



Parashat Matot-Masei 5770

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On the Parashah... A Collection of Quotes About the Love of the Land of Israel

[Tal Chermon]

Parashat Masei includes the verse: "You shall possess the Land and dwell in it, for I have given the Land to you to possess it" (Bamidbar 33:53) from which we learn the obligation to conquer and dwell in the Land of Israel (Ramban, positive mitzvah #4 in additions to Rambam's Sefer Ha-Mitzvot). Rav Aviner collected quotes which express the love of our Land (Tal Chermon – Torah, p. 451):

“And this is the land which you shall inherit (by lot)” (Numbers 34:2), “The Holy One Blessed Be He said: ‘The Land of Israel is Mine and the Nation of Israel is Mine, it is fitting that I give what is Mine to those who are Mine’” (Midrash Tanchuma ibid.).

“There is no Jew who does not own four amot of the Land of Israel. But you will say: the Ishmaelites took possession of it, while we are in Exile? We have the right of possession: land cannot be stolen and it still belongs to us” (Rabbi Nachshon Gaon).

“We have not taken control of a foreign land and we have not taken away property which is not ours. This is the inheritance of our forefathers, which had once been unlawfully conquered by our enemies” (Chasmona'im 1:15).

“It is fitting that this Nation, which is the embodiment of the world, dwell in the Land, which is the cornerstone of world, since the Land of Israel is holy and it is fitting that it is inhabited by the Holy Nation. When the Children of Israel dwell in it, this is what gives life to the Land of Israel (Maharal of Prague).

"May Hashem give me the merit of planting fruit trees near Jerusalem with my own hands, in order to fulfill the mitzvah (Vayikra 19:23): 'When you come to the Land, you shall plant'" (The Vilna Gaon).

"I am from the Land of Israel, but because of our sins we were exiled from there, and I must live in Ostrovtza. Any man who is asked where he is from must answer, 'I am from the Land of Israel, but at the moment I am temporarily in the Exile'" (The Admor of Ostrovtza).

"Anyone who lives in the Land of Israel should always be happy" (Rabbi Elazar Azkari).

Rav Aviner on... The Ten Plagues of Facebook

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

1. Face Worship. Facebook, the Book of Faces, could have been a blessed endeavor, strengthening family and social relations with the help of a social network. Unfortunately, however, it is a monster that has attacked its creator and become an impediment with its worship of faces. Man is not a face but a soul, which is revealed through its good character and good deeds, not through outer appearance, or through various artificial shows that one puts on for the sake of photo-ops. "Grace is false and beauty is vain, but the woman who fears Hashem – she shall be praised" (Mishlei 31:30). One time our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook, was invited to an exhibition devoted to his father, Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook. He said, "People will see his books and his pictures there, but they won't see his fear of G-d there. I've got no business going." How the soul suffers, seeing itself shoved into a corner, alone and scorned – and the individual being judged by his picture.

2. Exposure. A person has to be humble and modest, and not to expose personal details for all to see. The Jewish People are humble. A Jew does not have to be so extroverted, to reveal his personality and emotions to all, but only to his true friends. One time, Prime Minister Golda Meir was interviewed following the Yom Kippur War, and at the end was asked: "What do you feel personally?" She answered, "What I feel personally, is personal." A person has to be a bit introverted. Moshe placed a veil over his face. Likewise, one should not peek with curiosity into the lives of others, and certainly not into the pictures of women, all the more so if they are immodest.

3. Advertisements. Facebook is sponsored by advertisements, some of which are disgusting, full of offensive language and sexual immodesty, provoking people to commit acts that are base, coarse and forbidden.

4. Crime. Since the information is out in the public domain and available to all, all sorts of unsavory people take advantage of it for evil: identity theft for the sake of extorting monetary contributions; for convincing people to come to rendezvous where they will be robbed; as well as the use made by various types of sexual perverts; for sending junk mail, and for racist groups that encourage hatred.

5. Addiction. Facebook is the fifth biggest cause of addiction in the world. 400 million people in the world are addicted to it, and 2.5 million in Israel use Facebook. 75% of youth are regular users. Facebook addicts can spend 4-5 hours a day on it.

6. Loss of time. Time is one of the most precious things in life. A person thinks he is going into Facebook for a moment, and he may be stuck there for long hours.
7. Superficiality. It's all so shallow, so full of nonsense. People pursue that nonsense, and wallow in it. Pictures and videos, talkbacks and cheap blogs, and blogs responding to blogs. People engage there in superficial discourse, in nonsense, emptiness and shallowness, and they become shallow themselves. It's a vicious cycle, and it gets worse.
8. Exhibitionism. A person develops a longing to be seen by others, to share glances and find favor in the eyes of imaginary, virtual friends. He constantly updates his personal profile in order to increase his popularity. He strikes an alluring pose and has his picture taken in order to draw attention to himself. He becomes enslaved to finding favor in the eyes of others, and to being seen by them.
9. Disintegration. Time disintegrates. Life disintegrates into grayish nonsense. One's personality disintegrates. True, quality friendships disintegrate into virtual friendships.
10. Loss of friendship. Friendship is something vital to a person. Friendship or death! Loneliness is an awful sort of wretchedness. Therefore, one is supposed to acquire for himself a friend (Avot). Facebook instead supplies addiction to a shallow kind of socializing, engulfed in meaningless excitement, in virtual friendship. Pictures no longer reflect life. They have become the essence of life. It is the end of friendship. Facebook is a social network devoid of friendship, because a true friend is like a war buddy – someone ready in every situation to offer help and support. Certainly social connections are good, but that's not a real bond, but the destruction of the concept of friendship. Facebook also leads to the disintegration of the family. 20% of divorces are because of Facebook and the corrupt chats that go on there. True friendship is face to face, not face to screen or screen to face. Therefore, please harness all your courage and cancel your membership in Facebook. Be brave! At first you will have 4-5 days of feeling dazed, but after that you will feel wonderful pleasure and supreme freedom.

Stories about Leaving the Land of Israel - #5

The Rav of Antwerp invited the Steipler Gaon – Ha-Rav Y. Y. Kanievski – to his daughter's wedding. The Steipler Gaon responded: "If his honor can find me a halachic source which would allow me to travel outside of Israel to bring joy to a groom and bride, I will immediately come. He did not find one.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

The Nation of Israel, the Land of Israel or the Torah of Israel

Question: Which is more important - the Nation of Israel, the Land of Israel or the Torah of Israel?

Answer: Ha-Rav Chanan Porat related that the students at Yeshivat Mercaz Ha-Rav once discussed this question at length. They turned to our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, and asked him. Our Rabbi smiled and said: We are involved in wholeness. We want wholeness and not only a part. This was already written in the Torah (Shemot 24:7): "**Everything** which Hashem said, we will perform and we will listen."

We are obligated to do everything: The Nation of Israel, the Land of Israel or the Torah of Israel. Everything.

Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for

the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

My Beautiful Wife

At first, I wanted to get married to a beautiful woman. I was young and I didn't understand life. I didn't understand that grace is false and beauty is vain. I didn't understand that a beautiful woman is no help if she has bad character traits and that she will embitter my life. I learned this lesson the hard way. I met many young women for the purpose of getting married, who were externally pleasant, but did not have a good heart.

I finally understood that inner beauty is what is important. Beauty is important – but inner beauty. I then got married to my wife, who is the most beautiful woman in the world in my eyes. Her good character traits give her incredible beauty. And the wonder is that this beauty does not wither with time. On the contrary, it grows.

At first, I thought that I would love a woman who is beautiful. It then became clear to me that it is the opposite. Because I love her, she is beautiful.

Text Message Responsa

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a week. Some appear in the parashah sheets "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'ah" and "Olam Ha-Katan." Here's a sample:

Rashbi's Grave

Q: I heard that it is uncertain whether the Rashbi is buried on Mt. Meiron. Is it true?

A: Although Rabbi Binyamin of Tudela and Rabbi Petachya do not mention it, the Arizal verified it.

Cousins

Q: Is it forbidden for cousins of the opposite gender to touch? Source?

A: Certainly. Rambam, Isurei Bi'ah 21:6.

Ya'ale Ve-Yavo

Q: I do not know if I said Ya'ale Ve-Yavo on Rosh Chodesh. Do I have to repeat the Shemoneh Esrei?

A: Yes, we assume you acted as you usually do (Mishnah Berurah 422:10).

Widow and Divorcee Covering her Hair

Q: Do a widow and divorcee still have to cover their hair?

A: Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein has two Teshuvot where he writes that one may rely on the opinion that the obligation for a woman to cover her hair is a positive mitzvah and not a transgression, and one may therefore be lenient in an extenuating circumstance, such as one who cannot find a spouse because people think she is married because she covers her hair (Shut Igrot Moshe, Even Ha-Ezer 1:57 and 4:32 #4).

Borrowing Tefillin

Q: Is it permissible to borrow my friend's Tefillin without his permission?

A: If you are 100% certain that he would agree. Sometimes, it bothers people because of the sweat or another reason. Aruch Ha-Shulchan (14:11).

Tefillat Ha-Derech

Q: Is it permissible to me to add petitions into Tefillat Ha-Derech, such as save me from car accidents, drunks and traffic jams?

A: After reciting it.

Cohain's Wife

Q: Is it permissible for a Cohain's wife to visit Kever Rachel and other Kivrei Tzadikim (graves of the righteous), since perhaps she is pregnant with a boy?

A: It is permissible even if it is definitely a boy (Ha-Rav Yisrael Yaakov Fishcher).

Kivrei Tzadikim

Q: Is it permissible to leave Eretz Yisrael to visit Kivrei Tzadikim?

A: Rav Kook rules against doing so. End of Shut Mishpat Cohain. Visit our Forefathers and Foremothers in Maarat Ha-Machpelat and the graves of other righteous people here.

Bad Thoughts

Q: What should I do if bad thoughts pop into my mind?

A: It is not your fault. Think about something else. On the contrary, every time you think of something else, you fulfill a mitzvah (Mesilat Yesharim chap. 11).

Asking a Rabbi

Q: Is it permissible to ask a Rabbi a question even if I do not intend on following his position?

A: If you tell him up front that this is your intention.

Television on Shabbat

Q: In my house, they watch TV. What should I do?

A: If you have to be in the same room, turn your back to the TV.

Special thank you to Fred Casden for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parshah Sheet



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