



Parashat Miketz - #309

Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com

Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Tzion

Visit our blog: www.ravaviner.com

*Chanukah Sameach from
Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim
and*

Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon Shlomo Aviner Shilt"א

On the News...

Accused Rabbis

Question: How do we deal with the recent phenomenon of great Rabbis being accused of crimes and even being arrested?

Answer: This is an important opportunity to teach ourselves two great ethical and communal principles which apply not only to Rabbis but to every individual.

The first principle is that we do not accuse a person of anything before it is conclusively proven that he transgressed. The police are justified in checking, investigating and arresting if it is necessary. Their obligation is to relate to every complaint and clarify whether or it is true. However, we must not decide that someone who is suspected is guilty. Before anything is proven, every person –

whether a Rabbi, a politician or an average citizen - is considered completely innocent.

It is worthwhile to mention in this context that scientific thinking in general is based on the idea that anything which has not been proven is not accepted. I remember from my youth hearing a person speaking loudly into a public telephone and saying: "Sir, I am a Cartesist (a student of the great French philosopher René Descartes, the father of critical thinking). I therefore cannot accept anything before it is proven to be so."

The second principle is that there is a severe prohibition of Lashon Ha-Ra, i.e. relating negative things about a person, even if they are true. This is not only a severe prohibition from a spiritual, ethical and religious perspective, it is also a phenomenon which threatens to undermine and destroy society. In ancient Rome, a person who slandered another was punished with exile, not because the Romans were holy people, but because they made a great effort to create and advance a healthy society.

Therefore, when a person is investigated, and all the more so arrested, whether he is a Rabbi or not, there is a severe prohibition against revealing and publicizing the matter.

May we add purity, sensitivity and love.

Rav Aviner on...

Love the Charedi as Yourself

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

Love the Charedim as yourself.

The first reason: Obviously, they too are Jews. Loving your fellow Jew means loving the entire Jewish People and not just those similar to you. You don't need a Torah source for this. It's natural. Torah sources serve where the act does not come naturally, but requires in depth analysis and effort.

The second reason: Charedim means Torah: Torah learning, Torah observance, devotion to Torah. When they talk, it's based on Torah. Even if they err, for example, regarding Zionism, it's based on Torah. They're not like the secular, whose starting point is not Torah. So the Charedim are closer to us than are the secular. We and the Charedim share precisely the same goal. Our argument has to do with the means, the path. The secular, however, have a different goal. Obviously, deep in their souls their goal is the same, but they express themselves about a different goal.

Therefore, even though the Charedim oppose Zionism, they still contribute a great deal to it through the vigilance they maintain. One requires a bit of expansive thinking to understand this, but let us avail ourselves of Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook's words to his disciple, Dr. Moshe Zeidel, who had complaints against the Charedim: "Those innocent Charedim, who in the depths of the purity of their hearts opposed Zionism, are the very same people who refined it and removed a large part of its dross, until they brought it, through their negative actions, to such a level as being worthy to dress it in practical, royal attire, rather than the spirit of the House of Israel just dispersing it." They, for their part, have "a sort of heartfelt protest based on their sensing the great light of the soul" (Igrot Ha-Re'eiyah 3:156)

Some say that Maran Ha-Rav Kook and Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook loved the secular more than they loved the Charedim. Nonsense! They loved everybody! Rav Tzvi Yehudah said that learning the proper attitude to the secular, whom he defines as "our friends-opponents," continues: "From here we must learn by a logical process the special value and need of correcting our relationship with parts of our public who are within our camp, and who are equal partners with us in maintaining a vigil on Torah and Mitzvot in the rebirth of Israel and the return to their land. From the nature of those far removed we learn the nature of those close (Le-Netivot Yisrael 2:227).

Therefore, let us not teach the Charedim to love the secular. Let us not teach the Charedim to love the State of Israel or the Israeli army. Rather, let us teach ourselves to love the Charedim.

The third reason: Amongst the Charedim are Torah scholars whom must be related to with reverence and fear. The Talmud in Sanhedrin says that whoever denigrates a Torah scholar is deemed a heretic. The Jerusalem Talmud teaches that it's like a dome made of stones. If one removes one stone, i.e., if one harms a single Torah scholar, the entire roof falls down. G-d does not forgive those who harm Torah scholars.

Therefore, love your friend as yourself, including the Charedim.

They are classified as your "friend" in every way. As Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto wrote, "The Torah goes ahead and makes a general rule that includes everybody: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' This means 'as yourself,' without any difference; 'as yourself, without any differences, without tricks and plots, literally 'as yourself'". (Mesillat Yeshaim 11).

True or Superstition?

Unlearned Person with Spiritual Powers

Q: Can a person who is not a Torah scholar suddenly become a prophet?

A: Not a prophet and not a person with Ruach Ha-Kodesh, since an unlearned person cannot be righteous, and righteousness is a condition for holiness and Ruach Ha-Kodesh. Shaarei Kedusha of Rabbenu Chaim Vital 3:8.

Q: How then can we explain Manoach?

A: This was a one-time event. So too Avimelech and Bilaam's donkey. Shut Ha-Rashba 1:548.

Holding the Chuppah Pole

Q: Is it true that if one holds the Chuppah pole it is a Segulah for finding a match?

A: There is no source for this (This was also the response of Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski. Segulot Raboteinu, pp. 218-219).

Segulah for Chanukah Wicks

Q: I heard that there is a Segulah to find a match by taking the leftover oil and wicks from the Chanukiyah, burning them and then walking over them 7 times. What is the source?

A: Nonsense (And Ha-Rav Ben Tzion Mutzafi wrote in Shut Doresh Tzion: I have not heard about this).

[By the way, regarding burning the wicks, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 677:4) writes that one should burn the leftover oil in the Chanukiyah at the conclusion of Chanukah. The commentaries add that the same should be done with the wicks which are saturated with the oil. The reason one should burn them is because they were set aside for a Mitzvah and may not be used for another purpose (such as burning or eating). If they are put aside for the next year, there is a fear that they will accidentally be used (see Tur ibid. and Mishnah Berurah #19).

If so, it would appear that there is no obligation to burn them according to the basic Halachah, since the only fear is that someone may use them. It would also therefore be permissible to bury them or place them in a plastic bag and throw them out.

In his commentary on Pirkei Avot 'Az Yomru' (pp. 131-133), Ha-Rav Yitzchak Aharon Goldberger, Dayan and Rosh Yeshiva of Chasidei Pupa, writes that he discussed this question with the Admor of Pupa. Rav Goldberger once saw the Admor in the middle of the night bothering himself to burn them in the courtyard, moving them around with a stick in the fire until they were completely burnt up into ash. Rav Goldberger said that perhaps there is no obligation to burn the wicks, just as

it is permissible to throw out detached Tzitzit as long as it is done in a non-disgraceful manner, or to place them in a Geniza according to the custom of those who are meticulous in Mitzvah observance (Shulchan Aruch and Rama, Orach Chaim 21:1). Similarly, it is permissible to wrap separated Challah in paper and throw it in the garbage if it is difficult to burn it, so that no mishap occurs (Mahar"i Steif brought in Teshuvot Ha-Maor. And also brought in Moadim Uzmanim 7:177. See also Shut Minchat Yitzchak 4:13).

The Admor of Pupa responded that perhaps his words are correct, but since our Sages used the term "to burn it", he prefers to perform the obligation according to what our Sages said. He is therefore particular to completely burn the wicks. And this is the Minhag among some Chasidim, and the meticulous burn them among a large group of people.

I did see, however that Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski answered that the wicks may be buried (Shut Yadon Moshe 12:71).

This, however, has no connection to a Segulah – M.T.]

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

