

Heaven Knock, Knock, Knocking on Our Door: The Holocaust to the State of Israel




*Rabbi Efrem Goldberg
Boca Raton Synagogue
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ליקח מלכות וזירות קודם הזמן וברגו ר"ל שש
 מליונים מישראל, כי מלמד שזהו עונש כמר המבואר
 ע"ז בגמרא אני מחירי אח בשרכם, ובשנוטה נפרטין
 ממנו ומכל העולם כולו, ואין פורענותו בא לעולם
 אלא בשביל כרעפים ואינה מחללה אלא מן הכדיקים,
 אבל הם עשו גם פעולות נוראות לדבר, כי מלמד שעוד
 נחללה החייסודותם במשך שנים רבות כרבו במלשונות
 נוראות על ישראל אלא באומות ודברו עליהם בפני
 השמים קשות שמוכונים מאד להאומות וזריכים לנרשם
 מן הארצות, בחושבם שעי"ז יהי קל להם יותר לנצט
 זממם לבוא לארץ ישראל ולארגן שם ממשלה. וכבר
 ראינו אז במכתביהם של גדולי ישראל שפתחו ורערו
 מאוד אימת מות מהמלשונות שלהם שלא יהי עי"ז
 מה שצב"ר כן ה"י אח"כ. וחזק מה ים בירורים
 אמיתיים על כמה פעולות אכזריות שעשו בזה שדן
 גרמא בחקין של כל האסון בעולם, וממדינת אונגארין
 וחברר קצח מן הפעולות גם במשפט שהתנהל בא"י
 בזה. וככה היו כמה מעשים ברורים בכל משך הזמן,
 בחושבם שעי"ז יגיעו יותר למטרה חפצם להשיג
 ממשלה, אלא שאין רצונו להאריך בזה כאן כי לא נחתי
 בקונטרס זה רק לדבר בהלכה, ולא נחתי אלא לבער
 שבו דבר ברור שאך אותו הרשיון העמא של הקמת
 המדינה לפני הזמן גרם לנו כל החלואות והלחות
 שברו על ראשנו, מלמד רבנות בני ישראל שברגו
 ע"י מלחמותיהם שלא כדא. וגם מאותם שעלו לא"י
 בעתים הללו רוב העולים ממדינת ספרדים היו יושבים
 שנים ושקטים במדינתם ואין מחסור להם עד הקמת
 מלכות המינוח שבישראל, שעי"ז הקמת אותה המדינה
 נעשה להם שגאח ורדיפות במדינותיהם, וגם הליונים
 בעלמם סיישו להם בחטולות לברכות את הרדיפות
 עד שיביו מוכרחים לעלות בעירום ובחוסר כל, ובהם
 החפצו אח"כ למיליונים, וכפוף הוא שהם עשו כל
 החורבנות נחלה.

והאירון כבוד שעי"ז משתחפים גם שומרי חרטה
 ומלות בחוף אותה במלכות השאלה של הליונים
 בעמאל ר"ל ועבדים אחס יחד בשירות עניו במלכות
 מלמד שעבדים באותה המעשה על הרבה איכורים
 נוראים שכל אחד ואחד מהם הוא ניהרג ואל יצבור,
 כאשר מבאר למעלה, אבל עוד חמור יותר שעי"ז
 בשתחפתם עמם מכשירין את מעשה הליונים בפני
 כל העולם עד שצב"ר נעשה כל העולם מוכשר לקבל
 שומאם בחושבם כחירו פרושים את הדבר וח"י מה
 שכל הכדיקים וקדושים בכל הדורות הרשעו עלמות
 במה"י נגד מעשה הליונים ח"י העו מן הדרך אלא
 בטורים בעמאלים שמתאו אח כל העולם טוה במינות
 וכפירה טוה אל האמת, וכן כמה מיליו ישראל
 וגואלם, כאשר מבאר, שגם שומרי חרטה ומלות נכיים
 ומתחממים מהם, ומאי אהיו לן רבין בודות
 כראשונים שעבדו בש"י בכל לנס ומכרו נפשם לקבוצ
 אמות בלכות בני ישראל וכחירו להשתתק מעמא ביה
 של המינוח כדא וכהלכא שאמר הכתוב אל תקרב אל
 פתח ביה, ועתה שומרי חרטה ומלות מתחמלים ליבם
 ציניהם ולקחה חלק בחוף אותה השררה שהמליאו בדרך
 המינוח, ומלחבי פוכא של הליונים ומספרים ממים
 ותלחות שלהם יותר מליאת מרים, וצב"ר על דם
 נחקיימה כנבואה במלוא מובן המלה שבמלואי ג'
 פוק י"ד אמרתי שוא עבוד אלקים ומה נצט כי
 שמרנו משמרתו וכי הלכנו קדונית מעני ה' לבאות
 ושח אנתו מאשרים זדים גם נצנו עושי רשעה גם
 נחמו אלקים וימלעו. וכמתבאר בכל מלה ומלה שבאוצה
 כנבואה שנתפסקים כלנו יראה כל מלך דורינו.
 וכרעב"ן נשאר במשל שכניהם שם מעמים על שלות
 רשעים כהז אחר כן ח"ל; ומן הגאונים שאמרו
 שכקב"ה פוסק עליה לרשעים לגבות בהם אנשי
 רשע והתרימת שיביו מחוקין נרשעם ואומרים כה
 אלה רשעים ושלי עולם כשגו חיל אך שוא עבוד אלקים
 ומה נצט כי נשאר בריחו, וברוך יודע האמת, עכ"ל.
 וצב"ר בסיון כמר כזה כגיש לאנשי דורינו, וזריכין
 לרחמי שמים מרובין.

1. R' Yoel Teitelbaum
 Satmar Rebbe
 1887-1979
 Va'Yoel Moshe
 pg. 123



No one takes note of the fact that six million Jews were killed because of these [Zionist] groups, who drew the hearts of the nation [to their cause] and violated the oath of hastening the end by claiming sovereignty and freedom before the time. For aside from this being the bitter punishment set forth in the Gemara for [violating the oaths] – "I shall abandon your flesh..." - and by oath they and the whole world are punished, and no punishment comes to the world except on account of the wicked, nor does it begin except with the righteous. But they also performed terrible actions to bring this about; for aside from the fact that even at the very beginning of their establishment for many years they "informed" terribly on the Jews to the nations, and spoke of them badly to the authorities, as though [the Jews] were highly dangerous to the nations and they had to be expelled from their countries, [which the Zionists did] thinking that it would thereby be easier for them to carry out their scheme to come to the land of Israel and to organize a government there. We saw already then, in their letters, that great rabbis were greatly, deathly fearful that [the Zionists'] informing would bring about that which, for our many sins, did come to be afterwards.

Aside from this, there are verified reports of several cruel actions that they performed that indirectly brought about the entire terrible catastrophe. Concerning Hungary some of these activities came to light in the court case that was held in Eretz Yisrael in this regard [i.e. the Kastner trial], and thus there were several clear actions throughout that period, because they thought that they would thereby achieve more of their aim of obtaining government.

But I do not wish to elaborate on this here, for my intention in this booklet is only to clarify Halakha, and I write this only in order to show that it is clear that the impure idea of establishing a State prior to the proper time has caused us all of tribulations and troubles that have come upon us, aside from the tens of thousands of Jews who have been killed needlessly in [the Zionists'] wars.

Furthermore, among those who have moved to Eretz Yisrael in these times, most of the immigrants from Arab countries were living peacefully and tranquilly in their countries, lacking nothing, until the establishment of the heretical kingdom in Israel. Through the establishment of that State they began to suffer hatred and persecution in their countries, and the Zionists themselves aided this through their wiles, so as to increase the persecution until they would be forced to emigrate to Eretz Yisrael, destitute and with nothing, and they glorified their saviors, but the truth was the opposite – that [the Zionists] had brought about all of the destruction in the first place.

לא יניח אוחך לישראל בחיים, והנמשל מובן, שלאיננו
 גורמים צערותיכם וצמטותיכם אח כל הצרות והחללות
 ושוב נעשו למלילים, ואותן שאינם נוהגים לב לודע
 האמת חושבים למלילים, ובטיקך שהם"מ מסמא עיני
 העולם הזה, כי עי"ז נתפסו למוטא וכפורה ר"ל,
 ואפשר לצרר בכל פרטי מעשיהם שאינם אלה חורבנות,
 אבל צריך להב קונטרס מיוחד, וכבר כתבתי שאין
 לנוני להאריך בקונטרס הזה צבירורי דברים כאלה,
 אלא להעיר בעלמא, והרואה לדעת האמת יורכו כי
 דרך האמת, אבל זכו בגסיון האחרון שקשה יותר מכל
 בגסיונות שטברו עלינו, ועל חבלי משיח האלה צגודל
 האחרת פנים כ"כ אמר רב יוחנן ייתי ולא אחמורי
 וכאל כח האכל ואריבין לרחמי שמים להתחזק באמונה
 אמיתית בהש"ת ובחורתי בקדושה ובעציו שגדו
 אוחו בכל לב ונפש צדויות שלפנינו.

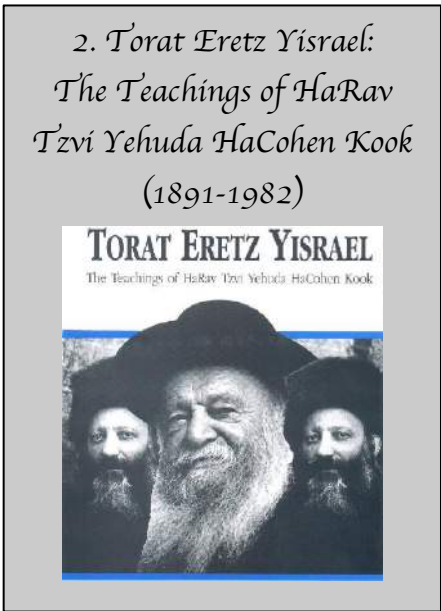
אוצר החכמות
 תמו"ק 17

The meaning of the metaphor is clear: that the Zionists, through their sins and their actions, bring about all the troubles and the tribulations, and then make themselves out to be saviors. Those people who do not make the effort to ascertain the truth believe them to be saviors. The crux of the matter is that the *sitra achra* blinds everyone's eyes to the fact that through this they are caught up into heresy and blasphemy, heaven forefend. It may be demonstrated that in every detail of their actions they bring only destruction – but this would require a separate work in its own right, and I have already written that it is not my intention to elaborate, in this booklet, on the clarification of such matters, but rather to point out the principle. One who seeks to know the truth – God will show him the true path. But this is the final test, which is more difficult than all the tests that have confronted us. The birth-pangs of the Messiah are as great as our capacity for suffering, and we need Divine mercy to help us strengthen ourselves with true faith in the blessed God, and in His holy Torah, and in His servants who served Him with all their hearts and souls in the preceding generations.

With tears in his eyes, and with the commitment to truth which characterized all of his teaching and life, Rav Tzvi Yehuda spoke to his students about the inexpressible horror which our people had suffered immediately before the founding of the Jewish State.

Many writers and scholars have put forth theories which attempt to explain the Holocaust. One Orthodox point of view focuses the blame on the reform Jews in Germany who broke away from the Torah. Another attitude blames the secular Zionists for having brazenly established a non-religious settlement in Israel before the *Mashiach's* coming. Rav Tzvi Yehuda had a different understanding. These theories, he said, failed to embrace the whole sweep of history. **The**

workings of Divine Providence cannot be isolated to any one moment of time, but must be seen in the context of a Divine historical plan which spans generations. Accusations like these fragment the unity of *Clal Yisrael* by putting the blame for the Holocaust on this group or that, rather than relating the cause to the nation as a whole. Just as *Hashem* is One, the nation of Israel is one.² Only from this understanding, from this encompassing perspective which embraces all of human endeavor, can one hope to fathom the Divine will in the horror which devastated our nation.



3. NOTHING IS HAPPENSTANCE

“One mustn’t subject *Hashem* to our reasoning and perception. Only after we understand this, is it possible to approach, in fear and in awe, a comprehension of a tiny part of the Holocaust. **In our generation, we have seen an awesome new form of destruction (the Holocaust), and an incredible new revival and building (the State of Israel).** There are people who don’t agree with this order of Divine Providence. They become confused when they encounter these events. Concerning this, the Torah cautions, *If you walk contrary to Me, and will not harken to Me... I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle; and your highways shall be desolate.*⁸ These people think that things happen accidentally, randomly, without cause. But the truth is that nothing happens randomly. There isn’t a thing which transpires that isn’t done according to the Providence of the Almighty. Not only the good events, but also the things which appear evil to us happen according to the Divine plan.”⁹

7. AMPUTATION FROM THE GALUT

What happens when the time arrives for the Jewish people to return to Israel, and they fail to come? A Divine, world upheaval is needed to bring the Jewish people home. Rav Tzvi Yehuda did not base this relationship between the Holocaust and the redemption of Israel from the witness of history alone. Everything he said was founded on the words of the Rabbis and Sages before him. It is worthwhile to cite just a few.

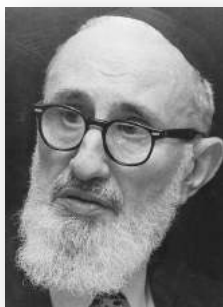
“**There are situations where it is difficult to separate from the Galut,**” Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained. “However, the time has arrived for our nation’s revival, and for the redemption of our Land. The Revealed End has come, the time when, *You, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they will soon be coming.*²⁹ The time approached for Israel’s return to Zion, and this caused the rebirth of the Land. But as the time arrives for our departure from the darkness of *Galut*, situations arise which resemble the Hebrew slave who rejects freedom and says, *I loved my master.*³⁰ **Jews fell in love with the Galut and refused to come back to Israel.** But the Diaspora cannot continue forever. The Diaspora is the worst Desecration of *Hashem* that there is, as we find in *Ezekiel: And when they came to the nations into which they came, they profaned My holy Name, in that men said of them, these are the people of the Lord, and they are gone out of His Land.*”³¹

“When the time comes for *Geula*, complications arise, and large portions of the nation are embedded in the tar of the *Galut*. The facts bear witness – multitudes of Jews grew accustomed to the impurity of the Diaspora, and refused to extricate themselves from it. Thus begins a Divine therapy, a deep, inner, esoteric purification from this decay, a treatment of amputation and healing. All of Israel’s millions are one single body, an indivisible organism, and when it is delayed from returning to health because of its cleavage to a foreign land, then a cruel, Divine amputation is needed. The time came for the Jewish people to return to their Land, but since they refused, there was no way to bring them back other than, *He took me by the lock of my head,*³² in order to bring them against their will to *Eretz Yisrael*. When the end of *Galut* arrives, and all of Israel fails to recognize it, there is a need for a cruel, Divine amputation and severance. We aren’t speaking here about a reckoning against this person, or that person, since this is a secret matter of *Hashem*, belonging to the secret world of souls. We are speaking of a reckoning which encompasses all of the nation, which arises from the situation of, **They despised the desirable Land.**³³ This is an amputation which causes the nation as a whole to separate from the Diaspora and to return to its life in the Land of Israel.”

3. *Shir Ha'Shirim*
Chapter 5

[She] I am asleep; my heart is awake – my beloved's voice, knocking – "Open for me, my sister, my love, my dove, my perfection, for my head is covered with dew, my locks with fragments of the night." "I have taken off my dress, how can I put it on again? I have already washed my feet, how can I dirty them?" My beloved stretches his hand through the door – and my being longs for him. I rise to open the door for my beloved; my hands are dripping with myrrh, my fingers are streaming with myrrh oil, all over the handles of the latch. I open for my beloved – he has slipped away; gone. I had fainted for him as he spoke – I search for him, I cannot find him; I call out, but he does not answer. The guards find me, those who go around the town; they beat me, they wound me, they pull my scarf from me, those guardians of the

וּשְׁכַדוּ דוֹדִים: אֲנִי יְשֻׁנָּה וְלִבִּי עַר קוֹל | דוֹדִי דוֹפֵק
פִּתְחוּ לִי אַחֲתֵי רַעִיתִי יוֹנְתֵי תַמְתֵּי שְׂרָאִשִׁי נִמְלֵאֲדִטֵל קוֹצוֹתַי
רְסִיסֵי לַיְלָה: פִּשְׁטֵתִי אֶת־פִּתְנֵתִי אֵיכָכָה אֶלְבֶּשֶׁנָּה רְחֻצְתִּי
אֶת־דַּגְלֵי אֵיכָכָה אֶטְנַפֵּם: דוֹדִי שְׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן־הַחֹדֶר וּמַעַי הֵמוּ
עָלָיו: קַמְתִּי אֲנִי לִפְתּוֹחַ לְדוֹדִי וַיְדִי נִטְפוֹ־מֹזֶד וְאֶצְבְּעוֹתַי מִזֶּד
עֵבֶר עַל פְּפוֹת הַמַּנְעוּל: פִּתְחֵתִי אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי חִמַּק עֵבֶר
נַפְשִׁי יֵצֵאָה בְּדַבְרוֹ בְּקִשְׁתִּיהוּ וְלֹא מֵצֵאתִיהוּ קִרְאתִיו וְלֹא
עָנָנִי: מֵצֵאֵנִי הַשְּׂמֵרִים הַסְּבָבִים בְּעִיר הַכּוֹנֵי פִצְעוֹנֵי נִשְׂאוֹ אֶת־



4. *Kol Dodi Dofek*
Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik
1903-1993

This essay was originally delivered as an address in Yiddish on Yom Ha'Atzmaut 1956 at YU

Chapter 3
Missing the Appointed Hour

We too are living in troubled times, in days of anger and distress. We have been afflicted with violent pogroms and have become accustomed to suffering. In the past fifteen years [1941-56] we have undergone tortuous ordeals that are unparalleled in thousands of years of diaspora, degradation, and destruction. This chapter of suffering did not end with the establishment of the State of Israel. To this day the State is still in a condition of crisis and danger, and we all fear for its future. We are all eye-witnesses to the rising star of the iniquitous and to the corruption of international law by the Western nations out of indifference to the principles of justice and fairness. All try to curry favor with our enemies and bow and scrape before them with false humility and shameful hypocrisy. All are concerned with the welfare of our enemies, and remain indifferent to the suffering Jewish State (much like the rich man who stole the lamb of his poor, powerless, and uninfluential neighbor [II Samuel 12:1-6]).

If God's grace, which is given to either an individual or a community, requires certain actions of the beneficiary, even if the gifts (such as wealth, honor, influence, power, etc., which are attained by exhausting effort) are granted to man by natural means, how much more so is it true that Divine gifts given supernaturally, in the form of miracles that transcend the framework of the elementary laws of historical causality, must subject the recipient of the miracles to God. Miraculous grace places upon man an absolute responsibility to fulfill the larger imperative that calls out from the miracle. A transcendental imperative always accompanies miraculous activity. "Command the Children of Israel" (e.g., Numbers 5:2, 28:1, 34:2, 35:2). Woe unto the beneficiary of a miracle who does not recognize it for what it is, and whose ear is deaf to the echo of the imperative that arises out of this metahistorical event. Pity the one who benefits from the miracles of the Master of the Universe but the spark of faith is not kindled in him, and his conscience is not stirred by the sight of this singular event.

What is the essence of the story of the Song of Songs, if not the description of a paradoxical and tragic hesitation on the part of the love-intoxicated, anxiety-stricken Lover, when the opportunity, couched in majestic awe, presented itself? What is it, if not the deferral of a great and sublime opportunity pregnant with a possibility of which she dreamed, for which she fought, which she sought, and for which she had searched with all the fervor of her soul? The delicate and refined Lover, passion-driven to her fair-eyed Beloved, who in days resplendent in brightness wandered the paths of the vineyards, the mountain ridges, through wheat fields and orchards, and in evenings bathed in the pale light of an enchanting moon or gloomy with darkness passed between the walls in search of her Lover — she returned one rain-stormy night to her tent, tired and weary, and fell asleep. The patter of quick-moving, light footsteps was heard in the stillness of the tent. In that mysterious and strange night, the Beloved for whom she had so hoped and kept watch, suddenly appeared out of the darkness and beckoned at the entrance of her tent. He knocked and pleaded that she open the door for Him.^D “Listen! My Beloved Is Knocking,^E saying, ‘Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is drenched with dew, and my locks with the damp of the night’” (Song of Songs 5:2). The great moment for which she had been waiting with such longing came at a time of inattentiveness. The elusive and secretive Beloved, weary of wandering and tribulations, appeared with His curly locks, black eyes, powerful build, and shining countenance. He stood in her doorway and thrust His hand through the hole in the lock, seeking shelter from the dampness of the night. He wanted to recount to her His mighty love, His longing and yearning for a life together filled with desire and joy, and of fulfillment of expectations and realization of dreams. A simple extension of the hand to turn the lock separated the Lover and her Beloved — the great dream from its complete fulfillment. With one leap the Lover could have attained all her life’s desires. “Draw me, we will run after you. . . . We will be glad and rejoice in you” (Song of Songs 1:4). Deceitful is the heart (Jeremiah 17:9), however, and who can explain it? That very night, sloth, the result of a strange inertia, took hold of the Lover. For one small moment the flame of yearning that burned within her was buried, the mighty desire withered, and her feelings and dreams were silenced. The Lover refused to leave her bed. She did not open the door of her tent to her handsome

Beloved. A cruel confusion swept her into forgetfulness and apathy. The Lover became lazy and stubborn, she poured forth countless excuses and pretexts to explain her strange behavior. “I have removed my cloak, how shall I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how shall I soil them?” (Song of Songs 5:3). The Beloved continued to beckon, and as His beckoning became more persistent, so too did the insanity that chilled and tainted the Lover.

So long as the whispering of the Beloved split the hush of the night, so did the heart of the Lover harden. Pleading and patient the Beloved continued to beckon while the minutes and hours of the clock were ticking

away. The Lover did not respond to the voice of the Beloved. The door to her tent was locked shut. The opportunity was lost, and the vision of an exalted life died. True, after a brief delay the Lover awoke from her slumber and jumped in haste from her bed to greet the Beloved. “I rose up to open to my Beloved” (Song of Songs 5:5), but the leap came too late. The Beloved had stopped beckoning and had disappeared into the darkness of the night, “My Beloved had turned away, and was gone” (Song of Songs 5:6). The joy of her life was exiled. Her existence became a desert, a storehouse of emptiness. The episodes of feverish search returned. She, the Lover, still wanders through the dwellings of the shepherds seeking her Beloved.

Chapter 4 Six Knocks

Eight years ago, in the midst of a night of the terrors of Majdanek, Treblinka, and Buchenwald; in a night of gas chambers and crematoria; in a night of total divine self-concealment; in a night ruled by the devil of doubt and destruction who sought to sweep the Lover from her own tent into the Catholic Church; in a night of continuous searching for the Beloved — on that very night the Beloved appeared. The Almighty, who was hiding in His splendid *sanctum*, suddenly appeared and began to beckon at the tent of the Lover, who tossed and turned on her bed beset by convulsions and the agonies of hell. Because of the beating and knocking at the door of the mournful Lover, the State of Israel was born.

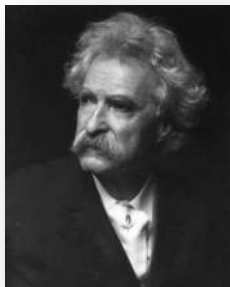
How many times did the Beloved knock on the door of the Lover? It appears to me that we can count at least six knocks.

God's knocks on the maiden's door – His summons to the Jewish people – were expressed in six significant and even miraculous aspects associated with the founding of the State of Israel.

1. *Political*: "No one can deny that from the standpoint of international relations, the establishment of the State of Israel . . . was an almost supernatural occurrence. Both Russia and the Western countries jointly supported the establishment of the State" (26).
2. *Military*: "The small Israeli Defense Forces defeated the mighty armies of the Arab countries" (27).
3. *Theological*: "[A]ll the claims of Christian theologians that God deprived the Jewish people of its rights in the land of Israel, and that all the biblical promises regarding Zion and Jerusalem refer, in an allegorical sense, to Christianity and the Christian church, have been publicly refuted by the establishment of the State of Israel and have been exposed as falsehoods, lacking all validity" (28).⁶
4. *Assimilation*: "Many of those who, in the past, were alienated from the Jewish people are now tied to the Jewish state by a sense of pride in its outstanding achievements. Many . . . are now filled with fear and concern about the crisis overtaking the State of Israel . . . It is good for a Jew not to be able to hide from his Jewishness . . . The very fact that people are always talking about Israel serves to remind the Jew in flight that he cannot run away from the Jewish community" (30).
5. *Self-defense*: "For the first time in the history of our exile, divine providence has surprised our enemies with the sensational discovery that Jewish blood is not free for the taking, is not *hefker!*" (31).
6. *Refuge*: "A Jew who flees from a hostile country now knows that he can find a secure refuge in the land of his ancestors. This is a new phenomenon in our history" (34).

5. *Majesty and Humility*
The Thought of
Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

R' Reuven Ziegler



6. *Mark Twain*
(1835-1910)
Innocents Abroad, 1867

We traversed some miles of desolate country whose soil is rich enough but is given wholly to weeds — a silent, mournful expanse.... A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action. We reached Tabor safely...[but] we never saw a human being on the whole route. We pressed on toward the goal of our crusade, renowned Jerusalem. The further we went the hotter the sun got and the more rocky and bare, repulsive and dreary the landscape became.... There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country. No landscape exists that is more tiresome to the eye than that which bounds the approaches to Jerusalem.... Jerusalem is mournful, dreary and lifeless. I would not desire to live here. It is a hopeless, dreary, heartbroken land.... Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes.

Operation Nachshon

Operation Nachshon (Hebrew: מבצע נחשון, *Mivtza Nahshon*) was a Jewish military operation during the 1948 war. Lasting from 5–20 April 1948, its objective was to break the Siege of Jerusalem by opening the Tel-Aviv - Jerusalem road blockaded by Palestinian Arabs and to supply food and weapons to the isolated Jewish community of Jerusalem.



Villages captured during Operation Nachshon

7. Wikipedia

Nachshon was the first major Haganah operation and the first step of Plan Dalet whose aim was to conquer the area allotted to the Jews by the 1947 UN Partition Plan. The operation was carried out by the Givati and Harel Brigades.

Background

By the end of March 1948, Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni's troops were preventing supply convoys from reaching Jerusalem. The city was besieged and the Jewish population was forced to adhere to a rationing system. On 31 March a 60 vehicle Jewish convoy was ambushed at Hulda and forced to turn back with the loss of five vehicles and 17 dead.^{[1][2]} Yishuv leader David Ben-Gurion decided to launch Nachshon in order to open up the city and provide supplies to the Jewish residents.^[3] Although initially intended as a one-shot affair, Nachshon later proved to be the first operation in the implementation of Plan Dalet.

The operation

The operation was named after the Biblical figure Nachshon Ben Aminadav, who was the first to wade into the Red Sea when the Hebrews escaped from slavery in Egypt. The operation was commanded by Shimon Avidan.

The first orders were given on 2 April 1948.^[4] A telegraph confirming the beginning of the operation, was released on 5 April, with the operation starting that same night. It lasted until 20 April.^[5] 1,500 men from the Givati and Harel brigades took control of the road to Jerusalem,^[6] allowing three of four convoys to get to the city.^[7]



Palestinian irregulars, under the command of Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni, moving to counterattack Haganah positions in Al-Qastal, 7–8 April 1948

The operation was a military success. All the Arab villages that blocked the route were either taken or destroyed, and the Jewish forces were victorious in all their engagements. Nonetheless, not all the objectives of the operation were achieved, as only 1,800 tonnes of the 3,000 envisaged were transported to the town, and two months of severe rationing had to be assumed.^[8]

Abd al-Qadir al-Husayni was killed during the night of 7–8 April, in the middle of the battles taking place in Al-Qastal. The loss of the charismatic Palestinian leader 'disrupted the Arab strategy and organisation in the area of Jerusalem.^[9] His successor, Emil Ghuri, changed tactics: instead of provoking a series of ambushes throughout the route, he had a huge road block erected at Bab-el-Oued, and Jerusalem was once again isolated as a consequence.^[10]

During Operation Nachshon the Haganah wanted to attack the strategic village of Abu Gosh but this was opposed by the Stern Gang whose local commanders were on good terms with the mukhtar.^[11]

Aftermath

Operation Nachshon exposed the poor military organisation of the Palestinian paramilitary groups. Due to lack of logistics, particularly food and ammunition, they were incapable of maintaining engagements that were more than a few hours away from their permanent bases.^[12]

Faced with these events, the Arab Higher Committee asked Alan Cunningham to allow the return of the Mufti, the only person capable of redressing the situation. Despite obtaining permission, the Mufti did not get to Jerusalem. His declining prestige cleared the way for the expansion of the influence of the Arab Liberation Army and of Fawzi al-Qawuqji in the Jerusalem area.

Between 15 and 20 April, three convoys, totalling over 700 lorries were able to reach Jewish Jerusalem.^[13] The Arabs, however, managed to block the road immediately thereafter.^[14] Operation Nachshon was therefore followed by Operation Harel, and immediately thereafter Operation Yevusi. Further operations in the Jerusalem region, Operation Maccabi and Operation Kilshon, took place in May.

9. *Kol Dodi Dofek*

Chapter 5

The Obligation of Torah Judaism to the Land of Israel

What was our reaction to the beckoning of the voice of the Beloved, to the munificence of His loving-kindness and miracles? Did we get out of our beds and immediately open the door, or did we continue to rest like the Lover [in the story of the Song of Songs], and were we too lazy to get out of our beds? “I have washed my feet, how shall I soil them?” (Song of Songs 5:3).

All the trembling and fear for the geographical integrity of the State of Israel, all the suggestions of our enemies which are directed at territorial concessions by the State of Israel, and all of the brazen demands of the Arabs for boundary changes are based on only one fact: the Jews have not populated the Negev and established hundreds of settlements there. Had the Negev been settled with hundreds of thousands of Jews, even Nasser would never have dreamed of the possibility of rending it from the State of Israel. Wide and unpopulated expanses constantly and perpetually endanger the tranquility of the State. The Torah has already emphasized this notion when it states, “You shall not be allowed to quickly destroy them, so that the wild animals will not overwhelm you” (Exodus 23:29). The fact that the Jews have conquered the Negev is not enough, its settlement is what is important. The great sage Maimonides ruled that the first sanctification of the Land of Israel was not a lasting one because it was the result of a military conquest, which was annulled by the violent attack of an enemy whose army was vast and armaments numerous, who conquered the Land and took it from us. The second sanctification of the land, which was carried out through occupation and settlement by Divine sanction, through toil and sweat, was never annulled.⁸ The sanctity that is based on the settlement of the Land is, simply stated, for now and for all time! We are terribly guilty for this gross negligence. American Jewry could have certainly accelerated the process of colonization. Yet, why should we examine the faults of others and place the responsibility on the shoulders of nonobservant Jews? Let us admit our own faults and confess to our own derelictions. Among the Jews of America, Orthodox Jews bear the most blame for the slow pace of the conquest of the Land through settlement. It was for us, the loyalists of Judaism, to heed the call of the Beloved more acutely, and to respond to it immediately with extraordinary effort. In commenting on the verse “And I shall lay desolate the land” (Leviticus 26:32), Rashi^A states in the name of *Midrash Torat Kobanim*^B: “This is a boon to Israel, that

its enemies will not find tranquility in its land when it shall be bereft of its true inhabitants.” The Land of Israel cannot be built by any other nation or people. Only the Jewish people have it within their power to settle the Land and make its desolation blossom. The Creator’s promise was turned into a wondrous reality in different periods in the annals of the history of the Land of Israel. We cannot forget even for a moment, that the Land of Israel, like a magnet, attracted the nations of the world — both Christians and Muslims. The Crusades in the Middle Ages were undertaken with the purpose of conquering the Land of Israel and populating it with Christians. All the toil of the Crusaders was for naught. They did not strike roots in the Land. Even the indigent Muslims did not succeed in properly settling the Land. It remained a barren desert, as is said, “And your land shall become a desolation” (Leviticus 26:33). Even in modern times, when European nations, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, settled and populated entire continents, the Land of Israel remained desolate and in a more primitive state than its neighboring Arab lands: Egypt, Syria, and the Lebanon. Had the Land been settled by an industrious, successful, and cultured people, had the Land been properly populated and developed, our attachment to it would have been eroded by the course of events, and no Jewish foot would have trod upon it. Strangers would have eaten its bounty and its fruit, and our rights would have become null and void. However, the Land of Israel did not betray the Jewish

people. It was loyal to them, awaiting redemption throughout the years. Logic dictates, then, that when the Jewish community was given the opportunity to return to its Land — which had withheld its treasures from foreigners and stored them for us — Orthodox Jews should have hastened to perform so great a mitzvah, to plunge with joy and enthusiasm into the very midst of this holy work: the building and settling of the Land. However, to our regret, we have not reacted that way. When the “desolate one,” which longingly waited for us from era to era, invited us to come and redeem her from her desolation, and when the Beloved who watched over the desolation for almost nineteen hundred years, and decreed that during this time no tree should grow, and no wells should fructify the Land, beckoned at the door of the Lover, we the Orthodox Jews — the Lover — did not bestir ourselves from our beds to open the door for our Beloved. If we had contiguous settlements throughout the Land from Eilat to Dan, our situation would be very different.

Let us publicly and frankly confess: we complain about certain Israeli leaders and their attitude toward the values of our tradition and religious practice. The

complaints are justified. We have serious charges against the secular leadership of the Land of Israel. However, are only they to be blamed, and are we as faultless and pure as the heavenly angels? Such an assumption is without foundation. We could have extended our influence and done something to shape the spiritual character of the Land if we had but hurried to awaken from our slumber

and open the door for the Beloved who is knocking. I fear that we Orthodox Jews are still enveloped in sweet slumber. If we were to establish more religious kibbutzim, if we were to build more housing for religious immigrants, if we were to establish an extensive system of schools, our situation would be completely different. Then there would be no need to come forward with complaints against the leaders of other movements. We Orthodox Jews suffer from a unique illness that is not found in nonreligious Jews (with some rare exceptions). We are all miserly. We do not excel when it comes to giving generously, in comparison with the rest of American Jewry. We are satisfied to part with a couple of pennies, and we demand, in recompense for our piddling donation, our reward in this world and a share in the first allocations. Thus, our dignity has reached its nadir, and we do not exercise appropriate influence on Jewish life here in America and on the course of events in Israel. Great and free America is a land of charity. The government itself, in the years 1945 to 1956, disbursed \$55 billion, \$350 million in foreign aid projects (the numbers are truly beyond our comprehension), and philanthropists are truly respected in this land that knows how to give and help in such proportions. Accordingly, we Orthodox Jews are not entitled to the greatness that others possess. Lately, we have become experts at criticism and fault-finding. ("And the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean" [Leviticus 13:3]). We know well how to criticize, to look for blemishes and to express

opinions as self-styled experts. One thing, however, escapes us, and that is that the priest who pronounces defilement must leave the encampment to be with the afflicted sufferer so as to purify him. "And the priest shall leave the encampment ... and the priest shall command" (Leviticus 14:3-4). We must build not just a few small nooks, whose impact is unfelt, but central institutions throughout the length and breadth of America and the Land of Israel. We have an obligation to purify those who are "outside the encampment," who are situated in the huge camp of ignorance. To this end, there is a need for vast sums; and we, the Orthodox Jews, are far from being generous and charitable. For this reason, our institutions here and in Israel suffer from want. The Religious Zionist

movement especially has to content itself with paltry sums. Due to lack of funds, the movement cannot function appropriately. Indeed, the loyal Lover is quite splendid, her eyes are like twin doves and her face radiates a beautiful charm (Song of Songs 1:15, 4:1). She is much fairer than the nonreligious lover. However, beauty is vain and grace is deceptive (Proverbs 31:30) if this Lover is stingy and very lazy. "I have removed my cloak, how shall I put it on again?" (Song of Songs 5:3). When one calls a rich Jew and asks him to give to a just cause, he answers, "I am going to Florida, and this year I have decided to stay in a luxury hotel, and I don't have the wherewithal to give you what you requested." What did the scholar tell the King of the Khazars? "You have embarrassed me, King of Khazars! . . . And our saying 'worship at His holy hill' [Psalms 99:9] is but the chirping of a starling" (*HaKuzari* 2:24). Do we not hear in our trembling over the safety and tranquility of the Land of Israel in our day, the beckoning of the Beloved who begs the Lover to let Him in? He has already been beckoning for eight years, and still He has not been properly responded to. Nonetheless, He continues to beckon. To our good fortune, our inherited Land has become more beautiful. The Beloved has not shown the Lover any favoritism, but He has compassion for her. The Beloved beckoned for only a short moment that night and disappeared, yet with us He has exhibited extraordinary patience. It is eight years that He has continued to beckon. Hopefully, we will not miss the opportunity!!

WHY AIPAC MATTERS:
THE IMPERATIVE FOR OUR
INVOLVEMENT

BY LARRY WEINBERG

I was a soldier in 1944 as an infantryman in the U.S. 100th infantry division. We were in combat in the Vosges Mountains, located between France and Germany. A fellow soldier came to me and said that they had found a Jewish man hiding in the woods and that the man wanted to know if any of the Americans were Jewish.

I ran to meet the man. He was gaunt and unshaven. As I got closer to him, I was overwhelmed with emotion, feeling as if I was somehow part of his liberation. I reached out to him when he asked in Yiddish, "Are you a Jew?" I responded enthusiastically, "Yes, I am a Jew!" The man came closer to me, spit in my face and said, "You came too late." He walked away and I never saw him again.

I came to realize that we American Jews did not do enough to prevent the Holocaust. When our people are in need or in danger, we must never be too late.

Larry Weinberg is a past president of AIPAC and a proud father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

10. AIPAC
Hagaddah

11. Community, Covenant and
Commitment (pp.229)
Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

Tzom ha-Revi'i [Fast Day of 17 Tammuz], 5727
[Tuesday, July 25, 1967]

To the honorable Mrs. Miriam Shiloh, may you live and be well,
Greetings and blessings!

I apologize for not responding to your letter immediately and for my tardiness until now. It was, and remains, very difficult for me to write. I was immersed in the mourning for my beloved wife, the apple of my eye and the desire of my soul, may her memory be a blessing. My world collapsed and was destroyed. As I indicated, even now I write to you with tears and the blood of my torn and tortured heart.

I thank you for your words, and accept your rebuke willingly. Indeed, I sinned against the Holy Land. I am amongst those who have fallen back (in not coming to the Holy Land). Of course, many factors that were out of my control prevented me. In spite of this, I am not searching for an excuse, nor am I justifying myself. I am guilty, and the blame rests on my shoulders. Last year, we – my wife *z"l* and I – decided to come to Israel and remain for about six months, to see the land and the people who dwell therein. However, “many are the plans in a man’s heart” [Prov. 19:21], what happened, happened, and “my sighs are many and heart is sick!” [Lam. 1:22].

Many of my friends and acquaintances, who live whether in the land of Israel or the Diaspora, are urging me to come now. You also emphasized in your letter that it is now a time of grace and also time of spiritual crisis. However, our sages told us [*Shemot Rabbah* 52:5, end of *Parashat Pekudei*] of a “*kippah*, a special counting-house, that was outside of Jerusalem” because anyone who would make his accounts and find himself in debt would be distressed, and regarding Jerusalem it states: “The joy of the whole earth” [Ps. 48:3] [implying that one must not be distressed within the precincts of Jerusalem].

How much more so [is this true] regarding a *kippah*, [the state] of bleak mourning that I am in that must [force me to]

1967 was an historic and momentous year for the Jewish people, with the tensions and fears leading up to the Six-Day War, the miraculous and stunning victory of Israel over her enemies and the liberation of Jerusalem and other parts of the land of Israel. For the Rav, on a personal level, that same year was one filled with great pain and sorrow. In the first three months of 1967, in consecutive order, the Rav lost his beloved mother, Pasha, at the age of 86, his brother, Dr. Shmuel Soloveitchik, at the age of 58, and finally the crushing blow of the passing of his beloved wife and soul-mate, Dr. Tonya Soloveitchik, in March at the age of 62. In the midst of this year of triple avelut, the Rav received a letter from Mrs. Miriam Shiloh (1938–1999), an Israeli religious Zionist educator then teaching high school students at Givat Washington near Kibbutz Yavneh. As was common at the time the students in Mrs. Shiloh’s class read the Rav’s classic essay *Kol Dodi Dofek*, outlining his forceful vision of religious Zionism and his call for American Jewry to make aliyah. The students in Mrs. Shiloh’s class questioned her as to why the Rav, who spoke so passionately about the subject, had himself not made aliyah. Spurred by her students’ questions and the heady aftermath of the Six-Day War, she directed their query to the Rav himself. Below is the translation of his short reply.

remain outside of Jerusalem. How can I now go up to Jerusalem, while I am despondent and embittered. The inspiration does not rest in a state of depression, sadness and pain.

You do not have to justify yourself for your words. I, too, a simple Jew, would say, in the words of the rabbis of *Yavneh* (*Berakhot* 17a): “I teach, and many others who work in the field of Torah education teach, my work is in the large city of New York, in an institution with great numbers of students, and they, their work is in Givat Washington or some other *moshav* in a similarly small institution. One may do much or one may do little; it is all one, provided he directs his heart to Heaven. All our work is dedicated to the flourishing of the values of Judaism, the tradition of our forefathers and our sages, the bearers of the tradition and its scholars.”

With great respect,

Yosef Dov ha-Levi Soloveitchik

ע"ד חובת העלייה לארץ היה רבנו סבור, שרבינים ומלמדים
באמריקה ובשאר מקומות, שפועלים ומצליחים בקירוב [כי סוף כל סוף
בדורנו אנו שיש חורבן כל כך גדול בכלל ישראל מפני הריפורמה ומפני
החילוניות השוררת, כל מנהיג רוחני משתתף הוא באמת בקיום כלל
ישראל ובבנין האומה], אינו מן הנכון שיעלו הם לארץ, וע"י כן ישתמטו
מחובתם ומעבודתם זו. [וכ"ה בתש"ו מהר"ם שיק חו"ד (סי' רכ"ה-
רכ"ז)]. וכ"כ הגר"ח"ע באיגרתו לכב' הרב קוק, ז"ל, שנדפסה בסי' חיי
הראי"ה להרמ"צ נריה, עמוד שפז.

12. *Nefesh Ha'Rav*
Rav Herschel Schachter

13. *Community, Covenant and
Commitment (pp. 238-239)*
Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

Below is a translation of relevant portions of an interview with the Rav conducted by Mr. Levi Yitzhak Yerushalmi. It was published in the Erev Rosh ha-Shanah, 5736 (September 15, 1975) edition of the Hebrew daily Ma'ariv. It is reprinted here with their kind permission, © Ma'ariv.

How do you view the phenomenon of manifestations of anti-Semitism, and specifically anti-Semitism as a result of the existence of the State of Israel?

The aloneness of the Jewish people is today very pronounced. The existence of the state dovetails with this aloneness. Herzl did not understand this aloneness in a metaphysical and meta-historical fashion. He did not see the uniqueness of Jewish history [a history] that was totally foreign to him. On the other hand, he saw and experienced the hate for the Jewish people in reality. He recognized this reality and this aloneness as a fact. He explained them in political terms. However, the aloneness of the Jewish people is one of the clear signs of the nation which exists as a chosen nation. The aloneness is a result of the election [of the Jewish people]. A great individual is lonely. Moses, our teacher, was lonely. A great nation is alone. This is part of the covenant that God established with the Jewish people. That is part of what makes it unique. A lonely individual is creative. A lonely nation is also a creative one. It is clear, therefore, that the State of Israel expresses the greatness of the Jewish people and its uniqueness in the world. After 1,900 years of destruction and exile, the nation returns to its land and rebuilds ancient ruins.

However, the gentiles do not appreciate the relationship between the nation and the land after the passage of so many years. I have spoken to many great people, some from the elite of American culture, and they ask me a small question: "What do you American Jews want? Is it freedom? All opportunities are open to you. You have been very successful." Indeed, in the span of less than one hundred years American Jewry has succeeded. This success is literally a miracle. A generation of poor uneducated immigrants, who did not know language and were often illiterates from the small towns and hamlets of Poland and Russia, brought forth a generation that was able to conquer America...Everything is wonderful, they say, What then do you Jews want (in your insistence on unequivocal support for the State of Israel)?...I explain to them: *Eretz Yisrael* for us is not just a state in the territorial-political sense. It is much more than that. It represents the hope and belief in the coming of the redeemer, of the messianic age and the redemption of the world which will come through the merit of *Eretz Yisrael*. When one speaks to a cultured gentile in such mystical terms, he understands, but most people do not....

In all generations, the anti-Semites would choose a specific Jewish institution and mercilessly attack it. At one time they attacked the Temple. Later in history they attacked the *Shabbat*. The gentiles would ridicule the *Shabbat* and say that Jews are lazy and do not want to work. Later in history they chose [to attack] circumcision and the Talmud, which were also institutions and frameworks. At a certain point in time they directed their hate towards the practice of *shehitah*. In our day, the enmity is directed at the State of Israel. I know this from experience. Non-Jews tell me: "If not for the State of Israel, Jews and gentiles would live in fraternal harmony." The state bothers them because it expresses and highlights the eternity and resurrection of the Jewish people. The state as a creation of Jewry disturbs the serenity of our enemies. I always believe that *the very* institution that is attacked by the enemy is central, important and vital. The enemy truly knows what is important. Therefore the Halakhah states that at the time of persecution one must suffer martyrdom even if the enemy only demands that one change a minor custom of behavior....

There has been tremendous progress in the life of Jews in America. The universities are open to all Jews. When I arrived in America thirty-five years ago it was impossible that a Jew would achieve the status of a professor of English literature at Harvard. Today, the head of the department is Jewish, and is even observant. In major hospitals too, Jews today serve as the heads of departments.

Is there a danger that there will be an increase in anti-Semitism in America?

I cannot say...It is also dependent on the Jews themselves, on whether they live ethical lives and do not violate the standards of proper behavior....

Do you support the peace proposal of Dr. Henry Kissinger [then Secretary of State] and the new proposed [interim] agreement between Israel and Egypt that are currently in the offing?

I do not live in *Eretz Yisrael* and I have no right to express my opinion on these matters.

Do you consider making aliyah to Eretz Yisrael or do you see your life's mission in teaching Torah in the Diaspora?

I think about it greatly. I see a mission in teaching Torah in all corners of the world. However, I also think about [coming] to *Eretz Yisrael*. If it be God's will and I merit it, I will yet come to live in *Eretz Yisrael* and teach Torah. I love teaching Torah. I am as a drunkard in this regard. All of my life I have been teaching Torah. I have taught children, teenagers, young people and older people. I deliver a weekly public class to adults in New York as well as a weekly public class for adults in Boston. I established a small day school in Boston named for Maimonides where the students study Jewish and Hebrew subjects in Hebrew and secular subjects in English. The day school has been in existence for over thirty years. The young people who have completed the school speak Hebrew and many of them have made *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*.

Do you educate towards aliyah?

Of course we steer them in that direction. They do not make *aliyah* simply by themselves. Many of my students at Yeshivat Rabbeinu Yitzhak Elchanan (Yeshiva University) have made *aliyah* to *Eretz Yisrael*. Amongst my students who have moved there are my daughter, my son-in-law and my only son. In truth, the Jewish Agency and governmental representatives are mistaken [in their approach]. You do not need to tell people: "Come on *aliyah*, and if you remain you are putting yourselves in danger just as German Jews did before the rise of Hitler to power." This is not the right way. One must educate and teach towards a lifestyle that will bring people to *Eretz Yisrael*. This is what we are doing.

Do you see in this a national Zionist mission?

This is the mission of the Torah and Divine Providence.

Do you consider yourself a Zionist?

If Zionism refers to a technical concept or to belonging to some established body, then I am not part of it, though I am formally a member of the Mizrahi and pay dues. If, however, Zionism represents love of the Jewish people and devotion to *Eretz Yisrael* as the land of our forefathers – then I am certainly a Zionist. From my early childhood, my father *z"l* studied with me the areas of *zera'im, hilkhos terumos u-ma'aserot, matanos aniyim u-bikkurim*. The [halakhic] concepts of the sanctity of the land, the impurity of the land of the gentiles, the temporary or permanent sanctification of the land are deeply rooted in my heart. From a young age I was educated towards the love of *Eretz Yisrael* as a land containing ten levels of sanctification....