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Q&A on Terrorists Attacks in Yerushalayim

Terrorist Attacks

Q: How should we relate to the phenomenon of terrorist attacks?

A: With strength, courage and gratitude to Hashem, since we are surrounded by 350 million enemies, and we largely live here quietly and in contentment.

Druze Police Officer who Fell in the Terrorist Attack

Q: Is it permissible to recite a prayer in Shul in memory of the Druze police officer who was killed protecting Jews in the terrorist attack in the Shul in Har Nof?

A: Certainly! He sacrificed his life for the Nation of Israel and he is one of the righteous non-Jews. This is also the ruling of Ha-Rav Ovadiah Yosef regarding a Druze soldier in Tzahal who was killed. And one of his proofs is from the Yerushalmi (Megillah 3:7) that on Purim we say: May Charvorna be remembered for good, since he spoke out against the hater of Israel – Haman, and this is true all the more so for the Druze soldiers who take their lives in their hands to protect the Nation of Israel. It is a Mitzvah to pray for their souls (Chazon Ovadiah - Avelut Volume 3, p. 238).

Hashem and Terror Act in Shul

Q: How could Hashem allow people Davening with Talit and Tefillin in a Shul to be murdered?

A: This is a surprising question. One who asks such a question obviously did not hear that Jews in the Holocaust were burnt alive while wearing Talit and Tefillin in Shuls. And earlier, the soldiers of Bar Kochba, who wore Tefillin during war, were killed. It also seems that one who asks such a question did not hear that Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Sarah, Rivka, Rachel and Leah, experienced endless suffering although they were the most righteous of people, and we do not find one word which they uttered against Hashem (see Rashi on Shmot 6:1). It is also horrible when people not wearing Talit and Tefillin are murdered. Every Jew has a complete Sefer Torah within him.

We must open our eyes wide and see that we are at a time of war. As Rabbenu Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Kook said, we are in a continuous war since the return to Zion began, and sometimes there is a break. On the contrary, we must thank Hashem for all of the terrorist acts that are NOT occurring.

Terrorist Attack during Davening

Q: How could Jews be murdered in a Shul while Davening when the Gemara states, "Harm will not befall one on the way to perform a Mitzvah?" They were not on their way to perform a Mitzvah, they were performing a Mitzvah!

A: See the Gemara in Pesachim 8b. "Harm will not befall one on the way to perform a Mitzvah" is said in regard to an infrequent danger. The example given there is one who is checking for Chametz. Should he check under rocks? No, he should not, because there may be snakes or scorpions under the rocks. The Gemara asks – how so? Harm will not befall one on the way to perform a Mitzvah. Answer: This (snakes and scorpions under rocks) is a frequent occurrence and there is therefore a chance that he may be harmed. Another example: A person has a joint wall with a non-Jewish neighbor.

Perhaps he should stick his fingers into the cracks in the wall to search for Chametz? No, he should not check because the neighbor may accuse him of witchcraft and cause him terrible problems. The Gemara asks – how so? Harm will not befall one on the way to perform a Mitzvah. Answer: This is an evil neighbor and it is considered a frequent occurrence. We do not apply this principle when there is a frequent occurrence. The Gemara states that the proof for this idea is found in the Book of Shmuel (1 chap. 16) when Hashem tells the prophet Shmuel to anoint David as king. "And Shmuel said: How can I go - if Shaul hears he will kill me?" (verse 2). Hashem said: Tell him that you are going to offer a sacrifice in order that he will not be suspicious. The Gemara asks: But he was going to perform a Mitzvah directly told to him by Hashem and "Harm will not befall one on the way to perform a Mitzvah" (see Rashi)? Answer: When there is a frequent danger, even those performing a Mitzvah can be harmed. This is discussed at length in the book "Mesilat Yesharim" at the end of chapter 9. It is obvious that if there are terrorists living among us, it is considered a frequent occurrence and even people performing a Mitzvah can be harmed.

Terrorist Attack as a Pogrom

Q: Was the terrorist attack in the Shul in Har Nof a Pogrom? After all, Jews were killed in the middle of Shacharit wearing Talit and Tefillin!

A: What happened during that terrorist attack was truly horrible, but it was not a Pogrom. A Pogrom is when many Jews are murdered and we are completely defenseless, as in the Crusades, the Chelminski Massacre, the Holocaust, etc. But now we have a way to defend ourselves, and we succeed in doing so. We have a powerful army, but even the most powerful army cannot completely stop terrorists. Every free country in the world has terrorism. Terror is a sign of weakness. It is not enough for the Arabs to have 22 countries and a territory 500 times the size of ours, they want our Land as

well. But they are unable to do so, so they use terror, which means "to scare". But we are not scared. We continue to build our Land and strengthen ourselves.

Safeguarding One's Life in Yerushalayim

Q: Is it permissible to visit Yerushalayim at this time or is it preferable not to visit because of "You shall surely safeguard your soul" (Devarim 4:15, 23:11), because of all the terrorist acts?

A: It is a minimal risk. See Mesilat Yescharim, end of Chapter 9.

Responding to Terror

Q: What can I do as a youth in the face of the horrible situation of terror attacks, riots, murders, etc.?

A: 1. Increase proper character traits, Fear of Hashem and Torah Learning.
2. Realize that the situation is not so bad. We must understand the truth that we are in a time of war, and to express gratitude to Hashem for all of the miracles, and for the fact that there are relatively few terror victims.



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