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Shlomo Michael ben Meir z'l

## It's All Here!

**R**av Mordechai Kamenetzky, shlit'a, Rosh Yeshiva and Dean of Toras Chaim South Shore is a beloved *talmid chacham*, prolific author and columnist. A grandson of the venerable Reb Yaakov Kamenetzky, zt'l, he often shares first hand experiences and personal encounters with *Gedolei Yisrael*, many of whom are family. Rav Kamenetzky described one such memorable visit with his cousin, the great *mashgiach* and *baal mussar*, Rav Shlomo Wolbe, zt'l, in Yerushalayim.

Educators, *rabbanim* and administrators flocked to Rav Wolbe for his sage advice and guidance. As '*mishpacha*', Rav

Kamenetzky's visit however was more personal and familial in nature, and the two cousins chatted about the years Rav Wolbe spent in Sweden during and after the War, as well as the time spent learning in Yeshiva in Montreux, Switzerland. Somewhere in the conversation, the magnificent beauty of the Swiss Alps came up. Rav Kamenetzky shared a comment he had heard in the name of the Brisker Rav that when Moshiach arrives, the Swiss Alps will be uprooted and transplanted to Eretz Yisrael.

Rav Wolbe was a man of equanimity and inner calm. Upon hearing the comment, he drew himself up to his full height and shook with intensity. With fire in his eyes and a voice filled with emotion he declared "No! It can't be! *Der Brisker Rav hut das kain mohl nisht gezagt*; the Brisker Rav could never have said that!"

"Reb Mordechai, listen carefully," Rav Wolbe continued, "there are no mountains

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as beautiful as the ones by *Tz'fas*. There are no lakes as beautiful as the *Kineret*. And there is no city that sparkles like Yerushalayim! Moshiach does not need to bring anything here! It is all here!”

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כִּי הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה בֹאֲשֶׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ לֹא כְאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם  
הַזֹּאת.. אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ דָרַשׁ אֶתָּה תָמִיד עֵינֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
בְּהַ מְרִשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרֵית שָׁנָה:

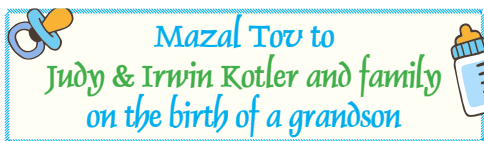
“For the Land that you are about to enter and possess is not like the Land of Egypt from which you have come... It is a Land which Hashem looks after, upon which Hashem always keeps His eye, from the year’s beginning to its end.” (*Devarim*, 11:10-12)

Torah assures us that Eretz Yisrael is under God’s direct and watchful protection, and as such, this Land merits a clearer and more present expression of *hashgacha p'ratis*, Divine providence. The powerful imagery and promise of being a Land which Hashem ‘looks after’ follows another meaningful directive in our Parsha:

וְאֶהְבֶּתְךָ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשִׁמְרָתְךָ מִשְׁמֵרָתוֹ וְחֻקֹּתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו  
וּמִצְוֹתָיו כְּלֵהֵימָיִם:

“Love Hashem your God, and always keep His charge, His laws, His rules, and His commandments.” (11:1)

Ramban understands this verse as emphasizing our obligation to walk in God’s ways: *Ve-halachta be-derachav*, “And you shall



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walk in His ways.” And this means to ‘imitate’ Him, שתשמור מה שהשם שומר, “that you shall look after and guard what Hashem is looking after and guarding”. The command *ve-shamarta mishmarto*, “keep His charge,” encourages us to be aware of the needs of the poor, widows and orphans, just as Hashem watches out for those who may be on the periphery of society.

In other words, we are asked to be concerned with, and actively look after, that with which Hashem is concerned. And this is a hint in the verse: “It is a Land which Hashem looks after, upon which Hashem always keeps His eye...”

We instinctually imitate Hashem’s concern for Eretz Yisrael because our connection to this Land is fundamental and inherent. Its holiness and pull is interlaced with our spiritual identity and DNA. There is nothing external about our *keshet* to the Land, from its holy history and topography to its politics and economic development. A spiritually healthy Jew appreciates and connects with Hashem’s Promised Land naturally – simply because it is ours.

Israel’s first President, Dr. Chaim Weizmann spent years dedicated to working to garner international diplomatic support for the establishment of a Zionist state and Jewish homeland. Meeting with British politicians while lobbying in the United Kingdom, a member of the House of Lords publicly accosted him: “Why do you Jews insist on Palestine when there are so many undeveloped countries you could settle in more conveniently?”

Ever ready and always sharp, Weizmann

answered immediately, “Well my good chap, that is like me asking you why you drove twenty miles to visit your mother last Sunday when there are so many other old ladies living on your street.”

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Rav Yitzchak Hutner, Rosh Yeshivas Chaim Berlin and author of *Pachad Yitzchok* shared a memory of time spent with Rav Avraham Yitzchak haKohen Kook:


“I once took a walk with the Rav and another man amid the mountains of the Land of Israel. Rav Kook told how impressed he was by the landscape. The fellow replied, with surprise, “But you were in the Alps! What’s so special about *these* mountains?” Rav Kook replied, “The Alps didn’t speak to me... the mountains of Eretz Yisrael call me by name.”

May we be blessed to hear the mountains and streams, rivers and valleys of Eretz Yisrael calling to us by name, and with our eyes to ‘look after what Hashem is looking after,’ and to see what the Ribbono Shel Olam is seeing... from the year’s beginning to its end.

“Ten measures of beauty were bestowed upon the world; nine were received by Jerusalem, and one by the rest of the world.” (*Kidushin*, 49b)

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 In honor of the aliyah this week of Dr. Rebecca & Rav Elie Mischel and Family

V'shavu banim l'gvulam! ■ 



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