



Parashat Vayeshev - #308

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Hey Bear, It's My Place!

Question: Is it worthwhile for the State of Israel to freeze building in the "Settlements" for the sake of much sought-after peace?

Answer: There is no need to be a renowned Middle-East expert to know that the Arabs lie and deceive. The fact that for well over 60 years, much innocent Jewish blood has been shed, leaving orphans and widows, is enough for us understand this fact. To our great distress, the Rambam already knew this when, in this very context, he mentioned the verse: "I am peace, but when I speak, they are for war" (Tehillim 120:7. Rambam, Igeret Teiman).

A foreign reporter once asked me: Hasn't the time come for the State of Israel to lay down its arms for the sake of peace? Like every Jew, I responded to the question with a question: In your opinion, what would happen if all of the Arabs countries and all of the terrorists laid down their arms tomorrow? He answered: The State of Israel would do the same. I then asked: And what happen if the opposite occurred and Israel laid down its arms? He said: Within 15 minutes, the State of Israel would be wiped out. I then turned to him: If so, who is the obstacle to peace?

But above all, have we ever seen a country in the world give up its territory to another who threatens it with war, in order to attain peace?! Don't forget – this Land belongs to us. The Arabs have 25 countries, 500 times the size of our country, and do not need to take a bite out of our Land.

This was, is and always will be our Land. It is our Land according to Hashem, according to the Torah, according to the Tanach, according to history, according to the League of Nations and according to the UN.

We are not frightened from the threat of thieves at midday.

A friend who went on vacation in Alaska told me that while there, he sat by the sea, fishing. During the flight in the small plane that brought them there, someone jokingly asked: "What happens if a bear approaches us?" The group leader didn't laugh. He answered: "Look it straight in the eye and say to it: 'Hey bear, it's my place!'" Later on when my friend was fishing, he heard a rustling behind him. He turned around and saw a terrifying sight – a bear was threatening him. He had the courage to look it in the eye without blinking and to say: "Hey bear, it's my place!" The bear growled, turned around and left.

We must say the same thing, clearly and without fear, to the Americans, to the Arabs and to the entire world: "Hey bear, it's my place!"

Rav Aviner on...

"He did not make us like the nations of the world"

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Vayishlach 5774 – translated by R. Blumberg]

We must constantly praise the Master of all, day and night, whether He gives us everything or nothing. Yet the truth is that He gives us so much blessing, miraculously or naturally, that even if we wanted to praise Him day and night, our praise would not suffice.

We must praise Him for the air we breathe, for the eyes with which we see, for the sun and the moon, for the flowers and the gardens, for our body and soul. Yet first and foremost, we must praise G-d for not having made us like the nations of the world, and not having placed us like the families of the earth, for not having designed our destiny to be like theirs, nor our lot like that of all their multitude. He is the Master of all, but within that "all", we stand out. We belong to the family of nations, yet within that family we are unique, bearing the souls of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah. We are a special family, a marvelous family, an unparalleled family.

We were a family already before the Sinai Revelation, the family of a special Nation, a family eternally beloved. This is the greatest kindness that exists. How fortunate that we are who we are, whether or not we are aware of it.

We see nations – G-d have mercy on them – who are wild men, men on the outside but wild beasts on the inside. Thank G-d He did not make us like them.

We don't hate them. Every day, in the "Aleinu" prayer, we pray for them, thrice daily: "Perfect the world under the reign of the Almighty, such that all mankind will call upon Your Name, and all the wicked of the earth will be turned to You."

We don't hate them. At the end of our prayers, we pray for them that they should all merit to become righteous nations. On that day, G-d will be one and His Name one. Yet in the meantime, there is only us.

Beloved is man, that he was created in G-d's image, and above him stands Israel, who are called G-d's children. All flesh are destined to be beloved and upright, and to live in eternal peace.

We are the family of Avraham the Hebrew. The entire world was on one side and he was on the other, and together with that, G-d blessed him. "All the nations of the earth shall be blessed through you" (Bereshit 12:3).

As far as all the wicked turning to G-d, that will come to pass. It won't be today or tomorrow, and apparently not the day after tomorrow either, but it will happen, and we shall await it patiently.

We are the disciples of Yehoshua bin Nun, who conquered the Land and settled it. It was he who authored the "Aleinu" prayer, quoted above, which we have recited down through the generations, relating to those same nations who shed our blood and who still continue to do so.

As for us, how good our portion and how pleasant our lot. How fortunate we are to be us!

True or Superstition?

Kever Rachel

Q: What is the source that Davening at Kever Rachel is a Segulah for fertility?

A: There is no source. Praying is obviously always beneficial, and this is certainly true at Kever Rachel (And Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi similarly writes in Shut Doresh Tzion: I do not know of such a Segulah and its source).

Q: What is the source that a picture of Kever Rachel is a Segulah?

A: There is no source (And Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi similarly writes there: There are those who say this is a Segulah, but I am unaware of it).

Ring that Fell during Wedding

Q: If the ring fell out of the groom's hand during the wedding, does this mean something?

A: No. The groom was just excited and nervous (Ner Be-Ishon Laila, p. 151. And it once happened that the groom dropped the ring and people whispered: It is a sign. The Rabbi calmed them: It is simply a sign that the right time was still a few seconds away...).

New Mother Going Out

Q: Is it forbidden for a new mother to go out at night during the first 40 nights after giving birth?

A: Nonsense.

Two Talitot

Q: Is wearing two or more Talitot a Segulah?

A: No. (And Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi similarly writes in Shut Doresh Tzion: There is no such Segulah. There are many stories about why Ha-Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg – Rosh Yeshivah of Torah Or – wears so many pairs of Tzitzit [in his younger years, 150 pairs, and as he has aged about half that number]. Some say that it is in order to fulfill all of the different opinions regarding Hilchot Tzitzit. Others explain that he began when his daughter was ill in order to fulfill a Mitzvah in her merit. But Ha-Rav Scheinberg himself says: "It is 15-20 Kilo of Mitzvot..." "Mishpachah" Magazine of 12 Nisan 5768 #851. This, however, is the unique practice of a great Rabbi).

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