



Parashat Naso - #351 Ask Rav Aviner: toratravaviner@yahoo.com

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On Our Rabbi – Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook...

One Who Shamed Herzl

Our Rabbi related that when he was learning in Yeshivat Torat Chaim (in the place where Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim is now located, and where generations of Rabbinic leaders, such as Jerusalem's Chief Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, Ha-Rav Aryeh Levin and Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv learned), Ha-Rav Yitzchak Nissenbaum, who was the secretary and right-hand man of Ha-Rav Mohiliver (one of the founders of the Religious-Zionist movement called "Chibat Tzion") and famous for his Derashot, was invited to give the Derashah one Shabbat. This fact testifies to the position of the Rosh Ha-Yeshiva, Ha-Rav Yitzchak Winograd: He did not fear the zealots of Jerusalem at that time and he invited a well-known Religious-Zionist figure to give a Derashah in the Yeshiva. Hundreds of people, include many wearing Shtreimels, filled the Yeshiva and listened to the gifted speaker. When he began discussing the foundations of Religious-Zionism, a screaming voice interrupted his words: "Is that what Herzl also says?" This caused a commotion among the listeners. Rav Winograd ascended the Bima, silenced the crowd, expressed his dismay and demanded that the brazen person be removed. Rav Nissenbaum adds in his book "Alai Chaldi" that he saw arms lifting the man above the crowd and taking him out through the window. At Seudat Shelishit, Rav Winograd told him that one of the zealots had come to him on Friday demanding that he not allow a talk about impure Zionism in the holy Yeshiva. Rav Winograd responded that the Yeshiva was his and anyone who disturbs the talk would be paid back in kind. He then hired two guards for the Yeshiva who stood near the window for the proper moment. When the brazen man began to yell, the young people next to him grabbed his arms and legs and

lifted him up to the guards. His comrades were shocked and did not dare to create a disturbance.

Rav Aviner on...
In the End, the Two Worlds (Charedim and National Religious)
Will Be One

Question: What is the difference in worldview between the Charedim and the National Religious that results in their differing halachic rulings regarding the Mitzvot of settling the Land, having a country, an Army, etc.?

Answer: the Torah forbids us to eat from the new grain before the waving of the Omer on Pesach (Vayikra 23:15). As the Talmud states in Kiddushin 38b: "Chadash [new grain from the new crop] is prohibited by the Torah." The Chatam Sofer used this dictum as a metaphor to express his opposition to changes and to modernism within traditional Judaism (Shut Chatam Sofer 1:28,148, 181, etc.). Amongst the Charedim, "Chadash is prohibited by the Torah" has become the defining principle of their approach.

For example, what was "innovative" about Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv was that he never innovated anything: not in approaches to Torah learning and not in his halachic rulings. He had absolute loyalty to tradition. He received the word of Hashem, "Moshe received the Torah from Sinai" (Avot 1:1), and he passed it on to the next generation in the same format, "handing it down to Yeshoshua" (ibid.), and so forth.

Due to present and former attacks against traditional Judaism from all directions, the Charedi world is by nature conservative, in order to avoid gradual spiritual erosion, as it says "Strip her to her very foundations!" (Tehillim 137:7). That is why they opposed collaborating with the Zionists regarding the establishment of the State and army service. "Chadash is prohibited by the Torah."

The Yeshiva World focuses on one thing: Torah learning. Following the terrible destruction of European Torah world, today's Charedim are making a monumental effort to build the world of Torah anew. To whatever extent they do collaborate with the State, it is for the purpose of advancing that goal.

Thanks to this outlook, the Charedi Torah world is flourishing more successfully than it has throughout the Exile.

Maran Ha-Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohain Kook likewise explains that we relate with suspicion to anything new. To make what is new permissible, the way the Pesach Omer makes new grain permissible outside the Temple, and the way the Shavuot wheat offering makes it permissible in the Temple we need content. The content that makes the new permissible is the old, the light "in which G-d enveloped Himself, causing His majestic

luster to shine from one end of the world to the other” (Bereshit Rabbah 3:4). This ancient light, stored away in the soul of Israel, will cause a new light to shine for us, a light that will illuminate Zion (Ma’amarei Ha-Re’eyah, p. 182). In other words, there are some things that were forgotten over the course of the Exile, and “having once been forgotten, they are now being institutionalized once more” (Shabbat 104a and elsewhere). When we are forced to innovate, we do so using old content, as Rashi says, quoting our Sages on Devarim 11:13: “If you heed the old teachings, you will likewise heed the new teachings.” In order for the new to be viable, it must be attached to the old, and this is accomplished through in depth study (see Ikvei Ha-Tzon, p. 107).

An example: Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren, who established the laws of the army, delved into the old teachings in order to create a Jewish army in keeping with Torah laws that had been temporarily eclipsed. Those foundations were hidden away, and Rav Goren reestablished them. Rav Kook likewise said, “The old shall be renewed and the new shall be sanctified” (Igrot Ha-Re’eyah Vol. 1, p. 214).

At the Giving of the Torah, the Jews said, “Everything G-d has spoken we shall do and obey” (Shemot 24:7), i.e. through Torah learning we will also rebuild the Land of Israel, the Jewish State and the Jewish army. The old renders the new permissible.

Thanks to this outlook, the National Religious Torah world is burgeoning, returning to its roots from before the Exile.

The controversy is about the means, not the goal. There is no essential difference between the Charedim and the National Religious regarding the goal. Everyone wants the entire Jewish People to settle in Eretz Yisrael. Everyone wants there to be a Jewish State and a Jewish army. Everyone wants that State to be holy, and everyone wants the nation that dwells in Zion to be holy. There is no argument over these points. The difference is only over the pathway there, the means to achieving the ends. Should we first move to Israel or should we first repent in the Diaspora and only then move to Israel? Should we collaborate with the Jewish State or not? Should we presently serve in the army, or not?

The argument is an internal argument, within the family, like the arguments between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Tarfon and between Rashi and Tosafot. There is an argument between us and them, but we share the same goal. The Charedim bring proofs from the Torah to back up their approach and we argue that those proofs are incorrect, and vice versa. The two worlds are headed in the same direction: that of the Shulchan Aruch, the code of Jewish law. There are not two codes of Jewish law, one for the Charedim and one for the National Religious. Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook put it this way: "This argument is within the camp. The spiritual camp consists of the G-d fearing. 'I am a companion to all who fear You' (Tehillim 119:63)."

It should be noted that the Charedi halachic authorities are by now likewise engaged in dealing with the laws affecting settling the Land, building a state and an army, for they, too, consciously or not, are part of the Nation’s rebirth in its Land.

With G-d’s help, the two worlds will ultimately become one.

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