created everything for His honor"

Baruch Hashem, you got married! You must remember that the purpose of marriage is not solely for one person to benefit from another, but rather to increase the honor of Hashem. Rabbi David Abudraham wrote in the name of Rabbi Meir Ha-Levi Abulafia: This blessing was established in order to remind us that the essence of the wedding is to increase people in the world, "And this is the honor of God, since the honor of the Creator is only through His creations." "Everything which the Holy One, Blessed be He, created in His world, He only created for His honor, as it says: 'Every one that is called by My Name, for I have created him for My glory, I have formed him, and I have made him'" (end of Pirkei Avot, Yeshaya 43:7). We must always remember for the reason that we are found here on earth: To increase the honor of Hashem.

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