



## Parshat Vayeilech

No 1086:

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### STARTING POINT

Yehoshua - by Rabbi Amnon Bazak

At the beginning of this week's Torah portion, Moshe turns to the nation with words of farewell, and he hands the leadership of the nation over to Yehoshua Bin Nun. Moshe notes two reasons why he must end his term of leadership. First, "I am one hundred and twenty years old today, and I can no longer 'go out and come'" [Devarim 31:2]. That is, "I no longer have the strength to wage war" [Ibn Ezra]. The phrase, to "go out and come," means to wage war (for example, see I Shmuel 18:27), and Moshe tells the people that at his age he can no longer be a military commander. This is different from the image of Kalev, for example, who says to Yehoshua at a much "younger" age, "Today I am eighty five years old. I am just as strong now as when Moshe sent me as a messenger, I have as much strength now as I did then to wage war and to 'go out and come'" [Yehoshua 14:10-11]. The second reason that Moshe gives for not continuing with his task is "G-d has told me, you will not cross this Jordan River" [Devarim 31:2]. That is, Moshe would not be able to perform any other role, since G-d has decreed that he will not be allowed to enter the land.

This implies that the next step is for Moshe to tell the people who will replace him in fulfilling his previous tasks, both fighting their enemies and providing political leadership in other areas. Moshe therefore explains, "Your G-d is the one who will pass before you, He will destroy these nations from in front of you, and you will take possession from them. Yehoshua will pass before you, as G-d has commanded." [31:3]. Yisrael will have two leaders: The Almighty will lead the wars of the nation, and Yehoshua "will pass before" the people. Clearly, this does not mean that there were two completely separate leaders and two separate tasks to be performed. In practice, it was Yehoshua who led the wars of conquest. But Moshe wanted to emphasize that in essence war is not waged by man but that it must be under the influence of the spiritual leadership of the nation. In practice, as Moshe emphasized twice, if Bnei Yisrael would keep the Torah, "your G-d is the one who goes with you, he will not leave you or abandon you" [Devarim 31:6,8]. The main task of the leader of Yisrael is to make sure that the nation observes the Torah, and military victory will follow inevitably as a matter of course.

Yehoshua would seem to be the best possible example to illustrate this idea. It was very clear that the war against Amalek was fought in a miraculous way: "When Moshe raised his hands, Yisrael would be strong, but when he put his hand down, Amalek would be strong" [Shemot 17:11]. However, it was Yehoshua who led the military campaign: "And Yehoshua weakened Amalek and his people by the sword" [17:13]. That is the opportunity where Yehoshua learned the secret of combining faith in G-d with the practical aspects of waging

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war. In the affair of the scouts, Yehoshua again was the person who declared that the wars to be fought by Yisrael are not influenced only by physical security but by spiritual issues. "If G-d wants us, He will bring us to this land and give it to us" [Bamidbar 14:8].

Yehoshua was indeed privileged that at the same time that he led the war of conquest of the land, he was also able to bring the nation to a very high level of faith in G-d: "And Yisrael served G-d all the days of Yehoshua" [Yehoshua 24:31].

### POINT OF VIEW

**Do Not Say: "Because of Our Sins..." - by Rabbi Yisrael Rozen**  
 "For the sin that we sinned before you with silly talk... and for the sin that we sinned before you with a confused heart."  
 [Confession - Yom Kippur prayers].

Ever since the uprooting of the settlements of Azza, thunderous voices have been heard in our camp, the religious Zionist sector, calling for soul-searching and self reckoning. Much has been written and said about this, in the general press and in internal bulletins, at meetings of rabbis and educators, in parlor discussions, and in the hidden corners of the Beit Midrash. It has become very fashionable to raise such questions as, "What mistakes did we make? Why did we fail?" The common thread in all these discussions are the following themes: "It is time for a fundamental soul-searching... We must learn our lessons from the events... We are to blame... We did not 'settle' in the hearts of the people..."

In any discussion of this type, the "rabbis" are at the center, and they are quite often sharply criticized. Declarations by one rabbi or another are discussed in view of their authority and their prominence, all linked to their responsibility at different stages of the events. There are endless discussions of the question of leadership in the nationalistic religious community, what exists and what should be.

In summary, we are seeing a collective acceptance of guilt. However, I for one am completely opposed to any such process, for three reasons. As Yom Kippur approaches, I take full responsibility for a call not to discuss collective guilt, neither our own nor that of any others.

First of all, I do not agree that the facts are as stated above. I do not think that in principle we were wrong on the issues of Eretz Yisrael and in the way we struggled against the disengagement plan. This is from a broad point of view, at the

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same level as the words of those who are pursuing guilt. I do not accept the assumption that a failed result necessarily shows that the path was wrong or that the vision was faulty.

In addition, I do not agree that there is a "crisis of faith" within our camp, even if we can find individuals – a man, a woman, a young boy or girl – who can be quoted as having problems on issues of faith. As far as I can tell, this is not widespread, and wherever it can be found it should be handled as an individual case and not as a general phenomenon. See our comments below about the self fulfilling prophecy involved in publicizing an atmosphere of crisis.

#### *The Boomerang of Self Guilt*

Second, the regular readers of this column are familiar with my consistent opinion against any form of pursuing guilt. Whenever something happens, rabbis, academics, and sensitive public figures immediately rise, looking for the faults in our own camp, and suffering from our great responsibility. This approach, almost as if to say, "he has carried our burden and suffered with our pain" [Yeshayahu 53:4], makes me wonder if we have been influenced by an approach foreign to the Jewish outlook.

I have strong memories of this phenomenon from two "historic" events that were burned deep into my soul, when the consequences of this feeling of guilt led us to pay a very high price. The more dramatic of the two events was the aftermath of the murder of Yitzchak Rabin, when the masters of this search for "sharp reckoning" jumped into the picture to take responsibility and to publicly apologize for sins that we did not do. I feel that we have not yet recovered from the blow that we were struck at the time by our own people. After that event, the camp of religious Zionists was transformed into a community branded by the mark of Kayin, and it has become tainted and unclean. The problem is that this is not only in the eyes of "others" but also (and perhaps mainly) in our own eyes. There is no justification for this fashionable acceptance of guilt, and what is even worse is that we are beginning to believe in our own responsibility for the events. See below.

Another event that I can never forgive or forget was the quick acceptance of responsibility for what happened in Sabra and Shatila, when Christians in Lebanon killed Moslems. Rabbis and other prominent leaders of religious Zionism strongly beat on our national breast. As far as I am concerned, this contributed to our losing the war in Lebanon, based on an unrealistic approach to ethics and on unjustified acceptance of self guilt.

Third, and this is the main point: I believe very strongly in the social and psychological dynamic process known as a "self fulfilling prophecy" – in all walks of life. Too much talk of a "crisis of faith" can lead to a process of prying and searching for "failure." It can give birth to a point of view, even after the fact. Conferences and calls for "a comprehensive searching of the soul" present a fertile bed for creating this kind of outlook. The trend of "self accusation" creates objects that justify the approach.

Recitation of the prayer "For the sins" on Yom Kippur is intimate and private, everybody beating on his own breast. It is true that the High Priest brings sacrifices "for himself and his

household" [Vayikra 16:11], for his tribe, for his brothers the Kohanim, and for all of the community of Bnei Yisrael. This is a holy ritual dedicated to accepting the guilt of sin for the whole nation of Yisrael, including sending a goat into the desert to die. It is not an attempt to beat the breasts of "other people," and it certainly does not include a search for scapegoats.

I therefore renew my call to my brothers, the modern "priests" of our times - rabbis, educators, and men of the spirit: Do not be quick to accept our own guilt, do not promote a crisis by the very act of discussing it. Let us not strike ourselves when we are not guilty, and do not strike us all with self fulfilling prophecies.

Perhaps the two phrases quoted at the beginning of this article from the prayer of "Al Chet" are relevant to our discussion. "For the sin that we sinned before you with silly talk... and for the sin that we sinned before you with a confused heart." As far as I am concerned, this second sin refers to exaggerated wonder and uncalled for questioning. The Hebrew phrase "timahon leivav" appears in the reprimands, the threat to Bnei Yisrael of punishment for not obeying the mitzvot: "G-d will strike you with madness, blindness, and a confused heart" [Devarim 28:28]. The phrase in the Torah can indicate for us that it has a similar meaning in the prayers.

#### **SERMON BY A GUEST**

**Ultimate Repentance - by Rabbi Tzefania Drori, Chief Rabbi of Kiryat Shemonah and Head of the Hesder Yeshiva**

The highest level of teshuva, repentance, is not related to a specific sin but rather to raising man to a new way of looking at his own universe. When a person sees himself as being part of the revelation of the good of G-d, he will of necessity refrain from any sin. How can he sin and therefore be torn away from ultimate good?

The scene of the binding of Yitzchak brings us in contact with an event where Avraham rose to his own highest possible level. In spite of the almost impossible demand to sacrifice his own son, he fulfills G-d's command and continues to believe that G-d's word is always for the best.

The secret of the binding lies in the ability to accept what seems to be a contradiction but still believe that all aspects of an event are the will of G-d. Ever since the event, Yitzchak and Avraham are a symbol and a sign for future generations, showing that Yisrael retains the power of faith even in what seems to be an impossible situation.

According to the Midrash, Yitzchak asked his father to bind him tightly lest he damage the sacrifice by moving at the last moment. This is the same picture that we saw in the behavior of those who were expelled recently from their heritage. For decades, the Almighty had helped them to extract "a hundred gates" – mei'ah she'arim – from the desolate land of Gerar. Five thousand shells and rockets that were fired at them did not defeat them. They dwelt in an area full of miracles, G-d remained with them in their holy communities, with pure and heavenly rabbis to lead them. They had simple faith, they felt that the Redeemer of Yisrael would never be silent in the face of the inflexibility and evil character of the decree to expel them.

When the legions of the army approached, the complexity of the situation became clear. How should the people relate to soldiers, to the IDF in general, to Israel as a country, to the beginning of the process of redemption? Should they resist those who came, using force to do them harm? Should they fight, strike out in anger? Or should they pack away their belongings quietly, thereby causing harm to the concepts of the land and the mitzva of living in the land? Why should they not rely on their simple faith in G-d?

And at that point the image of "the binding" appeared. The settlers asked to bind themselves so that in their anger they would not harm the unity of the nation. This was their finest hour. The G-d of Yisrael inspired their leaders and their rabbis, their daughters spoke as if they were prophetesses of old, and soldiers, young men and women alike, bowed their heads and wept openly in front of the entire world. The unblemished sacrifice caused no harm and was not harmed itself. Its faith in the land and in the unity of the nation and its army expanded, and it raised the spirit of Yisrael. It infected all the righteous people. In the hearts of the people, the tears of love for Eretz Yisrael and love of G-d will never be forgotten. The power of the belief in the eternity of Yisrael, the symbol of the settlers and those who accompanied them, will never leave our generation.

In the eyes of the entire world, tens of thousands of students of Rabbi Akiva demonstrated true love of G-d and love of Yisrael. You shall love G-d "with all your heart and with all your possessions" [Devarim 6:5] – the love must be shown in every event that G-d uses to test you, even if He takes your very soul.

This was the beginning of the ultimate repentance, a new view of a supreme generation that continues to believe and that plants the seeds of miracles to come in future generations. The unity of Yisrael and the love for the land have not been harmed.

(Reference: Rabbi A.Y. Kook, *Orot Hateshuvah*)

## TORAH, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT

### The Mitzva of Repentance - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg

"For this mitzva which I command you today is not beyond your reach" [Devarim 30:11]. The Ramban explains that the object "this" refers to the specific mitzva given above, "You shall return to your G-d" [30:2], implying that repentance is a positive mitzva. The Rambam has a different approach. While he notes at the beginning of the laws of Teshuva a mitzva "that a sinner should repent for his sins before G-d and confess," in the detailed law he writes, "When a person repents and regrets his sin he must confess" [1:5]. That is, the mitzva is to confess whenever a person decides to repent but there is no separate command to repent. This is similar to the case of a divorce: there is no positive mitzva for a husband to divorce his wife, but the procedure to be followed in case somebody wants to divorce his wife is a mitzva whose details are given in the Torah.

We can resolve this apparent contradiction in the Rambam by assuming that there are two kinds of repentance. Somebody who decides in his mind to repent has not yet fulfilled the mitzva. The way to observe the mitzva of teshuva is to include all of the elements that the Rambam lists – taking note of the

sin, regretting the act, and resolving not to repeat it in the future – and also to explicitly recite a confession. Repentance without a confession indeed exists, but this consists only of a promise not to sin in the future, and it has no effect on past sins. Thus, for example, a marriage ritual performed by an evil person "on condition that I am completely righteous" is recognized as possibly valid, because perhaps the man decided to repent and took upon himself never to sin in the future. However, since in this case the man did not confess (we did not hear a formal confession of sin as part of the marriage ceremony), his past sins have not been erased.

This then is what the Ramabam means when he writes, "When a person repents." If a person is in the midst of a process of repentance but has not yet formalized the process by confessing for past sins, he has been commanded to recite the confession out loud.

On Yom Kippur there is a special mitzva to repent. Any other day in the year, a person can repent a single specific sin and resolve not to repeat it, while he does not take any of his other sins into account. On Yom Kippur, repentance should include "all your sins" [Vayikra 16:30], without exception.

Reference: Rabbi Mordechai Berlin, *Mipeirot Hakeram*, 140-143

## MOUNT MORIAH

### Succot in the Temple - by Rabbi Yitzchak Levy, Yeshivat Har Etzion

*The Clouds of Glory and the Construction of the Tabernacle*

The GRA, the Gaon of Vilna, asked why we have been commanded to build a Succah in the month of Tishrei. It would seem more logical at first glance to celebrate the holiday of Succot, in memory of the Clouds of Glory that protected Bnei Yisrael in the desert, during Nissan, the first month that the clouds appeared in the sky. His answer is that the clouds were dispersed when the sin of the Golden Calf took place, and they did not return until the construction of the Tabernacle was started. Moshe descended from Mount Sinai on Yom Kippur, and the next day, the eleventh of Tishrei, he gave the command to build the Tabernacle. It is written, "They contributed more one morning after the next" [Shemot 36:3], that is for two days. This brings us to the thirteenth of the month. On the fourteenth, the artisans took the gold from Moshe and on the fifteenth they began to build the Tabernacle. On that day, the Clouds of Glory returned. And for this reason, we begin to sit in a Succah on the fifteenth of the month.

In summary, in response to the sin of the Calf, the Clouds of Glory were dispersed, and they did not return until after Yom Kippur, when the Jews were forgiven for the sin. When the construction of the Tabernacle was begun, G-d returned the Clouds of Glory and the Shechina was once again revealed to Bnei Yisrael. Thus, there is an important link between the Tabernacle and the Succah, and one who sits in his Succah can be considered to be under the protection of the Shechina that surrounds him.

*The Succah and the Temple*

Many of the laws of Succah are derived from the Tabernacle. The maximum height of a Succah is derived from the height of

the revelation of the Shechina over the Ark, the laws of the walls of the Succah are derived from the curtain that covers the Ark, and some of the details of the mitzva of dwelling and eating in the Succah are derived from the time of dedication of the Tabernacle.

The significance of these similarities and links is that it is as if on Succot the Shechina moves from the area of the Temple to each and every private Succah. Every person of Yisrael sits at the time of the holiday in the shade of the Shechina, as was said by Hillel with respect to the celebration of drawing water, the Simchat Beit Hasho'eiva: "You come to my house, and I will come to yours." This means that there is a mutual correspondence between a man of Yisrael who comes to the Temple and the Almighty who comes to a private Succah, in order to reveal His Shechina within it.

There is a similar link between the laws of the four species and the rules of the sacrifices. In this case also the rituals of the Temple move into the private sector throughout the land.

#### *Pouring Water*

The purpose of pouring water on the Altar on Succot is so that Yisrael will be blessed with rain. Succot comes at the end of the summer. The nation is requested to bring some of the water remaining at the end of the season to the Temple, as a way of asking for a blessing of water during the year.

With respect to the Temple, David wrote, "Everything stems from you, and what we have given you comes from your hand" [I Divrei Hayamim 29:14]. Everything belongs to the Almighty, and when we bring the water to Him as if it is our own, we are asking that the Almighty bless his nation with water for the coming year. Bringing the water is one mitzva of a comprehensive set of mitzvot which entail having the nation of Yisrael bring its produce to the Temple. This includes the Omer sacrifice on Pesach, the two loaves of bread on Shavuot, and the Bikurim – the first fruit – during most of the year. We ask for a continued blessing by bringing our crops to the Temple, the place from which the world was created, and the place from which all the blessings of the world emanate.

#### *The Celebration of Simchat Beit Hasho'eiva*

This celebration is named for the fact that the holy spirit can be seen in the ritual, and we are happy that G-d has shown favor to Yisrael by allowing the Shechina to appear. The bright light of the golden lamps full of oil and the dancing by the most prominent rabbis are also an expression of the appearance of the Shechina.

Every day, branches of "arava" were arranged around the Altar while the shofar was blown. Every day, some people held the four species as they circled the Altar. Some say that this was a ritual performed by all of Bnei Yisrael and not just the Kohanim. There are very few rituals where every man from Yisrael can enter the space between the courtyard and the Altar, since this area is usually reserved only for the Kohanim who are involved in bringing sacrifices or other holy service.

The main characteristic of the holiday of Succot is an atmosphere of public celebration, including festive processions and a large number of sacrifices. In all the activity, the people

play a central role, in this way showing their direct link to the Almighty. That is why when the celebrants leave the Temple they declare their satisfaction by saying, "Good for you, Altar."

During the night after the last day of the holiday, everybody would look at the smoke coming from the Altar. If it pointed towards the north, the poor people would be happy and the landowners would be sad, because it meant that there would be much rain, so that there would be an excess of fruit, some of which would spoil. If the smoke pointed towards the south, the poor people would be sad and the landowners would be happy, because this was a sign of little rain, and the fruit would be well preserved. If the smoke turned towards the east, everybody would be happy, if towards the west, everybody would be unhappy.

Let us hope and pray that we will soon be privileged to celebrate Succot once again in the Temple.

### **A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN**

#### **A Horse Is a Horse - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi**

The following is told about Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Chassidic movement. One time, he had an urgent need to travel to a faraway place.

The rabbi told his driver to prepare a wagon, and he hitched the horses to the wagon and made the other preparations. Within a short time, the Baal Shem Tov was on his way, accompanied by several of his students. They started on their hurried journey.

An hour passed and then another, but the end of the journey was nowhere in sight. After about four hours, the driver suggested that they stop to let the horses rest for a while and to eat and drink. But the Baal Shem Tov signaled with his hand – "No, we must continue." And the horses continued galloping along. A few more hours passed, and the horses continued to run, without showing any signs of being tired or hungry. G-d helped them, and they were able to continue their strenuous journey without a stop, feeling neither weariness nor hunger.

This wondrous phenomenon surprised not only the riders but the horses too. After all, they were used to stopping every now and then for a rest and to eat and drink. How could they continue on such a long trip without stopping at all? So the horses began to think to themselves: "Evidently we are no longer horses. We have been transformed into human beings. Only human beings can restrain themselves in this way and fast for such a long time. It has been almost a full day that we have not eaten or drunk anything, but we are not hungry. Yes, indeed, we must be humans."

So the horses raised their heads with pride and continued to gallop, in spite of the fact that they were fasting.

Many hours passed, and the wagon had still not reached its destination. The horses had run for a day and a night, and another day, without receiving a drop of water or a single piece of hay, and they were still full of energy. So they once again started to think: "Evidently we are no longer human, we have become angels! Only angels can continue to work for so long

without any rest. Cheers to the angels!" Out of pure excitement, the horses-angels continued to run.

Suddenly, the driver snapped his whip. Stop! The wagon had at last reached its destination. The rabbi and his students left the wagon, and the driver took the horses to the stables.

And, then, as soon as they saw the full troughs of food and water, the horse forgot that they were angels, they forgot that they were human beings – and they ran and fell on the food and drink. They roughly pushed each other aside and started to eat...

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And what about us? After the high spiritual level that we reach on Yom Kippur, will we run to the food, forget everything and return to be exactly like we were before? Or might we perhaps succeed in taking along with us some of the holy spirit of Yom Kippur during the rest of the year, a small amount of the atmosphere, some of the feeling of repentance that we felt during the day?

Let us hope and pray that we will not be like the horses, let us make sure that Yom Kippur will be a good beginning of a year when we act in the right way. Only then will we be privileged to live a good life!

(Source: Shai Agnon, "Yamim Nora'im")

## THE WAYS OF THE FATHERS (Pirkei Avot)

### Chapter 2 Mishna 10 - by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv

"Rabbi Eliezer says... Repent one day before you die." His students asked him, "Does a man know on what day he will die?" [Shabbat 153a]. How, then, can he repent one day earlier? And Rabbi Eliezer's reply is, "Just so. One should repent every day, for perhaps he will die the next day, and in the end he will repent all the time. This is what Shlomo said in his wisdom, 'At all times, your clothing should be white, and do not have a lack of oil on your head' [Kohellet 9:8]."

Thus, what Rabbi Eliezer wanted to teach is that every person should be in the midst of an act of repentance all the time. But this then leads us to wonder why he used such a roundabout way to say this instead of giving his message clearly, "a person should always be involved in repentance." Or, he could have quoted the poetic phrase from Kohellet, "you should always wear white clothing."

Evidently the linking of death with repentance is not accidental but on purpose. In the prayer ascribed to him, Moshe said, "You send man into despair, and you said, repent, people." [Tehillim 90:3]. According to Rashi, "You bring suffering on a person until he becomes very weak and close to death, and what you tell him in his suffering is: Repent, mankind, from your evil ways."

Perhaps what Rabbi Eliezer wanted to teach us is to repent one day before dying, meaning before the onset of suffering, while the person still has the strength to repent. (Note that Moshe quotes G-d as saying "repent," in the plural, while Rabbi Eliezer's advice is "repent," in the singular.)

There is another interesting point. The statement, "Repent..." does not refer to a specific sin but is a general call for repentance. It is more a call for renewal (compare to the words

of the Rambam, "One of the ways of repentance... is to change one's name, as if to say, I am somebody else and not the person who did those sins" [Hilchot Teshuva 2:4]). When Rabbi Eliezer tells us, "Repent one day before you die," he is giving instructions to a person who wants to repent. Rejuvenation and renewal as a result of repentance will not come as a result of complete eradication of your former self but rather as a development of what you were before. Personal renewal is an act of creating something based on what existed before and not creation of something completely new.

## HOLY AND SECULAR

### "For Our Sins..." – For a Holy Purpose - by Rabbi Amichai Gordin, Yeshivat Har Etzion and Shaalavim High School

About two years ago, great excitement was stirred up with respect to an article written by a religious reporter about a very prominent rabbi in the religious sector. The article contained some very serious accusations against the rabbi. As soon as the article appeared, many respected and learned men reacted with sharp criticism against the reporter and the newspaper where his article was printed. "How do you dare write such things about an important rabbi? ... Have you not heard about the laws of slander? ... We should place a ban on the newspaper that printed such a terrible article." Some ruffians even went so far as to phone the reporter and threaten to harm his children.

Now, unfortunately this same rabbi has once again been accused of some very serious failings. But this time the accusations are of a different nature. It is said that the rabbi does not know how to make a halachic ruling, and that he is too lenient in some areas. I will not discuss these claims here at all – this is not the appropriate place for such an issue. Rather, I want to discuss the publication of the matter in the first place. The very same people who went out of their way two years ago to defend this rabbi are now involved in slandering him in public, without the blink of an eye. All the claims of slander that they cared about with such feeling two years ago have evaporated into thin air. Suddenly, everything is legitimate. One is allowed to speak out against a learned and righteous man, there is no problem in insulting a prominent rabbi, and it is permitted to publish advertisements against him in newspapers. It would seem that with the urgency of the times the book of the "Chafetz Chaim" has been wedged out of the bookcases of these people and it has disappeared.

I can just hear the response by the people involved in this campaign. "What do you want from us? This is a struggle to defend the holy name. Do you think we would say such serious things about a Jew for no reason? We certainly would not do so about a prominent learned man. This is a time when 'It is necessary to act in the name of G-d, to violate the Torah' [Tehillim 119:126]. For the good of the Torah, we cannot be silent. We are not acting out of personal interest but only to glorify the name of G-d. How can you compare us to that reporter of two years ago?"

And that is precisely the problem. Anybody who is familiar with some of the history of communities and religious institutions knows very well that the greatest enemy of unity is when something is done "in the name of heaven." In the name of heaven, people have perpetrated the worst and most terrible acts. When somebody does something for his own personal

interest, he will be limited by some sort of internal boundaries. When a person acts "in the name of heaven," everything is allowed. There is no longer any limit or boundary of any kind. He is acting as the direct representative of the Almighty, he is engaging in the struggle of the Torah itself. He is not the one who harmed a fellow Jew, the Torah itself has been harmed and his task is to repair the damage that was done.

I do not intend in this article to claim that a struggle "in the name of heaven" is never justified. We have a basic obligation to act in a way that advances the name of the Almighty and that repairs faults in His world. However, we must always keep in mind that even when we are trying to improve the world, there are limitations and restrictions, and not everything is permitted. The opposite is true: everything is forbidden, until we have been able to prove otherwise.

If we ever come to the conclusion that our highly worthy cause justifies causing harm to another person, we must agonize over the decision, making absolutely sure that this is really justified and that there is no other alternative. Even if we have come to the conclusion that we must insult somebody or struggle against him, we must feel sharp pain when we take such action. We should be very upset that Divine guidance has put us in such a terrible situation, that the only way to mend the world is to cause harm to somebody else. We must pray to G-d that he give us a miracle and help us to refrain from taking such action.

Only then, after deep soul searching and out of a sense of deep sorrow and pain, can we feel justified in using the Divine name in order to harm another person.

I hope and pray that the people who have been involved in this terrible story acted out of a feeling of deep sorrow, and after deep thought about their actions. We are obligated to judge every G-d-fearing person in a positive light. To my great sorrow, from my narrow point of view things do not appear to be so, and I sincerely hope that I am wrong.

"Just the opposite – Put into our hearts that each and every one of us will see the positive side of our friends, and not his faults" [Adereba - Rabbi Elimelech's Prayer].

## THE CHAIN OF HALACHA

**Can Coffee or Cola be Used for Havdalah?** - by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Rabbi of Southern Alon Shevut and a teacher in Yeshivat Har Etzion

In the Talmud, it is written that it is permitted to recite Havdalah using a national drink ("chamar medinah") – see Pesachim 107a. This is also quoted in the Shulchan Aruch: "One should not recite Havdalah over bread, but liquor can be used if it is a national drink, and the same is true for all other types of drink except for water. NOTE (by the RAMA): It is better to use a 'damaged' cup of wine than liquor." [296:2]. The words of the RAMA imply that it is best to use wine for Havdalah (even if the cup has been 'damaged,' that is, somebody has already drunk from it). However, a person who likes liquor better than wine may prefer to use it if he wishes. This is the basis for the common practice of using drinks other than wine for Havdalah.

## What is a National Drink?

According to the Rashbam, water is not considered a national drink, and this also corresponds to the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch, who implies that every other drink can be used except for water. The Chida (see Mishna Berura 24) writes that milk should not be used, and in his responsa he adds that the Shulchan Aruch approves the use of intoxicating drinks only, and not all drinks common in a specific country. This is also written in "Yechaveh Daat" (2:38) and "Yavi'a Omver" (3:19).

On the other hand, the Aruch Hashulchan writes that several prominent rabbis gave permission in pressing circumstances to recite Havdalah using a sweet cup of tea or milk (272:14), and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein agreed that these drinks can be used if there is a problem (Igrot Moshe Orach Chaim 2:38). Rabbi Feinstein also gives a definition of a "national drink" – it is something which is drunk not only to quench one's thirst but has an element of honoring the meal and the guests. He therefore does not accept seltzer as a "national drink," since it is drunk only for the purpose of quenching thirst, but tea and milk are acceptable, "because they are drunk not only when needed for thirst but also when one is not thirsty, as a way of honoring the meal and the guests." Another rabbi permitted using black coffee or sweet tea, based on a ruling of the Aderet.

It would seem that instant coffee is also acceptable, especially for Ashkenazi people, whose main custom is to offer guests instant coffee and not thick Turkish coffee. Some people insist that only brewed coffee can be used, but Rabbi S.Z. Auerbach permitted using instant coffee. One may also use natural fruit drinks, and probably even the highest grade of carbonated soft drinks, which are considered to be "the preferred drink" of the country. However, juice made from a concentrate should probably not be used.

One is permitted to use regular beer or liquor if he prefers this to wine, since this is within the definition of "a national drink." The Mishna Berura writes that one should not use strong liquor, since it is impossible to drink the minimum amount of a "revi'it," but the TAZ gave permission to drink a smaller amount, as we discussed in the laws of Kiddush..



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