



RABBI AARON

GOLDSCHIEDER

Editor, Torah Tidbits

Desiring to Return to the Land is Desiring to Perfect the World

The aspiration of Israel for building the nation, for return to the Land, is an aspiration of the depth of good that penetrates to the roots of all existence. Not the “upraising of a brick” of some structure but rather a whole, in-depth turning to the foundation of the entire structure to establish it correctly. Not a few trees or branches of the Tree of Life and Good but rather exposing the source, the spring of life from which is fed the sap of the Tree of Life, with all its roots, trunk and branches, trailers and leaves. From it will come a spirit of life, a new spirit, a new world will be built. (Eretz Chefetz 5:2) (Naor translation)

In the above passage Rav Kook explains that the desire to return to Israel represents something much more grand than merely fulfilling the mitzvah of living in the Land. The return to the Land of Israel is nothing less than an undertaking that “from it will

come a spirit of life, new spirit, a new world will be built.” In a word, *yishuv Eretz Yisrael* is an attempt to attain the loftiest goals which will transform mankind.

Why is Eretz Yisrael essential in the process of *tikun olam*?

To answer this question let us examine the incisive comments of the Vilna Gaon on an obscure passage in the Talmud. In a section known as ‘the Rabba bar Bar-Chana teachings’ (Bava Batra 73a), we find the following story:

“Said Rabba bar Bar-Chana: Those who go down to the sea have told me that the wave that sinks a ship seems to have a fringe of white fire at its tip, but that when one strikes it with a club engraved with the name of God “*Eheye asher eheye Hashem tzeva-ot*” and with *Amen, Amen, Selah* it does down” (Bava Batra 73a).

The Vilna Gaon interprets the passage as an allegory. The ship in the wavy sea represents man’s passage through life as well as our story as a nation over the many centuries. There are many treacherous hurdles along the way. One major challenge is the *yetzer hara* which competes with man’s will to be virtuous and do the right thing. The “white fire at its tip” represents the white hot passion that the *yetzer hara* inflicts upon the psyche. Additionally, says the Gaon, the white fire is symbolic of the *yetzer hara* garbed in white and convinces the heart of the sinner that it is an act that is pure and justified.

The surrounding society poses a threat that evil may swamp man and hinders the Jew from carrying out his mission on earth.

As long as the people of Israel were able to function freely in their own Holy Land, the battle against evil could be won. But when we become “enslaved by the nations” in exile it is nearly impossible to remain influenced by self-serving or materialistic motives.

It seems that our journey across the sea of life is doomed: “the wave tipped with white fire” is sure to sink our ship. What hope is there for the Jewish people? What assurance is there that evil will not totally overcome and destroy the world?

Rabba in his allegory is teaching that the overwhelming tide can be effectively subdued with a club engraved with names and words which signify God’s promise that evil will not engulf the world and that the ultimate goal - to bestow goodness upon man - will surely be realized.

The Name - *Eheye Asher Eheye*

The first Name engraved on the club which beats back the wave is, therefore, *Eheye asher eheye*, which signifies that God accompanies His people whenever they are enslaved by other nations. God supplies them with the spiritual nourishment to survive the exile with their souls intact.

The Talmud (*Berachot* 9b) comments on this Name of God to mean: “[With these words] God said to Moshe: “Tell the Jewish people that I shall be with them in this

enslavement and I shall be with them in future enslavements.”

The second name on the staff expresses the notion that God has taken an oath to redeem the Jewish people from the Exile. This is expressed by the Name *yud-heh*, particularly in the following verse of the Torah: For God (*yud-heh*) has sworn by his throne that there will be a war between Him and Amalek throughout all generations (*Shemot* 17:16).

The tetragrammaton (the complete four-letter Name of God) represents the total revelation of God’s ways to mankind. The image of “God sitting in His throne” presents total recognition of mankind as Ruler of all. Amalek is the embodiment, in the national form, of evil. It is the single nation which went to war against the Jewish people to keep them from receiving the Torah at Sinai and which throughout history attempted to annihilate them.

In the verse both the Name of God, (*yud-heh*) and the word or throne (*kes*) appear in their incomplete form. The four-letter Name represents total revelation of God to man.

The Jewish nation is the agency by which all mankind will someday recognize God. Since universal recognition of God depends on the Jewish people, their exile is what has “made the Divine name incomplete,” and only when they have returned from the Exile and the Temple has been rebuilt can the other two letters of God’s Name be added and knowledge of God be manifest in the world.

The Name - *Hashem Tzeva-ot*

The name of God, *Hashem Tzeva-ot*, does not appear in the Torah. It does appear, however, numerous times throughout

Dr. Eliezer Rosenblum
NYS Licensed and Board Certified
Chiropractor
Offices in Jerusalem, Ramat Beit Shemesh
052-662-4658

Tanach within the prophecies of the *neviim*. Noteworthy is the verse in Psalms 24 which we recite regularly: “Who is the King of glory? It is the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates, be uplifted, eternal doors, that the King of glory may enter. Who is the King of Glory? *The Lord of hosts (Hashem Tzeva-ot)*, He is the King of glory, Selah!”

The Vilna Gaon interprets this word - *tzeva-ot* - to refer to the nation of Israel who serves as the army (*tzavah*) or legions who carry out the war against God’s enemies. God’s glorious kingdom will be recognized by all mankind when His army has succeeded in its mission.

Apparently this is the meaning of the law codified in the Rambam (Hilchot Melachim 1:1): “Israel was commanded three mitzvot upon entering the Promised Land, to choose a king...to wipe out the descendant of Amalek...to build God’s Chosen House.”

With the return to Eretz Yisrael, we will finally be in a position to defeat Amalek. With this victory the Temple can serve a lighthouse for the world as a source of inspiration and for God’s truth to become manifest.

With this in mind we can now turn to the final words written on the “club”:

Amen, Amen, Selah

“Amen” is engraved on the club as a symbol of accepting the authority of God and carrying out His will. Amen is an answer to a blessing. We say Amen with anticipation. We affirm with this one word that blessing will eventually be actualized and experienced as a reality to all mankind.

Eradication of Evil and Knowledge of God Proliferates

The Vilna Gaon’s elucidation of the obscure talmudic passage offers us a vision of the foundational and resplendent features of the Jewish view for the future. The long exile presented our nation with monumental challenges to our spirituality and to our very existence. We were limited in our ability to achieve all of our aspirations in that scenario. The nation of Israel returning to her Land puts the Jew in position to eradicate the evil in the world and to spread the word of God to mankind. Rav Kook envisioned the modern day return to Israel as an integral step in the path towards the ultimate destination for all humankind. ■

רפואה שלמה
אברהם יהושע בן פרל באהדנא



PROF. MENACHEM MARCUS , M.D.
BOARD-CERTIFIED RHEUMATOLOGIST
Specializing in Arthritis and Osteoporosis
Former Head of Rheumatology,
Hackensack University Medical Center (NJ)

Ultrasound guided injections for carpal tunnel trigger fingers

60 REHOV DISKIN, JERUSALEM
02-5635-673 WhatsApp + 972-58-563-5673