



From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva of Ateret Yerushalayim  
**Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner Shlit" a**

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Parashat Tazria - #343

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## On the Parashah... Respecting a Shul

From where do we know that one must have respect and awe for a Shul?

From the verse in this week's Parashah: "He should not enter all times into the Holy" (Vayikra 16:2). One may enter only when he is full of awe of Hashem within his soul.

This is why Nadav and Avihu were punished! It is true that they entered the Mishkan and we are discussing a Shul, but a Shul is called "Mikdash Me'at" – a miniature Temple. In our times, to our great distress, we do not have the Temple, so the Shul is Hashem's Temple.

It is permissible to jump, laugh and fool around (a little), but not in Shul. This is a holy place.

## Rav Aviner on... More on the Charedim

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

As I wrote a week ago, Charedi Judaism represents the authentic first floor of the Jewish People. Yet now the time has come to add a second floor, or more precisely, to restore the

second floor that disappeared in the Exile: the rebirth of the Nation in its Land, according to its Torah.

The Nation's rebirth does not in the least nullify the need for Charedi Jewry. It just augments it. As Rashi said, "The Torah's saying 'these' negates what preceded. The Torah's saying 'and these' adds to what preceded." The Nation's rebirth does not replace Charedism, but adds to it. It is not an alternative. It is cumulative.

And once again, we are not talking about an addition, but a restoration of what was previously existed. As our Sages said at the beginning of Megillah: "They forgot them, and then they reestablished them" (Megillah 3a). Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook explained all this at length in his article, "Teshuvah U-Berur Devarim".

Not only does the Nation's rebirth in its land not serve to weaken Charedism, but quite the contrary. It should strengthen it all the more, as is explained in Letter 378 of Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, which was printed at the start of Orot Ha-Teshuvah.

And altogether, such was the great vision of Rav Kook, which he called "The Flag of Jerusalem", meaning, bonding Torah-true Judaism to the great ideal of the return to Zion and the rebuilding of the Land and the entire renewing of our days as of old. Yet in his time that vision did not find practical fulfillment. The generation was not yet ready.

All the same, that vision is now, slowly, being revealed, in measured, cautious steps.

Indeed, before the establishment of the State of Israel, the Agudat Yisrael was very opposed to this entire process, which was considered a dangerous innovation, and they even did not encourage moving to Israel. Yet after the State's establishment a slow process of propitiation began. A representative of Agudat Yisrael signed Israel's Declaration of Independence. The Charedim began joining the Knesset, and, later on, the government. At first they did so as deputy ministers, and later on as ministers, and now they actively strive to be part of the government. Obviously, none of this nullifies their justified opposition to all the processes of separating church and state, as regards civil marriage, non-halachic conversions, etc. Yet let us not forget that all of that opposition does not constitute hatred, G-d forbid, but vigilance. As Rav Kook said, beneath a veil of accusations and contention lies a marvelous love (Orot, Orot Ha-Techiyah 25).

The Charedim recoiled from army service as well, both because of Torah learners, who are the Nation's spiritual army, and as far as the Charedim in general, due to their fears regarding religious life in the army. Yet the truth must be stated that during Israel's War of Independence, Charedim took part. There was the Tuviah Battalion, which included Yeshiva students from all the yeshivot of Jerusalem, who defended Jerusalem. After that, as well, there was the original version of the Nachal Charedi during the years 5720-5730, with its base in the town of Komemiyut. And now, in 5762, the Nahal Haredi Battalion was established once more, "Netzach Yehudah", which is linked to Agudat Yisrael Youth, and which enjoys the support of Charedi rabbis. Netzach Yehudah has produced, and continues to produce excellent fighters. Finally, in 5767, "Shachar" was created, standing for "Shiluv Charedim" [Charedi integration], which likewise brings great blessing. The percentages of Charedim who enlist are increasing significantly from year to year.

All this has been happening without coercion, without threats of imprisonment or financial penalties, out of mutual trust and the creation of frameworks suitable for Charedim, without women, with the highest Kashrut standards, with a battalion Rabbi,

Torah lectures, times for prayer, and more. And with G-d's help, this trend is on the rise. As I said, all this has happened without coercion, based on mutual trust involving voluntary enlistment.

The same is true regarding work. At one time, until 5750, Charedi youths learned a trade, and it is that way today with Charedi Jewry abroad. Following the Holocaust and the destruction of the Torah in Europe, the great Charedi rabbis ruled that Torah learning must be strengthened before all else, and at the expense of all else. Yet down through the years a situation of economic duress was created amongst Charedi Jewry. The average salary of the Charedi family is half that of a secular family, and it goes without saying that the Charedi family has more than twice the number of children of a secular family. Here are some figures from the Bureau of Statistics from 5769: an average income of less than NIS 2000 per person: secular - 24%; traditional - 37%; religious - 48%; Charedim - 52%. Working wives: secular - 88%; traditional - 80%; religious 94%; Charedim 61%. Indeed, this creates poverty.

Not in vain did the great Charedi luminaries rule that a person must learn until the yoke of earning a living forces him to work (Shut Minchat Yitzchak 9:103. Kaina De-Igreta of the Steipler Gaon). And sure enough, Charedi colleges have been set up for the study of law, accounting, business management, architecture, computers and more. Likewise, there are Charedi colleges for bookkeeping, graphic art, secretarial skills, social work and more.

The last point is the unity of the Nation, which is likewise mentioned in the famous work Em Ha-Banim Semecha, as one of the preconditions to redemption. Perhaps the most problematic matter is the limitation set on the number of Sephardic pupils in Charedi Ashkenazi educational institutions, but there are also great Charedi rabbis who are fighting against such quotas. In general, however, we needn't go crazy over what they say in the news, which always presents the out-of-the-ordinary, i.e., the exceptional, picturesque outbursts of the Charedim. One musn't get excited over those. Anyone with open eyes can see that there is a great love which is ever increasing.

Thank G-d, Charedi Judaism is rising higher and higher. This is so numerically (today it is 8% of the general population, in another fifteen years it will be 15%, and in another 25 years, it will be the majority!). Yet it is also true in the sense of the light shining upon Zion, strengthening the encounter between the hidden holiness of Israel and the hidden holiness of the Land.

We must realize that what binds us together is greater than what separates us. We must fortify ourselves with patience. We must maximize the positive and minimize the negative.

We must increase trust and love.

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