



Parashat Beshalach 5770

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10 Relationships between Maran Ha-Rav Kook and Various Gedolei Yisrael that the Yeshiva World Should Know - Part 7

[Collected by Mordechai Friedfertig.]

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

9. Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach: I only use the term 'Der Rov', Maran, for Ha-Rav Kook.

Maran Ha-Rav Kook was the Mesader Kiddushin at the wedding of Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. Ha-Rav Auerbach's brother-in-law, R' Shemuel Zelig, recalls how Maran Ha-Rav was honored with officiating at the wedding in the Jerusalem neighborhood of "Sha'arei Chesed." Although there were zealots who did not look upon this kindly, the groom's father – Ha-Rav Chaim Leib Auerbach – did not give in, because of the close relationship and deep respect between them.

[Ha-Torah Ha-Mesamachat p. 41 and Sefer Rabbenu p. 140 from the newspaper "Ha-Tzofeh"]

Ha-Rav S.Z. Auerbach said: If I say to you 'Maran' in Yiddish [Der Rov – Ha-Rav], know that I am referring to Ha-Rav Kook zt"l. I only use the term 'Der Rov', Maran, for Ha-Rav Kook.

[Sefer Rabbenu ibid. and the booklet "Or Shlomo" p. 24 and see note 34 where various testimonies to this fact are quoted]

Ha-Rav Auerbach honored Maran Ha-Rav with being the Sandek at the Brit Milah of his eldest son, R' Shmuel, who today serves as the Rosh Yeshiva of "Maalot Ha-Torah" in Jerusalem.

[The booklet "Or Shlomo" p. 21]

Maran Ha-Rav's picture hung together with pictures of other Gedolei Yisrael in Ha-Rav Auerbach's sukkah.

[The booklet "Or Shlomo" p. 28]

Ha-Rav Chaim Shtainer related that someone once published a book about Ha-Rav Yitzchak Elchanan Spector which also included disgraceful words about Ha-Rav Kook. Ha-Rav Auerbach said that it is forbidden to buy this book until it is corrected, and he also wrote a letter to the author asking him to fix it. He also met the author a few times and would always ask if the book was being fixed.

Ha-Rav Avigdor Neventzal related that Ha-Rav Auerbach would not hear the rulings of a particular Torah scholar because he besmirched Ha-Rav Kook's honor.

[Ha-Torah Ha-Mesamachat p. 308 and the booklet "Or Shlomo" p. 30]

Ha-Rav A. Yehoshua Zuckerman related that when someone mentioned in a talk about the horrible behavior of certain individuals against Maran Ha-Rav Kook, Ha-Rav Auerbach responded with great distress: I recommend that those who were brazen and dishonored Ha-Rav should go to his grave and ask forgiveness.

[Ve-Alehu Lo Vibol vol. 1 p. 83 and the booklet "Or Shlomo" p. 30]

And see further in the booklet "Or Shlomo" by Amichai Kinerati for the close relationship between Ha-Rav Auerbach and Maran Ha-Rav.

On the Holiday – Tu Bishvat

What do you see when you see a tree in Israel?

["Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah" – Beshalach 5767]

When you are walking along and you see a tree, what are you actually seeing? While it is certainly correct to say that you are seeing a tree, you are actually seeing much more than that, much more.

One hundred and seventy years ago, the French writer Alfonse De Lamartine wrote: "(Outside the walls of Jerusalem) we saw nothing living. We heard no sound of life. We found that same emptiness, that same silence that we would have expected to find before the buried gates of Pompei or Herculenum...total silence reigns over the city, along the highways, the villages... the whole country is like a graveyard." One hundred and thirty years ago, the American author Mark Twain visited the Land of Israel and he wrote: "There is not a solitary village throughout its whole extent -- not for thirty miles in either direction. One may ride ten miles, hereabouts, and not see ten human beings. We traversed some miles of desolate country whose soil is rich enough, but is given over wholly to weeds -- a silent, mournful expanse. Desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action. We safely reached Tabor...We never saw a human being on the whole route. There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country. Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies. Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise? Can the curse of the Deity beautify a land? Palestine is no more of this work-day world."

Did you hear that? There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere, not even an olive tree!

Therefore, when I see a tree, I see the Nation of Israel rising to rebirth in our Land. For almost two thousand years, this Land was angry at us and would not smile at us. Obviously, and by no coincidence, "because of our sins we were banished from our country and distanced from our Land."

As we know, our Sages objected to making Messianic calculations. They even said, "Let the bones be blasted of those who calculate the end of days!" (Sanhedrin 97b). If so, how can we know that the end is near? They answered, "We have no better sign of the end of days than that of Yechezkel (36:8): 'But you, O mountains of

Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel; for they are at hand to come” (Sanhedrin 98a). Rashi comments, “If you see the Land of Israel yielding its fruits plentifully, be aware that the end of the exile has arrived.”

Indeed, one hundred and twenty years ago, the Land began to blossom, and since then this sign has not proven to be a disappointment. Our country is being built up, and despite all the harsh shortcomings visible in our public lives, we have to admit that we are rising up to rebirth, and we have to be happy, hold on and look forward.

Rav Aviner on...

I'm Losing Patience

[“Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah” – Bo 5770 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Without being such a saint, I’m a pretty easy-going guy. I’m no genius, but I’m not so dumb either. I hold fast to my opinions, and I’m pretty obsessive about that. But I don’t write off all those people who disagree with me. I don’t get angry at them. Rather, I relate to them patiently, so that pretty much makes up for my being opinionated.

When I see a Jew violate the Shabbat, I don’t throw stones at him, but I feel sad, and I say to myself: “That person doesn’t know any better.” When I see a Jew eat non-kosher food, it pains me, but I say to myself: “Poor fellow! He wasn’t taught.” When I meet people who want to give up part of our country to our enemies, I shudder, but I end up saying: “They’re just confused.” When I hear about a juvenile delinquent caught up in petty crimes and foolishness, it hurts me deeply, and I am filled with compassion for him. Faced with all sorts of improper, inappropriate, immodest, immoral acts, I react with patience. I say to myself: “I believe in G-d. He won’t abandon His people. Everything will work out.”

But there are extremists, the likes of which make me lose patience when I see them. When I hear someone shout, “Death to the Arabs!” I shudder. I remember the Storm Troopers’ song, “When Jewish blood squirts from the knife, then will we have it so.”

The fellow who yells, “Death to the Arabs” always sugarcoats those words in a layer of fine verbiage taken from our treasury of holiness and nationalism. I remember that all that aggressiveness that hurts people and makes one forget what man is, starts with talk. When I hear an extremist call his Jewish brother, a traitor, an anti-Semite, a Nazi, etc., my patience runs out.

From my youth I recall Ionesco's stage play "Rhinoceros", which describes how moderate, friendly, intellectual, logical people can, without noticing it, turn into wild monsters who try to persuade their fellow man, by all sorts of arguments, that they are right. Those same brutes, closed up in their frozen world with their distorted approach, who never ever listen to anyone else, are unaware that they have turned into primitive crazies, busy trampling people.

Yes, be careful, man. I don't know if you come from the wild, but for sure you've still got a bestial spirit, and you are liable to become a wild animal. Don't fall asleep on the watch.

Certainly, during wartime we've got to protect ourselves, but let us not forget that our enemies are still people. Let us recall that when Yaakov was preparing for war with his brother, he "feared lest he be killed, but was troubled lest he be compelled to kill others" (Rashi on Bereshit 32:8). Let us recall Avraham, who returned from battle and was afraid because of the people he had killed (Rashi on Bereshit 15:1).

Yes, in war we kill, because "if someone is coming to kill you, you should kill him first." We have no choice. But one should not nurture a culture of murder, even by allusion. One should not speak lightly about death to the Arabs. One should not arouse the nations' hatred.

Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook, wrote that every Jew who is aware, even a child, knows that despite the terrible things that the nations did to us, we never nurtured our hatred for them (Le-Netivot Yisrael 1:17). Also, one must not talk of hatred for the nations in the name of the Torah, and certainly we mustn't talk of hatred for our fellow Jew. The Torah was compared to water, and Israel in its elevated moments was compared to the stars, and in its lowly moments was compared to sand. Sand and water mixed together make for a swampy morass.

I am therefore losing patience, because when that type of extremist gets going, it really hurts. They don't let their fellow man live in peace, but turn the world into a powder keg.

Consider yourselves warned.

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