



Parashat Bo 5770

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## 10 Relationships between Maran Ha-Rav Kook and Various Gedolei Yisrael that the Yeshiva World Should Know - Part 6

[Collected by Mordechai Friedfertig.

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

### 8. Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein: He was the Gaon of Geonim!

Ha-Rav Shabatai Rapaport, Ha-Rav Feinstein's grandson, related that in the year 5739, during Sukkot in Monsey, NY, Ha-Rav Feinstein was involved with writing a contrary view to a responsa of Ha-Rav Eliezer Waldenberg (Tzitz Eliezer). Ha-Rav Rapaport showed his grandfather a statement from Maran Ha-Rav Kook which Ha-Rav Rapaport found amazing. Ha-Rav Feinstein responded: "What is surprising, he was the Gaon of Geonim!"

[Likutei Ha-Re'eiya p. 59]

Ha-Rav Nisan Alpert, Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshiva University, Rabbi of Agudat Yisrael, author of "Limudei Nisan" and Ha-Rav Feinstein's student for forty years, was one of those who eulogized his Rav in New York. He also spoke at a memorial evening for Ha-Rav Kook, on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his passing. When he was asked about the connection between his Rav and Ha-Rav Kook, he answered that Ha-Rav Feinstein was a "Chasid" of Ha-Rav Kook. Ha-Rav Feinstein said to learn his books and one will find great things. He also added, rhetorically, that he did not understand what people wanted from Ha-Rav Kook ztz"l.

[Likutei Ha-Re'eiya p. 60]

## On the Parashah This is the Bread of Affliction

Question: It seems that this entire section was assembled during the time of the Exile as indicated by the famous declaration at the end, "Next year in the Land of Israel." If

so, we can ask, why didn't they establish it before the destruction of the Temple in order to remind us that our ancestors ate this bread in Egypt?

Answer: Rav Kook explained that this statement was not created to remind us so much of the past, but to provide us with faith and hope for the future. It is to ensure that our spirit will not fall when we mention our liberation from slavery, when we ourselves, at this very moment, are in an exile of slavery, a bitter exile. When then is the benefit of the Exodus to us? We therefore remember that we ate the bread of affliction in the past, but we were redeemed, and we will be redeemed in the end. We must eat the matzah joyously, because we believe and trust that even though we are slaves now, we will be free people in the Land of Israel speedily in our days (Olay Re'eyah vol. 2, pp. 261-262).

### Rav Aviner on... Time to get Back to "Orot"

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

Rabbi Yehuda Loew stated in Netzach Yisrael, Chapter 11, that the Jewish People's goal is not just to elevate the individual to holiness but to elevate both the individual and the Jewish People as a whole.

Elevating the Nation to holiness means fulfilling G-d's promise to make us a "great Nation" (Bereshit 12:2) and a "Nation of priests and a holy Nation" (Shemot 19:6). This was our mission during the First Temple Period. At the end of that period, however, in the days of the Prophet Yirmiyahu and King Yoshiah, when the signs of the impending destruction already loomed from afar, our greatest Torah luminaries were undergoing preparation to deal with elevating the holiness of individuals (Introduction to the Netziv's "Kidmat Emek", his commentary on She'eltot Rav Achai Gaon). That new focus continued on through the Second Temple Period. (see "LeMahalach Ha-Ide'ot BeYisrael" by our master Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook).

Presently, thank G-d, we are returning to our land. An enormous Zionist movement has arisen, replete with both light and darkness, which is restoring us to safe harbor (Orot, page 38). Yet how can we increase that light and overcome that darkness? Regarding belief and behavior of the individual, we are fortunate to have Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto's great work, Mesillat Yesharim, for guidance. Yet where shall we find a "Mesillat Yesharim" to guide in matters affecting the Jewish People? The answer is that the guide we are looking for is accessible in the Zohar, and the same ideas were later recorded in the writings of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the Arizal. So, is that the solution, for us to learn mysticism? Certainly not! As the Mishnah states in Chagigah, Chapter 2, the Torah's mystical secrets are intended only for the spiritual elite, and the same point has come down as law in Shulchan Aruch, Hilchot Talmud Torah, that not everyone should learn mysticism, but only select individuals. The masses, at best, do not understand anything of mysticism, and at worst, misunderstand it, which results in enormous damage.

All the same, mystical writings are fascinating – like drugs. We've got to be serious, however, not like a child who wants everything to be sweet, and to know that in our world we don't deal with any problem without appropriate preparation. The preparation for studying mysticism is in-depth study of the non-mystical portion of the Torah, including in-depth study of tracts devoted to faith and sterling character.

So where shall the Jewish masses find the inner light? Not in cheap mysticism combined with charisma, be it Ashkenazic or Sephardic, but in in-depth study of works of faith, which have hidden in them secrets of the Torah, but translated to conventional language.

At this point we can go back to our original discussion: Where is the “Mesillat Yesharim” of the Jewish masses? It’s Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook’s book, “Orot”, which our master, Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook, son of the author, called “holy of holies.” He used that description in his introduction to that book because it deals with the holiness of the Nation that is being reborn in our land. Whoever examines the sources mentioned at the end of the book will see that it is all taken from the Zohar and the Arizal. Rav Kook, himself, in fact said that there is not one sentence in it that does not have its source in the words of the Arizal (“LiShlosa BeElul”). It is only that he translated those secrets into everyday language. True, the book is poetic, but with effort one can understand it.

Yet the truth is that in the time of Rav Kook himself, very few people understood this book. Gradually, however, its light permeated the Jewish People, and today there are tens of thousands of people who study it. And just as regarding the character and behavior of individuals, one can immediately see an enormous difference between those who study Mesillat Yesharim and those who do not, so too with matters of the Jewish People, we can see an enormous difference between those for whom “Orot” is a major part of their life and those who do not learn it regularly, in depth. The latter will be very confused by the complex issues generated by Israel’s rebirth in their land, especially as regards our G-d-given Jewish State and army.

Thank G-d, however, the lessons of “Orot” are penetrating the entire Jewish People by osmosis, reaching both the Charedim and the secular, without their being aware of it. Such is the way of great ideas which are slowly absorbed by the masses. Thus, the secular, in a long, involved process, are presently making peace with the Torah, and the Charedim, as well, are being “Israelified” in the direction of the Jewish State and the army. Obviously, this is happening slowly and gradually, as is true with all processes, but they are occurring on a large-scale all the same. We must arm ourselves with great patience, but the fact is that both groups are starting to realize how good is the approach of “Orot”.

Thus, our present task is to disseminate “Orot” all the more throughout the Nation, both amongst the Torah scholars and the masses, and first of all, we must study it in depth ourselves. Then we will be the living fulfillment of, “G-d saw the light, that it was good” (Bereshit 1:4).

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