

Yitro 5781

BS"D Parashat Yitro 5781

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Open Your Eyes

I often receive letters from Chareidi yeshiva circles in galut criticizing my emphasis on aliya to Eretz Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael. The critical points in these letters are the government and secular facets of our life in the Medina.

I have an abundant quantity of patience, but it is running thin, so I would like to reply to these critics of our holy land.

Tractate Ketuvot 112b:

[illegible]

R. Chiya ben Gamda would lie in the dust of Eretz Yisrael to give expression to the verse (Tehilim 102,15): For her stones are dear to your servants; her very dust moves them to rejoice.

The Man Who Paved the Roads

A gentleman from Bnei Brak once revealed to me a personal matter. His children, like many others, never asked what their father did for a living. He had a teenage daughter who was studying in the Bet Yaakov system. He arrived home one day and found her totally distraught, in real tears. After a bit of inquiry, she told him that she was on a bus with friends, and they all saw her father working paving the road, and she was

so embarrassed.

The man then told his daughter two things:

1. Each time a new home, road or bridge is built in Eretz Yisrael, it brings us one step closer to the day when we will build the Bet Hamikdash. As the Gemara in Ta'a' nit (5a) quotes the Holy One Blessed Be He: "I will not enter into the heavenly Yerushalayim until I first enter into the earthy Yerushalayim".
2. "I pave roads in Eretz Yisrael. On my roads many millions of trips will be taken over the years and a great percentage of those trips will be made for mitzva purposes: Torah studies, tefillot, britot, weddings, consolations for the mourners, and the myriad good deeds that Jews perform. In every one of those millions upon millions of mitzva acts I will have a share, because I will have made it possible for their performance.

His daughter understood her father's words of wisdom and was forever proud of the man who paved roads in Eretz Yisrael.

I would like to explain what this father was telling his young daughter.

Eretz Yisrael is by definition "Eretz Hakodesh" – the "Holy Land", as stated by the prophet Zechariah 2,12:

:יְהוָה יִרְשֶׁתָּהּ יְהוּדָה כְּחֵלְקָהּ וְיִבְחַר יְרוּשָׁלַם

The Lord will inherit (choose) Yehuda as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem.

The Sanctity of Eretz Yisrael

Eretz Yisrael is the earthly simulation of Hashem's heavenly sanctity. In Eretz Yisrael every act has spiritual

implications; be it building a road or bridge, planting and harvesting a fruit orchard, – a tank and even the sewer system; everything. Because every act advances us toward the day when HaShem will enable us to rebuild the Bet HaMikdash.

In contrast, Chazal have denoted all of the galut (chutz la'aretz) as “tumat eretz ha'amim” – the impurity of a foreign land.

Even the shuls and yeshivot in chutz la'aretz have only a temporary fleeting sanctity, where a shul can be sold on condition that it will not be used for unbecoming purposes, whereas in Eretz Yisrael “once a shul always a shul”.

We in HaShem's holy land have yet to reach perfection, but we will. The land was held desolate by HaShem for us until we came home, so that in the 2000 years of our absence no gentile people would be able to cultivate and settle it. But when we returned the land blossomed. It took courage, perseverance, and self-sacrifice, so that today the land is a model of agriculture, high tech and all things that signify a modern robust society. In the spiritual realm we have no equal. A friend told me that in the 1940s he was a student in the one yeshiva in Tel Aviv; there were two in Yerushalayim (Etz Chayim and Chayei Olam) and barely anything else. At that time, he believed that they were the last generation of “bnei torah” in Eretz Yisrael. Lo and behold, we have created here a kingdom of Torah, in quality, quantity and Torah pride. We still have a way to go to perfection but it's in our sights.

The difference between galut and Eretz Yisrael can be illustrated in a light but serious incident involving Winston Churchill when he was a member of Parliament. He once arrived at parliament inebriated. A woman member said to him, “Mr. Churchill you are drunk”, to which he replied, “And madam you are ugly – tomorrow I shall be sober”. Meaning tomorrow we shall merit to see all the prophecies coming alive, but your beloved galut will forever be tamei.

Rebuilding our Ancient Homeland

The last Mishna in tractate Sota describes how society will look in the period just prior to the Mashiach. Among other distasteful scenarios the Mishna mentions חוצפה חוצפה impudence, insolence, audacity, will be prevalent within society, where there will be no honor for the elderly nor for the Talmid Chacham.

Chutzpa takes many forms, pushing ahead in a line of anxious people, or foul-mouthing decent people and much more.

In our generation we unfortunately encounter one of the most dire and disgraceful appearances of chutzpa stemming from arrogance and ignorance. It is the disgraceful “holier than thou” attitude of some Chareidi Jews in Chutz La’aretz who have the audacity to criticize the holy people in Eretz Yisrael.

Every day we struggle to rebuild our ancient homeland with the opportunity that HaShem has provided us after 2000 insane years of galut.

In order to understand the immensity of the task and the miraculous help we receive from our Father in Heaven, just consider for a moment. We are a small parcel of land in the midst of savage and brutal enemies. We number six and a half million Jews, and they are in the hundreds of millions, in 22 countries. It is like the City of New York having to defend itself and develop amidst the other 330 million people in the 50 states of America.

You are correct, it would be impossible! But yet Am Yisrael in the holy land is enveloped by HaShem’s Shechina, in the face of which numbers have no relevance.

Yitro, who had previously served as one of Paro’s three most

trusted advisors, was well versed in public administration. He knew that no man, even one as gifted as the great Moshe, could alone administer a nation of millions.

Moshe, too, was aware of this “irregular” situation, but was precluded from instituting any change for two reasons: 1. Moshe alone knew the most minute details of the Torah, 2. Moshe could not institute any changes unless they were sanctioned by HaShem.

Moshe brought Yitro's suggestions before HaShem and the necessary changes were instituted.

Yitro saw the abnormality and deviation of the situation of the “uneven distribution of historic responsibility,” where the few bear the responsibilities of the many, which leads to an eventual self-destruction.

Modern day Israeli government is supported and manned by Jews taking responsibility for 37 ministries and offices addressing specific needs of the diverse population, plus Judiciary and Legislative branches, and 58 Authorities and institutions. Yes, there is room for improvement and the best way to accomplish that is for halachic Jews to return home to Eretz Yisrael and participate in the rebuilding of our nation.

So, the next time you wish to criticize the people who constitute the returnees to our holy land, just remember what happened to the prophet Yeshayahu (6,4-7):

[illegible][illegible]

At the sound of their voices, the doorposts and thresholds

shook, and the temple was filled with smoke. Woe to me. For I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for".

My prayers regarding this segment of Am Yisrael: May Hashem open your eyes to the miracles that HaShem performs for His children in Eretz Yisrael every moment. And may you merit to learn Torah from rabbanim who would have been among the 20% who left Egypt with Moshe and not with the 80% who so much loved the galut.

B careful B healthy B here

JLMM Jewish Lives Matter More

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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