



Parashat Lech Lecha 5772 - #208

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### From the Archives



Ha-Rav with Ha-Rav Chanan Porat ztz"l  
and – may he live a long and blessed life –  
HaRav Avi Ronski, former Chief Rabbi of Tzahal

### On the Parashah...

#### Avraham Avinu – Father of all Mankind

[Tal Chermon]

Question: Is it correct to infer from the fact that Avraham is the father of all mankind that all the nations must become Jewish?

Answer: Rashi, in his commentary on the Torah (Bereshit 17:5), hints at this very question. Avraham's name was originally "Avram" which is an acronym meaning "the father of Aram." This means that he was a national leader, the father of his nation, Aram. Later, however, his name (and together with it his mission) was changed to "Avraham" which indicates his universal task as "the father of the

multitude of nations." A remnant of his former name remains in his new name which shows that despite his new universal character, he still retains his national character. He is both universal and particularistic. This is not an anomaly: the Kuzari (2:36) says "Israel is the heart of the nations." Or, as the Zohar puts it, "the mind of the nations" (Zohar, Mishpatim 108. See Orot Yisrael of Rav Kook 1, 1). The comparison to the essential limbs, the heart and the mind, indicates that Israel is on a different level of existence from the rest of mankind, which could be compared to inessential parts of the body, such as the leg or the ear. We are the central life force present of humanity. But we must remember that the heart only has significance when it is connected with the rest of the body - not as a detached organ sitting in isolation.

We are inextricably linked to the rest of the nations and have a responsibility towards them, but at the same time we are also distinct and separate from them. Along with them, we possess the Divine image that exists in mankind, but we are above them from our external vantage point, "as a Nation that will dwell alone, not counting itself among the nations" (Bamidbar 23:9). We must use our special characteristics to help them. This state of connection and separateness can be exemplified by the world of ideas. There are ideas that are common to both Jews and non-Jews and it makes no difference if they were conceived by Aristotle or, on a completely different level, by the Rambam. These ideas are broad concepts, well beyond national distinctions. A second category of thought is one where the idea is universal but the style in which it is stated is specific to each nation. Therefore, they have to be specially adapted to our specific national style before they can be adopted. This is unlike the first category that can be adopted without any alterations. There is a third class of ideas which are distinctly ours. Regarding them, we are "as a Nation that will dwell alone, not counting itself among the nations." These ideas are specifically ours and have no connection whatsoever with the non-Jews. This example in the sphere of ideas also applies to the practical world. We and our forefather Avraham are one and act identically. Avraham was connected to the nations as "the father of the multitude of nations," but also a "mighty nation" (Bereshit 12:2), naturally separated from the nations and also a source of blessing to them. In the same way, we are both nationalistic and universalistic, and a source of blessing for the entire world.

Rav Aviner on...

### And it came to pass, after Migron...

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Noach 5772 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Question: The terrible wound inflicted upon my flesh at Migron has not yet healed. It can never heal. In the middle of the night, they brutally dragged us out as though we were criminals. Young boys and young girls included. Little children in pajamas. Violence. Cruelty. "We are just following orders!" There was no one to talk to. Arabs threw our possessions out the window, breaking some of them in the process. That's right- they used an Arab moving company to take us away. They touched the women and the girls obscenely. Big heroes for dealing with children! Somebody fainted, but they didn't let the ambulance corps come near.

Unprecedented! The whole thing was just so pathetic, just so wretched.

Germans banished my grandmother and grandfather from their homes and told them, "Go to Palestine!" And here the Jews chase us out of our homes, at Katif and at Migron. Hearts of

stone. Such a heavy blow! And now this country of mine is betraying me. The IDF is betraying me. Enough! It's no longer my country. I don't love it any more. I no longer feel attached to it. I am angry at it. I hate it...

Answer: Dear friend! I weep at the sound of your lament. It doesn't matter whether I shed my tears publicly. Inside I weep. It really is terrible! But what shall we do? What do you suggest? In our country, we are all different, and we are pulling in different directions.

I fear that Gush Katif and Migron will not be the last instances of this sort. I hope and pray that I am wrong, and I strive to keep more from happening, but I can't promise it won't be. There are liable to be more harsh conflicts like these. So what shall we do? Shall you establish your own private country that fits your worldview?! Shall every group establish its own country? We are in this together for better or for worse.

In the last year of his life, every Saturday night, Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook would repeat the same expression: "nerves of steel". Apparently he foresaw that we would need nerves of steel to face the new week.

By the way, there was an incident that was even worse than the expulsions from Gush Katif and Migron: the Altalena incident. Jews shot at Jews: in the midst of the War of Independence, in the Land of Israel, and for the sake of the Land of Israel. We are very fortunate that it didn't turn into a civil war. It was then that Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda wrote his article, "Mi-Ma'amakim" [From the Depths]. And what solution does he suggest there to that outburst of hatred? Increasing our love of our fellow Jews, opening the emergency warehouses of love of Israel (Li-Netivot Yisrael 1). And even before that, he had written his article, "Et Achai Anochi Mevakesh" [I am looking for my brothers], during the "Season" [when some Jews were informing on their fellow Jewish Lechi and Etzel underground fighters to the British]. Then, as well, he set forth the rules of the conflict: no violence, no insults and no hatred (ibid.).

And still earlier, Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook wrote his article, "Al Chilul Hashem" [About the Profanation of G-d's Name], writing that the worst thing there could be is hatred between us (Ma'amarei HaRe'iyah).

We've known this for a long time. Our greatest enemy is the hatred between us. It was groundless hatred that destroyed our Temple, our Land.

Read the Psalms again and again. Remember how much hatred and wickedness King David suffered at the hands of his Jewish brethren, and yet he never returned their hatred. He, too, was banished from his home and his throne. And by whom? By Avshalom, his own son.

Even so, he gave orders not to harm Avshalom under any circumstances. Beloved, suffering brother. Imagine a father who beat his son with murderous blows. The son shouted back, "You've gone much too far! You've crossed all lines! I'm no longer your son! Good bye!"

Yet he could also have responded, "Dad, I'm angry. I'm battered. I'm wounded. I'm hurt. Yet you're still my father, and I owe you a lot. I'm staying home."

Which of the two possibilities should one choose? I don't know. The son will choose for himself. But let me tell you a second story:

A son beat his father with murderous blows. The father responded, "That's it! You've gone too far! You're no longer my son. I don't recognize you as such. I'm blotting you from my memory. Get out of my house and never come back! For me, you no longer exist." Or, he could respond, "Son! I'm wounded and in pain, angry and sorrowful, but you're my son. I believe in you. The door is always open. I know you'll return and I'll always wait for you."

Which of the two should the father choose? Here there is only one choice: the second. If the father closes the door, this son will deteriorate and will never come back. He's a lost son.

Now let's think together. In our case, who's the father and who's the son? Perhaps the government, the country and the army? Perhaps they're the great father who is beating you so badly? Perhaps it's they who make the decisions and run things, and you're just a young son, trying to survive amidst the waves of rage?

Or perhaps the opposite is the case? Perhaps you're the father, you're the thinker, you're the philosopher, the man of faith, the man of vision, the person who gazes into the distance based

on a higher ideal, and the government is the young son, limping along and confused, captive to his own base understandings?

Indeed, who is the father here and who is the son? That depends on the argument between historic materialism and historic idealism.

Marx and Engels' historic materialism argued that the institutions of government are what leave their imprint on history, and spirit is nothing but a pale, secondary byproduct.

Accordingly, the government is the father and you are the son.

But Hegel's historic idealism argues that what shapes history are thoughts and ideas, ideals and beliefs. All the forms of governmental organization are then nothing but a practical translation of those ideas, coming in tow. By that approach, you are the father. The people of faith and belief are the father, and the country is only nourished, openly or surreptitiously, by that soul. Obviously, the Torah is our historic idealism. See Maran Ha-Rav Kook's article, "Le-Mahalach Ha-Ide'ot Be-Yisrael" (Orot). Following this second train of thought, you must continue being a good and upright father, ever brave and patient, determined and faithful, with nerves of steel.

Perhaps we shall never decide who is the father and who is the son. Perhaps, we're all just plain brothers. That's right, brothers. Brothers who sometimes have difficult issues to deal with, like Yosef and his brothers, but still brother all the same. The true enemy is not one of us, but those who in every generation rise up against us to destroy us.

So, let us all carry on together, with nerves of steel, building in love and brotherhood, peace and friendship, for we are all truly brothers. Sometimes our brotherhood is open, and sometimes it is hidden.

Let us be strong and courageous.

*Family Matters - Ha-Rav writes weekly for*

*the parashah sheet "Rosh Yehudi" on family relationships*

#### A Time to Express Love

*One needs to dedicate special time to loving their child. When? Perhaps before they go to sleep. This is a time to express love, talk and give them a rub. This is true with a baby and an older child as well. This is a calm and quiet time, and it should be dedicated to love. A child cannot go to sleep in an environment of anger towards him: "Go to sleep! It's late! It's 9:30! I have been telling you for 2½ hours to go to sleep!" He then runs around until he is yelled at and he goes to sleep scolded. This is very bad. If he goes to sleep scorned it affects his dreams and his sleep. It is permissible to scold sometimes or tell your child to go to sleep, but sit with him, hug him, kiss him, love him.*

*The same is true in the morning. A child should not go to school scolded: "You're not ready yet? Let's go already! You're late." This is no way to go to school. Even without this, a difficult day awaits him...*

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