



BUILDING A SANCTUARY IN THE HEART

SPIRITUAL SURVIVAL

The ladder in Yaakov's dream ascended to Heaven, and it was footed on this earth. Yaakov called it a "house", even though it hadn't become a house yet, because he was not confined to the earthly aspect of this world, where there was no 'house' yet for the *Beis HaMikdash*. Rather, he was found at the 'top rung of the ladder' - which reaches Heaven.

There is a way to start serving Hashem "from above", by living the exaltedness and greatness of the soul, of the 'top rung of the ladder' which is in Heaven. And the other way of serving Hashem is to live inwardly, as in the verse, "*Lifnay, v'lifnim*" ("Before Me, and within"). These are two distinct spiritual ways to live in our generation.

The first way is to begin "from within": live an inner kind of life, and to keep going more inward, in the three pillar areas of Torah learning, *avodah*, and *chessed*. If you are learning *Gemara*, you need to come to a deep connection to what Abaye and Rava are discussing. If you are learning *halacha* or *agadta*, it makes no difference what, you need to enter deeply into your learning. When you daven, you need to enter into the words of what you are saying, and into the very idea of *tefillah*. Put your heart into

it and realize that you are conversing with the King. When you do *chessed*, don't just perform it mechanically - do it with your heart, from a desire to give to others.

Another way to serve Hashem is to live "from above": By thinking regularly the exaltedness that we can reach, and living from that place of exaltedness.

The main way to survive spiritually in this generation is to keep placing yourself at the "top rung of the ladder", which is in Heaven.

You first need a ladder that is firmly rooted in the ground, though, and for this reason, we need to carefully observe *halachah*, as well as to treat others respectfully. Upon that, we can sensibly go about rising higher in our *ruchniyus*, and to live all the time with lofty concepts in front of our eyes, along with davening to Hashem for help to reach what we are striving for. In this way, one can live with his head in the Heavens, like the top of Yaakov's ladder, constantly thinking of the greatness and exaltedness that we can reach, and also living "within", by connecting deeply to our Torah learning, davening, and *chessed*. ■ excerpt from *Bilvavi On The Parsha*

QUESTION With the rise of Anti-Semitism throughout the world, and with all the increasing Anti-Semitic attacks on Jews, especially with the Anti-Semitism that's now in the American government, does all of this mean that Hashem wants Jews to move to *Eretz Yisrael*? How can a Jew living outside of *Eretz Yisrael* know if the time has come to move to Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*)?

The atmosphere [in America] today is different than it used to be, resembling the way things were like before the Holocaust [in Germany]. How should we view the rise of Anti-Semitism and how can we know if Hashem wants those living outside of *Eretz Yisrael* to move to *Eretz Yisrael*? We have all heard stories of people who were able to leave Europe before the Holocaust and they waited too long...

ANSWER The simple nature of a Jew's soul (besides for the issue if there's a *mitzvah* or not to live in *Eretz Yisrael*, and when this applies) is to yearn to dwell in the palace of the King and to live close to Him. Therefore, simply speaking, at all times the "initial thought" of a person is that he would like to live in *Eretz Yisrael*.

However, "upon second thought", there are additional factors to consider. There were *tzaddikim* who were afraid to live in *Eretz Yisrael*, due to the immense holiness of *Eretz Yisrael*, similar to the fear of getting too close to the *Aron* (Ark) which would burn any unworthy carriers. Another reason was because they couldn't abandon their "flock" – their leadership of communities who needed them, as well as other reasons related to benefitting the masses. As for all others, leaving their country to go live in *Eretz Yisrael* couldn't be done, due to their responsibilities to earn livelihood,

and also because they wouldn't be able to find proper places of education for their sons and daughters properly by moving there. Sometimes a person cannot move to *Eretz Yisrael* due to the *mitzvah* of honoring parents, and sometimes a person cannot move there simply because of valid social or community reasons: a person would find it too hard to leave behind his friends or community. There are other reasons as well [not to move].

However, the recent events [of Anti-Semitism] are like a *bas kol*, a "voice from Heaven", to strongly awaken our "initial thought" [to want to live in *Eretz Yisrael*]. But after considering this, a person should also think it over, with a calm state of mind and with a pursuit for the truth. Each individual should do this, and think about what is proper for him to do right now, and why.

QUESTION Do all of us need to go through the physical war of Gog and Magog in order to be *zoche* to the *Geulah* (final Redemption)? Are all of the doomsday prophecies in sefer Yechezkel (Ezekiel) able to be nullified, since they are prophecies about punishment and suffering, which can be annulled? Is the war of Gog and Magog only going to happen if the *Geulah* comes in its set time, but not if it comes before its time (suddenly and swiftly)? Also, the Rav has said that we are now in the intensity of the war of Gog and Magog. Does this mean that it is a spiritual World War III, as the Chofetz Chaim said, that there will be three world wars before Mashiach, and that the final world war will be the war of Gog and Magog which will end with the *Geulah*? Also, *sefer Avkas Rochel* (one of the Rishonim) brings the entire order of events that will take place at the End of Days leading up to Mashiach's

arrival, and the description there does not fit with what the Rav is saying that we are currently in Gog and Magog. Did the Rav mean that we are fighting the “internal” war of Gog and Magog, the final battle taking place in our souls?

ANSWER Originally, had the generation been “entirely deserving of Redemption” (*see Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 98*), the Redemption would have come swiftly and suddenly, before its preordained time, and the war of Gog and Magog would have taken place in the blink of an eye – it would have all taken place in the inner dimension, within Torah learning. But now that we were not *zoche* to that, **we are already found in a drawn out process of the final war, and we are all going through it. This is the third world war which the Chofetz Chaim spoke about – and we are currently found in the intense part of it, and there have already been many casualties, mainly in the spiritual sense, *Rachmana Litzlan*.** It mainly affects people on a soul level, and very little on a physical level.

QUESTION (1) Will Mashiach come to Eretz Yisrael or will he come to the rest of the world as well? Though he will “gather all the dispersed” together, will he do this by actually coming to each country of the world where there are Jews, or will everyone gather together to come see Mashiach in Eretz Yisrael? (2) The Rav said once in a derasha delivered in America that the situation here is so spiritually dead that Mashiach cannot come here the way it is now. Elsewhere, I have seen that the Rav explains that it does not make sense at all how Mashiach will come, because it is not a logical matter that we can understand, and he will come even if it seems totally illogical for

him to come. How is this not a contradiction?

ANSWER If Mashiach comes due to “an awakening from below” [i.e. due to our *teshuvah*], he will come to all the different countries of the world, resembling a person who travels to find his mate. If Mashiach will come due to “an awakening from above” [if his arrival is due entirely to Heavenly compassion and we did nothing to deserve his arrival], then he will come only to Eretz Yisrael. **It has already become very, very, very important to be in Eretz Yisrael for some time now.**

My intention in saying that “Mashiach cannot come here” is because the Gemara says that Mashiach will either come in a generation entirely worthy or entirely unworthy, and right now Mashiach cannot come in the sense of a “generation entirely worthy”, because the generation today is not worthy. And when the generation is unworthy, we have no idea of what exactly will happen [before the *Geulah*]. We have already begun to see, more and more, that the generation has become “entirely undeserving” of Redemption, due to the generation’s heavy use of the accursed media.

QUESTION With the recent words of the Rav about corona being an outcome of the “50th level of *tumah*”, is it better now to move to Eretz Yisrael if one will still be able to have *parnassah* (livelihood) there and is it for sure better to live in Eretz Yisrael at a time like this when the world is falling apart? In America we are in the aftermath of extremist groups who are wreaking havoc on the country in a short amount of time, and now they want to defund the police. The danger of living here seems imminent. Would it would be wise to quickly move to Eretz Yisrael before the situation here in America becomes more severe?

ANSWER Generally, **yes [it makes sense to move to Eretz Yisrael especially at a time like this]**. Each specific case, though, needs to be carefully weighed and thought about before making the move.

QUESTION I am aware that the Rav has hinted in several responses to people that now is a very appropriate time to leave America and come live in Eretz Yisrael, due to the rise of anti-semitism in America, which like a *bas kol* (Heavenly message) that it's time to leave America and live in Eretz Yisrael for the arrival of Mashiach, and also because of the *tumah* that is very pervasive in America, namely, the lenient attitude towards media and internet use in America, and that for this reason alone it's important for one's Yiddishkeit to leave America and live in Eretz Yisrael. And the Rav also said that a person should just come to Eretz Yisrael now even if he's not sure about how this will affect his *parnassah* or *shalom bayis!* I, for my own part, am definitely ready to take the plunge and move to Eretz Yisrael. Here are my questions. 1) Wouldn't picking up and moving to Eretz Yisrael be a reckless, impulsive decision that would shake up the soul and be too jolting for a person? The Rav has said that a person shouldn't make big changes too fast which jolt the soul, so why is moving to Eretz Yisrael different? 2) Should I move to Eretz Yisrael even I'm nervous about this decision and I don't have that much *bitachon* that everything will work out? 3) Is America a physically dangerous place to be right now because Mashiach is coming soon? Also, if the danger here is mainly spiritual and not physi-

cal, because of the dominance of internet and media over here in America, why would it be better in Eretz Yisrael? Isn't Internet and smartphones everywhere you go? From a spiritual standpoint, is living in Eretz Yisrael really a better environment today than living in America, when there's so much *tumah* all over the world these days? 4) Should I stop making all these calculations and just move my family to Eretz Yisrael, in spite of all these factors, and just rely on Hashem, since we are now in a time where we should heed the *bas kol* from Heaven that we are in *ikvesa d'meshicha* (the period preceding Mashiach)?

ANSWER 1) **Make the decision amidst a composed, settled state of mind (*yishuv ha-daas*)**, so that you don't shake yourself up and jolt yourself in the process. 2) Either you can do it through (1) *Mesirus nefesh* (being willing to sacrifice), or (2) You should **wait until you are at the appropriate level of *bitachon* to go.** 3) **The main danger in America is a spiritual danger, but this also extends into the physical world, making it physically dangerous there as well...** From an external viewpoint, certainly there is *tumah* everywhere we go today, *Rachmana Litlzan* (may Heaven save us from it), but from an inner viewpoint, **the holiness of Eretz Yisrael always makes Eretz Yisrael the best environment for a Jew to live in.** This is because of Eretz Yisrael it is said, "*A land which the eyes of Hashem are upon.*"

4) Cry about this to Hashem, from the depth of your heart..■ from archive of Q & A

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