



Parashat Bo 5771 - #170

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On the Parashah...

Rabbenu Ha-Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda:

Return to the Land of Your Soul and Body!

[Sichot Ha-Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Shemot pp. 129-130]

“We are leaving the impurity of Egypt and heading to the "Air of Eretz Yisrael which makes one wise" (Baba Batra 158b). "The air of Your Land is the life of the souls" (Rabbi Yehuda Ha-Levi, poems, "Tzion Ha-Lo Tishali"). This air heals us, both spiritually and physically, as we see from what occurred with Rabbi Shmuel Salant, who served as the Rav of Yerushalayim. In his youth, he lived in Lithuania and was stricken with tuberculosis to the point that the doctors almost gave up on him. They searched for ways to cure him and suggested various unique places in the world whose climate would help to overcome the tuberculosis and allow him to live longer: Italy, France on the shore of the Mediterranean and Egypt, where there is a concentration of good air. Rabbi Shmuel Salant said: Why should I travel to Egypt - after all, it is close to Yerushalayim? He traveled to Yerushalayim and lived until 93 years old, well beyond the average age, and served in the Rabbinate there for 60 years. This power flows from the treasured nature of the air of Eretz Yisrael. What makes one wise also heals. This air, which belongs to the entire Nation of Israel, also belongs to each individual: To his soul, to his body, and to his psycho-physio-biological state. Father [Maran Ha-Rav Kook] z"l once met with a great scientist, who was far from Judaism and researched prominent illnesses which exist among Jews. He explains these illnesses based on the fact that **we are not Europeans but Asians**. There is a difference between the Asian air and climate and that of Europe, and since we are Asians in our make-up and belong in an Asian climate, the fact that we were not there caused us many physio-biological complications.”

Rav Aviner on...

Did you Raise a Hand Against a Soldier?!

At the beginning of the settlement enterprise, the settlers encountered opposition from the army, and they set up several tents, bringing themselves into conflict with the army. Our Rabbi Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook called on all of them to return. Prominent rabbis and professors sat in the Rav's home, and expressed a unanimous opinion that they had to go back there.

Then Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda's voice thundered: "Did anybody raise a hand against a soldier?" and everyone remained silent. They were frightened, and they did not respond. Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda repeated in a thunderous voice: "Did anybody raise a hand?" Once more, everyone remained silent. Still Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda did not relent, and he shouted, "Did they raise a hand against a soldier?" Then they admitted that they had, in fact, and Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda replied, "In that case, stay here. Don't go back there."

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda didn't let them go back there. Only after he had spoken to them on this topic at length, and they had committed themselves not to hit a soldier, did he approve their returning, and he then spoke very positively about the settlement drive and about the need to arouse the healthy forces everywhere. (I heard this story from Rabbi Ya'akov Levanon, and it may well be that I don't recall all the details well).

Obviously, the truth must be stated that one is not just forbidden to hit soldiers, but to strike any Jew, and Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda made that point before the State's establishment in his article, "I Am Seeking My Brethren" [Hebrew], where he laid out rules of behavior for public struggles: No hitting, no degradations, no hatred (Le-Netivot Yisrael 1:106). This is an accepted halachic principle: One does not perform a mitzvah by way of a sin. One does not perform a mitzvah that brings a sin in its train. If it is possible to do the mitzvah without a sin, then we remained obligated to do it. Yet if it is impossible, then such performance of the mitzvah is not what G-d commanded us to do. The Jerusalem Talmud includes a parable of a person who gave the king a gift of an object that he himself had stolen from the king (Perek Lulav Ha-Gazul).

Woe to the person whose defender becomes his prosecutor (see Mesillat Yesharim at the beginning of chapter 11 regarding those who fulfill mitzvot with the help of theft).

As stated, we have to avoid not just striking our fellow man, but also speaking or thinking evil of him. There's a well-known saying in Hebrew: "What begins with thought, continues with speech, and ends up with deeds."

All the preceding applies regarding every Jew, let alone regarding soldiers. Don't forget that this soldier endangers his life for you, and you lift a hand against him?! Ninety nine percent of the time he is defending our people and our land. He is defending the great sanctification of G-d's name. Yet sometimes he is forced, against his will, to do things that are enormously hard for him, and his heart cries within him. And you dare lift a hand against him?!

You've forgotten the main point. You've forgotten that the backbone of the entire enterprise of rebuilding the Land, of the return to Zion, of establishing the State, of Israel's wars and settlement drives - is the love of Israel, the unity of Israel. That is what we need the most - to be friends.

Kitzur Tefilat Amecha - #25

[adapted for middle-schoolers by Rabbi Shmuel Jablon from Rav Aviner's three-volume commentary on the siddur "Tefilat Amecha"]

In the Ashrei, we say "Your kingship is a kingship over all worlds and your rule is for every generation." Hashem's kingship extends over all nature - including inanimate objects, plant life, animals, and humans. It extends to this world and the next. And Hashem's rule is also over history - forever and ever. Sometimes, as human beings, we cannot understand why Hashem does certain things in nature or in history. That's because we cannot see the entire picture, from the beginning of time to the end. Just because Hashem has a reason for everything, doesn't mean we get to know the reason. Yet, we know that He is in charge and He runs the world.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Removing Mezuzot

Question: Can one who put up Mezuzot in a rented apartment take them when he leaves?

Answer: The basic Halachah is that one may not take the Mezuzot when leaving when a Jew is moving in there. There are, however, some solutions:

1. It is certainly permissible to take the Mezuzah Case.
2. One may replacement the Mezuzot with the least expensive, kosher ones available (Ha-Rav Mordechai Eliyahu on Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 11 #20).
3. One may take a Mezuzah which he put up in a place where a Mezuzah is not a requirement but he wanted to be strict.
4. One can ask the new tenant to pay him for the Mezuzot, but he is not required to do so (see Rama, Yoreh Deah 291 and Be'er Golah ibid.).

Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for

the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

I told you to be careful!

When we say to a child: "Be careful not to drop the plate" his hands start to shake and he drops it. We then say: "I knew it would fall. I told you to be careful." The very act of the warning, which displays a lack of confidence in the child, is what causes him to drop the plate.

We should not make the child feel bad or embarrass him for dropping the plate; rather pick up the shards with him. Do not make a big deal of it or say anything which will deepen his feeling of failure. For example, if a young child wants to dress himself, refuses his mother's help, and ends up with two legs in one pant leg, do not call him "Little fool," and do not even laugh and say it sweetly. He already feels weak and that he cannot do it himself.

We must understand that a young child lives in a different world from us. For him, the house is extremely tall and has big structures in it like one which has four pillars called a table. There are some which are smaller called chairs. And there are giants which roam around the house. Therefore, on the contrary, we must fill this small being with pride and a feeling of accomplishment.

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