



Parashat Beshalach - #315

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Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon R' Ephraim Greenblatt from Yerushalayim ztz"l

[Eulogy by Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner in Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim]

Le-Ilui Nishmat Ha-Rav Ha-Gaon R' Ephraim Greenblatt ztz"l, one of the great Poskim. He was not so well-known in Israel, since he was hidden away in America, and there were only small signs on the walls of Meah Shearim announcing his passing, but anyone who is involved with Pesak Halachah knows him well. He wrote more than 1000 Teshuvot which are brought in many works of the Poskim. He was a major Posek, who touched every subject, corresponded with all Rabbis and wrote briefly and to the point.

His grandfather, Rebbe Yitzchak, who was from Brisk, was both a Torah scholar and a businessman. Rebbe Yitzchak made Aliyah and brought his young son, Ha-Rav Avraham Baruch, to learn in Yeshivat Mercas Ha-Rav. Maran Ha-Rav Kook said that the Yeshiva was a proper place for him because he was too young. He said he should go learn in a Cheider. Rebbe Yitzchak then gave Rav Kook a letter of recommendation for his son from the Brisker Rav, Ha-Rav Yitzchak Zev Soloveitchik. Rav Kook went to the next room, put on his Kapote and Shtreimel, and said: In order to read a letter from the Brisker Rav, one must wear Shabbat clothing. Since the Brisker Rav recommended him, Rav Kook said: You are accepted. This was Rav Greenblatt's father.

Rav Greenblatt himself was born in 5692 in Yerushalayim and lived in the neighborhood of Makor Baruch. He was the oldest of 11 children. He learned in Yeshivat Kletzk in Rechovot under Ha-Rav Eleazar Menachem Man Shach. His grandfather supported his children and grandchildren, but when his financial situation deteriorated he told his grandson, Ha-Rav Ephraim Greenblatt: You are the eldest, travel to America, work in the Rabbinate and send money back to support the family. He was in doubt as to what to do and asked the Chazon Ish, Ha-Rav Shach and Ha-

Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer. All of them answered that he should go to America. Ha-Rav Meltzer blessed him: Travel there. You will succeed, you will do great things for the Jews in America and you will merit returning to Israel. He was 18 years old. Ha-Rav Aharon Kotler visited Israel at that time, and Rav Greenblatt spoke to him. Rav Kotler said that he should come and learn in Lakewood and then enter the Rabbinate. At that time, Ha-Rav Moshe Feinstein – the greatest Posek in America – sent two volumes of his commentary on the Gemara "Dibrot Moshe" to Rav Greenblatt's father. His father said that the explanations were too long. He told his son, Ha-Rav Ephraim, to give one volume to Ha-Rav Yechezkel Sarna, Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron, and the other to Ha-Rav Chaim Shmulevitz, Rosh Yeshiva of Mir. After a few weeks, Ha-Rav Shmulevitz said to him: It is too long. I understand the questions but not the answers. He added: Tell Reb Moshe that he should not write at such length. When Ha-Rav Greenblatt arrived in America, he went to Rav Feinstein's Shiur at Metivta Tiferet Yerushalayim. Reb Moshe said to him: You can learn here in the Yeshiva. From that time forward for the rest of his life he was a student of Rav Feinstein, a great student. Some say that he was the greatest of his students, and he is also one of the last of his students. At the age of 20, Reb Moshe said to him: Go to Memphis, Tennessee to be a Rabbi. Rav Greenblatt was in doubt about going to such a desolate place of Torah, but his Rabbi told him: You need to be there in order to strengthen Judaism. Rav Feinstein sent 40 of his students throughout America to strengthen Torah observance. Rav Greenblatt went to Memphis and served as a Rabbi there for 60 years until the age of 80. He was a Rabbi, Av Beit Din, Shochet and teacher. He also answered questions from all around America and corresponded with the great Torah scholars throughout the world. As the leading student of Rav Feinstein, he brings rulings of the Rav which are not found elsewhere, and resolves difficulties which others raised about Teshuvot in Shut Igrot Moshe. There are also over 100 Teshuvot in Shut Igrot Moshe addressed to him. It happened that someone wrote a book Maaneh Le-Igrot which disagrees with Shut Igrot Moshe. The book Maadnei Ha-Melech (at the end in Adanei Ha-Melech, pp. 81-82 note #27) states that Ha-Rav Yitzchak Yosef (the Current Chief Rabbi of Israel) said that the students of Rav Feinstein bought all of the copies of Maaneh Le-Igrot and destroyed them. Ha-Rav Ephraim Greenblatt, the leading student of Rav Feinstein and author of Shut Revivot Ephraim, said that after this book came out, he sat down to write a Responsa to each claim, to refute them one by one. He asked for Rav Feinstein's permission to publish the Responsa. Rav Feinstein took the pages, thanked him for his concern for his honor, but requested that he not publish them. He explained that if they do not respond to that author, his memory will be forgotten on its own in a year or two, and no one will remember him. But if they answer, his name will spread. And this is indeed what happened. The author did not succeed in selling more than 50 of the 1000 books he printed (which suggests that the student did not buy them and destroy them). And Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef said that this book should not be put in the library of Yeshivat Chazon Ovadiah since it does not follow the proper manner of disagreeing (Brought in Shulchan Ha-Maarechet of Ha-Rav Yitzchak Yosef, Vol. 2 pp. 436-437). In his time, the author of this work sent it to the Steipler, and then

visited him. The Steipler harshly rebuked him, yelled at him for insulting Ha-Rav Feinstein, and threw him out of his house. The Steipler then told his son, Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski, that Rav Feinstein is a great Posek and Tzadik (Orchos Rabbeinu Vol. 5, p. 169). Further, Ha-Rav Aharon Felder relates that Rav Feinstein once told him that he actually had met the author once and the author asked him for a favor, which he granted. Reb Moshe added: "I didn't know that the kindness I did for him was so great that he paid me back with such wickedness" (Reshumei Aharon Vol. 2, p. 4). We also heard that Ha-Rav Baruch Solnica had a Shul in New York close to the Shtiebel of the author of Maaneh Le-Igrot. Sometimes it was difficult for the Shtiebel to get a Minyan and they would come to Rav Solnica's Shul to find people to join them. Rav Solnica refused since he had besmirched Reb Moshe. Rav Solnica asked Reb Moshe how he should act and he said: You don't have to give him people to Daven there on a regular basis, but you should certainly give him people to help make a Minyan. This was Reb Moshe, and Ha-Rav Ephraim Greenblatt was his leading student.

He wrote 9 volumes of Teshuvot, Shut Revivot Ephraim (and we have heard that a 10th volume is being prepared for publication), as well as Divrei Torah on the Torah. As was the practice of his Rabbi, he would write each Teshuvah twice: One to send to the questioner and one to keep and check over. Rav Greenblatt corresponded with everyone: Zionists, Charedim, great Torah scholars, regular Torah scholars. He even brought things which I wrote 30 years ago in Iturei Cohanim when I was very young. He did not care if one was Charedi or not, it is all Torah. He also brings in his Teshuvot his correspondence with Ha-Rav David Cohain, Ra"m in our Yeshiva. He brings from everyone, and everyone brings him, although there are some Charedi Yeshivot who do not have his books since he brings Zionist Rabbis.

He would also write a Haskamah for any Sefer, to perform a kindness. He would not do so quickly but would really look into the Sefer. Ha-Rav Greenblatt wrote a Haskamah for the book "Kishrei Milchama" of Ha-Rav Ayal Krim, who served as the head of our Pre-Military Academy. He also wrote a long Haskamah for the book "Kum Hithalech Ba-Aretz" of Ha-Rav Mordechai Tzion, Ra"m in our Yeshiva. He writes that he really examined the book and found practical halachic conclusions, that the author toiled writing the book for 7 years and that he found important discussions there. He also writes that he wanted to write comments on the book but had just returned from the hospital, after a month's stay, and it was difficult for him to write, he apologizes.

He also performed kindnesses for me. I have his Sefarim in my home which he sent me for free without my even having to ask.

And he signed his Teshuvot: From Yerushalayim, currently in Memphis. This is the same as the Semag who would write: Moshe of Coucy, exiled from Yerushalayim.

Following his grandfather's instruction, Rav Greenblatt not only served as a Rabbi but also invested his money, made great profits and helped his family financially. He would give \$50,000 to each grandchild who got married. He had a huge library of 26,000 books. Unfortunately, he invested his money with the man who perpetuated the Ponzi scheme, who is now sitting in prison. Rav Greenblatt lost all of his money

and was left with nothing. He saw this as a sign that he needed to return to Israel. He came to Israel at the age of 80 without money to buy an apartment and without his Sefarim. He said: My children are in Israel, my wife was killed in a car accident (in 5762) and I don't have any money. I am returning to Israel.

When he arrived in Israel, Rav Mordechai Tzion invited him to visit our Yeshiva. He said in his humility: Certainly. It would be my honor, but I can't right now because I am not feeling well. He was invited again and - to our great sorrow - was unable to come. Toward the end of his life when he was living in Har Nof, he would Daven Mincha/Maariv in a Zionist Yeshiva. One of the neighborhood people, with a Knit-Kippah and without a beard, would give a class between Minchah and Maariv. This gaint Torah scholar would sit and listen without any feeling that it was beneath his honor. His humility was amazing.

With his return to Israel, Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer's blessing was indeed fulfilled: "Travel there. You will succeed, you will do great things for the Jews in America and you will merit returning to Israel".

May his soul be bound up with the bonds of the living with all of the righteous.

In the News...

Avreichim Must Earn a Living

[<http://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/209164/rav-aviner-avreichim-must-earn-a-living.html>]

Prominent Dati Leumi Posek Rabbi Shlomo Ha-Cohain Aviner Shlit"a addressed a statistic reporting that 40% of Charedim do not work. The Rav stated that due to the economic realities in Israel today, an Avreich (married Yeshiva student) must learn a profession that permits him to support his family. "A Talmid Yeshiva cannot remain in Yeshiva indefinitely. He must earn a living and it is not enough to say 'Hashem will take care of things and it will be fine.'"

He told students during a Shiur that there are Avreichim who go to soup kitchens daily, and that in some Charedi homes children regularly go hungry. That is why a husband must be able to earn a living. A Talmid can learn for a number of years as everyone must, but at some point one must reflect and determine if one will be a Rav or Rebbe and if not, it is time to look for work. The Rav added that not everyone is suited to be a Rav or Rebbe, though most believe they are, and while one may be a Talmid Chacham there is still the issue of earning a livelihood. Batei Medrashim are bursting with Talmidei Chacham that do not have work because all of the jobs in the Yeshivot are taken.

The Rav then addressed Avreichim who used to make do with the bare minimum. "Once upon a time, man slept on straw like Rabbi Akiva and this was fine. But today it is not possible to live like this. We may sleep on straw but how will one pay tuition

for one's children? One does not have to eat Prili (type of fruit yogurt) daily but even when living austere there is a need for money to pay for different necessities. We cannot change reality with Pilpul. Perhaps in Vietnam one can survive on one dollar a day but in Israel it is impossible.”

Rav Aviner on...

Digest of the Laws of Tu Bishvat

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

1. Tu Bishvat – the Fifteenth of Shevat -- is the date that separates last year's fruit from next year's fruit when it comes to taking tithes (Talmud Rosh Hashanah 15).
2. We don't recite Tachanun on Tu Bishvat (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 131:6).
3. There is an ancient Ashkenazic (Mishnah Berurah ibid. #31) and Sefardic (Pri Etz Hadar – Seder Limud LeLeil Tu Bishvat) custom of eating many types of fruit. There is no mention in those sources of eating fifteen types.
4. It is proper to look for fruits one doesn't have the opportunity to eat all year (Mishnah Berurah 225:19 based on Jerusalem Talmud at the end of Kiddushin).
5. One should seek out fruits of the seven species of the Land of Israel (see Devarim 8:8). Yet fruits from the Land of Israel that are not from those seven species are preferable to fruits of the seven species imported from abroad. This is because a bounty of fruit in our Holy Land is a sign of Redemption (Sanhedrin 98a; Rashi). The Divine Presence rests upon the Holy Land and is absorbed by those fruits (Bayit Chadash, Orach Chaim 208). Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook would therefore call an Israeli banana “the holy banana.”
6. A practice of Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook: “To show his love for the holy fruits of the Land, he would strive to wash his hands ritually before eating them” (Lishlosa Be-Elul 78).
7. One should eat of the seven species first, in the following order: olives, dates, grapes, figs and pomegranates (see Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 211:102).
8. If someone eats both fruit from Israel and fruit from abroad, he should conclude his after-blessing with the ending for fruit from Israel, “Al Peroteha” rather than with the ending for fruit from abroad, “Al Ha-Peilot”, for the former take precedence

(Siach Ha-Pesach p. 105, quoting from the Steipler Gaon, Ha-Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, and Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv).

9. Maran Ha-Rav Kook wrote: "Tu Bishvat has some aspects of a day of rejoicing over our resettling the Holy Land" (Igrot Ha-Re'eiyah Vol. 2, p. 61).

10. Some have the custom of planting a fruit tree on Tu Bishvat. When I visited Jonathan Pollard in an American prison, Pollard humbly told me, "I have a very large request to make of you: When you go back to Israel, plant a fruit tree".

I therefore ask our readers to plant a tree for Pollard.

Truth or Superstition?

True Segulot

Q: How do we know which Segulot are true?

A: Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski once answered: "I only know that which is written in the Shulchan Aruch". Segulot Raboteinu p. 321. And see Ner Be-Ishon Laila p. 230).

Dove Relieving Himself

Q: What is the source that if a dove relieves himself on someone it is a sign that he will become wealthy?

A: There is none.

Throwing Out Pictures

Q: I heard that it is forbidden to throw away pictures. What then should I do with pictures I don't want to keep?

A: There is absolutely no prohibition against throwing them in the garbage (Most Gedolei Yisrael are not opposed to being photographed, but even those who are did not say that it is prohibited to throw away a picture. On the contrary, Ha-Rav Moshe Greenwald, author of Shut Arugat Ha-Bosem, was extremely particular not to be photographed, and would burn pictures with human images. But he hid away a picture of his mother since it would not be honoring his mother to burn her picture. Beit Yisrael Volume 8 p. 169. Tiferet Banim on Kitzur Shulchan Aruch p. 346).

Mezuzot and Shalom Bayit

Q: There are those who are selling very expensive Mezuzot which were not touched by a knife, claiming that they are a Segulah for Shalom Bayit. Is this true?

A: There is no source and it is exploitation. If a couple is having marital problems, they should turn to a marriage counselor (Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski and Ha-Rav Meir Mazuz also said that they do not know of such a Segulah. Segulot Raboteinu p. 325).

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