



Parashat Devarim 5771 - #197

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On the Parashah...

Personal Debt-Ceiling Advice from Rav Aviner

Question: Our debt continues to grow. Is there a Segula to reverse this trend?

Answer: Certainly. You should spend less than you bring in, and not rely on the miracle of overcoming a simple mathematical principle. The Tur wrote that one should limit his expenses. The Mishnah Berurah explains that this is a harsh criticism against those who are enticed to spend money on luxuries without seeing the consequences, which in the end lead to theft and disgrace. Biur Halachah chap. 529. One should plan well.

Question: If someone does not have money for Shabbat or a wedding, should he collect donations?

Answer: He certainly should not collect donations. Collecting donations is only legitimate for essential needs like food or medicine, as is written at the end of the Mishnah in Pe'ah (8:9): "Anyone who does not need (to take tzedakah) and does so anyway will not leave this world before being in need of other people (because he is poor); and anyone who needs to take (tzedakah) and does not do so will not die from old age before supporting others from what he has acquired." This means that a person should not ask for donations for non-essentials. The Gemara says: "Make your Shabbat like a weekday and do not require [the help] of others" (Shabbat 118a, Pesachim 112-113), i.e. it is better to eat simple food such as bread and salt than to receive tzedakah. But if he does not have anything to eat, he should ask for tzedakah. The same applies for a wedding: a person needs to get married but he does not have to make a fancy wedding if he does not have the money to do so. I have friends who do not have a lot of money: one made a wedding in a nice outside area and brought sandwiches. The entire wedding cost 50 shekels. Another friend invited ten of us to the building of the Rabbinate which has a small hall. We drank coke, ate some cake, and the entire wedding cost 20 shekels. In Jerusalem in the Old Settlement as well as in Poland, people were poor and they made a

wedding an hour before Shabbat, then davened ma'ariv and ate their Shabbat meal - which doubled as the wedding meal. If a person wants to live with extras it is a personal decision, but living with extras with other people's money is unheard of.

Rav Aviner on... There is no Palestinian state here.

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

Question: Since there are people who are raising the idea of a Palestinian state in portions of Judea and Samaria, what about the possibility of Jewish settlements remaining in that same area?

Answer: That's an old idea. At one time it was a good. Now it's bad. In the past, we established settlements under Turkish or British rule, and that brought a blessing. Now that is all behind us, and we live in the State of Israel - not in another country.

As is well-known, the mitzvah of the Land of Israel is divisible into three parts: 1. There is a mitzvah to live in Eretz Yisrael and not somewhere else. That is called the mitzvah of *living* in the Land. 2. There is a mitzvah to settle the Land and to rebuild it. That is called the mitzvah of *settling* the Land. 3. There is a mitzvah that the Land must be under our sovereignty. That is called the mitzvah of *taking possession* of the Land (Ramban's Addenda to Rambam's Sefer Ha-Mitzvot #4).

Ramban explains that the most essential component is the third part. The first two occur when the Land is already under our sovereignty.

Ha-Gaon Rabbi Yehoshua of Kutna took a very strict view of this mitzvah. He said that if we are living under foreign rule, we are not fulfilling the Mitzvah of settling the Land. Our living in it has great value, but only as a preparation for fulfilling the mitzvah (Responsa Yeshu'ot Malko, Yoreh Deah #66). It is true that the great halachic authorities do not hold like him. Rather they say that even under foreign rule we fulfill the mitzvah of living in the Land. Still, they concede that we lack the mitzvah of taking possession of the Land, and the mitzvah of living in the Land itself is therefore not being fulfilled to completion.

Thank G-d, we are already a long way past these situations. We have risen to rebirth and we have an independent state. Now it has to be clear to us, to the Arabs and to the entire world that this is our Land. We have waited 2000 years, and now we are returning to it. We shall never leave it, forever and ever, as long as there is a heaven over the earth.

The Arabs who live in our midst have two options: 1. If they wish to live in their own country under their own sovereignty, they have 22 choices, whose area is 500 times greater than the State of Israel. 2. If they are happy living in our midst, we are ready to show them hospitality under our sovereignty and in our country. Obviously they are obligated to keep our laws, just as all the minorities in the world live according to the laws of various countries. Logically, most of them will choose to live in one of their own 22 countries, but as stated, it's up to them. In any event, there is certainly no moral or historic justification for them to have one more country at the expense of our tiny one.

In practical terms as well, it would be unthinkable to leave Jewish settlements in Arab territory. We know them. Many of them are murderers, and we have no guarantee that those among them who are not murderers will succeed in preserving our lives. They will keep us in a constant state of water shutdowns, power outages and terror, and very quickly, G-d forbid, not one Jewish home will remain in place. Especially if war breaks out, those settlements will be hostages, and an awful situation will be created.

But we don't need this analysis at all, because we have already said that in principle, morally, nationally, and historically: this Land is ours. We have to add that the very asking of the question attests to terrible weakness and horrible confusion. Before there was yet a Jewish state, when this question was raised, Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook wrote that such a question is the result of a loss of self-confidence, due to the Holocaust, which made it harder for us to state confidently, "This is our Land" (LeNetivot Yisrael 1:92).

After all, there has been no nation in the world, throughout history, that was ready to give up part of its land. Nations are ready to engage in wars with great self-sacrifice for the sake of liberating the full expanse of their lands. Certainly they are ready to defend it when they already hold it. There is no parallel throughout history of a people fleeing from its land and handing it over to a foreign people!

This is our Land! Even the nations of the world recognized this with the decision of San Remo ninety years ago in 1919. The representatives of the great powers that had achieved victory in the First World War gathered together in Italy to divide up the Middle East following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. This decision included within it the Balfour declaration from 1917 to establish for us a national home, a decision that was accepted then by the League of Nations, and signed on by 51 nations. The Arabs then received an enormous tract of land compared to what we received. Already then Balfour said to them: What are you complaining about? You received an enormous area, and in contrast, the Jews received a tiny niche?!

This was an international decision and there is no authority under international law to change it and exercise a new partition. According to the Balfour declaration, all the Jewish settlements are legal, and not only do the Jews have a right to settle in them, but the nations have a duty to help build them. See Howard Grief's book, *The Legal Foundation and Borders of Israel under International Law*. How fortunate is the human race which in a moment of spiritual elevation admitted that this is our Land forever and ever.

Thus, the solution in relation to Judea and Samaria is very simple, and can be summed up by two words that Moshe, in his time, used with the spies: "Be strong!" (Bamidbar 13:20).

We must be strong! That will allow us already to find solutions to all of our problems, as we have until now.

We have been reborn. We have emerged from the nightmare of the Exile. Let us be strong and march forward.

Be strong and take courage!

Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for

the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships

Unconditional Love

The love for a child is unconditional love. The same is true for love between a husband and wife: "I have loved you with an ever-lasting love" (Yirmiyahu 31:2) and "I betroth you forever" (Hoshea 2:21). The same must be true with a child, in every situation, although it is not always easy. There are times when a child will cause you pain, even serious pain. Sometimes he will be filled with distress, bitterness and thorns. You speak to him nicely and he attacks in return. In such a case, something is bothering him. Maybe he is disappointed with himself. At these times, you want to say to him: "You Nudnik!" But this is not right! One must be careful. He must always feel wanted. During every situation, we must express our eternal love for him.

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