



Parashat Tetzaveh 5772 - #224

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On Purim...

Sending Mishloach Manot Anonymously

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo]

Question: Is it preferable to send Mishloach Manot anonymously or with one's name?

Answer: There are two main reasons given for the Mitzvah of Mishloach Manot. Some write that it is in order to ensure that every Jew will be able to rejoice on Purim. By sending good items to eat, we enable everyone to enjoy the Purim Seudah – even those who do not have enough money to provide for themselves. Others write that we send Mishloach Manot in order to increase love and friendship among Jews. By expressing love for one another, we counter Haman's claim that we are a scattered and separated Nation. This is the explanation given by Rabbi Shlomo Alkabetz, author of Lecha Dodi, in his book "Manot Ha-Levi" (Esther 9:19). Seen in this light, one may argue that the message of love and friendship is better conveyed when the recipient knows who sent the gift (see Shut Chatam Sofer #196).

Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef wrote: There are those who say that one who anonymously sends Mishloach Manot to his friends does not fulfill the Mitzvah of Mishloach Manot, and he must send them again (Kol Sinai, Halichot Olam, p. 54).

It is therefore clear that a person who sends Mishloach Manot with his name on it to one friend, has already fulfilled his obligation, may thereafter send others anonymously. But in truth, there is reason to argue that sending them anonymously is preferable, so that a person who cannot afford to send a large gift does not suffer any embarrassment. In any event, one should not overdo the size of Mishloach Manot, and there are many Rabbinic decrees meant to minimize the expenses of Mitzvot so that people will not be placed in a difficult situation (Moed Katan 27a and end of Mishnah Ta'anit). The Rambam also wrote: "It is preferable for a person to be liberal with his gifts to the poor than to be lavish in his festive meal or in his giving portions to his friend, because there is no greater and more splendid happiness than to gladden the hearts of the poor, the orphans, the widows and the converts. For one who gladdens the heart of the unfortunate is similar to the Divine Presence, as it says (Yeshayahu 57:15): To revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite" (Hilchot Megillah 2:17).

It is also obvious, however, that one should not exaggerate in the other direction. As the Mishnah Berurah wrote: The Chayei Adam proves from the Jerusalem Talmud that if one

sends a small amount to a wealthy person, he does not fulfill the obligation of Mishloach Manot. Other authorities however do not mention this issue, but it is proper to be cautious about it from the outset (Biur Halachah d.h. Chayav 695:4). It therefore appears that it is best to lessen the scale of the Mishloach Manot, since the essence is the love and the friendship and not the financial value. As we stated, even though according to the basic law it is permissible to send anonymously, if the sender makes his identity known he has the ability to increase love among the Jewish People.

Rav Aviner on... Refusing Orders, etc.

[Be-Ahavah U-BeEmunah – Terumah 5772 – translated by R. Blumberg]

Question: Following our brief conversation, I see that I must clarify my position about being in favor of refusing orders. It is not to solve my personal problem. My own problem can be solved by making a polite request of my commander, who I know will help me. For me it is a matter of principle: a political tool to fight against this corrupt army and the corrupt state that stands behind it. Yes, I say this with great certainty, but with great pain as well. Everything is rotten, unfortunately, and can no longer be rectified. Therefore, the faster it is destroyed, the faster it will be rebuilt in an upright and pure manner. Refusing orders is just the tip of the iceberg. I have no faith in this country or in the Nation that dwells in Zion. True, I am talking only on my own behalf, and I don't represent anyone but myself, but I am certain that I am serving as a mouthpiece for others like me. Please don't respond with quotations from Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook or Chief Rabbi Kook – they should rest in peace – regarding the Jewish People. I feel no attachment to Chief Rabbi Kook, I'm no disciple of Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda, and as far as the Jewish People, I don't know what that is. I agree, unwillingly, that our lives are a partnership here, but I shall continue pulling as much as I can in the direction of the Torah, and against the degeneration that is going on from day to day. And in the end, I didn't write to get an answer, but so that you would listen to what I have to say.

Answer: Thank you. I, too, am going to tell you what I think, not to convince you, but to prevent a misunderstanding. I don't see myself in any sort of partnership. A partner has a part that is his, alone, and he's allowed to insist on having his way with it. In a partnership, each member is entitled to stop changes in the arrangement, even if he is in the minority.

Rather, I see myself as part of the people, and our master Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook wrote in Shut Mishpat Kohen that one should not confuse an aggregate with a partnership. An aggregate is like a body with organs, all of which are vital. Together they constitute a single vital whole. A partnership, on the other hand, is a collection of individuals like a joint venture, like a large insurance company.

All of Israel is responsible for one another. They suffer from one another, enjoy one another, in the same way that all of the body's organs constitute a single organism, as Malbim explained, and not like a worm, which is made up of individual, independent vertebrae. The one who decides what happens in this country is the people, because it is the people who built it. It is the people who returned to Zion, who established the State and who liberated Judea and Samaria. Judea and Samaria do not belong to you personally, but to the people.

This Land belongs to the people, even the people down through the generations, and it is the people who decide things. I am one of the people, and everything I do in this Land, I do together with them, my being one of them. "I live among my people" (Melachim 2 4:13), as is explained many times in the Zohar on this verse.

I am not always pleased with what my Nation does – generally yes, but not always. Certainly there are different spiritual levels within the Nation, in line with Rabbi Luria's comment that "Tzibur" [community] is an acronym for **T**zaddikim [righteous], **B**enonim [middle level] and **R**esha'im [wicked]. Yet all of them constitute levels within the Nation – my Nation.

In the Exile, we were a collection of individuals. At best, we were communities.

Yet our lives as a Nation disappeared, and now they are slowly coming back. This is what died in Yechezkel's prophetic vision of the dried bones. This is what died in the rot described by the Vilna Gaon in his Likutim, at the end of his "Sifra DeTzeni'uta". And this is what is now coming to life. We have resumed being a Nation, and the greatest expression of that nationhood is our country and our army.

I therefore try to fulfill, "I live among my people", and not to fulfill, "They have gone from here" – they removed themselves from brotherhood" (Bereshit 37:17; Rashi).

I love my Nation greatly, even in the most problematic of times, as is explained at the end of Chapter 19 of Mesilat Yesharim. I am always together with my Nation, both when they rise up, and when they fall.

It's true that we have many shortcomings in our public life, yet we are still rising as a reborn Nation. This is a Divine decision, and no human calculation can change it.

Everything will heal. Patience. It will come thanks a bit to me, and thanks a bit to you.

All of us together.

In the News...

Rav Shlomo Aviner: The Religious Community is Paranoid

<http://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/General+News/119072/Rav-Shlomo-Aviner%3A-The-Religious-Community-is-Paranoid-.html>

Rabbi Shlomo Aviner Shlita, Rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Ateret Kohanim addressed the controversy that erupted around the Kol Isha issue in the IDF. He feels the religious community got carried away in its response to and interpretation of the non-religious community's motivation for the women singing. "With the exception of one or two Meshuganas who are working against the religious community, no one in the country is against the religious community. Generally speaking, there may be an effort to repel religious coercion".

"When many religious people hear criticism against them they begin shouting 'Shmad' (Religious Persecution). What Shmad? Did anyone call for killing or doing something against religious Jews? He wishes to hear women sing because he wishes to hear women sing. That's it. Why do you think this is against you? He hears women singing even when religious Jews are not present. The Chilonim (non-religious) also want the religious to take part in the ceremonies. What do you think - that they want people to begin streaming out when singing begins? Of course they don't!"

"The Chilonim are not trying to prove anything. This is not a cultural war. The IDF simply wants everyone to participate, that's all. They are not trying to win us over. The cultural divide has always existed".

Regarding IDF Chief Rabbi Brigadier-General Peretz, the Rav commended him, explaining "He is the first chief IDF Rav in history to act against the military decision compelling everyone to listen to women singing."

The Rav explained to his Talmidim that there is a Rav in the IDF and he has instructed soldiers to accept the word of their officers, for if this is not the case the military will fall apart. Rav Aviner expressed his support for the IDF and instructed his Talmidim to adhere to the orders of superior officers.

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