



Parashat Vayakel 5771 - #177

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On the Parashah...

Do Not Ascend Onto the Mountain – Part 4

Recorded from two conversations with our Teacher and Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Tau Shlit"a –
Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Ha-Mor in Yerushalayim
[Sefer Le-Mikdashech Tuv, pp. 177-187]

Q: We are Zionists in matters of the Land of Israel, but "Satmar" (who are intensely anti-Zionists) in matters of the Temple Mount.

A: We have a Rav (Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook) who showed us the way. In matters relating to the Land of Israel, we also do not rule for ourselves. We have a Rav and we have a path. It is impossible to accept the Rav in one matter and reject him in another. As forceful as Ha-Rav [Kook] ztz"l was in matters of the Land of Israel, he cautioned that in this point one must not touch [the Temple Mount]. When an important person of great merits in building the Land entered the Temple Mount on account of some scheme which he though permitted it, Ha-Rav [Kook] ztz"l wrote: "One infringement on the holiness of the site of 'The House of Our Lives,' will counteract for us the myriad of physical settlements [we are building elsewhere in the Land of Israel]" (Igrot Ha-Re'eiyah vol. 2, 285).

Q: But that person entered really close to the site of the Temple, we are only talking about entering the Temple Mount within the wall and not within the Courtyard?

A: But we said that Rav Salant and Ha-Rav [Kook] ztz"l refrained from putting their fingers [into the Kotel]! With whom are we arguing?!

Q: Are we discussing the basic law, or a pious act?

A: This was a clear ruling, large-size announcements from the Chief Rabbinate were hung in Yeshivat Mercaz Ha-Rav. This is not the way. All of this issue of prayer in the "Machkameh" is distancing us from the Temple Mount and destroying its essential value. It is preferable to use this energy to establish more towns and settlements.

Q: Don't the settlements do damage because they do not act in a proper fashion towards the site of the Temple?

A: The settlements damage because we did not explain and did not arouse the Nation. Similarly, we should certainly arouse for the issue of the Temple Mount by means of tours, conferences and days of study.

Q: But this also needs to be built on an "awakening from below" (a Kabbalistic concept which means that it is sometimes possible for humans on Earth to take an action which prompts Hashem to react from above).

A: The "awakening from below" is to exalt the Nation in order for us to be at a proper level, in order that we will arrive in unity, so we can have one Kingship, to reestablish Semichah (Rabbinic ordination which originated from Moshe Rabbenu and was lost under Roman oppression) and to learn the issues of sacrifices and issues of prophecy.

[To be concluded next week, B"H]

Rav Aviner on... How Can We Renew Ourselves?

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Ki Tisa 5771 – translated by R. Blumberg]

I was asked how we can renew ourselves in the coming year in our communities. What should we be doing? What point needs strengthening? What should be advanced?

Obviously we must fulfill the entire Torah, as it says, "We will do and obey **all** that G-d has declared" (Shemot 24:7). Moreover, Radbaz in a responsum objects to establishing "main tenets of faith", since everything is a main tenet. All the same, there is room for main tenets, as Maran Ha-Rav Kook explained in his article "Ikarim" [Main Tenets], for when a person is healthy, the doctor treats all his organs, but when he is at death's door, we do what we can to save the essence. Similarly, the end of Tractate Makkot explains about great Torah figures who established a limited number of principles to encapsulate the Torah.

It is thus obvious that these foundations will not be changing every year. Rather, they have to remain fixed down through the years, for only contiguity has the power to have an influence. As Maharal teaches, what has an influence is the unchanging method, not the transient.

For that same reason, the required method is not sectarian. It is not tied to a particular community. Otherwise, it would lose its main strength, which is association with the entire Jewish People. Rather, it has to include the entire Nation that we belong to. That method was isolated in the book "Orot" by Maran Ha-Rav Kook, and was well-explained by Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda, and that method is: love and faith – the love of every Jew and faith in G-d, with love preceding faith.

Love of Israel, love of all Jews, those close and those far removed, those similar and those different, loving one's family, community and Nation, one's spouse, parents, children and neighbors, loving the religious and the irreligious alike, the right wing and the left, the Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Yemenites, and Ethiopians, those we agree with and those we disagree with, those whose ideas we combat or don't combat. Such love does not just involve emotion but profound intellect, intellect that discerns that what unites us is infinitely greater than what divides us. Such love involves a moral process of purification whereby exaltation transcends egotism and individualism and excess, subjective, exaggerated self-love.

Love. Love! That is the word and that is the cure.

Faith in G-d means clinging to G-d, belonging to G-d, and believing that all that G-d does is good, even if we do not understand it. It means believing that the Jewish State was an act of G-d, that the government and the army are good, despite their many shortcomings. It means believing that Moshe is truth and his Torah is truth. It means believing that every word of the Written and Oral Torah is true, and provides us with life and happiness. It means believing that the content of our lives is to serve G-d, whether through the mitzvot involving our relationship with G-d, or those involving our relationship with man. It means believing that it is our job to sanctify our lives for the service of our Creator, to increase G-d's glory and to sanctify His name.

Kitzur Tefilat Amecha - #36-37

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

#36

In the blessing of Ahava Rabba (Ahavat Olam in Nusach Sefard), we ask Hashem to gather us from the four corners of the earth and bring us upright and proud to our Land. This is how Hashem will give us blessing and peace from all corners of the earth - when He brings Klal Yisrael from all over to Eretz Yisrael. And all of us want be able to go to our true home - Eretz Yisrael. It is interesting to note that we don't just ask for all Jews to go home, we ask for Hashem to bring us there upright and proud. Just as we did when we left Egypt in the bright sunlight of day, proudly marching towards Eretz Yisrael, we ask that the Jewish People today not have to flee for their lives. We ask to proudly go to our Land. We are blessed to live in a time when most Jews in the world are able to do just that. We don't have to run away. We have to run towards our true home.

#37

In the blessing of Ahava Rabba, we learn about Hashem's great love for us. We say he has a great love for us. At the end of the blessing, we say that "He chooses His Nation of Israel with love". Notice that "chooses" is in the present tense. He chooses His Nation Israel with love. He chooses us constantly to be His Nation. This great love that He has for us lasts forever and will never go away. This is an important reminder to us about Ahavat Yisrael. Since Hashem has a great love for every Jew and for the entire Jewish People, we must have that same great love. Sometimes it's not so easy. People may annoy us or upset us in minor or major ways. But we want Hashem to love us even when we're not perfect. So we want to love all Jews in the same way that Hashem does.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Testing a Fetus for Abnormalities:

The Responsum which Hangs on Hospital Walls

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo vol.2 #312]

Question: Should older women be counseled to have a prenatal exam to reveal an abnormality with the fetus? If a problem is detected, what benefit is there if it is not permissible to have an abortion? Furthermore, since these exams can endanger the life of the fetus, is it permissible to check if the fetus has an abnormality?

Answer: 1. It is a good idea to have this exam, since either way - if the exam is positive and there is no problem, the pregnancy will continue with calm and contentment for the benefit of the mother and perhaps also for the benefit of the fetus. If, however - G-d forbid, the exam is negative and there is a problem, they can turn to a rabbi and ask him if it is permissible to abort in such a case. If he rules that it is permissible - since there are cases where it is permissible, and indeed abortions have been performed in practice by the rulings of great authorities - the parents can responsibly decide what they want to do. If they decide to keep the child, it will be out of free will, and they will accept him lovingly with a full heart, and they will raise him lovingly with a full heart.

2. Regarding man interfering with Hashem's actions, there is absolutely no interference here. Everything is included in the light of Hashem which illuminates the path of the scientific intellect of man, which acts in a manner permissible according to the word of

Hashem, which was revealed to us by Moshe Rabbenu. If this were not so, all medicine and all science in general, would be invalid. And on the contrary, wisdom gives strength to the wise man.

3. Regarding the claim which is heard against abortion being permitted according to Halachah, that it prevents a soul from entering the world, we do not engage in the hidden in order to

decide Halachah. On the contrary, the Halachah must be decided according to what is revealed to us and our children for eternity, and anything which is intended by the Halachah is in any case intended by the secrets of the Torah which are more hidden. If according to Halachah there is room to perform an abortion, we rely and trust that this soul will find a correction in other ways and the hand of Hashem will not shorten.

4. Regarding the test being dangerous, besides the fact that there are tests which are devoid of any danger, such as blood tests; according to Halachah, it is permissible to enter into a remote chance of danger when there is a need, such as making a living - engaging in a profession which has a certain danger involved in it or for a mitzvah. Endangering oneself in a minimal way is called as "an infrequent damage" in Halachah. This is the law in our case, since giving birth to a disabled baby can sometimes destroy an entire family, and all the more so when we are discussing the danger of a fetus which is yet to be born. We must certainly clarify, however, if it is permissible to have a test with a minimal chance of danger. It does not make sense to enter into details here, since Blessed be Hashem, science continues to advance, and in each individual case, one must take counsel with a G-d-fearing doctor and with an halachic authority.

5. The last is the most precious. The reality is that many women, who are not young, refrain from becoming pregnant, even though they very much have such a desire, because of a fear of giving birth to a disabled baby, and they live with a broken heart. When an halachic authority permits, and even encourages them, to arrange a prenatal exam, and also promises that in the case of a problem, G-d forbid, he will stand by their side in finding an halachic solution with responsible thought given to the effects on the family, this will take a huge burden off of their heart, and they will give birth to more children who will fill their lives with joy and happiness, and add more servants to the world for the sake of increasing the sanctification of Hashem's Great Name.

Rav Aviner's Responsum which Hangs on Hospital Walls

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, Rabbi of Har Beracha, in his book "Penini Halachah" (volume 3 p. 221) writes, "A few years ago Ha-Rav Aviner published a responsum, in which he encourages older women to test their amniotic fluid, so that if their fetus is sick, they can take counsel with a rabbi, and decide if they will follow the strict or lenient position [regarding abortion]. They hung this responsum in various hospitals. And in its merit, a not insignificant number of women, approximately in their forties, who had earlier feared becoming pregnant, lest they gave birth to a sick baby, dared to become pregnant, and may there be more like this in Israel."

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