

BS"D Parashat Bo 5784

"Bo" means Come

The phrase "Good things (can also) come in small packages" refers to the idea that small things can be as or even more impressive than larger ones.

The following is my "small package " response to those who ask my opinion regarding the exemption from military service of young, healthy full-time Torah learners during this time of war.

1- The halachic principle states that one should concentrate on the mitzvot which is now "biz'mano" – relevant, appropriate, and pertinent. When the Jewish nation is being attacked by vicious Amalek terrorists who seek the annihilation of the Jewish people, the relevant, appropriate, and pertinent mitzva is for every able-bodied man to fight until the enemy is dead. The present mitzva is to close the books with a heavy heart, and with vigor and courage put on your boots.

The older people learn and beg HaShem for salvation, and the younger men go out to dirty their hands in our quest for life.

2- For those who disagree, I say: You are exempt from active military service in order to prove to HaShem that we are worthy of your intervention on our behalf.

However, the conditions of your service have to resemble those of your contemporaries who are wiping the mud and blood from their faces.

Your learning day is from daylight to the darkness of night. You don't go home for a good supper and sleep in a comfortable bed between two clean sheets, and then show up at the bet midrash at 9:30 after taking your child to gan (preschool).

You are drafted to sleep, eat, and learn in the bet medrash (Torah study hall) and visit your home for a few hours at a time once every ten days, at best.

Anything less is to lie to yourself, and your learning and prayers fall short from reaching the heights of the Shamayim (heaven).

We have three sons and 18 grandchildren in Tzahal's most meaningful units, they are kohanim who know their historic role in defending Am Yisrael.

So be true to yourself. Don't make a mockery of your Torah, and don't lie to HaShem – it doesn't work.

What I have written refers also to bnei Torah in chutz la'aretz. Your living in galut does not exempt you from participating in a mitzva of this scale.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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