



Parashat Matot-Masa'ei 5772 - #241

Ask Rav Aviner: mororly@bezeqint.net

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

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On the Haftarah... The Return to Zion Purifies

[Ashekenazim: Yirmiyahu 2:4-28, 3:4
Sefardim/Yemenite Jews: Yirmiyahu 2:4-3:28, 4:1-2]

During different periods, especially during the time of the Aliyah of North African Jews, the question has arisen: Is it preferable for religious Jews to remain religious in Exile, or to come to Israel with the risk that they might be influenced by the secular and abandon traditional observance?

"I brought you into the Land of Carmel to eat its fruit and goodness, but you came and defiled My Land and made my inheritance an abomination" (Yirmiyahu 2:7). This Land was supposed to be a place of material and spiritual happiness for us, but it turned into a den of transgressors. Hashem certainly did not take us out of Egypt for this purpose: "Where is Hashem, who brought us up out of Egypt and led us through the desert, in a land of plain and rifts, a land of waste and darkness, a land where no one has passed and no one lives?" (ibid. v. 6). After we left the horrible desert and arrived in the Land of milk and honey, we wasted the Divine opportunity. We acted without gratitude to Hashem, and defiled the Land.

To our great distress, this process has been reenacted in our time. Hashem rescued us from the Exile, miraculously brought us to our Land in His kindness...and we turned our backs on Him, desecrated every ideal, every purity and every holiness.

This reality has led some Rabbis to question the value of the Zionist movement. Jews return to the Land in order to desecrate the Halachah?! Perhaps it would have been better to remain in Exile. This Land is holy, and our Sages taught that a sin in the Land of Israel is much worse than a sin performed outside of Israel: One who shames the king in the street cannot be compared to one who does so in the royal palace! The Torah itself warns: "Let not the Land vomit you out when you defile it" (Vayikra 18:28). If this is so, then what is the point of coming and defiling the Land – to be exiled again?

But the Zionist movement is legitimate and follows the Divine will. The midrash explains our verse from Yirmiyahu (2:7) "You came and defiled My Land" as meaning "If only My children would come and defile My Land" (Yalkut Shimoni Eichah #1038).

Furthermore, there are those who claim that there is no mitzvah to make Aliyah because there is a danger that one will become corrupt by being distanced from the Torah. But the Gemara and halachic authorities themselves explain that one should live in Eretz Yisrael, even in a city where the majority of residents are idol worshipers (Ketubot 110b. Shulchan Aruch Even Ha-Ezer 75:3), despite the potential negative influence. Although some authorities have written that in this regard heretics are worse than non-Jews, and there is a greater chance that they will have a negative influence, Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Eliyahu Klatzkin explained in a small book of Halachah called "Dvar Halachah" (#38 p. 27a) that the same law applies in a city in Eretz Yisrael where the majority of residents are heretics. His proof is from the Gemara in Eruvin (61b-62a. Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim #385) where the law appears that it is impossible to make an "Eruv Chatzerot" (lit. mixed [ownership of] courtyards, which allows one to carry within the courtyard on Shabbat) with a Tzeduki (Saducee, i.e. a heretic), and various options are given if one lives in the same house as a Tzeduki. But there is no mention of any prohibition of living in such a place, or any obligation to live in a place solely populated by observant Jews. He adds that a person's failure to observe the mitzvot of Hashem because he is concerned that spiritual damage will result, is discussed by the Gemara in Berachot (10a) regarding King Chizkiyahu, who did not engage in the mitzvah of procreation since he saw through Divine intuition that wicked children would issue from him. The prophet Yeshayahu said to him: "What you are commanded to do, you must do!" And Ha-Rav Klatzkin added (ibid.): As if there is permission to act wiser than Hashem's mitzvot (see Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Bereshit p. 276)!

There is a story that after the establishment of the State of Israel, Jews from North Africa and Yemen made Aliyah and were abandoning traditional observance. The person who headed the Department of Aliyah at the Jewish Agency was a Torah scholar named Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Shragai, and he was being eaten up inside by this fact. He did not know whether it was proper to continue to bring Jews to Israel under such circumstances. Although he was encouraged by Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Yechiel Yaakov Weinberg, the author of Shut Seridei Aish, and Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Yosef Soloveitchik, he was still greatly troubled. He went to the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Tzvi Pesach Frank, and asked him what to do. Rav Frank said to him: Can you do me a favor and hand me the Yalkut Shimoni? He opened it and showed Rav Shragai the words of the Yalkut Shimoni on Megillat Eichah: "Hashem says: If only my children, my Nation, would be in the Land of Israel, even though they make it impure." And he continued: What do you want from me - to transgress the words of our Sages?! You are not responsible for what is occurring. You must bring Jews to Israel and make every effort to connect them to Torah. Rav Shragai continued to bring Jews to Israel and mentioned this story at various times. In the book "Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah – Eretz Yisrael" (p. 57, 221-222), there is a letter of Rav Shragai describing exactly what happened, which he sent to me. It is even more severe in this case since we are not discussing unobservant Jews outside of Israel, but observant Jews who made Aliyah and then were no longer observant. If this is so, what was Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank's calculation? Rav Shragai once visited France in a place settled by many North Africa Jews who did not make Aliyah, and he saw their situation. They did not only abandon traditional observance, but abandoned Judaism altogether – complete assimilation. He then understood that Ha-Rav Frank was

correct that we should bring the Nation of Israel to the Land of Israel and we should know that everything will work out in the end.

We can also recall that a certain Rav once explained the line in the Haggadah, "If we received the Torah, but did not enter the Land of Israel – it would have been enough," that it would have been better for the non-religious pioneers to have remained outside of Israel rather than to commit sins in the Land of Israel. These words caused much consternation, and when the students came to class, they told our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook, what they had heard. They thought he would discuss this issue at length, but his response was brief: "See Yalkut Shimoni #1038" and taught the class as usual (Iturei Cohanim #181).

When the Belzer Rebbe (Ha-Rav Aharon Rokeach) made Aliyah, he came to Reb Noson (Ha-Rav Shalom Natan Ra'anan Kook, Maran Ha-Rav Kook's son-in-law) and said: we differed with you regarding the way to bring Jews on Aliyah. We said that they should first be strengthened in Judaism outside of the Land and only then make Aliyah, in order to build in holiness. You said that every one of them should quickly come on Aliyah without calculation. Since the Holocaust, it has become clear to us that we erred, and we are greatly distressed over this fact.

Maran Ha-Rav Kook taught us that the process of the return to Zion would be similar to the return of Ezra in the Second Temple Period. Many wealthy and important Jews remained in the Exile, and a small and not so righteous group accompanied Ezra to Eretz Yisrael. These Jews slowly returned to Torah, thus paving the way for the building of the Second Temple and the development of the Oral Torah (Igrot Ha-Re'eiyah, igeret #311). Maran Ha-Rav Kook also taught us not to overly check the "Kashrut" of those who make Aliyah, since the Land of Israel naturally allows those worthy to reside within her, and she vomits out the inappropriate people (ibid., Igeret 82).

Through the meeting of the hidden holiness of the Nation of Israel and the hidden holiness of the Land of Israel, the Nation of Israel will repent. It is only a matter of time and patience.

Rav Aviner on...

The War over Migron and over Judea and Samaria

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

Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook proclaimed before the Jewish People, and before the entire world: "Over Judea and Samaria there will be war", and "[We will halt its relinquishment] 'with our bodies'" (Le-Hilchot Tzibbur, p. 214, p. 226). When he was asked whether he meant civil war, he refused to answer. Afterwards he clarified to the Tzahal Commander-in-Chief that he did not mean civil war, or a war of the settlers against the army. Here is what he wrote:

"Our devoted Sages instructed the Jewish People in how to wage war against the nations. Let us hope that matters will never come to the Jewish People waging war against their own failed government."

Thus, what he was referring to was a situation in which the entire Jewish People are at war with their government. He wrote to the Defense Minister, "Over Judea and Samaria there will be an internal war, and when the entire Jewish People rises up against this government, we will obviously side with the entire Jewish People as G-d's word achieves ascendancy over

G-d's people and inheritance. We will not take the side of the failed government. The government must serve the people, and not vice versa.”

He further explained to his students that he was not advancing a practical directive but a proclamation of educational value. “I said and I wrote that over Judea and Samaria, Jericho and the Golan, there would be a war. No concessions are imaginable. Such threats, such utterances, such educational messages, must be repeated with regularity, thousands of times, to uproot this corruption, this disease, this weakness, at its source. These lands do not belong to the nations. We did not steal them from the nations. Rather, thank G-d, we have grown, matured, and returned to them. Over Judea and Samaria and the Golan and Jericho there will be a war. We must repeat these threats, these utterances, tomorrow and the day after, relentlessly, in order to express our position with strength and fortitude. We must remind the government and the Jewish People that we must not entertain the least possibility of conceding any part of our Land. We are not the owners of His Land. It belongs to the entire Jewish People. We are the Jews living on it. We are the representatives of the entire Jewish People. We must not betray our Land. We must increase our strength and fortitude to sanctify G-d's name” (from a tape recording).

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah's style of speech was thus meant to emphasize in the sharpest terms that there is a terrible and tragic issue at stake.

Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah never gave practical instructions to anyone to go and wage war over Judea and Samaria.

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As for Migron, there is good news. We purchased a large part of the area. Hence there is no reason to destroy it and to move its residents to any alternative location. Of course it was always ours to begin with, yet now there is not even any legal pretext for anyone to protest against us. Thus, certainly there is no reason for the government to do anything so terrible as moving the residents.

Let us be strong and resolute for the sake of our Land and the towns of our G-d.

Shut She'eilat Shlomo - Questions of Jewish Law

Drafting Yeshiva Students into Tzahal

Question: Some people bring as a proof that Yeshiva students should not be drafted the Gemara in Baba Batra (8a) which says that "Torah scholars do not require protection".

Answer: The Radvaz (2:752, brought in Pitchei Teshuvah Yoreh Deah 243:2) already explained that this principle only applies under three conditions:

1. In monetary matters.
2. For great Torah scholars and not merely yeshiva students.
3. When they do not want protection at all. But in Israel, they do not want to protect, but they do want to be protected by others.

This Gemara is therefore irrelevant to the discussion.

(See Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:368 which deals with the obligation of yeshiva students to serve in Tzahal).

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