



Parashat Bo 5772 - #219

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On the Parashah...

Non-Jew Eating from the Korban Pesach

[Commentary on the Haggadah]

One Pesach a certain non-Jew came to the Land of Israel from Babylonia pretending to be a Jew, and ate from the Pesach sacrifice. He returned home and boasted how he had deceived the Jews and ate the best portions of the Pesach sacrifice. Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteira asked him: "Did they give you the fatty tail to eat?" "No," he replied. The Rabbi said: "If so, next time you have to ask for it, because this is the best part." This non-Jew obviously didn't know that we do not eat this part, though it is sacrificed on the altar. The next year he went again to Jerusalem, and requested the fatty tail! They were shocked and asked him where he learned to ask for this part of the sacrifice. He told them that Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteira told him. They sensed what was hidden in his words. They investigated and discovered that he was in fact a non-Jew and killed him. They sent a message to Rabbi Yehudah ben Beteira: You are in the city of Netzivim, but your trap worked in Jerusalem (Pesachim 3b).

Why did they kill him? While it is forbidden for a non-Jew to eat from the Pesach sacrifice, as it is written, "any foreigner may not eat from it" (Shemot 12:43. Mechilta ibid.), it is not one of the seven mitzvot of the non-Jews for which they receive capital punishment.

The commentators answer this question in various ways:

1. He stole a kezayit (an olive-size piece) of the Pesach sacrifice, and a non-Jew who steals that is liable for death. This is similar to a non-Jew who learns Torah and is liable for death (Rabbi Akiva Schleshinger, Mishnato shel Rabbi Akiva #14). The difficulty with this answer, however, is that he is liable for death by Heaven and not by a Beit Din (court). Rabbi Schlesinger explains: "A Beit Din strikes and punishes for non-Torah transgressions (Yevamot 4b), in order to prevent all breaches - in particular for attacks in matters of the Temple (ibid.)."
2. Rav Kook explained that they killed him according to a temporary ruling, because of the desecration of Hashem's Name (Tuv Ra'ayah, Pesachim).
3. Rav Zvi Hirsch Chayot (Maharatz Chayot) answered that this incident occurred after the destruction of the Temple. The Tosafot already ask: Why didn't Rabbi

Yehudah ben Beteira himself make the pilgrimage? They give various answers: He did not own land in Israel, he was elderly and had no strength to ascend, or he was outside of Israel (Tosafot, Pesachim 3b). According to the Maharatz Chayot, this occurred after the destruction of the Temple when there was no obligation to offer sacrifices, and only individuals continued this practice. During this time, the non-Jewish authorities trailed the Jews, because of the fear that they would revolt. The Jews were concerned that the authorities would interpret the offering of the sacrifice and its consumption in a group as an organization to revolt. They therefore did it in secret. They feared that this non-Jew would inform against them to the authorities about the offering of the Pesach sacrifice. The authorities would smell the odor of rebellion in this act and would kill them. This was a case of saving lives, and they therefore decided to get rid of this non-Jew (kuntres "Avodat Ha-Mikdash"). My grandfather and my teacher, Rav Meir Flam, explained that perhaps the Jews combined the offering of the Pesach sacrifice and the organizing of the rebellion, and they therefore did not want the non-Jew to be in the vicinity.

Rav Aviner on...

Ode to Religious Zionism

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

Since its inception, Religious Zionism has been the living fulfillment of what Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook, its chief spiritual leader, said about himself:

"I am forever caught between two pathways, for on the one hand, I seek to establish peace and brotherhood between the older generation that is G-d-fearing and steeped in Torah learning... while on the other hand I seek to spread the love of G-d and Jewish faith and practice amongst the young people who are coming to settle the Holy Land, such that it will be to G-d's liking. I thus seek to fulfill the scriptural admonition, 'Love truth and harmony' (Zechariah 8:19)." (Orach Mishpat 254)

Such indeed is the intent of the "Religious Zionist" movement, as its name implies.

This movement does not involve two separate matters joined together artificially, but one cohesive matter whose strands are all woven together. Zionism, after all, is itself Torah.

But that itself is the very source of a problem. Many Jews dwelling in Zion interpret this holy combination negatively. Some view the Torah positively and the Jewish State negatively, while others do the opposite. Thus, Religious Zionism has gotten used to having stones thrown at it from both right and left. Surprisingly, however, these attacks do not weaken it, and do not dilute its numbers. Quite the contrary, the movement is on the rise and is blossoming, and the more it is oppressed, the more it grows and burgeons. Presently, Religious Zionism claims more than 10% of the Jews in our country, and its educational and ideological influence goes far beyond its relative numbers. This strength derives from two factors:

1. The constant attacks preserve it from extremism and exaggeration, and bring about a blessing.

2. Most of the time, the accusations are false and nonsensical. That is good news, for if the accusations are off target, it's a clear sign that there are no relevant accusations to be made.

Thus, Religious Zionism is not overly excited by the attacks. Rather, it continues along its sure path. An example of this is the recent media attack – which some claim was orchestrated – whose exaggerated statistics cannot cover up its low quality.

There is a very wide range of attacks, some new and some recycled, like "exclusion of women" in society in general and in the army in particular; religious extremism and religious

coercion; going too far with a Torah slant in the schools, boy-girl and men-women separation; and modesty. Obviously, these come from the liberal side of the national map.

The claims made in the news are a marvelous example of the media's transformation of isolated occurrence into gross overgeneralizations.

Example 1: An isolated group of military cadets left the hall to avoid women singing.

Whether they were right or in error, it should be noted that they didn't yell, curse or malign anyone. They didn't harm the event. They just quietly left the room so as not to bother others and in order to show them respect. The whole thing was much ado about nothing.

Example 2: Several dozen young people broke into an army base and stoned officers serving in our armed forces. Certainly this is a heinous, shameful act, but, once more, it was nothing but the act of isolated, fringe individuals who represent no one but themselves.

That's what we said: Tell me what you're being attacked for and I'll tell you who you are.

And that righteous institution, Religious Zionism, instead of responding with fierce attacks against their accusers (in order to discount their claims) chose rather to defend itself by endlessly apologizing, humbly fulfilling the Talmud's words, "If your fellowman calls you a donkey, put a saddle on your back" (Baba Kamma 92b). In other words, accept what he says. This patient, tolerant approach of Religious Zionism does not derive from weakness. Quite the contrary, it derives from the valor and fortitude to stand fast. Our movement has long been inured to all sorts of attempts at delegitimization. Therefore, it carries on with its strong spirit, without cursing or insulting anyone...quietly, with self-assurance.

The same may be said regarding all of the attempts, from within and from without, to divide us.

None of these succeed at all. Neither do all the stubborn efforts to create divisiveness, attempted by all sorts of ephemeral bodies within Religious Zionism.

It's obvious that Religious Zionism is enormously eclectic. After all, as noted above, it tiptoes between the pathways. Between Zionism and religiousness there are many pathways, a great many differences of opinion in various spheres: the Jewish State; the army; redemption; loyalty to the State; Torah study; university; Eretz Yisrael; modesty; mixed society; innovation in Torah rulings...yet all of these differences are null and void compared to our common ground, which is infinitely greater than what divides us. And what is that common ground? The Nation's rebirth in its Land according to the Torah

For Religious Zionism, working towards harmony is not the result of an effort but is built into its very existence. After all, in the eyes of Religious Zionism, Zionism is religious by its very nature, even if people far removed from Torah are partners in it. They, too, are emissaries of G-d even if they, themselves, deny this. Complex, intricate cooperation with secular Jews flows for Religious Zionists in a natural manner. The movement is noted for its creative tolerance, towards the Charedim, the secular, the right, the left, and certainly towards all the sub-streams within Religious Zionism. How remarkable is its loving relationship with its children who have moved away from Torah, yet who are its own flesh.

Therefore, it is no wonder that all sorts of funds and non-Israeli organizations aiming to make Israel a "state of all its citizens" (as opposed to a Jewish State) work so hard to weaken and to split Religious Zionism, since they view it as the greatest glue and the greatest guarantee of the nation's unity in its Jewishness. They invest large-scale resources and efforts to unravel Religious Zionism, to make its worldview more pluralistic and less Jewish – and nothing works for them. Even their attempts to empower various minor bodies within Religious Zionism in a centripetal direction have gained nothing. The centrifugal force is infinitely stronger.

Religious Zionism is holding to its own pathway without diverging from it, and despite all the winds blowing against it, it is becoming stronger, both in its Zionism and in its religiosity. It is producing more and more volunteers out of its ranks to combat units and to the officers' corps. In the last Officers' Training Program, Religious Zionists composed 40% of the group, and the synagogue on base is packed to the hilt on Shabbat. And all this is a result of an idealistic education. The vision of Ha-Rav Neriah, who said, "We shall establish yeshivot everywhere," is being fulfilled before our eyes. And of course there are also intensive girls'

religious high schools [“Ulpanot”] and post -high school seminaries and religious colleges for girls.

Every attempt to disqualify the Religious Zionists ends up in failure. All the arguments that claim that Religious Zionism is insufficiently enlightened, or, alternately, not sufficiently pure, don't succeed in confusing anyone. The Religious Zionist public is getting bigger and bigger, and its light is growing stronger. Obviously, things are not perfect, but all in all they're good. Even very good, from a moral, religious, educational or nationalist standpoint. There is little criminality and little licentiousness. There is a very strong moral sense.

And in fact, apart from a few minor accusers, Religious Zionism has earned high esteem in Israel and throughout the world, and it has an influence on the life of the Nation that far exceeds its numbers. Actually, Religious Zionism almost always sets the national agenda – apart from several painful failures. Yet such is life. You don't always succeed. Religious Zionism does not get overly excited over all those who are trying to confuse it. It is sure of its path, and the fact that there are difficulties is not due to their being on the wrong path, but due to their not yet having reached the end of the way. Religious Zionism constantly and relentlessly engages in self-criticism, with great sincerity and with an ongoing effort to improve itself. It doesn't need outside criticism for this to occur. Likewise, it is not alarmed by all sorts of attacks against it. It is strong, it has energy and it is marching mightily forward and fighting for its views out of a love for all.

It is not tired. It is always climbing, higher and higher.

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