

# Tetzaveh 5771

BS"D Parashat Tetzaveh 5771


Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers, chapter 2):



*“And if you will be conscious of three things you will not sin. Know what is right above you: An eye that always sees you, an ear that always hears you and that all your actions are inscribed in a book”.*

The word “book” used here could mean: 1- the soul of each individual, 2- the Torah, 3- the Book of Life that is opened on Rosh HaShana, 4- the “guest” book when entering the next world. Anyone one of them, or all four.

Moshe Rabbeinu in his defense of Am Yisrael before the wrath of HaShem that threatened to destroy the worshippers of the Golden Calf and perhaps the entire nation, prostrates himself before the Almighty and says (Shemot 32:32):

 *And now if you will carry their sin (be patient and not destroy the people), but if not then please erase me from the **book** that You have written*

“Erase me from the book” – eradicate my feeling of self, my feeling of being an entity apart from all others, my humanity – as if I were never a part of the reality of Your world. Total invisibility.

There are situations in life where a Jew distances himself so far from his commitment to the urgent needs and demands of Am Yisrael at that time in history, as if declaring to HaShem: “Erase me from the **book** that You have written”.

I have in front of me a letter that appeared in the chareidi magazine "Mishpacha" wherein the author explains why she opted to live in Lakewood and not in Eretz Yisrael. She concludes her letter with the following: "As long as Eretz Yisrael remains mostly a secular country I cannot move there. It just hurts too much. I will just wait for Mashiach – hopefully, not too long".

I would ordinarily not relate to this kind of letter – although it pulls at my heart strings to learn of her great suffering from our goishkeit, as she writes "**It just hurts too much**". But I will answer her for two reasons:

1. There is an unconventional, neoteric "chidush" to her approach. Our rabbis have taught that women have a natural love for Eretz Yisrael much more than men. And that is why not one woman took the side of the Biblical meraglim (spies) when they spoke badly of the land. But among the other irrational positions taken by certain contemporary chareidi groups, we find that even their women do not feel the intrinsic love to the land of their righteous mothers.
2. The ideas expressed by this righteous Jewish woman are unfortunately rampant among certain circles of "bnei Torah" in the galut. I would like to tell her and all of them what "hurt" really means.

The hurt and pain of a wounded soldier – dati and not so dati – who has just lost a leg in defense of our right to live in Eretz Yisrael is a bit more than the "hurt" of that righteous Jewish woman's pain.

Or the pain suffered by the parents of a soldier killed in battle or taken prisoner while defending our country.

The holy people of this land – dati and not so dati – who are living the words of our prophets that HaShem will restore us to this land are more "Jewish" than the most observant person

in Lakewood, New Jersey, USA. We are the followers of Yehoshua Bin Nun who liberated the Holy land, but those in the galut are followers of the other 10 men who went with Yehoshua and Calev to scout the land.

The thousands of rabbanim and teachers found in every corner of Eretz Yisrael sacrifice in order to disseminate Torah among people who unfortunately did not have the privilege of a Torah education. Their physical and financial sacrifices are succeeding, as attested to by the many batai kneset and yeshivot that are established in places one would never dream that Torah would enter.

I would like the good people in Lakewood to experience for one day what our sons and grandchildren go through every day in the military to insure that the murderers don't enter our land. They would probably run back to Lakewood!

The hurt borne by the holy people of Eretz Yisrael – dati and not-yet dati – in our quest to rebuild Jewish life in Eretz Yisrael is a bit more than the devastating “hurt” our righteous Jewish woman might suffer if she were to see a car driving on Shabbat in Tel Aviv, a possibility she claims has driven her to escape the potential pain by fleeing to the Gan Eden of Lakewood.

The righteous Jewish woman's letter appeared in the magazine Mishpacha, but unfortunately she and those like her are not part of my “mishpacha”, because by their actions and words they have declared to HaShem: *“Erase me from the **book** that You have written”*.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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