

Parshat Lech Lecha

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STARTING POINT

The War against the Four Kings - by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

The Torah discusses the war of the four kings against five others at length (Bereishit 14:1-10). We might wonder not only about the number of verses of this discussion but about several aspects of the story itself. First of all, in spite of the fact that there are four kings who fight against five, it is clear that the numerical advantage of five versus four is not relevant. The four kings rule over a very large area, including Shinar (that is, Babylon, as noted in Bereishit 11:2) and Eilam ("And on that day, G-d will send His hand a second time to take possession of the rest of His nation, remaining in Ashur, Egypt, Patros, Kush, Eilam, and Shinar" [Yeshayahu 11:11]). The five kings, on the other hand, control a few cities in the small area of Sedom and Amorah. It is therefore not surprising that the five kings served the four kings for twelve years. The question is what led them to rebel in the thirteenth year?

In addition, while the war is taking place, the description surprisingly moves away from the five kings and mentions other completely foreign nations. "And in the fourteenth year, Kedarlaomer and the kings with him came and struck the Refaim and Ashtarot Karna'im, the Zuzim in Ham, the Aimim in Shaveh Kiryata'im, and the Chori in their mountain, Sei'ir" [14:5-6]. What does this have to do with the war between the four and the five kings?

Evidently, there is one answer to both of these questions. The nations mentioned at the later stage – Refaim, Zuzim, Aimim, Chori – lived on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, and evidently the kings of the area of Sedom had a treaty with them to protect them from the kings living further to the east. This treaty was based on the great strength of these nations, as can be seen from their names. However, the treaty was not enough to protect Sedom, and the eastern kings conquered the nations of the eastern Jordan area.

This then leads us to the reason for the telling of this story, Avraham's victory over the kings of the east. The victory gave Avraham control over their newly acquired territory, which included the eastern side of the Jordan River. From that point in time, the eastern side of the Jordan became Avraham's property (even though it was not part of the Land of Canaan, as outlined in Bamidbar Chapter 24). Eventually, the nations that had some link to Avraham would receive parts of this heritage. Amon and Moav, the sons of Avraham's nephew Lot, received the lands of Eimim and Refaim: "For I have given Ar as an inheritance to Lot. The Aimim lived there beforehand, a great and powerful nation, large giants. Refaim were also considered giants, and the Moabites considered them Aimim." [Devarim

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2:11]. The same is true of the land of the Zuzim. "For I have given it to Lot as a heritage. It was also considered the land of the Refaim. Refaim lived there beforehand, and the Amonites called them Zamzumim, a great and powerful nation, strong as giants." [2:19-21]. The children of Eisav, Avraham's grandson, inherited the land of the Chori. "And in Sa'ir, the Chorim lived there beforehand, and the children of Eisav conquered them and destroyed them, and replaced them." [20:12]. Other sections of this area, which were ruled by Og, King of Bashan, were in the end given to the tribes of Reuven and Gad, and half the tribe of Menasheh, since this is also part of the property belonging to Avraham – "All of the Bashan, which is called the land of the Refaim" [Devarim 3:13].

Thus, in summary, the war of four kings against five is the basis of Avraham's possession of the land to the east of the Jordan River, for all generations to come.

POINT OF VIEW

"Windows Program" of the Religious Zionists - by MK Zevulun Orlev

"Rabbi Chiya Bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: A person should only pray in a house where there are windows. As is written, 'His window was open in the attic in the direction of Jerusalem' [Daniel 6:11]." [Berachot 34b].

The obligation to pray only in a place that has a window or an opening to the outside is something that needs to be clarified. At first glance, we would expect that the view from the window might interfere with the need of one who wants to become close to the Almighty to keep his mind on the issues and to concentrate on his prayers. Rabbi A.Y. Kook explained this matter in his first book, Ein Ayah (which he wrote at the age of 23):

"Prayer is indeed a unique holy service that takes place in the soul of the one who prays, but the necessary condition that it will have the proper effect is that the person has a complete understanding of the value of the external world. Then a proper completeness will operate on him and on his surroundings. However, anybody whose solitary concentration on his service

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brings him to become separated from any relationship with the outside world will never achieve the ultimate goal of completeness through prayer, which should bring him to a state of readiness to perform in a kind and righteous way, according to the spirit which will awaken within him.

"Therefore, a person should not pray in a house that does not have windows. The possibility to see the outside world must be available together with the true joy that comprises complete peace, in the knowledge that this is the objective of Jerusalem, from which the word of G-d will emanate. That is the reason that Daniel had open windows pointing towards Jerusalem."

This "Windows Program" of Rabbi Kook, as it may be called, is the root of the approach of religious Zionism. It establishes the need for a close link between those inside the synagogues and those who remain outside. It insists that prayer and divine service will never be an excuse to disengage from the nation as a whole. It teaches us that faith, an outlook, and a religious way of life should not be factors leading to isolation from the rest of our nation.

Thus, the sector of religious Zionism cannot run its life in a way that ignores the surroundings, that is blind to what happens in the rest of society, and that is deaf to cries of all the other sectors.

This was the essence of religious Zionism from the day it was established, and it has remained the same during the one hundred and thirty years of its existence. The movements of Mizrachi and Hapoel Hamizrachi and their political offshoots, in their different variations up to the Mafdal of today, have been consistently involved and integrated with all parts of the Jewish nation, irrespective of their ideas and viewpoints.

A position based on a feeling of responsibility for the entire nation is not a question of politics, and it does not stem from actions related to government. Rather, this is a responsibility that is spiritual, pertaining to ethics and to a deep faith, something that cannot be chopped up into halves, thirds, or quarters. It involves a general responsibility that cannot be ignored.

The dismantling of Gush Katif, the difficult crises with respect to the Jewish identity of Israel, the collapse of Jewish religious services, the trampling of social justice, the increased poverty and the widening of social gaps, the conspicuous failures of the educational system from all points of view including scholastic achievement, the attempt to disavow all values of Judaism, Zionism, and society, the attempt to flee from responsibility for decreasing the par in education, the rulings by the Supreme Court on the subject of religion and state that are so predictable – even all of these issues do not justify abandoning the values of religious Zionism. Even though all of these issues are very serious and threaten our existence along with the Jewish character of our country, we can never use them as an excuse to close our windows to the outside.

Especially in a time of crisis and doubt, and even more so in a time of fear and danger, it is wrong to turn away from the "Windows Program," as we have nicknamed the words of

Rabbi Kook quoted above. This is the supreme test of religious Zionism. It is also the greatest test of every family member, whether he is a rabbi or a public figure, whether he is a simple citizen, whether he or she is young or old, and no matter whether he or she is a settler in Yesha or an inhabitant of Tel Aviv. Every single person must ask himself if the current crises will overpower us so that we will seal the windows leading to the outside, thus refusing to continue with the approach of religious Zionism.

We all fought against the "Disengagement" plan. Even though we strongly disagreed about the best way to oppose the plan, we must never accept another disengagement - from the values of religious Zionism and from the country and its institutions, including the IDF. Such an additional disengagement would be opposed to the spirit and the essence of religious Zionism. It is inconceivable for one who wears a knitted kippa, a former member of Bnei Akiva, or one who studied in a Hesder Yeshiva, to even consider such a new form of disengagement. All of these people and others like them must constantly internalize the absolute and constructive spirit of religious Zionism, which blows in through the open window.

As far as I am concerned, the above thoughts are the most important basis for the unity of the entire family of religious Zionism. This is the most important and necessary foundation for observing the mitzvah of "Lech Lecha" – settling in Eretz Yisrael – which is a mark of the progress of religious Zionism. With the concept of Lech Lecha, we move forward and we do not flee. It entails always moving towards the centers of controversy and not towards surrender or disengagement.

GUESTS FOR SHABBAT

"Rise Up and Tour the Land" - by Rabbi Elyakim Levanon, Rabbi of Eilon Moreh

Avraham took many journeys in Eretz Yisrael. "And Avram passed through the land until the site of Shechem, until Eilon Moreh... And he moved from there towards the mountains, east of Beit El... And Avram descended to Egypt... And Avram pitched his tents, and he came and sat in Eilon Moreh, in the area of Chevron." In the Talmud, there is a disagreement between the Chachamim and Rabbi Eliezer about the purpose of the Divine command to Avraham, "Rise up and tour the land" [Bereishit 13:17] (Bava Batra 100a). Rabbi Eliezer derives from this event a law that possession of land can be formally obtained by walking on it, and he explains that after this walk the land belonged to Avraham. The Chachamim feel that Avraham walked in the land because he liked it so much, and in order that his descendents would find it easy to conquer. The common denominator for both sides is that Avraham set the tone of the link between Bnei Yisrael and the land for all generations to come.

One important event is the war of five kings against four, which ended with Avraham's nephew Lot being captured. We are told that Avraham gathered his disciples and pursued the kings that had captured Lot, until he reached Dan, in the area of Chova, to the left of Damascus. We know that the passage describing this event was written by Moshe at Mount Sinai,

many years after Avraham's actions. This must be so, since Dan was born after Avraham had died, and it is Moshe who described the battle, naming the sites in terms of what was known in his own time.

But even so, the passage is problematic. How did Moshe know what Dan's heritage would be, wasn't the land divided among the tribes by Yehoshua when Bnei Yisrael entered the land? I heard an explanation of this puzzle from the late master of Tanach, Prof. Yehuda Elitzur. In his opinion, it was not only Avraham who toured the length and breadth of the land, the children of Yaacov continued this tradition too. As is written, the activities of the fathers are a sign for the descendents. Eretz Yisrael is unique in its variety, no one place is the same as any other, and every area has its own traits that are different from those of every other one.

Our forefathers, and the tribes themselves, became familiar with the spiritual properties of every site in the land. Whenever one of Yaacov's sons felt that a specific area was appropriate for him, he established that his children would receive their heritage in that area. This tradition of which area most matched the traits of every tribe was passed on to Moshe. He was therefore able to identify the place where Avraham's pursuit led him as "Dan." When Yehoshua divided the land among the tribes, Dan in fact received a portion in the center of the land, between Tzor'a and Eshtaol, but later on the tribe of Dan increased their area by capturing the area of Layish, in the north, which was the original area that matched their inherent traits (see Shoftim 18:2).

In modern times it is also possible to see differences in the attitudes of people depending on where in the land they live. People of the plains are different with respect to their links to Eretz Yisrael than people of the mountains. With respect to any proposal to withdraw from areas within Eretz Yisrael, some people respond as on a plain, with restraint and in a calm way. This is symbolic of their links to the land. Others react with strong opposition, like stones exposed on a mountain, representing the way they relate to the land. Both of these approaches are the words of the Living G-d. It is possible to become attached to Eretz Yisrael in every reasonable way – plains or mountains, deep within the boundaries or on the coastline.

The "garin" – closely knit group - that founded Eilon Moreh was the spearhead which opened up the possibility of settling the mountains, using tools that match the spirit of the place. Let us hope and pray that our various strengths will be used appropriately throughout our land, so that in the end "The Tabernacle will become one" [Shemot 26:6].

The Activities of the Garin:

"And Avram passed through the land to the site of Shechem, to Eilon Moreh. And the Canaanite was in the land then." [Bereishit 12:6]. In line with the activities of our forefather Avraham, the people of the garin of Eilon Moreh – Shechem - took on the task of conquering the land by their activity, while it was still occupied by the Gentiles. The garin was organized in 5733 (1973), when it began its attempts to establish a settlement

in the area of Shechem. The government prevented the establishment of a settlement seven times, and then, after the eighth try, an agreement was reached that opened the way for settling the Shomron region. Seven years later, the first permanent houses of Eilon Moreh were erected at the present site, Mount Kavir. The site of the settlement is in the heart of the Shomron, near the city of Shechem. It provides a view of both Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival, which stand one on each side of the town.

Today about 250 families live in Eilon Moreh. The town is an outstanding place. Among the central elements of the social structure of the place are the institutions of the Beit Midrash, under the leadership of the rabbi of the town, Rabbi Elyakim Levanon. These include a Hesder Yeshiva, a large Kollel, a high school for immigrants from the former Soviet Union, and a yeshiva high school that was established last year.

At a time when many settlements are limited in the number of new families they can accept because of a lack of suitable housing, Eilon Moreh has had the privilege of welcoming dozens of new families, settling them in new homes that were prepared in advance.

A CHASSIDIC THREAD

Sarah's Beauty and Egypt's Ugliness - by Rabbi Shlomo Schock

"And there was a famine in the land, so Avraham descended to Egypt... And he said to his wife Sarah, behold I know that you are a beautiful woman." [Bereishit 12:10-11]. Avraham's first period of living in the land ends with a famine. Hunger begins to be felt when mundane existence can no longer satisfy a person's wants. Things that are obvious become commonplace, normal activity becomes burdensome, and a person begins to feel a need to move to faraway places in order to begin to enjoy new tastes in life. Life as it is becomes tiresome and in need of rejuvenation. We cannot live reality as if we were speeding along a highway. Now and then we must pause and stop along the shoulder of the road to give ourselves an opportunity to look at things from the outside and see how wonderful they are.

Sarah's beauty is revealed with Egypt's ugliness in the background. In one instant, what has been accepted as normal and commonplace is transformed into beauty. The eyes, which have become used to looking in a certain way, achieve a new depth and improved insight over an unusual background of ugliness. Rudeness and ugliness that surround us become the boundaries beyond which we are introduced to the revelation of beauty.

Beauty and ugliness are mixed together within our souls too. "Sometimes the soul is revealed in all its naked ugliness to a person and he is shocked and frightened by the sight. The only way to calm his spirit is to note that together with the ugly and impure side of the soul there is a side that is beautiful and pure, and that 'G-d created each one as well as the other' [Kohelet 7:14]." [Rabbi A.Y. Kook, Orot Hakodesh].

When our trait of beauty descends to the depths of ugliness, it cries out and demands to take its rightful place where it belongs, at the highest level of our personality. Each and every one of us has beauty trying to be revealed, and it is hunger, which can bring us down from our proper lofty position to a status of ugliness, that can open up the gates to the beauty for which we yearn.

We should neither ignore nor be depressed by the ugliness within us. This ugliness is the key to a process of clarification, and it allows the beauty that lies hidden deep within us to float to the top. There is a well known example of ugliness that is the source of beauty and grace, while what is accepted as beauty withers and becomes ugly. In the well known children's story, the ugly duckling is transformed into a glorious swan. Clearly, the beauty of the swan is influenced, among other things, by its memories of the surroundings when it was no more than an ugly duckling.

TORAH, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT

Avraham Fell into a Deep Sleep - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg

There is no single moment that a person from Bnei Yisrael is not fulfilling a mitzvah, not even when he or she is asleep. How can this be? Somebody who lives in Eretz Yisrael is observing the mitzvah of living in the land for 24 hours a day, each and every day of the year. This is also true of one who sleeps in a Sukkah, who under certain circumstances can even be counted as part of a minyan. Halacha considers one who is asleep as being responsible for his actions. If he lies down near some dishes and while sleeping rolls over and breaks them, he is required to pay for the damage. The principle involved is that "a man is always considered as acting on purpose, even when he is asleep."

It is reasonable to suggest that this responsibility, in the same way as the credit for observing a mitzvah, stems from the moment that he lies down to go to sleep, when he still has conscious thoughts and intentions. Afterwards, he should be treated as a fool, without conscious thought. Thus, if while asleep somebody rolls out of a Sukkah, there is no obligation to wake him (or to carry him back inside without waking him). In any case, perhaps such a person can be considered as being in a state of discomfort, which would relieve him of the requirement to observe the mitzvah of Sukkah, without regard to his mental state. This might lead to a situation, if there is only one set of tzitzit in a family, that if one man falls asleep wearing the tzitzit another one might be permitted to take the garment off him, so that he would observe the mitzvah instead of his brother, who does not.

Can a sleeping person be given formal possession of an item? This would seem to depend on the ruling of the Mishna in Gittin which forbids a man to divorce his wife while she is asleep. The comparison is valid according to those who feel that the reason is that one who is asleep is a fool (ROSH). But others feel that the reason the divorce is invalid is because the woman cannot watch over the "get" while she is asleep. However, with respect to transferring possession of an item, as long as somebody has an active intention of giving the item,

positive intention of the one who receives it is not necessary in order to make the transaction valid.

We end with a story: Once there was a listener who would always fall asleep during the rabbi's sermon. He was asked, wouldn't you feel more comfortable sleeping in your own bed? Why do you bother to come here at all? His answer was: When a person falls asleep, his soul rises up to rest in the heavens, and there the question is asked, where did you come from? What a great difference there is between one who answers that he arrived from a regular bed and one who can say that he came from a Torah lesson in the synagogue!

(Reference: *Talmudic Encyclopedia, Volume 26, "Yashen" [Sleep]*)

A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN

The Torah as Protection - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi

It was late at night. Everybody in the small Jewish village in the area of Dambia, in Ethiopia, had gone to sleep hours before. Only in one cabin had the people not yet gone to sleep. The Kесе, Abba Negateh Tefteh (the father of Kесе Amahah, from Netanya) sat, prayed, and studied Torah even at this late hour.

Suddenly, Abba Negateh heard footsteps outside his house. "Who is moving about at such a late hour?" he wondered. He rose from his seat, and he carefully looked outside to see who was coming. By the light of the moon, he saw the face of one of the men who approached. His whole body trembled. Who in the entire area did not know this man? He was one of the leaders of the Christians in the area, a man who was widely known for his hatred of the Jews. Many times he had caused troubles for the Jews and tried to harm them.

Kесе Abba Negateh understood that this time again the Christians had not come for a "friendly visit" to the village. He carefully peeked out of his window to see what they were doing. There was a large group of men, all armed with swords and other weapons. Suddenly, the entire area was lit up. A large torch had appeared in the hands of one of the band of men. He threw the torch towards the synagogue of the village. "Master of the Universe, how can you allow those who hate your name burn down your house and the holy book, the 'Orit' (a Torah scroll)?" Abba Negateh cried out quietly. He knew that it was no use to cry out for help. It would take a long time to wake up the Jews of the village, and even if they did try to fight the intruders, the Christians were armed with many powerful weapons. To oppose them might cost many Jewish lives. Abba Negateh continued to pray with all his heart for a long time, while he looked on in fear at what was happening.

But lo and behold, a miracle happened. The torch fell on the synagogue, which as usual was made of straw, and nothing happened. It rolled off the roof and its flame went out. The intruders lit it again and brought it close to the straw roof – and once again it did not catch fire. The men began to make nervous sounds. One of them came forward and made another attempt to light the roof, but he too failed. The cabin, made of dried straw, would not catch fire. Again and again the men tried

to light the roof, but it did not burn. Finally, they said to each other, "This is the hand of G-d. The G-d of the Jews is guarding over them." One of the men called out, "Let us run away, before He punishes us," and he turned to leave. Within a few minutes, all the others followed him, and they quickly left the area, astounded at what had happened.

And what about the Kese? He knew very well who had protected the synagogue. During the rest of the night he remained awake singing a prayer of thanks to G-d, who had saved His people and His Torah scroll from a disaster. In the morning, he gathered his congregation and told them about the great miracle he had seen. The entire congregation burst out in song, singing the praises of G-d, and the rejoicing continued until nightfall.

After that day, Abba Negateh Tefteh declared the date as a holiday of thanks to G-d, in memory of the day when He rescued His people from their enemies and saved the Torah from the hands of the evil men who wanted to cause harm.

(Source: Talada Tamnu, Kam Ashto's daughter, with thanks to Rachamim Malko and "Amud Haor")

(If you have an interesting story to tell, you are invited to send it to us.)

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

"Brit Avraham" - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg

The book we discuss today, which is on the subject of circumcision, is special because of its author, Rabbi Tzvi Binyamin Auerbach, known as TZVA. He was not a mohel, but his father, Rabbi Avraham, was a mohel and performed circumcisions in the city of Strasburg, in France. According to the preface of the book, he continued in this role "until Robespierre and his colleagues commanded to eradicate the circumcisions and the mitzvot, and G-d rescued him with His mercy." The author was not only a rabbi but also had a Ph.D. degree, based on his studies of philosophy and Semite languages.

The author served as a rabbi in Darmstadt for ten years, and he showed his congregation that he felt himself first a rabbi and only afterwards a doctor. As a result, he was persecuted, and among other things it was said that the prayer "Kol Nidrei" allows Jews to break promises that they had given to the government authorities. He managed to extricate himself from this libel, but in the end he was forced to leave the city, and he move to Frankfurt, where he lived as a private person and not as a rabbi.

While in Frankfurt, Rabbi Auerbach wrote the book "Brit Avraham" in memory of his father. He also spent much of his time editing the book "Ha'Eshkol," written by the Raavad of Norvona, which he published later, when he became the rabbi of Halberstat. He explained that he was in possession of a manuscript of this book, and he wrote a commentary named "Nachal Eshkol." After Rabbi Auerbach died, doubts were raised about the source of the book and whether he ever really

had a manuscript written by the Raavad. The greatness of the author, the TZVA, can be seen in every line of the book, and to this very day many people are involved in studying the innovations in the books, both "Ha'Eshkol" and "Nachal Eshkol." Even though rabbis and researchers supported him and defended him from the suspicions (in a book, "Tzidkat Hatzdik," Berlin, 5670), others claimed that the book was a forgery (Rabbi Shalom Albek, "Kofer Eshkol," Warsaw, 5671). Many claim that even if the basic original book was authentic, the TZVA did not refrain from adding sentences and even full chapters of his own, displaying them as if they were written by the Raavad, and then discussing them in his own commentary, "Nachal Eshkol."

To this day, it is not clear why this respected rabbi acted in this way, and how it is that in spite of all the doubts the TZVA succeeded in being accepted by all the sectors of Judaism. Perhaps he first gained a reputation as a learned and respected rabbi with the book, "Brit Avraham."

LAND OF MY BIRTH

Natan Elbaz, Who Sacrificed His Life for his Friends - by Zev Wallack

Elbaz was born in 5694 (1934) to a modest family that lived in poverty in a small town in Morocco. He studied in a yeshiva, and when he was still a child he volunteered to be active in defense of the local Jewish population. He yearned for Eretz Yisrael from an early age, and at the age of 17 he left his family and moved to the land on his own, within the framework of Aliyat Hanoar. Even though he had just arrived, Elbaz volunteered for a combat infantry unit.

Elbaz's heroic act, which we will describe in this article, was well known to everybody at the time. However, more than fifty years later, at a time when the level of national awareness is on the decrease, it seems that Natan Elbaz has been forgotten. This was discussed recently in the magazine, "Pashut," by an author who calls himself Bill Bull:

"What is an ideal country as far as I am concerned? I would like to see a country where... battles and heritage would be familiar to everybody. This would be a country where if I asked somebody who Natan Elbaz is I would be greeted with a chuckle for asking such a simple question, for every child must know about his great feat..."

In order to understand the situation in which Elbaz found himself, we must start with a short explanation. Weapons at the time were much simpler than today and not as safe to use. Most training accidents were caused by the outmoded old type of fragmentation grenade that was in use. In fact, as a result of the attempt to make the grenades safer, the number of accidents increased. How is this possible? The detonator could be removed from this type of grenade, so that it could not explode. This seemed to be a very good thing, but in reality the effect was the opposite. The process of returning the detonator to the grenade and cocking the handle were very complicated and dangerous.

With this in mind, we can return to our hero, Natan Elbaz. On the eighth of I Adar 5714 (11/2/54), he was given a task of dismantling hand grenades. That is, he was to remove the detonators from armed grenades and release their safety catches and handles. Elbaz began this sensitive task sitting in a tent, when he suddenly heard a click, which meant that the safety catch of one of the grenades had been released.

There were 4 seconds left until the explosion, which would spread dozens of deadly pieces of shrapnel around the area. Natan immediately cried out, "Grenade!" so that his colleagues in the tent would take cover, while he ran outside the tent with the intention of throwing it far away. Unfortunately, he found that outside the tent there were many soldiers waiting for a lineup. In the few remaining seconds, the only way he could save himself would be to throw the grenade away, harming his own friends. But he preferred to protect them with his own body. He held the grenade against his chest and threw himself on the ground. Immediately, a loud explosion was heard – and the shrapnel was all buried in his body. He had given up his own life to save his fellow soldiers, and for this act of bravery he was awarded a medal after his death.

Natan Elbaz's sacrifice was widely publicized, and it became a symbol. Many streets throughout the country and many synagogues were named for him. The IDF camp south of Beer Sheva, Camp Natan, is named in his memory. Two poems were written about him. One was written by Amos Ettinger, and the famous singer Jo Amar put it to music and sang it. The second poem was published by Natan Alterman in his weekly column in Davar, "The Seventh Column." Here is what he wrote:

"You ran quickly, and the faces fell / As one who is about to cry shame. / You hurried so fast that / you did not even have the time to apologize, Elbaz. / You did not throw the grenade away / because there were men around you in the tent. / You did not throw the grenade outside / because there were men there. / You opened your mouth wide, you opened your eyes / and in your hand there was destruction... So you broke away to run far / in the universe to find a nearby place / a place where there was no man nor child / the path was heavy and long. / And in your hand, the ticking bomb / that had started the count to four."

Natan Elbaz Street in Sdeirot was made famous last year when Kassam missiles fell there and killed people. Ella Abukasis, a 17-year-old girl, was killed when she fell over her 10-year-old brother and protected him from the shrapnel. At her funeral, people noted that Ella continued the tradition of Natan Elbaz. They had both sacrificed their own lives to save others.

CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES

(Halachic summaries by Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, brought to press by Rabbi Shmuel Zaafrani)

"Go To the Land Which I Will Show You" [Bereishit 12:1]

1. The mitzvah to settle Eretz Yisrael is a great mitzvah, and even at this time it is a Torah obligation according to the Ramban (according to the Rambam, it is a rabbinical ruling).
2. How is this mitzvah observed? Some say, it can be performed by purchasing or renting an apartment, by living in the land, and by planting. Others say that tourists who come for a short visit also fulfill the mitzvah. In any case, those who live here permanently are to be preferred to those who only come to visit. This is implied by the verse, "He gives a soul to the nation living there, and a spirit to those who walk there" [Yeshayahu 42:5]. The nation living on the land receives a soul, which is greater than the spirit given to those who only come for a tour. When in the Sifri it is written that living in Eretz Yisrael is as important as all the mitzvot, it is certainly referring to living in the land on a permanent basis.
3. Since a visit is also included in the mitzvah of settling the land, a person can insist that his or her mate come to the land, even if only for a short time.
4. The sages prohibited starting a trip on a boat on Friday, and recent rabbis have extended this to include overseas flights. However, if the purpose of the flight is to observe a mitzvah, such as coming to Eretz Yisrael, it is permitted.
5. It is a good practice for one who leaves an airplane at Ben Gurion Airport to come out quickly, in order to fulfill the requirement to hurry to the land, as is written, "We will run to know G-d" [Hoshaya 6:3].



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