



Parashat Vayishlach 5772 - #213

Ask Rav Aviner: mororly@bezeqint.net

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

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On the Parashah... Yaakov Avinu – Adversities

Yaakov returned to Eretz Yisrael, but his life was also beset by adversity there. In fact, he suffered throughout his lifetime, starting from his conception when "the children clashed within her" (in the mother's womb [Bereshit 25:22]) and on through his birth when "his hand grasped the heel of Esav" (ibid. v. 26). He then had to buy the birthright (ibid. v. 33), received his father's blessing by deceit (ibid. 27:6-29), was forced to flee to Charan to save himself from his brother Esav who was plotting to kill him (ibid. v. 41-46), was duped into marrying the sister of the woman he wanted to marry (ibid. 29:20-25), was repeatedly swindled by his father-in-law Lavan (ibid. 31:41 and 30:28-43), had a confrontation with his "loving" brother Esav upon his return home (ibid. 32:3-33:18), suffered: the rape and abduction of his daughter Dinah, the reprisal attack on the city of Shechem (chap. 34), his son's hatred of their brother Yosef (ibid. 37:1-12), the loss of this most beloved son of his (ibid. 37:12-36), the imprisonment of Shimon and later of Binyamin (chaps. 43-44), the crossing of his hands and the switching of his blessings to his grandsons (ibid. 48:10-21), etc., etc. There was not a period in Yaakov's life that was free of hardship and tribulations. The greater a matter is, the more trouble and afflictions are associated with it. Yaakov is the most ideal of the forefathers (Bereshit Rabbah 76:1), because he was the final product – the full-blown Jew – that resulted from the creative process that transpired through our forefathers, Avraham and Yitzchak. "It was Yaakov who redeemed" (Yeshayahu 29:22)." Avraham's very existence is justified and gains significance by virtue of the fact that Yaakov is his

descendant. Yaakov's life is beset by complications specifically because of his greatness (Zohar, Bereshit 207).

Rav Aviner on... There's No "Price Tag"

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

Question: When the Arabs attack us, are we allowed to retaliate, an eye for an eye? After all, attacking them and their property is the only thing that deters them. And likewise, when the army or the police evacuate settlements or hilltop communities, perhaps we should react against the Arabs. Let them know that just as they've got crazies, so do we have crazies who can't be controlled: insane, irrational people. This will deter them by creating a balance of terror, an efficient approach. In his time, the Prophet Samson operated this way, and it worked.

Answer: That's a very bad approach indeed. You don't build up the Land of Israel through bad character and sins.

Quite the contrary, because of our sins we were exiled from our land. An important rule in Jewish law is this: one does not do a mitzvah by doing a sin.

Our argument with the Arabs is over whose land this is. This is our Land and not theirs! Yet that does not permit us to kill them, hit them, rob them or even insult them. Quite the contrary. By doing such things we hurt our national struggle, moving it into the petty realm of spats with neighbors. And certainly one shouldn't hurt an Arab for something he didn't even do.

In his day, when the first settlement groups were setting out for the Shomron, Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook said one is allowed to settle only on State lands, and he explained:

"We have no quarrel with Ahmed or Mustafa. We have no personal argument with this or that Arab. It's a national struggle."

The very question is a sign of weakness and confusion. It shows that there are people who haven't understood what we have been doing here for more than a hundred years. The issue is not settlements by a particular Jew, but by the Jewish people. And the one who decides on this is the Jewish people, and not an individual Jew and not an individual student.

Within the very question is the hidden assumption that the Israeli government is hostile to the land, like the British in their day. It's true that under British rule partisans operated, and then as well there was a terrible argument over whether each group was entitled to make decisions, or if this was a role for the entire nation. Yet at that time there was no country. Now, thank G-d, there is, and all agree that it is our country which must decide these things.

In Shimshon's day as well, we didn't have a country, and the Philistines ruled in Israel, so Shimshon operated alone. Part of his reason for doing so was to make sure that the entire Jewish people would not be held accountable for his deeds. Besides, everything he did, he did with divine intuition, in accordance with divine holiness.

Indeed, from "Price Tag" against Arabs, some people have moved on to "Price Tag" against the Army and Police, as though they are the enemy, as though they must be treated as informers and traitors, etc.

The Army virtuously does not report all of that – all of the stones thrown at it, all of the intentional harassment, all of the insults. When all is said and done, the Army loves the whole Jewish people, and sacrifices itself for all of the Jewish people. What a great army! In the book *Pele Yo'etz* (s.v. "Hatzala"), the following is quoted from our Sages: "Even the least worthy Jews are as full of mitzvot as a pomegranate is full of seeds" (Berachot 27a). How can this be? The Talmud is talking about "those who possess the mitzvah of saving Jewish lives. Through this, they surpass in merit the greatest sages of Israel." And if this is said of those who save individuals, all the more so regarding the Army which saves the entire Jewish people, the entire Land of Israel, ensuring the full sanctification of God's name and the full

glorification of the Jewish people. They don't report it, but it hurts them and makes them sad that the very people that they are protecting harm them and endanger them. Surely it is obvious to all that if the army didn't do its work, if it failed to function even slightly, those very people wouldn't be able to survive.

Our only consolation is that perpetrators of "Price Tag" are the fewest of the few, the fringe of the fringe, and, truth be told, sometimes they're accused of doing things they haven't done... Moreover, not one Torah scholar has ruled that one should act this way, either against the Arabs or against the Army and Police. There are only a very few isolated Rabbis who have alluded to their support, or have told their students, "It's forbidden," while winking in collaboration.

G-d have mercy on those fringes who shoot themselves in the foot and distance themselves from the community by taking a path that is neither beneficial nor moral.

Therefore, once and for all, changes in policy have to go through decisions of the entire nation, and not through the partisan acts of individuals. Don't try to force your truths on everybody. The one making the decisions is the Jewish people, and it isn't afraid of anything, not of the enemy and not of anything. Not even of you.

Thank G-d we're moving forward. We're becoming stronger. We're becoming united. We're becoming exalted. And Hashem is walking before us.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Hilchot Sheleg – Laws of Snow

Making and throwing a snowball

Q: Is it permissible to make a snowball on Shabbat?

A: The Rambam (Hilchot Shabbat 10:12) writes that putting all sorts of things together is forbidden on Shabbat because of "boneh" (building). Some argue that making a snowball on Shabbat is therefore forbidden (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata ibid). Some explain, however, that since a snowball is temporary it is permissible. One may therefore be lenient. Making snowballs before Shabbat which one sets aside to throw on Shabbat (within an eruv) is permissible. There is a question about throwing a snowball since it is crushed. One can argue that if the snowball is crushed it is an "unintended act which is not beneficial to him," since the thrower wants a full snowball to hit the other person. This is not the intention of the one who is hit, but we follow the intention of the thrower.

Special thank you to Orly Tzion for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parashah Sheet



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

