



Parashat Miketz 5770

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10 Relationships between Maran Ha-Rav Kook and Various Gedolei Yisrael that the Yeshiva World Should Know - Part 1

[Collected by Mordechai Friedfertig.

Ha-Rav Aviner Shlit"a encouraged spreading its message]

1. The Praises of the Netziv

The Netziv – Rosh Yeshiva of the Volozhin Yeshiva - said about Maran Ha-Rav Kook: "He is equal to everyone else [in the Volozhin Yeshiva]", "There was never a student like this in Volozhin" and "If the Volozhin Yeshiva was established only for this great student – it would have been enough." Ha-Rav Reuven Bengis – Av Beit Din of the Edah Charedit – similarly said that the most important [student] in the Yeshiva is the son-in-law of the Rav of Ponevezh (Ha-Rav Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Te'omim, Ha-Aderet – Maran Ha-Rav Kook's father-in-law).

[Tal Ha-Re'eiyah pp. 59-60, Shivchei Ha-Re'eiyah p. 45 and Be-Derech Ha-Torah Ha-Goelet p. 189]

2. The Chafetz Chaim: Know that he is holy and pure and anyone who impinges on his honor will not go unpunished.

The Chafetz Chaim once came to Ponevezh in his effort to organize Torah scholars who were Cohanim to learn matters relating to "Kodashim" (the sacrifices in the Temple), since the Temple would soon be built and therefore there would be a need to know the practical Halachah. He turned to Maran Ha-Rav, who was a Cohain (and who was stayed in his father-in-law's house), and asked him to focus on the laws relating to the Temple and sacrifices. A few days later, Maran Ha-Rav visited the Chafetz Chaim in

the place where he was staying. The Chafetz Chaim said to him: "I have a request of you, but promise me from the outset that you will fulfill it." Maran Ha-Rav responded: "Since I trust that his honor will not request anything which is inappropriate from me, I promise to fulfill your request." "This is my request" – said the Chafetz Chaim – "When a Rabbinic offer comes before you do not refuse to accept it." Maran Ha-Rav, who had decided not to involve himself with the Rabbinate, found himself in a difficult position, and wanted to free himself and said: "In order to accept a Rabbinic position I would have to involve myself with the halachic authorities who discuss the issues involved, and I already promised his honor to involve myself with 'Kodashim.'" Chafetz Chaim thought hard and said: "I give up on your first promise, your Rabbinate is more important"...

[Bisdeh Ha-Re'eiyah p. 218, Sichot Ha-Re'eiyah p. 122, Tal Ha-Re'eiyah p. 90, Moadei Ha-Re'eiyah p. 231 and 550, Bein Shenei Cohanim Gedolim pp. 32-33 and mentioned in Bisheloshah Be-Elul vol. 1 p. 35]

After Maran Ha-Rav Kook had served a while in the Rabbinate in one of the holy communities in the Exile, he received an invitation from the Chafetz Chaim to help him prepare a work on the service of the Cohanim when the Temple is standing. Maran Ha-Rav replied: If his honor permits me to remove the yoke of the Rabbinate which is upon me, I can fulfill the request which is extremely dear to me. The Chafetz Chaim answered: I have not found an individual as talented as you in administering a Rabbinate in Israel!...

[Ha-Re'eiyah Kook ztzvk"l of Ha-Rav Shmuel Baruch Shulman p. 36]

At a huge Rabbinical Conference in Vienna in 5683, one of the Rabbis made disparaging remarks about Maran Ha-Rav, the Chafetz Chaim (who was sitting at the dais) stood up shocked and said: "You insulted the Mara De-Atra (Rabbinic authority) of Eretz Yisrael." He left the conference and decided not to return to it. The Chafetz Chaim waited in his hotel to return to his city, and many people came to visit him or receive a blessing. When the members of delegation from Eretz Yisrael wanted to enter, he said: "I will not say 'Shalom' to those who caused dispute with the Rav of Yerushalayim (Maran Ha-Rav)!" And he added: "Know that he is holy and pure and anyone who impinges on his honor will not go unpunished."

[Bisdeh Ha-Re'eiyah p. 225-228, Sichot Ha-Re'eiyah p. 26-127, Malachim Bivnei Adam p. 211 and for additional information on the subject see Sichot Ha-Re'eiyah chap. 11 and Bein Shenei Cohanim Gedolim chap. 4]

In the year 5681, our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook (Maran Ha-Rav's son) traveled to Poland to meet with Rabbis and Chasidic Rebbes to convince them to join the "Degel Yerushalayim" movement which Maran Ha-Rav established to infuse the Zionist movement with Torah and holiness. At that time, the Chafetz Chaim came to Warsaw, and our Rabbi, who yearned to see the splendor of the most righteous person of the generation, went to where he was staying. He found him

surrounded by people. After over an hour, our Rabbi approached to take leave from him. The Chafetz Chaim asked: "Are you a local?" Our Rabbi responded: "No, from Jerusalem," and he added: "Your honor was close with Reb Eliyahu David (the Aderet), father-in-law of my father." When the Chafetz Chaim heard whose son was standing before him, his face lit up and he joyfully said: "Your honor is the son of the Rav of Zimel, the Rav of Boisk, the Rav of Yafo, the Rav of Jerusalem? Then why does he speak about his grandfather? Tell me about your father! How is he? We are long-time, dear friends."

[Bisdei Ha-Re'eiyah p. 221, Sichot Ha-Re'eiyah p. 126, Shivchei Ha-Re'eiyah pp. 157-158, Be-Derech Ha-Torah Ha-Goelet p. 97, Tzvi Kodesh p. 146 and Bein Shenei Cohanim Gedolim pp. 36-37]

See Bisdei Ha-Re'eiyah pp. 217-231, Sichot Ha-Re'eiyah pp. 120-133 and the book "Bein Shenei Cohanim Gedolim" which discuss the special relationship between the Chafetz Chaim and Maran Ha-Rav Kook.

On the Parashah Wisdom and Vigor [Tal Chermon p. 92]

Pharaoh publicly installed Yosef as ruler of Egypt: "He had him [Yosef] ride in his second royal chariot and they proclaimed before him 'Avrech'" (Bereshit 41:43). What is the meaning of this title? The Targum Onkelos interprets it as "father (i.e. counselor to the king)." Yosef is the spiritual father, the source of the Divine ideals and culture of the king. He is above the king. Once the king is affiliated with and guided by holy principles, he can then set about organizing and arranging the practical aspects of existence virtuously and properly. Rabbi Yehudah explained the word as a combination of two words "Av" meaning that he is a "father" of wisdom despite being only "Rach" – "tender" and "young" in age. Older people generally have the advantage of wisdom and experience, but they lack the dynamic energy of youth. With the youth, the situation is reversed. There is a popular saying: "If only the elderly 'could' and the young 'understood.'" The ideal situation is when these two forces, wisdom and capability, are present in one person. Yosef was a "young-elder": as wise as an older person and full of youthful vigor.

Rav Aviner on... But what will be tomorrow?

Question: What is the mitzvah of the lights of Chanukah – lighting them or placing them in the correct place?

Answer: It is well-known that this is a dispute in the Gemara (Shabbat 22-23) as to whether the mitzvah is the lighting of the Chanukah lights, or whether the mitzvah is that the lights be placed in the proper spot, i.e. lit for a certain period of time. What is the difference? One

example is in a case where someone who is not obligated in the mitzvah, like a non-Jew, kindles the lights and then a Jew, who is obligated, picks them up and puts them down. If the mitzvah is the actual lighting, since the lights were kindled by someone who is not obligated, the Jew cannot not fulfill his obligation with them. If, however, the mitzvah is placing the lights, even though the lights were kindled by someone who is not obligated, since they were put down by the Jew, he does fulfill his obligation. The Halachah is that the actual lighting is the mitzvah (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 675:1). This is also verified by the blessing itself: "Who has made us holy with His mitzvot and commands us to light..."

Based on this discussion, we can ask: What exactly was the miracle of Chanukah? Was the miracle the actual lighting of the Menorah in the Temple or was the miracle that they were lit for a certain period of time? The miracle seems to be that they were lit for a certain period of time, since there was no problem lighting the Menorah – there was enough oil for one day! If we say that the miracle was the actual lighting of the Menorah, what was the miracle? Answer: The miracle was that it took great strength to be bold enough to even light the Menorah in the first place. They could have said: "Why should we light it? It needs to be lit for eight days before new oil will be ready. It isn't worth it to light it for one day." But they did not say this. They said: "Hashem commanded us to light. We will light. What will be tomorrow? We don't know. Hashem will decide." The same is true of the revolt. "You are going to rebel against the Greeks?! You think you can win?! Sure you can begin a battle, but how are you going to win? Why even start then?" "We were commanded by Hashem, so we will begin. After that Hashem will decide." There was a great miracle, but they didn't know that this was going to occur when they began. This is "Mesirat Nefesh" – true self-sacrifice. There are many example of great self-sacrifice in our tradition, but the miracle of Chanukah is unique. Up to this point, there were always prophets. Here, however, there were no prophets to give direction. They acted because they understood what Hashem commanded them to do.

This is similar to the question of why Yom Ha-Atzmaut was established on the 5th of Iyar in particular, since on that day no miracle occurred. The Jewish State was declared, and with it a life-threatening situation began (Chanukah and Purim were established on the day after the "war" ended). Our Rabbi, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, explained that the courage to declare the State is the miracle of miracles, the soul and root of all of the miracles and wonders (Le-Netivot Yisrael vol. 1, p. 179). The Talmud discusses a shepherd who abandoned his flock, leaving it prey to either a wolf or a lion who came and tore it to pieces. The Rabbis established that his responsibility for the slaughter depends on whether or not he would have been able to save the animals. If he would not have been able to overcome the attacking animal, he is exempt from all payment. The Talmud asks: Why is this so? Perhaps it would have happened as for David: "Your servant slew both the lion and the bear" (Shmuel 1 17:36)? Perhaps a minor miracle would have occurred (Baba Metzia 106a)? The Tosafot described the miracle: "A spirit of courage and the knowledge to wage war" (Tosafot *ibid.*). So too in the matter of the declaration of the State: "The awakening, the exerting of effort, the philosophizing and the strengthening for the drive to rescue and revive," is a miracle from the Heavens, "with a supreme and inner stimulus of power." The fact that the Nation of Israel was filled with the spirit to fight and the knowledge to wage war is the foundation of all miracles (Le-Netivot Yisrael

ibid.). From this act flowed all of the miracles which led to establishment and strengthening of the State of Israel.

Family Matters

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

A Non-Angel Married to a Non-Angel

My dear friend, you are good and your wife is good. Or, if you prefer, you are not completely good and neither is your wife. You both therefore forgive each other. You are not perfect and neither is she, you are therefore a perfect match from heaven. When you demand that she be perfect and focus on her deficiencies, and also demand that she understand that you are not perfect – you are mistaken. Finding deficiencies in another is simple. It does not require intelligence, talent, love, or effort. But this was not the reason you married. If you forgive her with all of your heart for her mistakes and ask her to do the same for you – you have understood marriage and you will be happy. If you expected to marry an angel, you were mistaken, such a thing does not exist. If it did exist, she would not have married you, since you are not an angel. A perfect match from heaven: a non-angel married to a non-angel.

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