



Parashat Chaye Sarah 5770

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## On the Parashah ~

### Acquiring Territory in the Land of Israel

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo vol. 4 #54. Originally delivered on the radio program "Kabbalat Shabbat" which was dedicated to Beit El]

In the Torah portion of Chayei Sarah we read about Avraham Avinu purchasing the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron. We can ask ourselves: what does this story have to do this us? What do we learn from it for our lives?

Our Rabbi Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, explained that we must view the history of our ancestors in light of the great principle "The action of the fathers is a sign for the children" (Ramban to Bereshit 12:1, Tanchuma - Lech Lecha 9 and Sotah 34a).

The purchase of the Cave of Machpelah marked the beginning of our settlement in the Land of Israel. The fact that Avraham Avinu acquired this first piece of land with money is of great significance, for he was a great warrior when necessary, and thus could have acquired the land through force. And so we learn that, of the various methods of acquisition enumerated by Halachah, money was the first to be used in the attainment of our Land. Indeed, so many generations later, Theodore Herzl too began the acquisition of our Land through monetary channels: the Bank of the Land of Israel, one of his earliest endeavors, was established not for individual matters, but for the settlement of the Land. Purchasing its stocks was a mitzvah, and the project itself provided a model for the activities of the Jewish National Fund.

Crucial to our understanding that "the action of the father is a sign for the children" is the idea that our forefathers were not separate entities from their children, but rather, formed a continuum with them. They were the foundation of Klal Yisrael. Their actions are "signs" for their children, i.e. for us, because we are in fact one entity with them. We are bound together, sharing a single essence which flows throughout time, from one generation to the next. When we learn about our forefathers and their actions, we learn about ourselves and our actions, which are one and the same.

This idea has its source in the words of our Talmudic Sages, who explained the Divine command to Avraham Avinu: "Arise, walk in the Land, its length and its breadth, for I am giving it to you" (Bereshit 13:17). This journey through the Land of Israel, Our Sages teach us, was not designed to signify Avraham Avinu's individual inheritance of the land ("I am giving it to you,") but rather to ensure that the Land would be easily conquered by his children (Baba Batra 100a). The father and the children are one entity: the promise to one includes the promise to the other.

It is clear that this Divine decision, "I gave this Land to you," marked the beginning of our connection to the Land of Israel. This Land is ours. It is an absolute, divinely decreed fact which is unchangeable. It is through our own efforts, however, that this connection is realized. Avraham Avinu brought into reality the Divine decree "I gave" by acquiring the Land with money. This action of our forefather was "a sign for the children" in the period before the establishment of the State of Israel, and continues to be "a sign for the children" in our day.

Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook, explained in his speech about the Jewish National Fund, that our right to the Land was never annulled; not our right as individuals, and all the more so, not our right as a Nation. As a loyal, righteous Nation, however, we aspire to conquer our Land in a just and faithful manner. Whenever possible, we do not conquer through strength and sword, but, rather, through peaceful means: we are thus willing to pay huge amounts of money for every piece of our Land (Ma'amrei Ha-Re'eyah vol. 1, p. 252). We were and we are. With Hashem's help, may we merit to continue the work of Avraham Avinu.

## **Rav Aviner on...** **Is This the Same Country?**

[From "Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah" – Bereshit 5770 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Question: Since the Gush Katif expulsion, I've got a terrible wound over my heart that to this day has not healed. Quite the contrary, I've changed my relationship to the State of Israel. For me, it's no longer the "first flowering of our redemption." When I

see a film in which our soldiers forcibly evict mothers, fathers and children, from their homes, in which synagogues are destroyed and graves are moved, I say, “It’s not the same country. It’s not the same army.”

Answer: Why not mention Sabbath desecration, breaches in Kashrut, sexual immodesty, the warped legal system, poor education, graft, and corruption? Indeed much of the Jewish population living in Zion has lost their faith in the government’s struggle against public corruption, and they believe that the public sector is very corrupt. Indeed, the situation is problematic.

Yet even when we arrived in the Land after the redemption from Egypt we had troubles immeasurably worse than those today, and it was the same in Ezra and Nechemiah’s time. And before that, just when Yaakov’s family began to grow strong, Yosef was sold by his brothers.

And when you get down to it, after Adam was created, Adam sinned and Kayin killed Hevel. Don’t you know that life is complicated? Life only looks simple to the drunkard (Yoma 75). “When one casts his glance on the cup, all looks smooth” (Mishlei 23:31). Life looks simple to him, but he only sees the surface. Haven’t you read Chapter 1 of Mesilat Yesharim? Haven’t you learned that man faces a two-front battle? Haven’t you learned that man has a good impulse and an evil impulse? Haven’t you heard of Noach’s flood and the Generation of the Dispersion? Of the destruction of the First and Second Temples?

One way the evil impulse tempts us is towards hatred, and we’re not allowed to feed that temptation. Jewish law states that one is forbidden to read a book that provokes the evil impulse (Orach Chaim 307:16), let alone to see movies that increase our desire to hate. Neither may we feed our evil impulse to despair. The evil impulse works alone. It needs no help. By contrast, the good impulse needs much strengthening. See Mesilat Yesharim, which states that one has to look for the ways and means to build it up, and that one has to take precautionary measures against those deleterious elements that would erode our good traits. True, there have been many crises since the start of the return to Zion. They didn’t start with the expulsion from Gush Katif, and there will be many more crises to come. The definition of a crisis is something that goes against our will. But open your eyes and see all the kindnesses that G-d performs for us. This Land was empty and now it houses millions. It was in the hands of the Turks and the British, and now it is in our hands. It was spiritually desolate and now it is full of Torah. The Jewish People were under the control of the world’s evildoers, and now we have an army that defends us.

Apparently G-d did you a kindness by letting you be born in the right time and place, so you don’t know how lucky you are. As for myself, I was born in the wrong time and place, and as an infant I had to be hidden lest I end up in the concentration camps. Thank G-d that infant was never sent there, but six million others were. Those sent to the camps would have paid a million dollars to be protected by that army you say is “not the same army”.

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

### Fear of the Shulchan Aruch

Someone once read to our Rabbi a Chasidic saying that a "Chasid" fears Hashem and a "Mitnaged" fears the Shulchan Aruch. Our Rabbi responded: As if fear of the Shulchan Aruch is something other than fear of Hashem. (Iturei Yerushalayim #37)

### I am the Messiah

At the end of morning davening, a Jew knocked on the Bima of the yeshiva and announced that he received permission from the Rosh Yeshiva to speak. Our Rabbi nodded his head in agreement. The Jew then explained at length that he was the Messiah but he did not demand any action. He just wanted them to know. After he finished and left, the students turned to our Rabbi in surprise for having given him permission to speak. Our Rabbi responded: "You can't perform a kindness for a fellow Jew!" (Iturei Yerushalayim #37)

### Rav Meir Kahane

When Rav Kahane made aliyah, our Rabbi greatly encouraged him, but when he asked for our Rabbi's support in his run for the Knesset, he responded: Up to this point! The path of the Jewish Defense League in standing erect and not being afraid of the non-Jews is appropriate for outside of Israel. Here, we have a State and sovereignty, and Jewish courage comes through the army and the police. (Iturei Cohanim #34)

### Chabad

Our Rabbi mentioned that no group in Israel possesses all of the truth, and every stream has a deficiency. A student who was a Chabadnik asked: what is Chabad's deficiency? Our Rabbi responded: "That they think they are all of the Torah." (Iturei Cohanim #35)

### Fatherly Concern

A student told our Rabbi that he was going home because he ran out of clean clothing. Our Rabbi took money out of his pocket, gave it to him and told him where he could do laundry. (Iturei Cohanim #35)

### Weakness

During the Sinai War and before it, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel directed people to recite specific Tehillim. After the victory, the students in the yeshiva ceased reciting them. After the army's retreat from the Sinai, our Rabbi yelled: "Stopping the recitation of Tehillim in the Central Universal Yeshiva was part of the weakness which caused the retreat!" (Iturei Cohanim #35)

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

On the Sheva Berachot – "Creator of the man"

What is the difference between this blessing and the next blessing "Who created the man" etc...? Rashi explains that this blessing, "Creator of the man," relates to the first creation of the first man and "Who created the man" refers to the second creation (Ketubot 8a). The original man was created in two stages. Before anything he was created alone, but since "It is not good for the man to be alone, I will make for him a helpmate," the second blessing of the creation of the man appears where he receives a partner, "an everlasting building." One can ask: Why two creations? Why create man alone which is not good for him and afterwards a partner? After all, Hashem could have shortened the process and created him with his partner right away.

Hashem is certainly Omnipotent, but he wanted the man to be alone and only afterwards marry. As in every matter, man has free choice, and it is in his power to decide if he wants to better his actions. Marriage is therefore also the product of free choice. It is one of the most fateful choices of life, and it is certainly incumbent upon him to weigh with clear understanding and the understanding of Torah with whom he should marry, and all the success of marriage also depends on the reciprocal efforts of the spouse. "It is forbidden for a man to betroth a woman until he sees her, lest he will see something unpleasant in her and she will be unbecoming to him and the Torah says: 'Love your fellow as yourself'" (Kiddushin 41a). When people marry, they must be sure that they love each other, but that is not enough. There is a need for continuous serious work in order to understand the other, to feel the other, to learn to surrender to the other and to request from the other.

The original man who was created alone, was - according to our Sages, both male and female, the man and his wife joined together in one body. Afterwards the Master of the Universe separated him into two: one side man and one side woman. It seems as if marriage is the ideal, natural connection. However, one must arrive at this supreme level, this serious, chosen, intellectual, ethical connection. This is the pleasant and wonderful work of the marriage (see Olat Re'eiyah vol. 1, pp. 392-393).

It once happened that a couple brought an expensive, new car. During the first drive, the wife, driving alone, caused an accident and it resulted in major damage to the vehicle. An immense feeling of anxiety gripped her: My husband is going to kill me! She got the car registration to give the other driver the required information. During this a small note fell out of the insurance card, written in the handwriting of her husband: "My sweet, remember, I love you more than the vehicle."

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