

TORAT ERETZ YISRAEL

The Teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook



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HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook

Commentary by HaRav David Samson

Based on the Hebrew *Sichot of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*
Compiled and Edited by HaRav Shlomo Chaim HaCohen Aviner

English Translation and Editing by Tzvi Fishman

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	XI
By the Chief Rabbi of Israel, Harav Avraham Elkanah Shapira, Shlita.	
FORWARD	XV
By Harav Shlomo Chaim HaCohen Aviner, Shlita, Rosh Yeshiva, <i>Ateret Cohanim</i> .	
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND EDITOR'S NOTE	XXI
EMUNAT YISRAEL	1
1 EMUNAH	3
THE STUDY OF EMUNAH / EMUNAH AND HALF EMUNAH / THE GAON OF VILNA - LEARN EMUNAH! / KODESH KODOSHIM / THE HIDDEN AND THE REVEALED / EMUNAH COMES BEFORE THE COMMANDMENTS / THE CHOSEN NATION	
2 CLAL YISRAEL	27
THE CLAL / AFFILIATION WITH THE CLAL / THE WAR AGAINST THE SADDUCEES / THE KEDUSHA OF THE CLAL	
3 YISRAEL AND TORAH	47
AM SEGULA / ISRAEL PRECEDES TORAH / THE UNIVERSAL APPROACH	
AHAVAT YISRAEL	55
4 AHAVAH	57
AHAVAT YISRAEL - THE FOUNDATION OF TORAH / RAV KOOK'S AHAVAH / DERECH ERETZ PRECEDES TORAH / AHAVAH FOR EVERYONE / AVRAHAM, MY LOVE / A GOOD EYE / SODOM / LOVE FOR THE DISBELIEVER / MISERUT NEFESH FOR CLAL YISRAEL / LOVE FOR A COMPLETELY WICKED MAN / LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE / OVERCOMING THE INCLINATION TO HATE / TALMID CHACHAM AND MANKIND /	

THERE ISN'T ANYONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO REBUKE / REBUKE AND
PERSUASION / FATHERS AND SONS / LOVE FOR THE GENTILE NATIONS
AND PEOPLES / TRUTHFUL AHAVAH / HATRED OF EVIL / DECLARE HIS
WORKS AMONG THE PEOPLES / THE HEART OF THE NATIONS /
INCREASING EMUNAH AND AHAVAH

ERETZ YISRAEL

95

- 5 A VISIT WITH RAV TZVI YEHUDA – ERETZ YISRAEL 97**
SEEING THE ACTS OF HASHEM / A NEW SOUL / ONE NATION IN THE
LAND / I COME FROM ERETZ YISRAEL / GET YOURSELF FORTH TO THE
LAND / THE MITZVAH OF SETTLING THE LAND / DWELLING IN ERETZ
YISRAEL – EQUAL TO ALL OF THE COMMANDMENTS / OUR NATURAL
PLACE / THE HEALING AIR / THE LAND OF OUR LIFE / TEMPORARY
DEPARTURE ABROAD / ALIYAH AND THE PRECEPT TO HONOR ONE'S
PARENTS / THE TORAH OF ERETZ YISRAEL / THE SHEKHINA IN THIS
WORLD / EXPLAINING THE NEED FOR ALIYAH / WHEN THE LORD
BRINGS BACK THE CAPTIVITY OF ZION
- 6 A VISIT WITH RAV TZVI YEHUDA –
THE GALUT AND THE GEULA 135**
THE HOUSE ON OVADIA STREET / OUR UNFOLDING REDEMPTION / THE
HEART OF THE NATIONS / THE END OF GALUT / GEULA AND KIDDUSH
HASHEM / THE END REVEALED / THERE IS NO COINCIDENCE / EYE TO
EYE
- 7 THE PRECEPT OF LIVING IN ISRAEL 155**
THE NATION AND THE LAND / LECH LECHA / FOR HASHEM HAS CHOSEN
ZION / GO IN AND POSSESS / THE PRECEPT OF DWELLING IN THE LAND /
STATEHOOD / THE PRECEPT OF COMPULSORY WAR / WAR / MILCHEMET
MITZVAH AND VOLUNTARY WARS / CONQUEST OF THE LAND IN EVERY
GENERATION / ENLISTMENT OF YESHIVA STUDENTS / SURRENDERING

LAND IS FORBIDDEN / WAR AND THE SANCTITY OF LIFE / SACRIFICING ONE'S LIFE FOR ERETZ ISRAEL / SETTLEMENT IN THE LAND / BUY YOURSELF A FIELD! / WEAKNESS OF SPEECH IS FORBIDDEN / MILITARY AND POLITICAL VALOR / MARTYRDOM AND MIRACLES / ERETZ YISRAEL IS ACQUIRED THROUGH SUFFERINGS / MINORITIES IN ERETZ ISRAEL / OUR RIGHT TO THE LAND / INHERITING AND LIVING IN THE LAND

8 RETURN TO ZION – PART ONE 205

DWELLING IN ERETZ YISRAEL – AN ENCOMPASSING MITZVAH / THE CENTRALITY OF ERETZ YISRAEL / ERETZ YISRAEL – OUR TRUE PLACE / THE JERUSALEM TALMUD / THE RENEWAL OF PROPHECY / SECOND DAY OF YOM TOV IN THE DIASPORA

9 RETURN TO ZION – PART TWO 233

GEDOLEI YISRAEL IN FAVOR OF ZIONISM / THE OHR SOMAYACH / THE AVNEI NEZER / THE NETZIV / THE CHOFETZ CHAIM / ZIONISM AND THE SILENT MAJORITY / GEDOLEI YISRAEL IN FAVOR OF ZIONISM: PART TWO / HE WHO LABORS ON EREV SHABBAT / HARAV AVRAHAM YITZHIK HACOHN KOOK / GEDOLIM CAN ERR / THE SIN OF THE SPIES / SHOULD WE LISTEN TO A GADOL WHO ERRS? / THE LAND OF ISRAEL AND THE SECRETS OF TORAH

10 THE HOLOCAUST 259

WONDERING OF THE HEART / DIVINE RECKONING / NOTHING IS HAPPENSTANCE / THE HORROR OF THE HOLOCAUST / CLAL YISRAEL / RISE UP FROM THE DUST / AMPUTATION FROM THE GALUT

11 TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF MASHIACH – PART ONE 275

MASHIACH / THE RETURN OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL / THE REVEALED END / THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE / GATHERING THE SCATTERED OF ISRAEL / MILCHEMET MITZVAH – COMPULSORY WAR / THE THREE OATHS / ALL OF HER INHABITANTS / THE INGATHERING OF THE EXILES

12 TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF MASHIACH – PART TWO	297
KING DAVID – THE FIRST MASHIACH / AND DESTROY ALL THE CHILDREN OF SETH / BAR KOCHVA / A SPARK OF MASHIACH / MASHIACH – GREAT IN TORAH / KING HEZEKIAH / MASHIACH AND CLAL YISRAEL / PETTINESS / GEULA WITHOUT TSHUVA / CHRISTIANITY / FREEDOM FROM GENTILE RULE / WARS / CALCULATIONS OF THE END / SEEING THE DIVINE / KORESH, MY ANOINTED / AS WATER COVERS THE SEA / FILLED WITH PRECEPTS / ISRAEL AND TORAH ARE ONE	
13 SOVEREIGNTY IN OUR LAND	337
YOM HAATZMAUT / THE JOY OF A MITZVAH / THE SANCTITY OF THE STATE / FROM THE SECULAR TO THE SACRED / TSHUVA AND THE SETTLEMENT OF ISRAEL	
14 SHILO	351
JUDEA AND SAMARIA / SHILO / THE PEOPLE I HAVE FORMED FOR MYSELF / HOLY SETTLERS OF THE LAND / RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD / THE LAND OF OUR LIFE / THE RESTING PLACE – THIS IS SHILO	
15 JERUSALEM	369
YOM YERUSHALAYIM / TO YOUR HOLY HABITATION / WE SHALL NOT BUDGE FROM HERE!	
GLOSSARY	377
INDEX	381

INTRODUCTION

By

HaRav Avraham Elkanah Kahana Shapira, *Shlita*

Chief Rabbi of Israel

Rosh Yeshiva, Mercaz HaRav, Jerusalem

The translation of our sacred writings has been given special attention by our Sages. Moshe Rabenu himself, in explaining the Torah in the plains of Moav, translated it into seventy languages (Rashi, Deuteronomy, 1:5). Similarly, upon entering the Land of Israel, Joshua was commanded to inscribe on great boulders, *All the words of this Torah clearly explained* (Deut.27:8). Rashi states that *clearly explained* means writing the Torah in seventy languages (Rashi, loc cit). From these instances, we learn that it is proper to translate the Torah into foreign languages, and regarding this, there is a special Divine command to Joshua to write all of the words of the Torah *clearly explained*.

On the other hand, it is recorded in the *Megilla Taanit* (the Chapter of Fast Days) that Darkness came to the world for three days because of the translation of the Torah into Greek in the days of Talmi, the King. Our Rabbis of blessed memory even established the anniversary of this translation as a fast day because of our great anguish over this event.

The discrepancy between the sources is striking. Why did the Rabbis of blessed memory view the translation of the Torah into Greek as a tragedy when both Moshe and Joshua themselves translated the Torah, not only into Greek, but into all seventy gentile languages?

Once, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook, ל"צז, was asked to explain this paradox: why did darkness come to the world for three days when the Torah was translated into Greek in the days of King Talmi, when in the Torah itself, Hashem commanded that the Torah be translated into seventy languages? HaRav Tzvi Yehuda reflected on the question and

said that the matter depended on our inner strength. When Israel is strong, as in the times of Moshe and Joshua, there is reason to translate the Torah, even for the nations of the world. However, in the era of the Second Temple, when the Kings of the House of Talmi ruled over us and forced us to translate our Torah against our will, and against our own interests, this is indeed a cause for mourning.

Concurrent with this understanding, we are faced with another apparent contradiction. Ezra, in a similar period of national weakness during the Second Temple era, translated the Torah into Aramaic. In the book of Nechemiah (Ch.8:8) it is recorded how Ezra and Nechemiah gathered the returned exiles of Zion on Rosh Hashana and read the Torah to them: *So they read in the book, in the Torah of G-d distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.*

The *Gemara* (*Megilla* 3A) explains this verse. *And they read in the book, in the Torah of G-d distinctly - this, the explanation of the reading, this is the Targum* (the Aramaic translation). Ezra had to translate the Torah for the Jews who returned to Israel from the exile in Babylon because not all of them could understand the Torah in the sacred Hebrew language. However, in light of what we have explained, we still have to understand how Ezra could have translated the Torah in a time of national weakness.

To do this, we must make a distinction and say that even in a time of weakness, if the purpose of the translation is to teach Jews Torah, then the undertaking is permitted, and even a *mitzvah*. However, when the goal of the translation is to teach the nations of the world, then the matter depends on our inner strength.

In translating the writings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook, זצ"ל, there is another matter of interest. The *Gemara* states that when Yonatan ben Uziel translated the words of the prophet, an earthquake shook the Land of Israel for four-hundred-square parsangs because secrets of the Torah were revealed to mankind (*Megilla* 3A). The sections of the Torah which deal with the end of the *Galut* and the coming of the *Mashiach* are matters which are uniquely related to Jews who live in

Eretz Yisrael and who speak the Holy Tongue.

The book, "*Torat Eretz Yisrael*" represents a new dimension in Torah literature in presenting fundamental principles of *Torat Eretz Yisrael* to the English-speaking public for the first time. The clear illumination of our relationship to Torah, to *Am Yisrael*, and to *Eretz Yisrael* in our unique era, which until now has been the inheritance of those students who have made the writings of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, ל"צ, a regular part of their learning, is now available to the broad Anglo-Saxon community. The appearance of this work at this time takes on an additional importance with the eradication of the penultimate exiles of Ethiopia and Russia. Today, the Jews who are scattered throughout the Anglo-Saxon world constitute the principle *Galut*. Thus, it is precisely this community which most needs a beacon of light which can connect them to *Eretz Yisrael* and to its Torah.

I pray, hope, and believe that this book will be warmly received by those who learn it. If its readers will succeed in internalizing its contents, there is sufficient power in the teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, ל"צ, to cause an upheaval as in the days of Yonatan ben Uziel when the earth trembled for four-hundred-square parsangs.

FORWARD

by

Harav Shlomo Chaim HaCohen Aviner
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No one is bold enough to think he can properly describe Rav Tzvi Yehuda, our teacher, or to understand even a little of his stature. But to be silent is also forbidden. The essence of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, זצ"ל, lay in his being a *Tzaddik* of the nation, of *Clal Yisrael*, of the entire community of Israel, in all of its different groupings and shades. He was a national *Tzaddik*; not just a private, holy sage.

The concept of an evil man is someone whose entire life and ambition is materialistic, and degenerate to an extreme. The *Tzaddik* stands in contrast to this, a man whose life essence is ethical, spiritual, and *Kadosh*. He is a man filled and surrounded with Torah. Yet even amongst *Tzaddikim* there are levels – level upon level of *Kedusha*, of Torah, and purity of life and deed. On the most exalted peak stands the *Tzaddik* of all Israel. He is not concerned with his own private place in the World To Come, but with the World To Come of the entire community of Israel.¹ He is the *Tzaddik* who raises himself above the trait of, *What's mine is mine, what's yours is yours,*² to identify, with every fiber of his being, with the yearnings and needs of the entire nation and world.

1. *Mesillat Yesharim*, at the end of Chapter 19.
2. *Avot*, 5:13.

*Rabenu's*³ life was so fused with the life of the nation, he ceased being a private person. His entire inner being was bonded with the nation's well-being, with a humility which left nothing for himself. His fusion with the Divine light which shines in the Congregation of Israel was totally complete, like King David, who spoke of himself, in his private life, as, *A worm and not a man.*⁴ Yet in his universal aspect, in his devotion, commitment, and self-sacrifice to the nation, he rose to encompass the exalted heights of *Clal Yisrael* itself.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda identified with all of the nation, in all of its wanderings through history, but especially with the living soul of the nation today, as it appears in our generation, and emanating from this, he was deeply bonded to each and every Jew, with a devotion of brotherhood and love which everyone could feel.

In every generation, there is a *Tzaddik* to the whole Israeli nation, a *Tzaddik* of the masses, a *Tzaddik* to all of the world. He is so universal in his influence, he is the foundation of the world itself.⁵ These universally righteous men form a chain. From generation to generation, they funnel the Divine flow of life which advances the historical mission of Israel. This national *Tzaddik* is a unique personality, elevated over all of his generation. This is especially true today, in a generation which has witnessed the rebirth of our people and the restoration of our nation in our Land. For this national reawakening will bring the great, longed-for repentance, the *Tshuva* of the entire nation of Israel, and, with it, the repentance of the world.⁶

These *Tzaddikim* are unique. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, ל"צ, and Rav Tzvi Yehuda, his son, are the *Tzaddikim* of the redemption. The spirit of *Hashem*, which hovers over the world, and directs all of our history, is embodied in their souls.

3. Rabenu (sometimes transliterated, *Rabbeinu*) is a title of respect, meaning: our teacher.
4. Tehillim, 22:7.
5. Proverbs, 10:25.
6. *Orot HaTshuva*, 17:1. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

Individual effort alone doesn't make a *Tzaddik*. His essence is a unique, Divine creation. In the beginning of time, *Hashem* formed a soul filled with the miraculous talents tailored to the needs of the generation of redemption, and He planted that soul in our midst. The former Chief Rabbi of Israel, HaRav Shlomo Goren, expressed this succinctly when he called Rav Tzvi Yehuda, the *Nasi*, the president of Israel, the father of the nation, the leader, and the outstanding judge of *Halacha*, in its national aspects, which are manifested in the laws of the community, the Kingdom, and the laws which govern the redemption of Israel.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda's Divine historic mission was to illuminate the holy foundation of our national rebirth in Israel, and to teach us to discover *Hashem*, not only in the Torah, but also in the historical events unfolding in our midst. Surrounding this vision was his profound, fundamental *Emunah* in all of our nation; in our unblemishable *Kedusha*; and in our eternal connection to *Hashem*.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda defined his father's life-task in two words, *HaTorah HaGoelet*, the redeeming Torah. *HaTorah HaGoelet* is the Torah in all of its encompassing wholeness, depth, breadth, and detailed intensity. This is the Torah which illuminates the path of our redemption, and brings it to life. It is a learning which encompasses all branches of Torah, the practical and worldly, as well as the most spiritual, inner quests.

From our very beginnings, our Rabbis have told us that the redemption of Israel depended upon our discovering the secrets of Torah, on the revelation of the Torah's deepest truths.⁷ The redeeming Torah, which is learned in the *Beit Midrash* of Rav Kook, is the Torah of the verse, *The Lord's Torah is perfect*.⁸ This is the Torah in all of its

7. Zohar, *Naso*, 124. And, *Even Shlema*, Ch. 11:3, by the Gaon of Vilna: "This redemption will not come to pass, except through the learning of Torah. And the principal redemption depends on the learning of Kaballah." And see, *Orot*, Ch.64:57, by HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

8. Tehillim, 19:8.

completeness – the Torah which, *Restores the soul*.⁹ Only this Torah and learning can renew the soul of the individual who lives it, and the soul of the general nation of Israel, which, for thousands of years, lay entombed like the dry bones of Ezekiel.¹⁰ These dry bones have now been resurrected, brought back to life by *HaTorah HaGoelet*.

With joy you shall draw water out of the wells of salvation.¹¹ The *Targum* explains this as meaning, “With joy you shall welcome a new learning from the elite *Tzaddikim*.” The water we draw from is Torah. Those who are thirsty for Torah go to the elite *Tzaddikim* and receive a new teaching. Rav Tzvi Yehuda’s *Torah HaGoelet* is this new learning – this new/old learning. Rashi tells us on the verse, *If you hearken diligently*,¹² “If you hearken to the old, you will hearken to the new.”¹³ The more a man attunes his ears to hear the old, he hears the new, which develops and gradually comes to light. *But the path of the righteous is like the gleam of sunlight that shines ever more brightly until the heat of noonday*.¹⁴ In our generation, this brighter learning burst to light through the channels of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, and his son, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda.

There are many truly righteous men and Torah scholars, all of great stature in the service of *Hashem*, but the new learning does not come from them all. Not all possess *The life of the world implanted within them*.¹⁵ Not all are awarded the task of illuminating the world with the Divine light which is destined for his generation. This is the task of the elite *Tzaddikim* who are appointed by Divine choice and creation. They are the springs of salvation, the *Tzaddikim* who know how to teach the new learnings hidden in the wellsprings of Torah.

9. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, 5:1.

10. Ezekiel, 37:1-14.

11. Isaiah, 12:3.

12. Deuteronomy, 11:13.

13. Ibid, Rashi.

14. Proverbs, 4:8.

15. Blessing over the Torah.

These great souls are our sources of redemption. We are to receive this new learning with pleasure and joy.¹¹ How fortunate we are to learn Torah from the chosen *Tzaddikim*, who teach us how to see the *New light shining on Zion*,¹⁶ today.

16. Blessing Before the Morning Shema.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
and
EDITOR'S NOTE

A feeling of great joy accompanies the publication of this volume. For the first time, the teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, זצ"ל, are being made available in English. Rav Tzvi Yehuda dedicated his entire life to disseminate the teachings of his father, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, זצ"ל, and to illuminate the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*. This new light on Zion and Torah is especially important today when, after a two-thousand year exile, the scattered Jewish nation is returning to its Land.

HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook once confided that the person who most truly understood his teachings was his one and only son. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda was born on *Pesach* night, 5651, one hundred years ago, in the town of Zeimel, in the Lithuanian district of Kovna. His mother, Reiza Rivkah, was the daughter of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Rabinowitz, the twin brother of the *Aderet*. The Kook family moved to Boisk when the father was made rabbi of the city. Upon the appointment of HaRav Kook as Chief Rabbi of Yafo, the family made *Aliyah* to Israel on the 28th day of *Iyar*, 5664 (1904), on the very same day of the month on which Jerusalem was later reunited during the miraculous Six-Day War. Every year, at the *Yom Yerushalayim* celebration at the *Mercaz HaRav* Yeshiva, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would mention the great significance this day held for his family.

In addition to his Yeshiva learning, Rav Tzvi Yehuda studied throughout his early childhood and youth with his father. At a very young age, he grew into a respected *Talmid Chacham*, yet he declined to teach in public unless his father specifically told him to teach. He dedicated himself to Torah study and to the organization, editing, and publication of his father's prolific writings. His attachment to his father permeated every sphere of his life, including working by his father's

side to establish the *Shaare Torah* Yeshiva in Yafo, and assisting him in many of the duties of the Yafo Rabbinate. When the long hours of community work began to interfere with his learning, he moved to Jerusalem to study at the *Porat Yosef* Yeshiva. After a period of intense study, he accepted a teaching position in Germany, where he concentrated his own studies on the in-depth learning of *Gemara*, *Shulchan Aruch*, and *Poskim*. Throughout the First World War, his studies continued in Europe, where he was stranded without any way of returning to Israel. In the year 5680 (1918), he journeyed throughout Europe, meeting with the outstanding Torah leaders to enlist their support for *Degel Yerushalayim*, a movement of religious Zionism which his father had established to unite all of *Am Yisrael*, "In the holy work of revitalizing the nation and of building the Land."

In 5682, he married Chava Leah, the daughter of HaRav Yehuda Lev Hutner. A year later, when his father founded the Central Universal Yeshiva in Jerusalem (*Mercaz HaRav*), Rav Tzvi Yehuda joined the *Nazir*, HaRav David HaCohen, and HaRav Yaakov Moshe Charlop, on the teaching staff. In addition to the classes in *Tanach* and *Emunah* which he taught, he supervised the Yeshiva's administration, organized the rescue and *Aliyah* of Yeshiva students from Russia and Lithuania, and continued the editing of his father's writings. After his father's death on *Elul* 3, 5695 (1935), he took an active role in the struggle for Israeli Statehood, and with the establishment of the State, he urged his students and the nation to see the Divine value of *Medinat Yisrael* in the redemption of *Am Yisrael*.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda succeeded HaRav Charlop as *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Mercaz HaRav*. Under his direction, the Yeshiva grew to be the spiritual center for the rebirth of the nation in Israel. Its students became the founders of Yeshivot and religious schools all over the country. The leaders of the *Gush Emunim* movement, which led the way in the settlement of Judea and Samaria, the Golan Heights, and Aza, were almost all students of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda. Until the day of his death, on Purim, 5742 (1982), at the age of ninety-one, he championed the principle of Jewish settlement in all of *Eretz Yisrael*,

and stressed the Torah prohibition against surrendering any fraction of *Eretz Yisrael* to any other people or nation.

In addition to the work of editing his father's writings, Rav Tzvi Yehuda published numerous articles and books of his own. His classes, spanning all subjects of Torah, have been recorded in hundreds of hours of tapes. The edited transcripts of these classes, published in Hebrew by HaRav Shlomo Haim HaCohen Aviner, *Shlita*, form the basis of the English translations in this book. Any reader who has a working knowledge of Hebrew is encouraged to read Rav Tzvi Yehuda's lectures in the original Hebrew, published as *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, by Yeshiva *Ateret Cohanim*.

Rather than presenting a dry, literal translation of the Hebrew *Sichot*, a commentary by HaRav David Samson, *Shlita*, a longtime student at the *Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva*, has been included to explain Rav Tzvi Yehuda's teaching in the light of the unique era of redemption which Rav Kook taught his students to see. Generally, Rav Tzvi Yehuda addressed his lectures to students who were acquainted with traditional Yeshiva learning, and with the writings of the *Maharal*, the *Kuzari*, and with the works of his father. Therefore, to make the lectures clear to the English-speaking reader who may not be familiar with these works, important background is included in the commentary. Whenever possible, however, a straightforward translation of the *Rosh Yeshiva's* speech is presented.

For clarity, quotes of Rav Tzvi Yehuda have been indented on the page and enclosed by quotation marks. The verses of Torah, *Gemara*, *Midrashim*, and commentaries which filled the *Rosh Yeshiva's* lectures are printed in italics, unless otherwise typeset for emphasis. However, the stream of verses which punctuated his speech, and the associations and meanings they contain, cannot be reproduced in translation. Thus, the reader is encouraged to study the notes on each page for valuable sources and background. The footnotes, like the translations, are based on the Hebrew *Sichot*, edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.

While many themes in the book may seem to be repeated, this is not a drawback of the book, but rather its highlight. In his lectures on

the study of Torah, Rabbi Kook taught his students to appreciate the special style of the Talmud. Once a student asked why the discourses in the *Gemara* are so undefined and rambling, as opposed to the Rambam which is clear and succinct. Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered that the Talmud is living, and therefore resembles a live discussion, as opposed to the codified text of the Rambam, which, while overwhelming in its clarity, lacks the vitality of simple discussion. In editing the *Sichot*, we tried to remain faithful to the *Rosh Yeshiva's* lively, associative style. The thematic repetitions which reappear throughout the lectures have been purposefully included because each theme takes on an additional dimension when set in a different context. The concepts which are repeated are integral to a proper understanding of *Am Yisrael* and Torah, and special attention should be given to them, and to their nuances as they reappear throughout the lectures.

Finally, a word of apology and confession. The writing of this book was undertaken with an awareness of the inadequacies and pitfalls involved in translating the Hebrew *Sichot*. We have attempted to capture the gist of Rav Tzvi Yehuda's expression and the substance of his teaching. However, no translation could do justice to his very precise, rich, and dramatic Hebrew. No translation can capture the grandeur of his thoughts, or the passion for truth in his speech. Once, while describing the influence of *Clal Yisrael* on the world, Rav Tzvi Yehuda used a series of adjectives that might roughly be translated into English: the cosmic, trans-universal, transcendental, physical, concrete.... Rav Yosef Bedeki asked the *Rosh Yeshiva* why he had used so many words when a single adjective might have sufficed. Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered with a surprised glance that made his student realize that each word had its own precise definition which, only when they were combined together, expressed the exact idea. This precision and illumination is impossible in English. Hebrew is the language of the Torah, and only the *Lashon HaKodesh* can express the nuances and shades of its Divine light.

The deep, inner bond between Torah and Hebrew is all the more

vital in the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*. The new light on Zion which we yearn for in our prayers is uniquely connected to *Eretz Yisrael*, and to our sacred Hebrew tongue. In the same way that our life in *Galut* is foreign to our true Israeli natures, foreign languages distort our true understanding of Torah. Concepts such as *Kedusha*, *Emunah*, and *Clal Yisrael* have no precise counterpart in English. Language is a product of culture, and the Christian-Protestant foundations of English-speaking cultures often stand in antithesis to Torah concepts and ideals. To translate *Kedusha* as holiness risks the danger of many false associations. Images of Christian priests, Buddhist monks, and their sterile, negation of life, stand in total contrast to the foundations of Jewish *Kedusha*, which seeks to raise all of life to G-d. The translator's job is made even more difficult because the available Torah literature in English is itself a product of the *Galut*. The Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*, and the concepts on which it is based, have no existing expression in English. Yet if the translator avoids using problematic terms such as holiness, faith, saintly, and the like, and relies on arcane explanations of these concepts, he ends up with a dry, cumbersome text that no one can read. Thus, because of these problems, the encompassing, national perspective of Torah which Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught his students to see has remained a treasure confined to the *Lashon HaKodesh*, and to the generation of Israelis challenged with restoring the Torah, and the Nation, to our Land.

With the mass *Aliyah* of Russian Jews to Israel, the world of English-speaking Jews represents the final Diaspora. Rav Kook taught that the darkness of the Exile can only be erased by adding light. It is our hope that this presentation of the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* in English will be a valuable guide for readers who lack access to Rav Kook's teachings in Hebrew.

We would like to express our gratitude to all of the people who read drafts of the manuscript and offered valuable suggestions, in particular to Rav Moshe Kaplan, for his conscientious proofreading of the text and work on the sources, to Rav Tzvi Liker for his advice on the translation, and to HaRav Shlomo Aviner, *Shlita*, for his

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Certainly, there can be no substitution to learning the teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda in their original Hebrew. It is our hope that the readers of this book will all one day have the blessing of enjoying Rav Kook's teaching in the language of our Torah, in the Land of the Torah, with the complete redemption of our nation – may it come speedily in our time.

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Part One

EMUNAT YISRAEL

Chapter One

EMUNAH

1. THE STUDY OF EMUNAH¹

Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook wrote that there were two fundamentals of Torah which needed to be strengthened in our time: the principles of *Emunah* and *Ahavah*, of belief and of love. While all aspects of Torah require constant strengthening, Rav Kook chose to emphasize these two.²

His son, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, personified these two tenets of our religion, and emphasized their importance for a proper understanding of Torah.

The Mishna in *Berachot* tells us that the basis for all of the commandments in the Torah is *Emunah*.³ An increase of *Emunah* results in a greater cleavage to *Hashem*, and hence to all of the Torah. Although *Emunah* is usually translated into English as belief or faith, these words lack the deep spiritual component of true *Emunah*, which encompasses, not only intellectual and emotional belief, but the study and knowledge of *Hashem*, and Torah, and **the understanding of their expression in Am Yisrael.**⁴

1. Chapter based on *Sichot of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, Talmud Torah 1 and 2, Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim, Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.
2. *Orot, Orot Yisrael*, 4:2. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.
3. Mishna, *Berachot*. 2:2.
4. “*Emunah* is neither intellectual understanding nor feeling, but the most fundamental and substantial revelation of the soul’s essence.” *Essays of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook*, Pg.70. Mosad HaRav Kook.

On the very first day of my learning at the *Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva*, I fell ill and missed Rav Tzvi Yehuda's opening lecture. It was a class he gave each *Elul*, in which he explained to new students, the very special differences in the *Mercaz HaRav* approach to learning Torah. Several days later, when I was feeling better, I took a place in the line of students who were waiting to ask the *Rosh Yeshiva* questions, at the conclusion of the *Shacharit* prayer. When my turn arrived, I told the *Rosh Yeshiva* that I had been sick, and that I had missed his opening lecture.

He sat me down, asked how I was feeling, and inquired about the details of my illness. Then for nearly an hour, he explained, word-for-word, the lecture I had missed. The understanding of these matters was so important to Torah learning, the *Rosh Yeshiva* took the time to go over the opening lesson with me alone. His concern was warm and tangible, like the interest of a father in the wellbeing of his son. At first, I was a bit overwhelmed by this private attention, but, soon, I forgot about the students waiting at the door, and I focused on every word.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda told me that the Yeshiva was a place to gain stature in Torah, through a program of intense, detailed study, all day and into the night, with a focus on *Gemara* and *Halacha*, no less than in any other Yeshiva. What then was the uniqueness of the *Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva*, he asked? **The learning of Emunah.**

“Every year, among the new students,” he said, “There are those who ask, What is *Mercaz HaRav*? What is the difference, the specialness, the distinguishing feature of this Yeshiva? They want to understand our unique approach to Torah learning. After all, there are a great many Yeshivot.”

“The foundations of Torah aren't always as clear as they need be. Along with the study of *Halacha*, the

truest pursuit of Torah includes the study of *Emunah*.”

“*Emunah* isn’t something which can be condensed to the expression, ‘I believe,’ or to singing the song, אָנִי מֵאֱמִין. *Emunah* is something which must be learned as well, to study and study until the comprehension is clear. We need to strengthen the fundamentals of *Emunah* until we possess total understanding and knowledge in our inner beings, during every breath of our lives. From this basis, *Emunah* is revealed in its intellectual expression, in its deep emotional belief, in its exalted spiritual aspect, and in all of the other senses in man.”

“*Emunah* has to be studied,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda repeated.

Repetition was characteristic of his teaching. During my ten years of learning at the Yeshiva, I came to understand why. Concepts which I thought I had understood the first time he expressed them, took on sharp focus only much later, after constant repetition, year after year. A story is told about a student who once asked the Rebbe of Kotzk why the *Maharal* repeated himself so often in his books. “This disturbs you?” the Rebbe responded. “I still haven’t managed to understand what he intended the first time.”

“*Emunah* isn’t a simple proclamation of belief,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “***Emunah* is the greatest learning, the greatest wisdom, the profoundest thought, the broadest approach to the world, encompassing all of man, and all of the universe.**”⁵

5. “*Emunah* encompasses all knowledge, creating a universal bond between all the different disciplines and fields, and this bestows eternal life to everyone who is

“The study of Emunah is not less important than other learning. On the contrary, it is much more important. Emunah is the study of the profoundest truth, and the understanding of matters which stand in the most exalted reaches. It encompasses the truthful illumination of logic, of science, and of the Divine.”

“It is true,” the Rosh Yeshiva said, “That *Emunah* must be תמימה, pure. But what is the meaning of תמימות? Foolishness? *Emunah* isn’t just simple belief. It is a profound wisdom which requires deep probing.”

2. EMUNAH AND HALF EMUNAH⁶ .

Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted his students to understand that just as there are levels of Torah knowledge, there are levels of *Emunah*. There are people of great belief and understanding, and others of wavering belief, which stems from an unclear understanding of Torah, and of *Am Yisrael*. Situations of false *Emunah*, and crises in faith, occur when the foundations of Judaism aren’t properly comprehended. To avoid tragic mistakes of this sort, *Emunah* has to be learned, clarified, absorbed, and understood in all of its encompassing grandeur.

“*Emunah* is certainty,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught.
“Contrasting this is the *Emunah* stemming from

blessed by its light. Its inner vitality brings life to society, to the foundations of ethical conduct, and to the life of the individual, in the same way that it infuses all of the universe with life...” *Musar HaKodesh*. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook. Section 74. Mosad HaRav Kook.

6. See *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, Emunah*. Section 7, Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim. Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.

philosophical inquiry alone, which can only bring about a situation of incomplete faith.⁷ This is the false “*Emunah*,” which is mentioned in the Torah in connection with the Spies.”⁸

The Spies were the leaders of Israel, who were sent into *Eretz Yisrael* to spy out the Land, as the Children of Israel prepared to go up from the wilderness of Sinai.⁹ The negative report they brought back to Moshe Rabenu, and their refusal to journey on to Israel, caused the death of their generation during forty years of punishment in the wilderness. Rav Tzvi Yehuda quoted the verse: *And in this matter, you did not believe in the Lord your G-d.*⁸

“In this matter, in not making Aliyah to Israel, they didn’t have *Emunah*.” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “In other matters, they did believe. They believed, and yet they didn’t believe. This is a state of half-*Emunah*. Rashi, in the name of *Chazal*, (the Torah Sages) cites this in regard to Noah, saying that even, ‘Noah was small in *Emunah*. Though he possessed *Emunah*, he did not truly believe in the flood’s coming, and did not enter the ark until the water forced him in.’”¹⁰

“However, the foundation of our *Emunah* begins with Avraham Avinu. *And he had Emunah in the Lord.*¹¹ He wasn’t a half-believer. He believed with a complete faith, with אֱמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה.”¹²

7. *Kuzari*, 1:13.
8. Deuteronomy, 1:32.
9. Numbers, 13:1–25.
10. Rashi, Genesis, 7:7.
11. Genesis, 15:6.
12. Thirteen Principles of Faith of the Rambam.

“There can be a spiritual deficiency in *Emunah*, which causes a lack of belief, like in the sin of the Spies. *Yet you would not go up (to Israel.)*¹³ You have *Emunah*, and yet, *In this matter, you didn't believe.*”⁹

“There are types of, *Tzaddikim who don't believe,*”¹⁴ Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, quoting from the *Gemara*. “They select and choose words of the Torah, and *mitzvot*, saying, ‘This matter is arranged properly by the Almighty. It's very nice; it pleases me; it's easy; I agree to abide. However, this matter is not so good.’ This approach to Torah leads to dangerous consequences and heresy. There is a startling saying of *Chazal* in the *Gemara* regarding someone who says – this precept is pleasant, and this one isn't pleasant; this matter is pleasing to me, and that matter is not. Everyone who says this teaching is pleasant, and this one is not pleasant, loses the riches of Torah.”¹⁵

“In contrast to this comes the true approach of, *Everything that the Lord said, we will do and listen.*¹⁶ We will do it whether it pleases us or not; whether we intellectually understand, or whether the matter is above our logic and understanding.”

“When the Torah is seen in its true light, as the foundation of our life, *For they are our life and our length of days,*¹⁷ then there isn't any criticism of *Hashem*.

13. Deut. 1:26.

14. Sotah 48B.

15. Eruvin 64A.

16. Exodus, 24:7.

17. Evening Blessing of the *Shema*.

In the place of criticism, comes cleavage, harmony, and complete *Emunah*.”

The *Rosh Yeshiva* said that incomplete *Emunah*, as exemplified by the tragedy of the Spies, occurs when the Torah isn't studied and understood in the proper fashion.

3. THE GAON OF VILNA – LEARN EMUNAH!¹

The importance of learning *Emunah* was stressed by the Gaon of Vilna, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. A close student of the Gaon writes that the legendary rabbi often repeated that we are obligated to study the *Kuzari*. The *Gaon* called this book, *Kadosh* and pure, and said that, “The principles of *Emunat Yisrael*, and Torah, are precisely formulated in it.”¹⁸

Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed the Gaon of Vilna's description of Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi's, *Kuzari*, as being *Kadosh* and pure.

“The *Gaon* also informs us that the foundations of Israel's *Emunah* and Torah are precisely explained in this work. For all things depend on being understood in their proper light. Therefore, the Gaon of Vilna determined that Torah and *Emunah* are to be understood as they are illuminated in the *Kuzari*. This was a teaching he repeatedly stressed.”

18. Supplement to *Maase Rav*, by HaRav Yisrael Mishkalov, author of *Paat HaShulchan*; found in the introduction to the book, *Beit Yaacov*, by Rav Yaacov Broide. And *Siddur* of the *Gra*, Pg. 512, Note 38.

“From this, we understand that *Emunah* needs to be studied. It is a *mitzvah* to listen to the words of our Sages,¹⁹ and the holy words of the *Gaon*¹⁸ tell us to learn *Emunah*, and to study it specifically from the *Kuzari*, and not from the first chapter of the book, ‘*Duties of the Heart*’ חובות הלבבות. One can learn ethics from *Duties of the Heart*, but *Emunah* is to be learned from the *Kuzari*.”

4. KODESH KODOSHIM²⁰

The study of the *Kuzari* is an integral part of the *Mercaz HaRav* program of learning. While it is not in the scope of this volume to explore the book in depth, it is worthwhile to understand the importance which the Gaon of Vilna, Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, and other great Torah scholars saw in it. The *Mahari* Enzel was a devoted student of Reb Aryeh Leb HaCohen, a giant in both *Halacha* and *Emunah*, and author of the *Kitzot*. In his Responsa, the *Mahari* writes: “Rabenu Yehuda HaLevi lived in the generation preceding the Rambam, and his book is קִדְשׁ קִדְשִׁים *Kodesh Kodoshim*, as is widely known.”²¹

Rav Tzvi Yehuda assured us that *Talmidei Chachamim* (Torah scholars) of the stature of the *Mahari* Enzel didn’t choose their expressions lightly. *Kodesh Kodoshim*, (Holy of Holies) the innermost chamber of the Temple, where the Ark containing the Tablets from

19. Yevamot 20A.

20. *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, Talmud Torah 1, Section 11, and Talmud Torah 2, Section 36.

21. Responsa, *Mahari Enzel*, 60:6.

Sinai was housed, represented the pinnacle of *Kedusha*. It is the expression Rabbi Akiva chose in describing *Shir HaShirim*, the most exalted and Divinely inspired of songs.²²

“What is the meaning of *Kodesh Kodoshim*?” the *Rosh Yeshiva* asked. “Obviously, not everything in the world can be categorized *Kodesh Kodoshim*. Apparently, the *Mahari Enzel* learned this from his Rav, the *Kitzot*. He informs us that among all of the standards of *Emunah*, the *Kuzari* is *Kodesh Kodoshim*. And he adds, ‘As is widely known.’ These aren’t just flowery words, but words that are carefully measured in the scales of *Kedusha*.”

“Three times a day, we define ourselves as belonging to, *This people which I formed for Myself*,²³ as belonging to the *Kedusha* of *Clal Yisrael*: וְקְדוּשִׁים בְּכָל יוֹם יְהַלְלוּךָ סֵלָה. *And Holy Ones will praise You each day, Selah*.²⁴ Each one of us is attached to the *Kedusha* of *Clal Yisrael*. The true source of *Kedusha* is *Hashem*: *You are Kadosh, and Your Name is Kadosh*.²⁴ *For with You is the source of life*.²⁵ From this Divine exalted source, an illumination and revelation of *Kedusha* appears in the world – in the *Kedusha* of the *Am HaKodesh*, of *Am Yisrael*. **We are the holy beings who praise Hashem every day.** As it says, *Be Kadosh for I am Kadosh*.²⁶”

22. Mishna, Yadayim 3:5.

23. Isaiah 43:21.

24. The Blessing, *Atah Kadosh, Shemona Esrei*.

25. Tehillim, 36:10.

26. Leviticus, 19:2.

Divine Kedusha passes into the world via the Kedusha of Am Yisrael, Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained. Thus, within the overall *Kedusha* of our nation, matters which most specifically referred to Israel were *Kodesh Kodoshim*.

“In other books on *Emunah*, there are a great many important matters, exalted and *Kadosh*, which pertain to Israel – such as the book, *Duties of the Heart*. But they aren’t unique to Israel. In contrast to this, the *Kuzari* is completely devoted to Israel, unique to *Am Yisrael*. For this reason, it is *Kodesh Kodoshim*. Therefore, when my father, *Abba*, אבא first named the Yeshiva, the *Central Universal Yeshiva*, he required students to study the *Kuzari*. **There is absolutely no other way to properly learn *Emunah*.**”

The *Kuzari*, the works of the *Maharal*, the writings of Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, and *Mesillat Yesharim*, were among the books the *Rosh Yeshiva* advised me to learn when I asked him for guidance in charting a course of study. Except for the latter treatise, I had never encountered these texts during my Yeshiva years in America. They weren’t studied in the Torah world with which I was familiar. There, the learning focused solely on the understanding of *Gemara*. In many classes, Aggadic material was skipped.

The approach of the Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva was different. Here, the inner depths of Torah were studied alongside the exegesis of Halacha. In his book, *Even Shlema*, the Gaon of Vilna writes that, “The *Aggadot* which appear to be meaningless matters, G-d forbid, contain all of the hidden secrets.”²⁷ This type of learning was characteristic of the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*, which encompasses all of the Torah, the

27. *Even Shlema*, 8:26.

hidden, esoteric matters, and the revealed matters, in all of their wholeness.²⁸ This study of the deeper meanings of Torah is integral to the acquisition of true *Emunah*.

5. THE HIDDEN AND THE REVEALED

“Some people claim that the study of *Aggadah* and *Emunah* is not important,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “However, the Oral Torah includes the details of *Halacha*, and also *Aggadot* and *Midrashim*, which comprise the inner depths of Torah and *Emunah*. Obviously, the main portion of the day must be devoted to the study of *Halacha* and *Gemara*, and, together with this, the Gaon of Vilna emphasized the learning of *Midrashim*, because, ‘A treasure of Divine instruction is hidden in them’.”²⁷

“*Halacha* and *Aggadah*, and the inner understandings of Torah, exist side-by-side in the *Kedusha* of Torah – but they are not to be intermixed. On this, the *Chatam Sofer* has an incisive remark: One who mixes *Halacha* and *Aggadah* is like one who combines פְּלִיָּים (hybrids, or diverse mixtures.)”²⁹

“The elucidation of *Halacha* must be according to revealed, concrete, matters (נגלה). This is essential. However, no confrontational relationship exists between

28. See, *Orot HaTorah*, Ch.13:4. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook. Mosad HaRav Kook.

29. Responsa, Chotam Sofer, *Oruch Chaim*, End of Responsa 51.

Halacha and *Aggadah*, G-d forbid. There is a connection, an attachment, a reciprocal relationship. Like in hybrids – each component is *Kosher* by itself. Only their mixing is forbidden by the Torah. The statement of the *Chatam Sofer* doesn't represent a negation of the esoteric levels of Torah (נסתרות), nor of the conceptual, philosophical comprehensions of the Torah, which appear in the *Aggadah*. As if it were feasible to say that the Torah only includes dry *Halacha*! **It is impossible to separate oneself from the esoteric aspects of Torah, or from its spiritual, philosophical depths, and from the riches of Emunah which the Torah contains.**³⁰ One cannot attain a proper understanding of Torah through an approach to learning which divides the Torah's components into scattered pieces. *The Torah of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.*³¹ In its state of perfect wholeness, it restores the soul.³² **The Torah includes Halacha and Aggadah together.** Though they aren't to be intermixed, there's no negation in the words of the *Chatam Sofer* regarding deep inquiry into Torah thought. Furthermore, we have

30. *Orot*, Pg. 101. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook. "Our dear brothers, sages of Torah, and influential scholars – we too acted foolishly and sinned! We studied and researched the sources; we debated the fine points of Talmud and discovered new insights; we wrote and explained; but we forgot *Hashem* and His might. We failed to hear the voice of true prophets, to the exalted voice of our eternal sages, to the voice of the *Tzaddikim* and *Hasidim*, the sages of *Musar*, and the possessors of the secrets of Torah, who called out and proclaimed in the most strident of voices, that in the end, the river of Talmudic analysis would turn arid and dry, if the deep ocean waters of Kabbalah, and the Torah's inner understandings, weren't constantly drawn into the learning – the waters of the knowledge of *Hashem*, the pristine waters of pure faith which flow from our inner souls, and which stream forth from our life source."
31. Tehillim, 19:8.
32. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, Ch.5.

the words of the *Chotam Sofer* as they were passed down to my father, *Abba ל"צט*: ‘Anyone who openly reveals that he doesn’t believe in the secret side of Torah, is to be suspected that, secretly, he doesn’t believe in the revealed side of Torah as well.’”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed that the foundation of Torah study lies in the clear understanding of the true *Emunah* of Israel. Only in this light could we approach the Torah, and everything which surrounds it. Alongside the long hours of studying *Gemara* and *Halacha*, the students of Rav Tzvi Yehuda attended classes which explored the intricacies, nuances, and foundations of *Emunah*, the deep thought and philosophy of Israel. This course of study was not something mystical, Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed. On the contrary, the intrinsic bond between Torah and *Emunah* was clearly set forth in the words of the Mishna and the *Gemara*.

6. EMUNAH COMES BEFORE THE COMMANDMENTS

Once, I was visiting Rav Tzvi Yehuda in his house when a group of non-religious students came by to see the Rabbi. He invited them to sit in his study and learn something with him. He then opened his small blue, daily *Siddur*, and explained the meaning of the *Shema* to them. The order of the verses, he said, taught us that the foundation of all of the Torah’s commandments was the true understanding of *Emunah*.

In the second chapter of Mishna *Berachot*, a question is asked in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha: *Why does 'Shema' precede the section, 'And if you listen to...?'*³ In the order of our prayers, we say the verses of *Shema Yisrael* first, and then the paragraph which begins with the verse, *And if you listen*. These two sections are also separated in the Torah, in the Torah portions of *וְאֵתְּנֶנּוּ* and *עַקֵּב*.

“What’s the reason?” Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked. “Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha answers, *So that a person will first accept upon himself the yoke of G-d’s Kingdom, and afterwards take on the yoke of the mitzvot*”.³

“What is the meaning of accepting Hashem’s Kingdom?” Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked. “*Emunah*. In its true meaning, *Emunah* is accepting the yoke of Hashem’s Kingdom. This comes before the commandments, for the foundation of all the commandments is *Emunah*.”

The *Rosh Yeshiva* said that there were well-known perspectives on Torah which categorized Judaism as a religion of commandments. Clearly, Judaism does contain many *mitzvot*, but the essential factor is one’s orientation to them. Are they the sum total of Judaism? No. The essence of Judaism is not the *mitzvot*. Rather, its focus is on **Torah** and *mitzvot*. The Torah is the source and foundation of all the *mitzvot*. Within the Torah, *mitzvot* are to be found. But **Torah is much more than just the commandments.**

“As we mentioned, there are people who say that Judaism is a religion of practical observance, of practical Orthodox observance – ‘Orthopractice.’ This can lead to the dry emptiness of mechanical observance. However, the proper orientation is more enlightened than this. The observance of the *mitzvot* has to be grounded in Torah. The proper observance evolves from the true understanding of *Emunah* in Hashem. The acceptance of Hashem’s Kingdom precedes everything else. One must be very exacting with the language of the Mishna, as it says, **וְאַחַר כֵּן יִקַּבַּל עָלָיו עַל מִצְוֹת**, *And (only) afterwards take on the yoke of the mitzvot.*”

“The words in the Mishna are precisely stated.

Afterwards implies a need for patience. First, the proper method of learning, the proper approach and direction to Torah, must be made clear.” Then, Torah learning begins.

What is the acceptance of *Hashem's* Kingdom, which leads to the true path to Torah? Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that **the Kingdom of Hashem is established in the world through Clal Yisrael**. The nation of Israel is the historical, cosmological channel which brings the word of *Hashem* to the world. G-d's Kingdom appears in the world through the existence and life of *Clal Yisrael* – in this way, and no other.³³ **Thus, the true acceptance of Hashem's Kingdom demands an understanding of Israel's Divine role in the world.**

7. THE CHOSEN NATION

Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught that the proper approach to the Torah is to be found in the teaching of our Sages. From the Mishna, we come to the *Gemara*, where matters are clarified and explored to their depths. Rav Tzvi Yehuda pointed to a question of *Chazal*, in the name of *Rav*, which appears twice in the *Gemara*, in tractates *Nedarim*, and *Baba Metzia*³⁴:

Why is the Land lost?

“*Rav* is described by the title, *The Rav of all the Jews*

33. See, the Maharal, *Tiferet Yisrael*, End of Ch.17: “The accepting of *Hashem's* Kingdom (at Sinai) is not meant for each individual, but, rather, for *Clal Yisrael*; for *Hashem* doesn't single out the individual in saying, *I am the Lord, your G-d*, – this is meant for all of the nation... for *Hashem's* Kingship isn't over the individual, since there isn't a kingship without a nation....”
34. *Nedarim* 81A. *Baba Metzia* 85A, 85B.

in *Galut*.³⁵ Rav and Rabbi Yochanon were two outstanding students of *Rebbe*. When there is a disagreement between them, the *Halacha* is always according to Rabbi Yochanon,³⁶ who was the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Eretz Yisrael*. Rav brought the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* to Babylon. The majority of Jews were then outside the Land, and from the Torah center of Israel, Rav brought the learning to *Bavel*. The treasure of Torah in the Babylonian Talmud is derived from this source of Torah in *Eretz Yisrael*.³⁷

“The *Gemara* states: *A question was asked of the Sages, the Sages of Kedusha and truth, and they didn't know how to explain. It was asked of the Prophets, and they too were unable to explain.*”

“This is truly something intriguing. The *Gemara* informs us that there was a particular matter which the Sages and Prophets didn't know how to explain. *Until they asked the Almighty Himself*. The question was taken from a verse in *Jeremiah: Why is the Land lost?*”³⁸

“The meaning of lost, אֲבָדָה, in this verse is “*Galut*”, (exile) as is written in the verse, וְאֲבָדְתֶם מְהֵרָה מֵעַל הָאָרֶץ, *And you will quickly perish from the Land.*³⁹ Seemingly, there isn't a need for this question, for we know that the First Temple was destroyed for the sins of idol worship,

35. Betza 9A, 9B. See Rashi, beginning, ‘And Rav Yehuda says...’

36. Betza 4A, 4B.

37. The Babylonian Talmud is founded upon the Mishna, which was compiled in *Eretz Yisrael*.

38. Jeremiah, 9:11.

39. Deut. 11:17.

sexual misconduct, and murder; and that the Second Temple was destroyed for senseless hatred.⁴⁰ However, Rav's question is a deeper, more exacting inquiry,⁴¹ whose understanding is illuminated, specifically, in the Oral Law."

*"Why is the Land lost? Hashem provides the answer: Because they have forsaken My Torah."*⁴²

How were we to understand this, Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked? Didn't they learn Torah and practice *mitzvot* at that time? A careful survey of history reveals that Torah was practiced and learned in all generations. A richness of Torah scholars and Torah erudition existed in every age. There were many more students of Torah then, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, than there are in our time. Who could count all of the names which appear in the *Gemara*? The Rambam, in the forward to the *Mishna Torah*, states that in every generation, thousands, and hundreds of thousands, were engaged in Torah study. Out of this dedication to Torah came the overflowing richness of the Oral Law, as manifested in the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds. Throughout all of our history, the Torah was dynamically alive in our midst. If so, how are we to understand the Almighty's answer, *Because they have forsaken My Torah*? The *Gemara* responds, *Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav, they didn't say the blessing before learning Torah.*³⁴

"They occupied themselves with Torah in all of its greatness," Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained. "In all of its study and *Lamdanut*, in all of its intensity and breadth, but **they failed in their approach to Torah**. It wasn't with

40. Yoma 9B.

41. See Introduction to *Tiferet Yisrael* of the Maharal.

42. Jeremiah, 9:11-12.

the blessing which must precede all Torah learning.⁴³
And what is this blessing?”

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים
*Blessed art Thou, Hashem our G-d, who has chosen us from all of the
nations, and given us His Torah.*⁴⁴

“They learned and practiced Torah, but not out of its national character, not out of our national pride, the pride of, *Who has chosen us from all the nations*. This is the blessing which must precede all Torah learning. **They were industrious learners and masters of Pilpul, (Talmudic dialectics) they were ultra-Orthodox in their religious observance, but they didn't approach the Torah from its national character, and for this, the Land of Israel was lost.** When you come to learn *Gemara* and *Tosefot* without being filled to the core of your being with our pride in being a Divinely created nation, chosen by *Hashem* from amongst all of the nations, there is a danger of national destruction.”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized this *Gemara* for a reason. He wanted us to know that **there is a proper way to learn Torah, and to practice Judaism, and a misguided way.** He was teaching us something which seemed revolutionary and new, yet was really the age-old tradition of our Sages.

43. “Rather, certainly, they always labored in Torah, and because of this, the Sages and Prophets were perplexed over why the Land was lost, until *Hashem* Himself explained the answer, which He knew from it's deepest sources, that they did not say the Blessing over the Torah.” *The Ran*, on Nedarim 81A.
44. Rabbi Hamnuna, in the *Gemara*, calls the Blessing over the Torah, *Asher bachar bonu*, the most exalted of all the blessings. Berachot 11B.

Many times in the course of a year, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would return to this basic foundation of a true understanding of Torah. **The Torah was not just given to individuals. It was given to a nation.** A Divinely created and appointed nation, which was distinguished from all other nations and peoples by its Divine selection. When seen in its truest light, **the Torah is first and foremost the constitution of the Israeli nation, and, contained within this, is a code of individual conduct and laws.** But when the Torah is studied from a perspective which focuses on a person's individual service of *Hashem*, the national character of Torah is lost. The individual is stressed, and the national, communal fabric of Israel is threatened. Disunity appears in the nation when individuals, or groups with common interests, place their own needs before the needs of the *Clal*. When this occurs, the Jewish people no longer deserve the fundamental requirement for national independence and sovereignty – a national land.

The *Gemara*, in tractate *Yoma* illustrates this poignantly in its examination of an incident which occurred in the *Beit HaMikdash*, a short time before the Second Temple's destruction. The *Gemara* relates that during a race of *Kohanim* up the ramp to the Temple altar, to determine who would win the right to perform the first morning service, one of the *Kohanim* stabbed a fellow *Kohen* in the heart with a knife. When the father of the dying young *Kohen* arrived on the scene, his first concern was not to save his dying son – rather, he was concerned for the knife, which would turn ritually impure if it was not removed from his son before he died. Because of an improper orientation to Torah, the laws of ritual purity were safeguarded more conscientiously than the sanctity of human life!⁴⁵

When the Jewish people preoccupy themselves with the ritual observance of precepts, and not on the service of *Hashem* by the *Clal*,

45. Yoma 23A, and 23B.

the Torah is deemed forsaken, and the unity and health of the nation is shattered. Thus, our Sages tell us, in Divine punishment for ignoring the national, communal, aspect of Torah, the Land is lost. **Exile is not only an expulsion from the Land of Israel; it causes the destruction of our nationhood, and distorts the essential character of our Torah.**

This perspective on Israel and Torah was much different than what I had learned in America. There, the accent was on the Torah – it was the Torah which made Israel so special. However, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Mercaz HaRav* in Jerusalem was saying something different – **the nation of Israel is special in and of itself, a unique Divine creation which Hashem had formed and chose for Himself. Only afterwards, to complement Israel's Divine uniqueness, was the Torah given to us.** As the Torah blessing says, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ, **Who chose us from all of the nations**, and afterwards, וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ, *Gave us His Torah.*

Once, a student wrote to Rav Tzvi Yehuda and asked if a person should learn in a Yeshiva where a national awareness is fostered, along with Torah learning, like in *Mercaz HaRav*, or to learn in a place where only Torah is studied, without any “external distraction.”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered that this type of thinking was distorted and false, stemming from a lack of true Torah comprehension. **National awareness is not something external which is brought into the Yeshiva from outside. National awareness lies at the very essence of Torah!**⁴⁶

“The nationhood of *Am Yisrael*, of *Am segula*,⁴⁷ of the *Kingdom of Kohanim* and an *Am Kadosh*,⁴⁸ is a

46. For a detailed discussion of this topic, see the Chapter Eight, Return to Zion, Section 2, of this book.

47. Deut. 7:6.

48. Exodus, 19:6.

Torah commandment, in accordance with our teachers, the Rambam,⁴⁹ and the Ramban,⁵⁰ to conquer and rule over the Land of Israel in perpetuity.”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that this commandment, to establish and maintain the nation of Israel in *Eretz Yisrael*, is the foundation of all of the truth, of all of the Torah.⁴⁶

“All Torah learning, all observance of Torah, all greatness in Torah, of every Rosh Yeshiva, and every Yeshiva student, must begin with the knowledge that Hashem chooses His nation Israel with love.⁵¹ Only from the foundation of, *Who chose us from all of the nations*, comes the true understanding of, *And gave us His Torah*. In this way alone.”

“The key to understanding the question, *Why is the Land lost?* lies in our understanding what happens when the study of Torah neglects the historical, cosmological, and practical foundation that *Hashem* chose His nation with love – all of the nation, and not just elite individuals and *Tzaddikim*. When the detailed learning of Torah doesn’t emanate from the recognition of Israel’s Divine,

49. “What is a *Milchemet Mitzvah*? The war against the Seven Nations.” Rambam, Laws of Kings, 5:1. There, the *Kesef Mishna* says, based on Sotah 44B, that this is, “Joshua’s war to conquer *Eretz Yisrael*.” And see, *Mishpat Kohan*, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Page 349, “The war waged over, and the conquest of, *Eretz Yisrael*, is termed a *Milchemet Mitzvah*, as explained in the words of our teacher, (the Rambam) here, in Chapter 5:1, that the war against the Seven Nations is a *Milchemet Mitzvah*.”
50. Ramban, Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Commandment 4.
51. Morning Blessing of the *Shema*, *Ahavah Rabbah*.

national creation – this is what *Hashem* calls a, *Forsaking of Torah*. There is no other way to learn and to observe Torah except through, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנוֹ, from the recognition of the Divine creation of all of *Am Yisrael*. If one comes to the detailed learning of Torah without this encompassing recognition, there is a danger of perishing from the Land, for the individual, and for the congregation as a whole.”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized at the outset of our learning that all Torah study must be founded on this proper understanding of *Emunah*.

Summary

EMUNAH

1. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook emphasized that there are two fundamentals of Torah which need to be strengthened in our time: *Emunah* and *Ahavah*.
2. *Emunah* is the greatest learning, the greatest wisdom, the profoundest thought, the broadest approach to the world, encompassing all of man, and all of the universe.
3. The uniqueness of the *Mercaz HaRav* Yeshiva is in the study of *Emunah*.
4. Just as there are levels of Torah knowledge, there are levels of *Emunah*. Situations of false *Emunah* occur when the foundations of Judaism are not properly comprehended.
5. The Spies lacked complete *Emunah* in their refusal to make *Aliyah* to Israel.
6. Today also, there are believing Jews who lack complete *Emunah* in regard to *Aliyah* and Israel.
7. The Gaon of Vilna repeatedly stressed the importance of learning *Emunah*.
8. The Gaon of Vilna emphasized the vital importance of studying the *Kuzari*, a book which contains the essential understanding of Israel's *Emunah* and Torah.
9. The *Kuzari* is *Kodesh Kodoshim* because it is devoted exclusively to *Am Yisrael*.
10. To acquire true *Emunah* one's learning must embrace the entire realm of Aggadic literature and their commentaries. Alongside the detailed study of *Gemara* and *Halacha*, a true course of learning

includes the study of the *Kuzari*, *Mesillat Yesharim*, the writings of the Maharal, and the works of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

11. The *Chatam Sofer* said that, "Anyone who openly reveals that he doesn't believe in the secret side of Torah is to be suspected that, secretly, he doesn't believe in the revealed side of Torah as well."
12. *Emunah* is the necessary prerequisite to observing the *mitzvot*.
13. The essence of Judaism is not the *mitzvot*, but the Torah which encompasses them.
14. The true acceptance of *Hashem's* Kingdom demands an understanding of *Clal Yisrael*.
15. When one comes to learn *Gemara* and *Tosefot* without being filled to the core of one's being with our pride in being a Divinely created NATION, chosen by *Hashem* from amongst all of the other nations, there is a danger of national destruction.
16. The Torah was not just given to individuals. It was given to the nation. The Torah is first and foremost the constitution of the Israeli nation.
17. National awareness is not something external, which is brought into the Yeshiva from outside. National awareness lies at the very essence of Torah.
18. All Torah learning, all observance of Torah, all greatness in Torah, of every *Rosh Yeshiva* and every Yeshiva student, must begin with the knowledge that *Hashem* chooses ALL OF HIS NATION ISRAEL with love.

Chapter Two

CLAL YISRAEL

1. THE CLAL¹

The *Gemara* teaches us that the focus of true Torah study lies not only on the **individual Jew**, and the commandments incumbent upon him, but, just as significantly, on the Divine relationship between *Hashem* and the **nation of Israel as a whole**.² This demands a precise understanding of *Am Yisrael*, and of the often-used expression, *Clal Yisrael*. The concepts of Israeli nationhood, and of *Clal Yisrael*, were among the most basic teachings we learned at the Yeshiva. **The Torah of Eretz Yisrael is distinguished by this emphasis on the Clal, and on the understanding that the greatest sanctification of Hashem in the world comes through Clal Yisrael – and not through the individual Jew in his private worship of Hashem.**³ Our return in recent times to sovereign nationhood in the Land of Israel has restored the true national character of the Jewish people, and of the Torah, which had been missing for nearly two thousand years.⁴ Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized that raising awareness from a person's individual service of *Hashem* to the broader service of the *Clal* can only be achieved

1. Based on, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, Talmud Torah* 1:6.
2. Nedarim 81A. Baba Metzia 85A. And see, Chapter One of this book, Section 7.
3. *Orot HaTorah*, 13:7. Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.
4. Berachot 8A. *Since the day the Temple was destroyed, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, has nothing in the world but four cubits of Halacha alone.* And see, *Orot, Orot HaTechiya*, 7. And, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, לתקף קדושתו של יום עצמאותנו, Pg.179. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook.

through the proper comprehension of just who we are as a nation. **Understanding the relationship of Hashem to Clal Yisrael, is the key to true Emunah.**

“Occasionally, people ask what is the meaning of the *Clal* כלל? They claim that the *Clal* is the sum total of individual components, or a gathering of all the individual parts of the whole. There aren’t proper words to reject this conception. This is a materialistic viewpoint, which lacks intellectual depth.”

“The understanding of the *Clal* is not the gathering together of the individual parts of the nation. Rather, the *Clal* is a Divine creation, a fundamental Divine formation which reveals itself, superficially, in its physical aspect, in a multiplication of parts. This understanding is vitally connected to the foundations of *Emunah*, and to its most essential principles.”

The general, mistaken understanding of a *Clal* can be compared to a partnership, where each partner invests his money in some common venture. The partnership exists for each individual partner, by offering a greater profit through a greater investment pool. The partnership lasts only as long as the venture continues, and never takes on a life of its own. It exists only to advance the needs of the individual, like the governments and societies of the world.⁵

The true understanding of the *Clal* is different, however. Its existence precedes and encompasses each individual Jew. **The Clal is the eternal soul and embodiment of the nation of Israel.** As opposed to

5. For an in-depth analysis of the *Clal*, see the publication, *Israel and the Nations, Clal and Prat*, Yeshiva Mercaz HaRav. Iyar, 5743.

the partnership, which exists for the individual; **in Am Yisrael, the individual takes his meaning and purpose from the Clal. Just as an organ of the body exists for its task in the body as a whole, so too does an individual derive his purpose from the Clal as a whole.** The hand, or the brain, or the heart, only have meaning in relation to the health and life of the body. They exist for the body and not for themselves. So too with the life of each individual Jew. He exists for the nation of Israel; not only for himself.

One readily understands that the sum of the body's organs don't constitute a person. His being encompasses and transcends his individual organs. In the same manner, **Clal Yisrael transcends the sum of each individual Jew, and has a being and life of its own.**

This concept of the *Clal* is essential to a proper understanding of the nation of Israel, of Torah, and of the service of *Hashem*.⁶ An example of the *Clal's* elevation over the life of the individual can be seen in the Israeli army.

In Israel, the army brings everyone together in one common goal. Jews from all different parts of the country, who came to Israel from all over the world, who have different backgrounds, languages, and political views, meet together in the army, and put all of their individual differences aside to join in the service of the *Clal*. Every soldier has his own private belief about this issue or that, but during his duty in *Tzahal*, his personal feelings are subordinated to the overall needs of the *Clal*. A very basic example is when the army has a battle to fight. Each soldier has his particular role to play in the battle, but the most important factor is the overall success of the army.

6. See the Maharal, *Gevurot Hashem*, Chap. 53. "For first, it is incumbent to remove the disbelief (in the *Clal*.) before anything else, and afterwards, to teach everyone, according to his understanding. For as long as there is a denial (of the *Clal*.) he will not come to recognize the truth."

So too, in *Clal Yisrael*, the individual serves the higher interests of the nation. **The greater a Jew's connection to Clal Yisrael, the greater his connection to the G-d of Israel.**⁷ For the most exalted service of *Hashem* comes through the nation,⁸ and not through the individual Jew. And the healthiest expression of this national service is seen in the life of the nation of Israel in *Eretz Yisrael*.⁹

7. *Beit David*, Chapter Six. The *Gaon*, Rabbi David Tevel, author of the *Nahalat David*, writes: "The sin of dividing and disuniting the Jews of *Am Yisrael* is absolute *Kefirah* (the denial of G-d)... in His unity, may His name be blessed, for the fact of His unity obliges the whole *Kadosh* Israelite nation to be unified in love and brotherhood, to be bound together, cleaved as one man, without any disunity, for just as the Creator is one... similarly, in parallel to this, the holy Israelite nation, whose souls emanate from this source of unity, must unite and cleave one to the other, more than the unification of the body, which is composed of many organs... for the unity of the holy Israelite nation testifies to His blessed unity. And for this reason, the sin of causing disunity (*Machloket*) is readily understandable, for this is absolute idol worship, since the disunity which comes from argument is the opposite of unity, and testifies that he has no portion in the G-d of Israel." Also, Rambam, Laws of Tshuva, 3:11: "A person who separates himself from the community, even if he does not commit a transgression, but only keeps apart from the Congregation of Israel, does not perform religious precepts together with the nation, behaves indifferently when they are in distress, does not observe their fasts, but goes his own way, as if he were one of the gentiles and did not belong to the Jewish people – such a person has no portion of the World to Come." And see, the *Hagada of Pesach*, of the Maharal, on the evil son: "Since he removed himself from the *Clal*, he denies a principle of our faith."
8. See Chapter 2, Sections 2 and 3, of this Book. And see, Responsa of the *Rama*, Rav Moshe Iserles, Response 83; "That all of the needs of the *Tzibur* are *mitzvot*, and are comparable to the study of Torah, and just as the study of Torah is greater than all of the other precepts, so too, the involvement in the needs of the *Tzibur* is the greatest of all the precepts". Based on Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, 5:1, *One who is involved in the needs of the congregation is comparable to one who is involved in Torah study*. See also, *Shulchan Orach HaRav*, of the *Baal HaTanya*, Rebbe Schneur Zalman, Chapter 70:4, that the person who deals with the finances of the congregation, need not interrupt his work for any other precept, including prayer and the recital of the *Shema*.
9. Zohar, Emor, 93A.B.

The concept of the *Clal* seems very remote and abstract when first encountered. Where can this higher service of *Hashem* by the *Clal* be seen? What did Rav Kook mean when he said that the significance of our lives lay in our connection to the *Clal*, and not only in our individual lives?

The ingathering of the exiles to Israel is an excellent example of the higher service of the Clal. The individual precepts a person performs are important, necessary, and praiseworthy deeds. However, the ingathering of the entire nation in Israel, aside from the precept itself, is a fulfillment of prophecy which brings about a great Sanctification of *Hashem* in the world: *And I will sanctify My great Name, which was profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord G-d, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own Land.*¹⁰

Similarly, a Jew's winning a Nobel Prize for medicine is a commendable achievement which benefits the world. Yet this is also something a gentile can do. Contrasting this, **the building of a flourishing Jewish society in Israel, not only wins respect in the world, it testifies to the truth of the Torah and prophets, who proclaimed the nation's future rebirth in the Land:** *And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and have brought you up out of your graves, and I shall put My spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own Land: then you shall know that I have spoken and performed it, says the Lord.*¹¹

2. AFFILIATION WITH THE CLAL.

When an individual connects his life to the *Clal*, he blinds himself

10. Ezekiel, 36:23-24.

11. Ibid, 37:13-14.

to the eternal existence of the Israeli nation. Our Sages point to this when they say that Yaacov Avinu didn't die.¹² The *Gemara* explains that Yaacov lives on in his descendants, in the eternal life of the *Clal*.¹³ His name, *Yisrael*, the name of *Clal Yisrael*, indicates his great stature in encompassing all of the nation. Because of their absolute identification with *Clal Yisrael*, *Tzaddikim* are said to live on after their death.¹⁴ **Through his attachment to the Clal, a man can elevate himself above the limitations of his passing existence to the infinite life of the Clal.**

Our Sages in *Avot* tell us: *Let all those who labor for the Tzibur, labor for the Sake of Heaven, for then the merit of the forefathers aids them, and their righteousness endures forever. And as for you, I (Hashem) will bestow on you great reward, as if you had accomplished it all.*¹⁵

Normally, a man's work ends with his death. But when, for the sake of *Hashem*, and not for his own private interests, he devotes himself to the benefit of the *Clal*, his service is uplifted to an eternal righteousness. His being becomes merged with the *Clal*, and with its eternal life. He has raised himself to the higher realm of the *Clal*, which isn't limited by the boundaries of time. He and his work continue in the life of the *Clal*. His reward is not merely his personal recompense for the small part he accomplished, rather, it is the reward for all of the work of the *Clal*, from Avraham Avinu until the End of Days.

This transformation from the boundaries of individualism, to the infinite life of the *Clal*, is exemplified by the lives of our forefathers.

12. Rashi, Genesis, 49:33.

13. Taanit 5B.

14. Berachot 18A.

15. Avot, 2:2.

Avraham said, *I am dust and ashes*.¹⁶ Moshe Rabenu and Aharon said, *And what are we?*¹⁷ David said, *I am a worm and not a man*.¹⁸ They said these things, not because their lives lacked importance in their eyes, but because their personal lives had no significance in relation to their dedication to the *Clal*. Their true greatness comes not in their personal lives, but in their identification with all of the nation.

With a proper understanding of the Clal, the service of Hashem becomes, not only a private observance of Torah and precepts, but the national observance of Torah as well.¹⁹

“When one understands the very absolute nature and value of *Clal Yisrael*”, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, “One comes to a life of, *מִסִּירַת נֶפֶשׁ Miserut Nefesh*, (self-sacrifice) for Torah, for the nation, and for the Land of Israel – all from the attachment to the *Kedusha* of *Clal Yisrael*.”

For me, this understanding came as a startling insight into Judaism which needed learning, and re-learning, and a constantly renewed commitment to its practice before it became clear. A Jew isn't just an individual person – he is a part of a *Clal*. More than that, **the main service of Hashem is by the Clal, by the nation as a whole, and not by the individual man, as it says: THIS NATION I have formed for**

16. Genesis, 18:27.

17. Exodus, 16:7.

18. Tehillim, 22:7.

19. See the commentary, *Mishnat Eliahu*, of the Gaon of Vilna, on Mishna, Berachot, 5:1. *So that they will turn their hearts toward their father in heaven*. “This means that it is prohibited to have personal intentions when reciting the *Shemona Esrei* prayer; but, rather, one must pray that **all of Israel** achieve maximum fulfillment, and the Congregation of Israel will be completed (in the heavens) above.”

Myself; THEY shall declare My praise.²⁰ This recognition leads to an entirely different orientation to Judaism and Torah. It leads to a perspective which shifts the focus of Torah from the individual, to an identification with the whole nation, and to all of the *mitzvot* incumbent on it – including living in Israel, and helping to restore our nation in our Land.²¹

Three times each day, in the *Shemona Esrei* prayer, a Jew prays to *Hashem* to gather the Jews dispersed throughout the world back to Israel; to rebuild Jerusalem; to restore the Kingdom of David; and to restore the Divine worship in the Temple. We join the *Shemona Esrei* prayer with a supplication and blessing over our *Geula: Blessed art Thou, Hashem, the Redeemer of Israel*. At the conclusion of every *Pesach Seder*, and of the final *Yom Kippur* prayer, we pray that the coming year will find us all in Jerusalem. On the day of our wedding, before the ceremony is complete, we recite verses from *Tehillim*, vowing to set Jerusalem above our chiefest joy.²² The *Amora, Rabbah*, in tractate *Shabbat*, brings a list of questions a man is asked when he enters into judgment in the World of Souls. One of the questions is: *Did you yearn for the Salvation?* The *Ran* explains this as a yearning for the fulfillment, **in one's lifetime**, of the prophecies of redemption.²³ In line with this, before going to sleep at night, we express our yearning for Salvation, **לִישׁוּעָה קְרִיבָה ה'**. **The yearning for redemption, for the return of the Jewish nation to Israel, and to its true Torah life, is a major tenet of Judaism.**

20. Isaiah, 43:21.

21. *Orot, Eretz Yisrael*, 2: "For the person who perceives only the superficial, revealed (aspect of Judaism) will feel that he lacks nothing essential in his not having the Land of Israel, the Kingdom of Israel, and all of the aspects of the completely built nation."

22. *Tehillim*, 137:6.

23. *Shabbat* 31A. See Rashi, there. And, *Chidushei HaRan*.

Though redemption is central to Jewish life and Torah, because of our inability to act on our yearnings for salvation throughout our long exile from our Land, a passivity arose regarding the fulfillment of our hopes and prayers.²⁴ Redemption was relegated to *Hashem*. The Almighty would bring the redemption Himself – our participation was restricted to prayer. However, a closer look at the *Shemona Esrei* reveals something different. Included in this deep expression of our most essential desires and needs are prayers for knowledge, for *Tshuva*, for forgiveness from our sins, for sustenance, and for health. We pray for these things, but our participation in their fulfillment doesn't end with our requests. To acquire knowledge, we open books and study. To attain repentance, we correct our improper deeds with a new standard of good behavior. To obtain food and a livelihood, we seek employment and work. And when we are sick, G-d forbid, we don't merely pray – we go to the doctor and do what he prescribes in order to get well. There is no passivity in Torah. **A Jew's life is comprised of active commands.** Our prayers for the ingathering of the exiles, and for the rebuilding of Jerusalem aren't any different. **The Gaon of Vilna emphasized this point by urging his students to make Aliyah to Israel, to build settlements, and to play an active role in bringing redemption to Israel.**²⁵ And the Rambam states, in his *Letter Concerning Forced Conversion*: “The obligation to fulfill the commandments is not dependent on the coming of the *Moshiach*. Rather, we are obligated to busy ourselves with Torah and precepts, and to strive to fulfill everything we can....”

On the verse, *Thou shall arise and have mercy upon Zion, for it is time to favor her, for the set time has come. For Thy servants desire her stones and cherish her very dust,*²⁶ the *Kuzari* states, “This means that

24. See, *Kuzari*, 2:23,24.

25. *Koi HaTor*, End of Chapter 5, written by HaRav Hillel of Shklov.

26. *Tchillim*, 102:14,15.

Jerusalem will only be rebuilt when Israel yearns for it to such an extent that they embrace her stones and dust."²⁷

Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized that, along with the Torah's focus on individual repentance, is the much greater emphasis of the prophets, and of our prayers, on the *Tshuva* of the nation as a whole, which occurs when the Jewish people return to the Land of Israel, and to our true Torah life.²⁸

This same understanding of Torah and Divine service, and its concern with the nation, is emphasized in the book, *Mesillat Yesharim*, by Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato. This classic work is familiar to almost everyone with a background in Yeshiva learning. The *Nazir*, HaRav David Cohen, ל"צ said that, in our generation, the proper approach to learn *Mesillat Yesharim* was to start with Chapter Nineteen. In this chapter, the divisions of *Hasidut* (righteous behavior) are explained in all of their many manifestations, up to the highest expression of *Hasidut*:

"This saintly attitude has been elucidated in *Tanna DeVe Eliahu*, may his memory be for a blessing, in Chapter Four: *Every Sage in Israel who possesses the words of Torah according to their true understanding, and grieves over the honor of the Holy One Blessed Be He, and for the honor of Israel all of his days, and yearns and feels pain for the honor of Jerusalem and for the Temple, and for the swift flowering of Salvation and the ingathering of the exiles, he merits Divine Inspiration in his words.... A Hasid of this kind, aside from the Divine service he performs in carrying out the precepts with this motivation, must certainly feel constant and actual pain over the Exile, and over the*

27. Kuzari 5:27.

28. Deut. 30:1-8. And see, The Writings of Rav Alkali, Pgs. 298; 326; 538-539. And *Orot HaTshuva*, Ch. 17:1, and 2; HaRav Avraham Yitzhak KaCohen Kook. See also, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, המדינה כהתקיימות חזון הגאולה, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook.

*destruction of Jerusalem, because of their tendency to minimize the honor of the Blessed One. And he will long for the Redemption, so that the honor of the Blessed One may be raised.... We see then, that we are obligated in this matter, and we cannot restrain ourselves because of our inadequate strength, as we have learned, 'The work is not yours to complete, but you are not free to abstain from it...' (Avot, 2:16) **The honor of Hashem can grow only with the redemption of Israel, and with the growth of Israel's honor; for each one, in reality, is dependent upon the other.***"

Mesillat Yesharim emphasizes that the righteous Jew isn't to be satisfied with his private performance of precepts. The heart of his service of *Hashem* must be the deeply-felt longing for the redemption of Israel, and for the redemption of *Hashem's* honor, which is disgraced by Israel's existence in *Galut*. The truly righteous man feels actual pain over the Diaspora, and is devoted to the goal of Israel's national rectification, through the restoration of the Jewish people in our Land. *Mesillat Yesharim* continues:

"It befits every *Hasid* to be motivated in his actions by a concern for the good of his entire generation, a desire to bring merit to them and to protect them... For the Holy One Blessed Be He does not desire the destruction of the wicked. Rather, it is a *mitzvah* upon the *Hasidim* to seek their merit and to atone for them... **and to speak in defense of his entire generation.**"

Mesillat Yesharim continues: "These are the true shepherds of Israel, whom the Holy One Blessed He truly desires, who sacrifice themselves for His sheep, who seek and strive for their peace and well-being in every possible way, and who always stand in the breach to pray for them, to nullify stern decrees, and to open the gates of blessing for them."²⁹

29. *Mesillat Yesharim*, Chapter 19.

Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook personified this teaching. The Yeshiva he founded in Jerusalem was devoted to building *Talmidei Chachamin* who could meet the challenges facing our nation, as we returned home to Zion. During the years that Rav Tzvi Yehuda was the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Mercaz HaRav*, the Yeshiva was the spiritual center for the rebuilding of Israel, not only for its role in clarifying the proper Torah approach to the *Geula* which is unfolding in our time, and to teaching a love for all of our people, but in being the catalyst for the establishment of settlements and Torah institutions all over the country – **not through the work of other people, but by students of the Yeshiva.** The people who brought Jewish settlement and Torah back to Judea and Samaria, to places like Bet-El, Shilo, Elon Moreh, Ofra, Gush Etzion, Kiriath Arba, and Hebron, to name just a few, were students of Rav Tzvi Yehuda.

The journey from the Torah's, *Four cubits of Halacha*, in *Galut*,⁴ to the very real mountains and valleys of *Torat Eretz Yisrael*, presented a challenge to all of us at the Yeshiva. First, one had to understand the meaning of true *Emunah*. Then one had to elevate one's perspective from that of the individual, to the higher, encompassing point of view of the *Clal*. And then one had to translate this new understanding into deeds, through the study of Torah in all of its encompassing wholeness, and through the down-to-earth work of rebuilding the nation, which is a natural consequence of this learning.

Fortunately, we had the example of Rav Tzvi Yehuda to guide us. He spent his days editing his father's writings, teaching classes, overseeing the Yeshiva's management, and being actively involved in the day-to-day life of the nation and State, whether in matters of settlement, *Aliyah*, the Chief Rabbinate, education, community issues, or foreign and military affairs. In addition to his students, and the stream of people who came for advice, the highest leaders of the Israeli government were frequent guests in his house. Students and

Rabbis who knew him intimately, testified that in his devotion to *Clal Yisrael*, Rav Tzvi Yehuda had no private life at all.

An occurrence toward the end of his life illustrates the Rabbi's great concern for the nation. At a point in his illness, doctors made the decision to amputate his leg. Rav Tzvi Yehuda received the news calmly, and requested the doctors not to use any anesthesia during the operation. His father, he said, had refused anesthesia when he had been operated on, because it disorients the mind, and interferes with one's attachment to *Hashem*.³⁰ The physicians were alarmed at his insistence, but Rav Tzvi Yehuda promised them he wouldn't disturb their work, or move during the operation. When they cut through his tissue and bone, not a sound escaped from his lips. True to his word, he didn't move at all. No one could understand how the traumatic procedure didn't seem to affect him in the least. Later, when he was recovering in his hospital bed, he hinted at the answer.

“What disturbs me,” he said, “are the problems of *Clal Yisrael*.”³¹

3. THE WAR AGAINST THE SADDUCEES

The Rambam writes in the *Laws of Tshuva* that someone who separates himself from *Clal Yisrael* has no share in the World To

30. Rambam, *Sefer HaMitzvot*, Positive Command 6, “To cleave to *Hashem*, as it says, *To Him thou shall cleave*. (Undergoing surgery without anesthesia was a decision which Rav Tzvi Yehuda made for himself. It is not required by *Halacha*. Ed.)

31. See the Journal, *Ituri Kohanim*, Issue 53, P.45. Yeshiva Ateret Cohanim, Related by Rav Zion Towil.

Come.³² Rav Tzvi Yehuda used the example of the Sadducees to illustrate this tragedy of detachment from the *Clal*.

During the time of our early Sages, a traumatic war was waged against the Sadducees, who misunderstood the wholeness of Torah, and denied the Oral Law. They claimed that an individual could volunteer to bring a *Korbon Tamid*, the sacrifice reserved for the *Tzibur* as a whole, *Twice a day, an Oleh Tamid*.³³ This is a communal offering, and not a private sacrifice. No individual is ever allowed to bring such a *Korbon*.

“This is a congregational offering of all *Clal Yisrael*,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized. “**Tzaddikim and sinners together.**”

No individual *Tzaddik*, no matter how *Kadosh* he might be, can bring this *Korbon* for the *Clal*.

“Transgressors also belong to *Clal Yisrael*,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. He quoted a *Gemara* to explain:

*Every congregational fast which doesn't include transgressors, isn't a fast.*³⁴ Our Sages learn this from the *Ketoret* (incense) which has to include the spice חלבנה.³⁵ Even though it had an evil odor, *If one of the spices is missing, he is deserving of death.*³⁵

This understanding of the *Clal*, and its preeminence over the life of the individual, perhaps finds its noblest expression with Moshe Rabenu.³⁶

32. Rambam, Laws of Repentance, 3:11.

33. Numbers, 28:3.

34. Kritot 6B.

35. Ibid.

36. See, *Avne Miluim*, HaRav Aryeh Leib HaCohen, in the Introduction of the

The story of the golden calf is familiar to everyone. Shortly after the giving of the Torah to the newly formed nation of *Yisrael*, a small portion of the people participated in the sin of the golden calf.³⁷ *Hashem* sent Moshe down from Mt. Sinai with the words, *Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may burn against them, and that I may consume them; and I will make out of thee a great nation.*³⁸

Here is where we see Moshe's true greatness, in his selfless concern for the *Clal*. He answers *Hashem*: *Yet, now, if Thou will forgive their sin, and if not, blot me I pray Thee out of Thy book which Thou has written.*³⁹

Moshe Rabenu understood that the existence of Am Yisrael depends on the Clal, and not on individuals, not even on the greatest of Tzaddikim.⁴⁰ Moshe can be erased from the book, but the *Clal* must survive. The *Kedusha* of the *Clal* is greater than the *Kedusha* of individual *Tzaddikim*.⁴¹ This is true even if there are blatant sinners in the *Clal*. Even if a golden calf is worshipped – the *Kedusha* of the *Clal* persists. Moshe Rabenu's death would be a severe loss to the nation, but something which must inevitably occur. In contrast, the destruction of the nation would be a desecration of *Hashem* in the world, as Moshe says, *Wherefore should Mitzrayim speak, and say, In an evil hour did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth.*⁴²

Mahari Enzel to Part 2, Pg. 10.

37. Exodus, 32:28. *There fell of the people that day about three thousand men.*
38. *Ibid*, 32:10.
39. *Ibid*, 32:32.
40. *Kuzari*, 2:56. "They (the Jewish people) did not derive their exalted position from Moshe, but, rather, Moshe received his high position for their sake." Also, *Bcrachot* 32A.
41. *Orot, Orot Yisrael*, 3:3. See also, *Chesed L'Avraham*, by Rabbi Avraham Azuli; *Fountain* 2, River 52.
42. Exodus, 32:12.

This recognition of Israel's true essence as a Clal lay behind Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook's understanding of secular Zionism. He saw, in the return of the Jewish people to Israel, a return of health to the *Clal*. Rav Kook saw beyond the individual lives of the non-observant Zionists, to the broader perspective of the return of the Jewish people to Zion. This was a fulfillment of Divine prophecy, and the sanctification of *Hashem*, as set forth by the prophet Ezekiel: *And the nations shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord G-d, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.*¹⁰ How does this *Kiddush Hashem* occur? The verse continues: **For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own Land.**¹⁰

Whether they were aware of it or not, the secular Zionists were fulfilling a vital function of Torah in their returning the nation to Israel. While Rav Kook urged them to adopt a complete observance of Torah, he understood that this would happen only with time, and that the way to endear them to Torah was not to reject them, but to respect them for their role in *Hashem's* step-by-step process of returning the nation to Zion.⁴³

4. THE KEDUSHA OF THE CLAL.

Why was the service of *Hashem* by the *Clal* so important? Because **the true sanctification of Hashem in the world is only by the Clal**, and not by the individual. An example of this can be found in the *Kedusha* prayer, which can only be recited by a congregation, and not by an

43. See, *Maamar HaDor*, in *Eikvey HaTzone*, by HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

individual who prays alone.⁴⁴ This supreme sanctification of *Hashem* in our prayers comes through the *Clal*, and not through the *Prat* (the individual Jew.) Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained:

“The purpose of all of the Heavenly creations is to sanctify *Hashem*. Our task is to increase the sanctification of *Hashem*’s Name in the lower world on earth, as we say in our congregational prayers, *We will sanctify Your Name in the world as it is sanctified in the high heavens.*⁴⁵ Man’s greatness lies in his Divine image. *And the Lord created the man in His image, in the image of the Lord, He created him.*⁴⁶ This is especially true of *Am Yisrael*, as our Sages say, *You are called man.*⁴⁷ **We are a unique species of man, whose essence is congregational and national in nature.**⁴⁸ The *Kedusha* of the *Clal* derives from *Hashem*, and isn’t dependent on man’s actions. The national, collective soul of Israel is a Divine creation. *This nation I have formed for Myself.*⁴⁹ Israel existed before the world.⁴⁹ That is, the soul of the nation preceded the world. The *Kedusha* of *Clal Yisrael* existed before anything else.”

“Therefore, *The existence of the world without Israel is impossible.*⁵⁰ This nation is a unique, Divine creation,

44. Berachot 21B. *Whence do we know that a man praying by himself does not say the Kedusha? Because it says, I will be sanctified among the Children of Israel (Lev. 22:32:) For any manifestation of sanctification requires at least ten. This law is the same regarding the Kaddish prayer.*
45. *Kedusha*, according to the Ashkenazic custom.
46. Genesis, 1:27.
47. Yevamot 61A.
48. Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael*, Chapter 11.
49. “The thought of Israel preceded everything.” *Bereshit Rabbah* 1.
50. Taanit 3B.

whose purpose is to sanctify *Hashem's* Name in the world: ***They shall declare My praise.***²⁰ This is accomplished through the eternal existence and life of the *Clal*.⁵¹

When examined in its true light, *Emunah* is much more than a simple belief in *Hashem's* existence and rule in the world. Rather, it is a deep understanding of how the Kingdom of *Hashem* is revealed in the world through *Clal Yisrael*. This recognition effects every facet of an individual's life, and elevates his service of *Hashem* from the individual level, to the exalted level of the *Clal*.

51. *Orot*, Israel and its Revival, 10.

Summary

CLAL YISRAEL

1. The Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* is distinguished by its emphasis on the *Clal*, and not just on the individual.
2. The greatest sanctification of *Hashem* in the world comes through *Clal Yisrael*, and not through the individual Jew in his private worship of *Hashem*.
3. The *Clal* is the eternal existence and soul of Israel, past, present, and future. *Clal Yisrael* transcends the sum of each individual Jew and has a being and life of its own.
4. In *Am Yisrael*, an individual's life derives meaning from the *Clal*, not only from his personal life.
5. The more a Jew is connected to *Clal Yisrael*, the more he is connected to *Hashem*. The main service of *Hashem* is by the *Clal*, and not by the individual Jew.
6. A proper understanding of *Clal Yisrael* elevates an individual from his private service of *Hashem* to the national observance of Torah as well, including living in Israel, and helping to restore our nation in our Land.
7. The yearning for the return of the Jewish nation to Israel is a major tenet of Judaism, and a foundation of our prayers.
8. The Gaon of Vilna urged his students to make *Aliyah* to Israel, to build settlements, and to play an active role in bringing redemption to Israel.
9. *Tanna DeVe Eliahu* emphasizes that a Jew must feel genuine anguish over the Exile, and over the destruction of Jerusalem, and long for the redemption of Israel. The honor of *Hashem* in the

world can increase only with the redemption of Israel.

10. Moshe Rabenu understood that the existence of *Am Yisrael* depends on the *Clal*, and not on individuals. Even if there are blatant sinners in *Am Yisrael*, the *Kedusha* of the *Clal* persists.
11. Rav Kook saw beyond the individual lives of the non-observant Zionists to the broader perspective of the return of the nation to Zion. While he urged them to observe all of the Torah, he understood this would happen gradually with time, and that the way to endear them to Torah was not to reject them, but to respect them for their role in *Hashem's* step-by-step process of returning the Jewish people to Zion.
12. The Jewish nation is a unique species of man, whose essence is congregational. The whole nation is *Kadosh* due to its Divine creation.

Chapter Three

YISRAEL AND TORAH

1. AM SEGULA¹

“We mentioned the need to study the foundations of *Emunah*, and to understand Israel’s essence as a *Clal* before one can achieve a true understanding of the Torah. In our study of the fundamentals of *Emunah*, there’s also a need to inquire, who is Israel, and in the same breath, what is the Torah? What is their relationship, and what roles do they play in *Hashem’s* Divine plan?”

Every holy word of the Gaon of Vilna was purposefully chosen. Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. In his expression, “*Emunah* of *Yisrael*, and of Torah” – *Yisrael* comes first.² This is also the order which our Sages chose in wording the blessing over the Torah: *Who chose us from all of the nations, and gave us His Torah. The nation of Israel comes first.*

A philosophy of Judaism exists which says that Israel’s uniqueness and specialness depends on the Torah. If this is so, it would have been more appropriate for our Sages to have worded the blessing: Who gave us His Torah, and chose us from all of the nations. But *Chazal* didn’t say this. **Israel’s specialness lies in its Divine creation, and not in its**

1. See, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, Talmud Torah* 1 and 2, Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim.
2. Supplement to *Maase Rav*, by HaRav Yisrael Mishkalov, author of *Paat HaShulchan*, as found in the Introduction to the book, *Beit Yaacov*, by Rav Yaacov Broide. And *Siddur* of the *Gra*, Pg. 512, Note 38. See Pg. 9 in this book.

receiving the Torah. The *Kedusha* of Israel preceded the giving of the Torah. The choseness of the nation preceded Mt. Sinai. **Precisely because of its Divine choseness, Israel was given the Torah.**³

“When you call upon the Name of *Hashem*,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, “Not in the order of Israel and Torah, and not with an attachment to all of *Am Yisrael*, awesome dangers arise, dangers of detaching the lights of *Kedusha* from their source.”⁴

The soul of Israel is the Torah, Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught. Israel itself is Torah, stemming from its source of Divine existence. Torah is the inner being of *Clal Yisrael*, which finds expression in the observance of Torah, and in its learning. Israel is Torah personified. **The life-giving words of Hashem are revealed through us, in every aspect of our existence – in Torah, in spiritual matters, and in every down-to-earth facet of our national life.**

In his book, *Orot HaTorah*, Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook writes: “The Torah was given to Israel because of their exalted inner *Segula*. It is this hidden, Divine *Segula* which caused the Torah’s appearance and presentation to Israel.”⁵

It isn’t the Torah which makes us *Am Yisrael*. Rather, the Divine

3. See, the Maharal, *Tiferet Yisrael*. Ch. 1. There, he explains that only Israel, out of all the nations, was suited to receive the Torah because of Israel’s Divine, spiritual nature. See also, Avodah Zarah 2B.
4. This was the great sin of Christianity. Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained. They sought to deny the eternal *Kedusha* of *Clal Yisrael*, and to extract the Torah from *Am Yisrael* and to replace it with a modernized paganism. See, *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 2, Pg. 60. And, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, Number 3, On Christianity. Yeshiva Ateret Cohanim.
5. *Orot HaTorah*, 1:2.

uniqueness of *Am Yisrael* is what makes the Torah specific to us. The Torah comes to maximize and channel our special spiritual power. It is a blueprint of life, given in line with our Divine *Segula*.

Torah is bonded to Israel by virtue of their reciprocal source in *Hashem*. The cause of Israel's *Kedusha* doesn't stem from the Torah. It comes directly from *Hashem*. This great truth, of Israel's intrinsic *Kedusha* is revealed in the world through the Torah and its commandments, but **Israel's Divine value doesn't evolve from the Torah, nor from its level of religious observance.**

“On the deepest level of understanding,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, “Torah, and *Hashem*, and Israel are one.”⁶ This is the true approach to Torah, through the understanding that the Divine election of Israel preceded the Torah. Although the Torah comes from Heaven, *It is not in the Heavens.*⁷ Why? Because it is directed to us. It comes down to us. It is a Torah with a destination. **The Torah is addressed to us.**”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed that Israel wasn't a coincidental address, which could also have been some other nation. The nation of Israel had been uniquely created to absorb the tenets of Torah, and to promulgate its teachings in the world.

The *Rosh Yeshiva* quoted from the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*. “If there were no Israel, there would be no Torah.”⁸ The *Kuzari* also states, *If not for the Children of Israel, there would be no Torah in the world.*⁹ Torah is derived from the highest exaltations. And on the

6. Zohar, Leviticus, 73.

7. Deut. 30:12. Baba Metzia 59B.

8. *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*, Leviticus, 26:46.

9. *Kuzari*, 2:56.

other hand, it continues from Heaven to us. Israel and Torah are two parallel revelations of *Hashem* in the world. When the Divine light seeks worldly expression in the form of a nation, its reflection is Israel. When it seeks expression in word, it appears in the form of Torah.¹⁰

“It’s true that the Torah is a Divine, hidden treasure,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “But its purpose is to come down to us, to appear amidst *Clal Yisrael*, and in the life of the individual. This is the meaning of, *If there were no Israel, there would be no Torah*. If Israel did not exist, G-d forbid, there would be no address for the Torah in the world, and thus there would be no Torah. And, no less than this, if there were no Torah, there would be no Israel.”

2. ISRAEL PRECEDES TORAH

The book, *Tanna DeVe Eliahu*, is a compendium of teachings and deeds of the prophet *Eliahu*. Rav Tzvi Yehuda quoted from this holy source to illuminate the relationship between Israel and Torah:

*Eliahu said, Once I traveled from place to place, and a man encountered me and asked me questions of Torah. He said to me, ‘Rabbi, I have two things in my heart that I hold a great love for – Torah and Israel. But I don’t know which comes first.’ I told him, **People usually say that Torah comes before everything. But I say, Yisrael Kedoshim comes first.***¹¹

10. Similarly, when the Divine light seeks concrete geographical expression, its reflection is *Eretz Yisrael*, as it says, *The eyes of Hashem, thy G-d, are always upon it...* (Deut. 11:12.)
11. *Tanna Deve Eliahu*, 14.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that these were profound words, but that we had to guard against a distorted understanding of this exalted expression. An example of this type of misunderstanding appeared in the words of the first Prime Minister of Israel, in one of his speeches. He said: there is a saying of the Sages, who debated which was foremost, Israel or Torah (or to his way of thinking, the nation or the religion.) It turns out that Israel precedes. Therefore, the national life is foremost, and religion is secondary to it.

“This is foolishness and heresy,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda declared. “When we say Israel precedes, we must understand what Israel is. The intention is not only the national, physical body. We are speaking of the living, cosmic Israel. Some people are trapped in a materialistic outlook, and have superficial understandings of matters. When they speak of a certain individual, they see only his external physical being, and they think that this is his essence. But a living man has a soul, which appears in this world in the form of flesh and bones. This inner dimension exists in the individual, and also for the congregational man.”

“Every nation on earth has a counterpart soul, the angel and Celestial representative of that nation in heaven.¹² Israel has a concrete expression in the physical world, but Israel’s true essential being is something much more. It is the soul which gives life to the national body. The Israel which preceded the Torah is the living soul of Israel, whose essence lies in its Divine image, in its Divine creation, in the Divine word which gives us life. This is, My spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have

12. Daniel, 8:10–12. See also, Ramban on the Torah, Leviticus, 18:25.

*put in your mouth.*¹³ We aren't speaking here of the mass of bones, but of the whole, living, existential, ongoing life force which sustains us – the Torah of Israel.”

“Just as if there would be no Israel, there would be no Torah – if there were no Torah, there would be no Israel, G-d forbid. **One can't speak about the national, political, military body of Israel without acknowledging its inner workings, without also speaking about its soul.** Therefore, it is understood that when one speaks about the nation of Israel, one is also speaking about the Torah concealed within. **The concept of Israel is the concept of Torah.**”

“What then is the Torah which comes after Israel? Which comes in addition to the wholeness of Israel? This is the Torah which is learned in Yeshiva – the details of Torah defined in all of their exacting specification and parts.”

“In a designated place in the world, within a designated people, *Hashem* formed a national, universal soul filled with unique content – Torah. The Torah's revelation, in all of its detail and preciseness, already lay in the foundation and source of this unique creation. The life and soul of Israel is the Torah, in its general, all-encompassing aspect. From the Divine creation of Israel comes all of the details of Torah.”

13. Isaiah, 59:21.

3. THE UNIVERSAL APPROACH

“The unique character of our Yeshiva,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda told us, “Lies in our ambition to learn everything. Obviously, it is impossible to study everything. However, one must have this aspiration, and the system of learning must be in line with this goal. We strive to encompass all of the Torah, because only in its wholeness and universality is the Torah, *Perfect, restoring the soul*.¹⁴ The main point is the whole.”

“Absolutely no spark of Kedusha of Torat Yisrael is allowed to be forsaken, just as no Israeli soul is allowed to be forsaken, just as no handful of Eretz Yisrael is allowed to be lost. We are bonded by a triangle of encompassing Kedusha. Bonded to all of the Torah, to all of Clal Yisrael, to every soul, whether he be a *Tzaddik*, a person of average deeds, or a wicked man. And we are bonded to all of Eretz Yisrael, out of a recognition of the *Kedusha* which pervades it all.”

14. Tchillim, 19:8.

Summary

YISRAEL AND TORAH

1. Israel's specialness lies in its Divine creation, and not in its receiving the Torah. The *Kedusha* of Israel preceded the giving of the Torah. It is precisely because of our Divine chosenness that *Hashem* gave us the Torah.
2. The soul of Israel is the Torah. On the deepest level of understanding, Israel, Torah, and *Hashem* are one.
3. In learning Torah, one must strive to encompass the whole, because only in its wholeness is the Torah, *Perfect, restoring the soul*. The main point is the whole.
4. We are bonded by a triangle of encompassing *Kedusha* – bonded to ALL of the Torah, to ALL of *Clal Yisrael*, and to ALL of *Eretz Yisrael*.



During the First World War, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook was stranded in Europe with no way of returning to *Eretz Yisrael*. This photograph was taken while he was waiting for a Brit to begin.



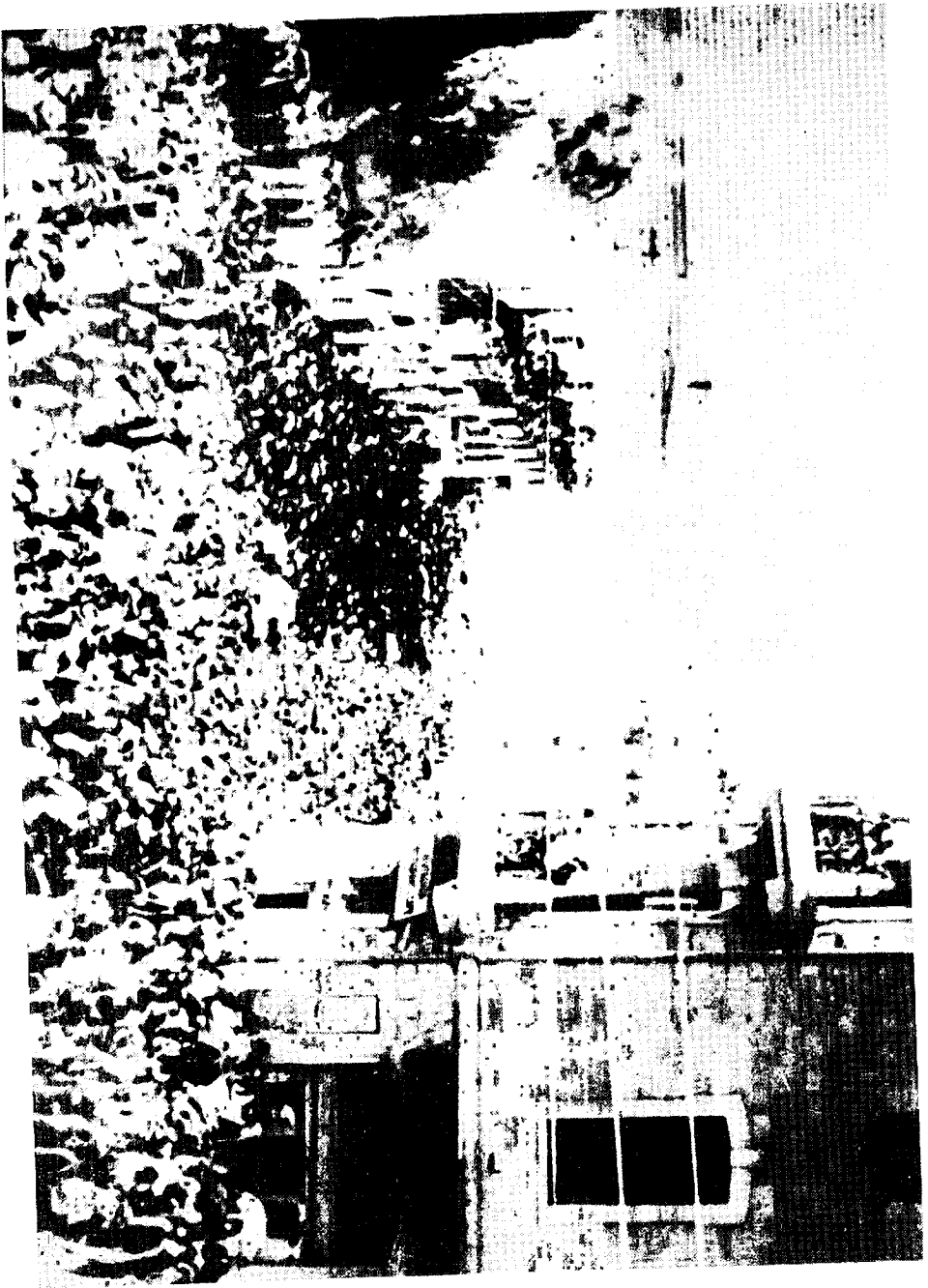
Rav Kook gives a lecture in the old Yeshiva building on HaRav Kook Street in Jerusalem.



Chief Rabbi Kook inaugurates a new neighborhood in Jerusalem.



HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook with his father



The funeral procession of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook winds its way along Yaffa Road toward the Mount of Olives.

Part Two

AHAVAT YISRAEL

Chapter Four

AHAVAH

1. AHAVAT YISRAEL – THE FOUNDATION OF TORAH

Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook taught that all of the Torah is founded upon *Ahavat Yisrael*.¹ He emphasized that **learning to love our nation, Israel, was the foremost educational task of our time.** His father had written that *Ahavah* and *Emunah* were the two principles of Torah which needed to be strengthened the most,² and Rav Tzvi Yehuda personified them both. True *Ahavah*, he said, is an encompassing orientation to all of creation, which is achieved only through learning.³ The strengthening of *Ahavah* leads to the strengthening of *Emunah*.⁴ Therefore, increasing *Ahavah* was to be the focus of all of our energies in working to rebuild our nation.

2. RAV KOOK'S AHAVAH

When you ask former students of Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook about their *Rosh Yeshiva*, everyone mentions his towering *Emunah*, his humility, and his scholarship in all of the Torah. However, the quality mentioned the most is his love – his joyful *Ahavah* for his students, his

1. Jerusalem Talmud, Nedarim, 9:4. *Rabbi Akiva says, This (Ahavah) is a great principle of Torah.* Also, Shabbat 31A: Hillel said: *Don't do to your fellow man what you yourself dislike. This is the entire Torah, and the rest is its commentary.* See, also, *Ohr L'Netivati*, Section 135. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook.
2. *Orot, Orot Yisrael*, 4:2.
3. *Ibid*, 4:1, Sub-section 5.
4. *Midot HaRiyah, Emunah*, 2. Harav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

Ahavah for *Am Yisrael*, and his heartfelt *Ahavah* for all of the world.

When you speak with these students, a great number of whom are *Roshei Yeshivot*, and rabbis of cities and settlements all over Israel, each one speaks about the special relationship and closeness he shared with Rav Tzvi Yehuda, like that of a favorite student. Yet, Rav Tzvi Yehuda didn't prefer one student more than another. He made everyone in his presence feel like a special son.

This was simply his way – to give all of himself, all of his love and attention to every one of his students, and to every person who came to speak with him. Even when someone came with some seemingly small matter to discuss, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would always take as much time as was needed to help.⁵

Whenever he met with someone, all of the time they were together, that person was the most important person in the world. This love and concern was something everyone felt.⁶ His connection with his students was especially deep. Sometimes, when a student came to him with a problem, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would give an answer before a question was even asked.⁷ If he heard that a student was ill, he would go to visit him in his dormitory room with a gift of honey and fruit. If a boy required a special diet, the *Rosh Yeshiva* would go to the Yeshiva's kitchen and give instructions what to cook. He worried about our finances, and arranged for grants for students who needed assistance. And if he discovered that a boy needed clothes, he would take him to a store and buy him the item he lacked.⁸

His love was so overflowing, he would often spontaneously embrace his students and shower them with kisses.

The same love he felt for each individual Jew, he felt for *Am Yisrael*. Everything he did, every subject he taught, had its foundation

5. See, *Korot Rabenu*, in the journal, *Iturei Cohanim*, #38, edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner, Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim.

6. *Korot Rabenu*, *Iturei Cohanim*, #44, in the name of HaRav Daniel El Chai.

7. See, *Zichronot*, *Iturei Cohanim*, #47.

8. *Korot Rabenu*, loc cited, #48, in the name of HaRav Eliezar Waldman.

in *Ahavah*. This is the *Ahavah* which finds its keenest expression in the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*. It is a love which transcends all pettiness, and divisiveness, and which encompasses the world. Even when an occasion demanded boldness, protest, or reproof, Rav Tzvi Yehuda spoke out of a deep and sincerely felt love.

The *Rosh Yeshiva* taught that in returning to our Holy Land, and to our holy Hebrew language, we must be especially careful concerning the purity of our speech. Along with loving every Jew, we were to avoid speaking *Loshon Hara* against *Am Yisrael* and against *Eretz Yisrael*. The study of *Shmirat HaLashon* by the *Chofetz Chaim* was a daily requirement at the Yeshiva, and a practice which Rav Tzvi Yehuda personally upheld.

On the question of how to bring someone closer to Torah, Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered, with Ahavah.⁹

His identification with the nation of Israel was total. A student, who lived with Rav Tzvi Yehuda during the last years of his life, recalls an occasion when the *Rosh Yeshiva* was tortured with terrible pains.¹⁰ Physicians examined him and couldn't find anything wrong. Finally, after long questioning, they discovered the source of the problem. His pains had begun with the murder of eleven Israeli athletes in Munich. They were the sufferings of *Am Yisrael*.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda's identification with the nation wasn't an abstract concept, but an actual, day-to-day attachment with the soul, and body, of the *Clal*. Once, Rav Yosef Bedeki recalls, Rav Kook awoke in a fright in the middle of the night and said, "A horrible thing happened to me." In the morning, it was reported that an official in the government had committed suicide during the night, the same hour Rav Tzvi Yehuda had awoken.

His love embraced everyone. Once, after a class, a student asked which was preferable – to be religious and anti-Zionist, or to be a

9. Introduction to, *Love People, and Bring Them Closer to Torah*, HaRav Dov Begun, Yeshivat Machon Meir.

10. *Korot Rabenu, Iturei Cohanim*, #47, in the name of Harav Yosef Bedeki.

Zionist and not religious. Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered in a loud voice, **“We need to love all of Am Yisrael! It isn’t our task to judge the value of Jews!”**¹¹

Repeatedly, he would emphasize that in the Blessing before the Morning *Shema*, we say that *Hashem* grants a special choseness to, *His nation with love*. Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that this love encompassed **all of the nation**, and not only selected *Tzaddikim*. Just as *Hashem’s* love for Israel encompasses all of the nation, so must we, in following the ways of *Hashem*, love all of *Am Yisrael*.

In teaching us to love all of *Am Yisrael*, not in the sense of abstractly loving the general nation, but, rather, in actually feeling *Ahavah* and concern for each and every individual, Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed that this meant loving *Tzaddikim*, and the less righteous, together. Often, he would draw our attention to the Hebrew word for congregation, or public, צבור, *Tzibur*. According to an oral tradition, the letters of the word are the initial letters of וְרָשָׁעִים, בְּיָנוּנִים, וְצַדִּיקִים, *Tzaddikim, Benonim, U’Rashaim* (Righteous, average, and wicked people.) This is the constitution of *Clal Yisrael*, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. All three types of people together.

The unparalleled love which Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, and his son, Rav Tzvi Yehuda, shared for all of *Am Yisrael*, finds particular expression in the special *mitzvah* they shared as *Kohanim*, לְבָרַךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲבָה, *Bless the nation of Israel with love*.¹² The *Kohanim* are a unique portion of *Am Yisrael* who have a special character, strength, and mission, to bless out of an absolute purity of heart, and out of the deep recognition that we are an *Am Segula*, a unique, Divine, eternal nation, wholly given to *Hashem*.

In explaining the *Ahavah* his father had for the world, Rav Tzvi

11. See the booklet, *Gedol Shimusho*, for reflections of Rav Tzvi Yehuda by his students.
12. Blessing of the Kohanim.

Yehuda told us a story. Once, in a eulogy for an outstanding Torah leader, a *Talmid Chacham* made some references to Rav Kook, without mentioning him by name. He said that a certain rabbi had been truly great in Torah, but that his *Ahavat Yisrael* spoiled his stature. He was referring, of course, to Rav Kook's renowned *Ahavah* and tolerance for the secular Zionist pioneers who had returned to Israel to rebuild the Jewish homeland.

“In truth,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, “One has to know that this *Ahavah* which my father, and teacher, ל"צו, felt for *Am Yisrael*, was not the normal, human understanding of love. Rather, he harbored a profound understanding of *Am Yisrael*, and his love flowed from this.”¹³

Misunderstandings regarding Rav Kook's love for *Am Yisrael* led to attacks from many quarters, including his being hung, in effigy, in a neighborhood of Jerusalem. And yet, ironically, **Rav Kook saw the shortcomings of his generation as clearly as anyone in his time. However, his profound insight raised him above the trait of condemnation.**¹⁴ **He sought to find merit in every Jew – the sign of a true shepherd of Israel.**¹⁵

“The great love we feel for our nation, doesn't shut our eyes to its blemishes,” he wrote.¹⁶ “Even though loving mankind encompasses everyone, and sometimes an evil person also falls into this general

13. *Orot, Orot Yisrael*, 4:1, and 2.

14. *Ibid, Orot HaTechiya*, 24.

15. *Mesillat Yesharim*, Chapter Nineteen. “These are the true shepherds of Israel, whom the Holy One Blessed Be He greatly desires, who sacrifice themselves for His sheep, who petition and actively work for their peace and well-being in all of their endeavors, and who forever stand in the breach to pray for them, to nullify stern decrees, and to open the gates of blessing for them.”

16. *Olat HaRiyah*, Part Two, Pg. 6. *Orot, Orot Yisrael*, 4:3.

love, this doesn't in anyway interfere with hating evil. The opposite – it strengthens the hatred. For, certainly, it isn't from the aspect of evil that the wicked person is included in this encompassing love, but, rather, for the aspect of good in him, for *Ahavah* says that **goodness exists in every place.**"¹⁷

The *Ahavah* of Rav Kook didn't stem from any softness of heart, leniency, misplaced feelings of mercy, or from an inability to confront the truth.¹⁸ On the contrary, *Ahavat Yisrael* is the most penetrating insight into truth that there is.

"*Ahavat Yisrael*," Rav Kook wrote, "and the work of stressing the good in the *Clal*, and in the individual, isn't simply work on the emotional level alone, but a great occupation of Torah, and a profound expansion of wisdom."¹⁹

Ahavat Yisrael is more than an emotion. Rav Tzvi Yehuda would remind us that *Ahavat Yisrael* is a decree of *Hashem*. *Love your neighbor as yourself.*²⁰

"We must observe the commandment to love *Hashem*,²¹ and to love mankind,²² in the same way which we must observe every section of the *Shulchan Oruch*," Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

17. *Midot HaRiyah, Ahavah*, 8.

18. See the essay, *Ahavat Yisrael in the Teaching of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, by HaRav Shlomo Aviner, *Iturei Cohanim*, #41.

19. *Orot, Orot Yisrael*, 4:1.

20. Leviticus, 19:18.

21. Rambam, *Laws on the Foundations of Torah*, 2:1.

22. Rambam, *Laws of Knowledge*, 6:3. And, *Mishna Brurah*, 156:4.

This *Ahavah*, *Rabenu* taught, has to be especially pure in our time, when Israel is returning to its Land. The strengthening of *Ahavah* depends on us, through our diligence in Torah study, which is the source of true love. This pure *Ahavah* comes from the knowledge that we are carrying the yoke with our brothers. It is a love cleansed of condemnation, which seeks to magnify the honor we feel, one for the other, in an atmosphere of united souls. *Am Yisrael* is bonded together by an indivisible *Kedusha* – a oneness which comes from *Hashem*. This understanding leads to a love of all of the nation, and to peace among all individuals, communities, and groups. With this same pure love, *Hashem* brings his nation back to its Land.²³

“My father, רבנו, said²⁴ that since groundless hatred, שנאת חנם, caused the destruction of the Second Temple,²⁵ we must increase unconditional *Ahavah*, אהבת חנם, to bring about the Temple’s rebuilding. This *Ahavah* isn’t dependent on anything. It is like *Hashem*’s love for Israel, which is an eternal *Brit*.²⁶ אהבת חנם doesn’t aspire to attain an added level of Divine service, or to do a good deed. אהבת חנם comes when there are no personal advancements to be won. This *Ahavah* exists regardless of any shortcomings in the beloved, and without any conditions that have to be met. Even with all of the

23. *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 2, 222. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook.

24. *Orot HaKodesh*, Part Three, 324. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

25. Yoma 9B.

26. The *Brit* between *Hashem* and Israel remains steadfast and eternally true, irregardless of Israel’s behavior, or its level of Torah observance. See, the Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael*, Chapter 11: “Even if Israel was totally immersed in idol worship, and had, by their deeds, abandoned *Hashem* to cleave to foreign gods, so that it was fitting to say that they had relinquished their title of children, which binds them to *Hashem*, like a son is attached to his father – in this situation also, they are called *Hashem*’s children.”

deficiencies and imperfections in people, *Ahavah* must be total. *And let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor.*²⁷ There can be great differences in personalities, or disagreements in learning, or debate over the right thing to do, but, true *Ahavah* transcends all of this, and surrounds all of the Children of Israel. This is the eternal love of *Hashem* for His people.²⁸

A lack of true *Ahavah* in *Am Yisrael*, manifests itself in a lack of unity, which weakens the nation, and complicates our settling in the Land. The rifts which we see today, whether between political parties, between the religious and the secular, or within the religious world itself, are divisions which prevent us from uniting behind our national task. This can only be rectified, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, by an active and diligent love.

3. DERECH ERETZ PRECEDES TORAH

Our Sages ask the question, why were the armies of Ahav victorious, when idol worship was rampant among them; while the armies of the righteous Saul fell in battle?²⁹ They answer that, although Ahav was wicked, there was loyalty and *Ahavah* between people in his time, and *Loshon Hora* wasn't heard. For example, when Ovadiah hid one-hundred prophets in a cave, the matter remained concealed. *So great is Shalom, even if people worship idols, yet there is peace between them, it were as if I cannot pass judgement against them.*³⁰ Contrasting this, in Saul's time, even though it was an era of

27. Zechariah, 8:17.

28. Blessing before the Evening *Shema*. And, see, *Shmot Rabbah*, 49:1: *If all of the gentile nations were to gather to destroy the love between Hashem and Israel, they couldn't succeed.*

29. *Devarim Rabbah*, 5:10. See also, Jerusalem Talmud, Peah, 1:1.

30. *Bereshit Rabbah*, 38:10. *Yalkut Shimoni*, Hosca, 247;520.

great *Tzaddikim*, there was a lack of loyalty and *Ahavah* between people, and *Loshon Hora* was spoken, as when David's whereabouts were revealed to King Saul by informers. Because of this, the armies of King Saul fell in battle.

We were to learn from this, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, that **the true way to protect Israel from its foes is by increasing the Ahavah within the nation.** Victory lies in not letting side issues, even if they are important in themselves, overshadow the main task of promoting *Ahavah* and unity amongst our own people.

Often, a voice of cynicism tells us that this idealistic vision is an impossibility. However, Rav Tzvi Yehuda maintained just the opposite. **The trait of loving people is ingrained in the fabric of our nature,** he said. A normal person feels love for others. This doesn't make him a special *Tzaddik*. This is the way everyone should be. A natural love and concern for the world is our inheritance from our forefathers, from Avraham, and from Sarah.³¹ It is an attribute we all possess.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught that we had received the Torah from Moshe at Sinai, but the *Midot*, the proper character traits which we needed to receive the Torah, are our inheritance from Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaacov. *Derech Eretz (moral living) preceded the Torah,*³² he said, quoting the words of *Chazal*.

The correct understanding of Torah, and of *Ahavah*, which stems from it, is vital in guiding the path of our lives. Our Sages tell us,

31. Isaiah. 51:1, and 2: *Hearken unto me, you who follow after righteousness; you that seek the Lord: look to the rock whence you were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from which you were dug out. Look to Avraham your father, and to Sarah who bore you...*

32. *Vayikra Rabbah*. 9:3.

וְזֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר מָשָׁה **placed**, *This is the Torah which Moshe placed. If one merits, the Torah is an elixir of life for him. If one doesn't merit it, the Torah becomes a deadly poison for him.*³³ Our Sages derive this learning from the Hebrew word מָשָׁה. While the understanding, *placed*, is appropriate to the verse, a variant spelling of the word in Mishnaic Hebrew has the meaning of a spice, or a drug. If a person has the fundamental merit of being connected to the *Midot* of Avraham Avinu, the Torah brings life to him. However, if he lacks this great love, which encompasses all of mankind, and all of the Israeli nation, then he lacks a true understanding and possession of Torah. For him, the Torah becomes a deadly poison.³⁴

A story is told about two brothers, *Talmidei Chachamim* who lived in Jerusalem. It is known that, according to Jewish law, a city of idolatry is sentenced to be burned. However, there is an opinion which says that if there is a single *Mezuzah* in the city, the sentence is not enacted.³⁵ If these brothers heard that there was a *Mezuzah* in a banished city, the first brother would enter the city at night to remove it, in order to carry out the decree. The second brother, however, would sneak into the city at night to put up a *Mezuzah*, so that the judgment could not be enforced. The question arises, which direction should a man undertake – to enforce the law to destroy the banished city, or to save it?

The way of the second brother in saving the city is the way of Avraham Avinu, and the model which Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught us to follow.³⁴

The *Rosh Yeshiva's* lectures to us on *Ahavah* were based on the treatise, *Midot HaRiyah*, a study of proper *Midot*, written by his

33. Yoma 72B.

34. See, *Ahavat Yisrael in the Teachings of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, Pg.10. *Iturei Cohanim*, #41.

35. Sanhedrin 113A.

father. On many occasions, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would simply read from his father's writings, sometimes during an entire class, without any further comment or clarification of his own, as if to say that there was nothing he could add to his father's teaching. Only when he sensed that we needed assistance in understanding his father's thought, would he offer an explanation, and he would emphasize that his understanding of the matter was what he had learned from his father, and that he was adding nothing of his own. While the content of his teaching came from his father, the style was clearly his, a style carefully formulated to bring his father's vision to us.

4. AHAVAH FOR EVERYONE

In *Midot HaRiyah*, Rav Kook writes: **“The love of mankind must be alive in the heart and the soul, a love for each individual person, and a love for all of the nations.”**³⁶

Rav Tzvi Yehuda began by saying that these words of his father were astute advice and guidance.³⁷

“The righteous man must fill his heart with love, and nurture within himself, an *Ahavah* for **everyone**. This is a great insight. It seems like a great innovation. Yet we have the example of Avraham Avinu.”

One could very well ask, what is the great innovation here? The concept of loving all people certainly isn't new. The idea finds expression in many religions, in the philosophy of enlightened thinkers, and in the social and

36. *Midot HaRiyah, Ahavah, 5.*

37. Based on, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, Ahavah, #23*, Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner, Yeshivat Atoret Cohanim.

political foundations of liberalism, humanism, and democracy. While the concept of universal love, if not its practice, has spread through the world, it is interesting to note its source. It began, the Torah tells us, with Avraham Avinu. **The world's recognition of the value of love comes from Avraham Avinu.** Love's truest expression, and practice, is our inheritance from Avraham.

5. AVRAHAM, MY LOVE

Avraham is called *Avraham, my love*.³⁸ He loved the world with all of his being. Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that we reached the historical stage of Moshe Rabenu, only upon the foundation of Avraham Avinu. The Torah comes to us from Moshe. *Moshe received the Torah at Sinai*.³⁹ But our *Midot* come to us from Avraham Avinu. A person only merits an acquisition of Torah on the basis of the pure, refined *Midot* and *Zchute* (merit) of Avraham Avinu. **The greater a Talmid Chacham is in his learning, and the more he deserves the designation of a true Torah scholar, the more he is obligated to be filled with a love for all of the world.**⁴⁰

6. A GOOD EYE

Along with the Divine love which fills the world, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, there exists a Divine order of judgment, a Divine aspect of wrath. Our Sages explain:

38. Isaiah, 41:8.

39. Avot, 1:1.

40. Ibid, 6:1.

*How much is His wrath? An instant.*⁴¹ The essential and overwhelming element of Divine Providence over the world is goodness and mercy, pleasantness and love. There is only an instant of anger.⁴² Something very tiny every day.

“Our Sages attribute to Bilaam the power to direct the sources of evil, to channel the deepest streams of this Divine wrath.⁴³ Bilaam’s essential character is to curse, to yearn to do evil, and to gaze with an evil eye on the world.⁴⁴ In *Pirke Avot*, it is explained that everyone who has a good eye is *A student of Avraham Avinu*.⁴⁵ Avraham Avinu is all love and sympathy, *Loving Hashem and loving mankind*.⁴⁰ Out of his love for *Hashem*, he loves all people, the heaven and the earth, and all of creation. He has the special attribute, filling all of his being, of a good and sympathetic eye. His opposite, someone possessed with an evil eye, is a student of Bilaam, the wicked. In contrast, Avraham is a paragon of virtue in his sympathetic outlook on all of the world.”

This aspect of *Ahavah*, to see the world in a sympathetic eye, is a trait which the people of Israel inherited from Avraham Avinu. Understandably, loving all people is not simple to practice. True *Ahavah*, Rav Kook taught, demanded diligent work, years of study, and deep inquiry into the most exalted reaches of Divine Providence in the world.

41. Berachot 7A.

42. Tehillim, 30:6.

43. *Orot HaKodesh*, Part 2, 483.

44. Zohar, *Achrei Mot*, 63B.

45. Avot, 5:19.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that **one who truly loves the Creator, loves the creation which He created.** One cannot truly love *Hashem* without also loving all of His works. If he hates the works which *Hashem* has created, he doesn't really love *Hashem*.⁴⁶

The matter can be explained by the parable of a King who had an evil son. The King loved the boy very much, but the youth's heart was set on evil, until he transgressed all the laws of the kingdom. With a heavy heart, the King signed the order for the boy's execution. Though he hated the boy's actions, he loved his son no less.

One who truly loves *Hashem* loves everything which *Hashem* has created. This is the outlook of Avraham Avinu, the perspective of, שׁוֹיֵתִי ה' לְגַדִּי תָמִיד *I have placed the Lord always before me.*⁴⁷ This exalted vision sees *Hashem* in all people, and in all of creation.

This level of cleavage to *Hashem* requires disciplined learning. True *Ahavah* for all people isn't attained through some simple formula. Someone who decides to learn the book, *Mesillat Yesharim*, and wants to reach the exalted level of *Kedusha*, without first mastering the many preceding stages, is certain to fail.⁴⁸ Similarly, **the Ahavah for all**

46. "For this matter of loving people is also the love of *Hashem*. For a person who loves someone, loves all of the things which he does. Thus, when one loves *Hashem*, it is impossible not to love his creations. And if a person hates mankind, it is impossible that he feels love for *Hashem*, who created them." Maharal, *Netivot Olam*, Part Two, 50, *Loving a Friend*.

47. Tehillim, 16:8.

48. *Mesillat Yesharim*, Chapter 26. On *Kedusha*, "But first, he must have obtained all of the proper traits which we have mentioned until now, from the beginning of Watchfulness, to the Fear of Sin. Only in this way, will he arrive at *Kedusha* and succeed in it; for if he lacks the preceding traits, he is like an outsider, a man with a blemish, about whom it is said, *An outsider shall not come near* (Numbers, 18:4.)"

people, which comes through the constant cleavage to Hashem, cannot be achieved without having attained a deep understanding of Hashem's unity in the world. In contrast to this elevated vision, an individualistic point of view of the world results in division, rather than in Divine unity. *Hashem's* connection to all things is forgotten. This is the forgetfulness which Avraham Avinu strove to erase from the world. Seeing *Hashem* in the world, and loving all people, is a teaching which needs constant repetition. Precisely because it is so readily forgotten, it is a teaching which is constantly new.

7. SODOM

“The outstanding goodness of Avraham Avinu lies in his loving all of mankind. Loving *Tzaddikim* and righteous people is not an unusual virtue. This is obvious and proper behavior. Everyone who isn't primitive feels this type of love. However, **with Avraham Avinu, we find an Ahavah even for wicked people.**”

“The Book of *Bereshit* describes a distressing situation. *The people of Sodom were very wicked, and sinful against the Lord.*⁴⁹ Rashi explains this as, *Evil with their bodies, and sinful with their wealth.*⁵⁰ This is a wickedness both against *Hashem*, and against man. The people of Sodom relinquished the right to exist because of this horrendous corruption. *I will go down and see if they have done according to this outcry,*⁵¹ to see if there is truly no possibility of salvation. The finding is negative. There is nothing to justify Sodom's continued existence.

49. Genesis, 13:13.

50. Rashi, there.

All the same, the Almighty asks, *Should I hide from Avraham, the thing I intend to do?*⁵² Avraham is almost like family, in the inner circle of the King, as if he stands beside the Throne of Glory. Yes, judgment has been passed on Sodom. Yes, this verdict of annihilation is clear and just. However, it is impossible to keep this matter from Avraham.”

“Thus, three men appear to Avraham; three angels with earthly form. They converse, and afterwards, they inform him that they are angels in human likeness, and that, *Hashem has sent us to destroy it,*⁵³ to destroy Sodom. They are *Hashem’s* messengers, who have come to kill the inhabitants and raze the cities. When this heavenly information reaches Avraham Avinu, he immediately starts to act. He begins to debate and argue with *Hashem*. *Perhaps there are fifty righteous in the midst of the city.*⁵⁴ Perhaps the residents of the city aren’t so evil. He continues to bargain – forty righteous, thirty, twenty, ten. He argues with sharp rejoinders, and finally says, *Far be it from You to do after this manner.*⁵⁵ This isn’t proper, Avraham says. *Shall not the Judge of the earth act justly?*⁵⁵ If an attorney were to speak in this fashion to the judges in a trial, he would be removed from the courtroom. Yet Avraham Avinu speaks in this bold manner before the Lord.”

Avraham’s seemingly audacious behavior was all the more remarkable, Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, precisely because he was so

51. Genesis, 18:21.

51. Ibid, 18:17.

53. Ibid, 19:13.

54. Ibid, 18:24.

55. Ibid, 18:25.

close to *Hashem*. He is the one who, *Believed in the Lord*,⁵⁶ and who, *Recognized his Maker*.⁵⁷ He knew, more than anyone else, of *Hashem's* unapproachable grandeur.

“To a person who doesn't know what serving the Lord involves, it isn't a problem to speak boldly against Him. But for someone so close to his Creator, this requires, *מסירת נפש*, *Miserut Nefesh*, a bravery to the point of being ready to give up one's life. Toward whom is this boldness and *Miserut Nefesh* directed? Toward, *People...very wicked and sinful before the Lord*.⁴⁹ This is the behavior of a giant of kindness, and not of an ordinary man. This is the, *Great one among the giants*.⁵⁸ Loving *Tzaddikim* and righteous people is a straightforward gesture that doesn't warrant an abundance of praise. However, Avraham Avinu is not a simple *Tzaddik*. Out of his very great closeness to *Hashem*, out of his knowledge of *Hashem*, and his *Emunah* in Him, comes his towering love for all of mankind.”

8. LOVE FOR THE DISBELIEVER

Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted us to know that feeling *Ahavah* toward all of mankind isn't only an abstract ideal, but a concrete course of behavior, which is founded on the life of our forefathers. **The mitzvah of Ahavah, like other commandments of the Torah, is comprised of many details which demand diligence and study.** Included in the general *Ahavah* is the love of all people, independent of their righteousness, or their connection to *Am Yisrael*.

56. Ibid. 15:6.

57. Nedarim 32A.

58. Joshua, 14:15. See tractate, Soferim 21:9.

“There is another example of Avraham’s love for mankind,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught. “A quarrel broke out between the shepherds of Avraham and Lot – a conflict of opposites. *And Avraham said to Lot, Let there be no quarrel between me and you, nor between my shepherds and yours.*⁵⁹ Avraham wanted to rectify the problem between them. *Separate yourself, I pray thee, from me. If you will take to the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if you will depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*”⁶⁰

“Lot moved on to Sodom, where, *The people of Sodom were very wicked and sinful before the Lord.*⁴⁹ The Torah tells us that, *Lot journeyed East.*⁶⁰ Rashi cites a *Midrash* of our Sages, *He took himself away from He who preceded the world.*⁶¹ Who is this? This is a description of *Hashem*, who preceded everything which was created. Lot separated himself from *Hashem*, in contrast to Avraham, who was bonded to his Creator. Lot said, ‘I don’t want to have a share in Avraham’s G-d.’”⁶¹

“In our days, what do we call someone who says that he doesn’t want anything to do with *Hashem*? A heretic, כּוֹפֵר. In contrast to Avraham Avinu, who is connected and bonded to *Hashem*, Lot doesn’t want any attachment to Him. This is the path of heresy. In the family of Avraham Avinu, the first and foremost of all the

59. Genesis. 13:8–9.

60. Ibid, 11.

61. *Bereshit Rabbah*. 41:7. The Hebrew word, *M’Kedem*, which is translated as, ‘*To the East*’, also has the connotation of, ‘From the One who preceded everything’ – which is understood to refer to *Hashem*.

believers, there is a heretic who rejects a connection to *Hashem!*”

“The Torah relates the details of the war of the, *Four kings against five*.⁶² Among the belligerents is, *Bera, King of Sodom*.⁶³ In the course of the battle, Lot is taken captive. *And there came one who had escaped, and told Avram, the Hebrew...that his brother was taken captive*.⁶⁴ His brother, here, means his kin. When the foremost of believers hears that his relative, a denier of *Hashem*, is taken captive, he immediately, *Led forth his trained servants*,⁶⁵ his students.”

“Avraham Avinu was a great educator, as the Torah verse clearly states. *For I know he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord...*”⁶⁶ Avraham is the one who educated mankind to recognize the Creator, to be *Kadosh*, and to come close to *Hashem*. And, in line with this, he enlists his students in battle. This giant of spirit and *Emunah* reveals himself as a military commander who inducts his Yeshiva students into a war for the sake of the heretic, Lot! Here, Avraham’s great love for all of mankind is revealed.”

A key to a true appreciation of Rav Tzvi Yehuda’s teaching was the awareness that he wasn’t only talking about Avraham Avinu; he was also speaking about our situation today, both in our individual

62. Genesis, 14:9.

63. Ibid. 2.

64. Ibid, 13.

65. Ibid, 14.

66. Ibid. 18:19.

lives, and in our life as a nation. This is the counsel which the Ramban wrote to his son in his well-known *Iggeret* – that he should apply whatever he was learning to himself.⁶⁷ Rav Tzvi Yehuda was teaching us to understand ourselves and our era, so that we could guide our lives on the proper path of Torah. **Our attitudes to the challenges of our time were to be learned from the example of Avraham Avinu.**

9. MISERUT NEFESH FOR CLAL YISRAEL

Rav Tzvi Yehuda resumed the discussion at a point of our history, several generations later, with the appearance of Avraham's great-grandchild, Moshe Rabenu. **Wherever there is more Torah, he said, and more learning, there's more Miserut Nefesh over the love of mankind.**

For forty days and forty nights, Moshe was on Mount Sinai. He brings back the word of *Hashem*, written on the tablets, but when he descends from the mountain, he discovers, *The calf and the dancing*.⁶⁸ This, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, wasn't surprising, since in a happening as phenomenal as *Matan Torah*, some disorder was to be expected. *Hashem* tells Moshe, *Get thee down for **thy people**, which thou hast brought up from the land of Mitzrayim, have become corrupt.*⁶⁹

“**Thy people**,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, emphasizing the accusation in the verse. “*Which **thou** brought up from the land of Mitzrayim.* As if Moshe Rabenu hadn't acted as *Hashem's* messenger. Then *Hashem* announces an awesome decree of judgment. *I will consume them.*”⁷⁰ In

67. *Iggeret* of the Ramban to His Son.

68. Exodus, 32:19.

69. Ibid, 7.

70. Ibid, 10.

the face of this devastating anger, Moshe Rabenu says, *The people have sinned a great sin.*⁷¹ It's true, he admits. Their sin is grave. He doesn't argue. He doesn't try to cover it over. But even so, he says, You are obligated to forgive: *If Thou will forgive their sin.*⁷²

Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that the *If*, אם, of the verse is not an expression of doubt. It is used in its meaning of **when**, as in the verse, ואם יהיה היכל, *And when the Jubilee will be.*⁷³ There is no uncertainty regarding a Jubilee, which must occur every fifty years. So too, *If you will forgive their sin*, is certain. This was a confirmed decision, forceful in its positiveness. The *Tzaddik*, Moshe, decrees! He gives *Hashem* an order. If not, *Blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written.*⁷² **Moshe Rabenu is ready to sever all connection to Hashem, and to give up his life if need be, in order to save Clal Yisrael.**⁷⁴

“This forcefulness of Moshe Rabenu is *Miserut Nefesh*, no less than Avraham's, for people who were wicked and sinful against *Hashem*. Moshe's willingness to sacrifice himself is even greater. His willingness to martyr himself is total, to the point of severing all connection to *Hashem*, and to life.⁷⁵ Continuing from Avraham's towering stature comes the greatness of Moshe Rabenu on behalf of *Clal Yisrael*. From the heights of Sinai and Torah comes an even greater love, the peak of *Ahavah*.”

71. Ibid. 31.

72. Ibid. 32.

73. Numbers, 36:4.

74. See, Chapter Two in this book, end of section 2. Also, see, Letters of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Part 2, 188-189.

75. *Avne Miluim*, in the Introduction of the *Mahari Enzel* to Part 2, Pg.10.

10. LOVE FOR A COMPLETELY WICKED MAN

“In *Midot HaRiyah*, the love of all of *Hashem*’s works is mentioned.⁷⁶ This is an *Ahavah* which encompasses all of the world, and all of mankind. There are levels of love. A unique expression has been handed down to us by one of the *Gedolim* of *Hasidut*, Rabbi Pinchus from Koritz: ‘A *Tzaddik* who isn’t complete, loves a sinner whose deeds aren’t totally wicked. **A complete *Tzaddik*, however, loves a completely wicked man.**”

“To love a completely wicked man, one must be totally righteous. It is dangerous for anyone who is not a complete *Tzaddik* to love a completely wicked man.⁷⁷ But a total *Tzaddik* can. ‘The love for everyone must fill the heart....’⁷⁸

Though this encompassing *Ahavah* is not easily achieved, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said it was an ideal we should all strive to reach.

11. LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLE

“In the chapter on acquiring Torah in *Avot*, someone who labors in Torah, just for the sake of Torah, is

76. *Midot HaRiyah, Ahavah, 2.*

77. “Regarding these souls (the non-righteous.) should someone who lacks the depth of knowledge, and subsequent insight, to distinguish between the inner aspect of holy *Segula* in them, and the polluted side of their free will, which surrounds their inner souls like the thorns which surround a rose – should this person attempt to bring them close to belief, he could be greatly damaged, G-d forbid, and learn from their deeds, and become attached to their evil side. He is obligated to keep a distance from them, and the Almighty places in his heart, a feeling of enmity, and a desire to keep away, so that these people won’t ruin him.” Letters of Harav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Part 2, 187.

78. *Midot HaRiyah, Ahavah, 1.*

described as *Loving Hashem and loving mankind*,⁴⁰ and not as someone who only loves *Talmidei Chachamim* and those close to Torah. Similarly, Hillel says, *Be like the students of Aharon, love peace, and pursue peace, love people, and bring them close to Torah*.⁷⁹ Is this speaking about people who are close to Torah, or about people who are far away? There isn't a need to bring a close person near. Rather, Hillel's intention is on those far away. He instructs us to love people who are distant from the Torah. The verse doesn't tell us to love people **in order** to bring them close to Torah. The main point is to love, and from this, they will naturally come close to Torah."

12. OVERCOMING THE INCLINATION TO HATE

The love of all people, including those who were far away from Torah, was a teaching emphasized by our Sages, so that we shouldn't fall prey to feelings of hatred. This is illustrated in the Torah, in the verse, *If you see the ass of him who hates you, lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to unload it, you shall surely unload it with him*.⁸⁰ Rav Tzvi Yehuda rhetorically questioned – how could a verse of Torah describe a situation of a Jew, **Who hates you**, when it is forbidden to hate another Jew?!⁸¹ The *Gemara*, in tractate *Pesachim*, explains that the reference is to someone who is disliked, because of his lack of Torah observance. He is hated because of his sins.⁸² He isn't complete in Torah, and in the performance of precepts, and due to this, he isn't loved.

79. Avot, 1:12.

80. Exodus, 23:5.

81. Leviticus, 19:17.

82. Pesachim 113B.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked us to picture a situation where there are two men; one who is loved, and one who isn't so loved. Both need aid in lifting their burdens. On the surface of things, who should one help? The loved one. However, the *Gemara* says that one must perform the *mitzvah* of helping the hated one,⁸³ and this is the *Halachic* ruling.⁸⁴ The *Gemara* explains the reason: *In order to vanquish the inclination to hate.*⁸³ Since there is an inclination to dislike people who do not observe the precepts of the Torah, education is needed to help us overcome this bias. This is similar, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, to the morning prayer asking *Hashem* to help us overcome our evil inclination."⁸⁵

“*Tosefot* ask why should a person overcome this repugnance, which isn't an evil inclination, but a good inclination, for, hating someone who doesn't have a fear of *Hashem* is a positive impulse in a person who does fear the Lord.⁸³ In response, *Tosefot* give a deep psychological insight: A verse in the Book of *Mishle* says, *As in water, face answers to face, so the heart of man to man.*⁸⁶ If a 'religious man' doesn't behave with love toward the 'non-religious', the hated man feels rejected. He senses that the 'religious' people only have *Ahavah* for other 'religious' people, and that they look condemningly on the 'non-religious'. This situation arises from the 'religious' man's reverence for *Hashem*, but the 'non-religious' man is left with a rejected feeling. This causes conflict, and the situation continues and worsens

83. Baba Metzia 32B.

84. Rambam, Laws of Murder and The Guarding of Life, 14:13. And, *Tur, Shulchan Oruch, Choshen Mishpat*, 272:10.

85. The Morning Blessing, *Hagomel Hasadim Tovim L'amo Yisrael*.

86. Proverbs, 27:19.

until it reaches total hatred, may *Hashem* save us. The beginning stems from a seemingly valid response toward spiritual paucity. The initial hatred isn't complete, but it grows until it becomes utter abhorrence – and this is something truly awful”⁸⁷

13. TALMID CHACHAM AND MANKIND

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that a *Talmid Chacham* should bring about a love of *Hashem* in his dealing with people, and not a reaction of hate. This teaching is found at the end of tractate *Yoma*: *And you should love the Lord thy G-d; that the Name of Hashem be loved on your account. That a person be versed in Torah, and study, and serve Torah scholars, and that his worldly affairs be conducted in pleasantness with people. What do people say of such a person? Fortunate is the father who taught him Torah. Fortunate is the teacher who taught him Torah....*⁸⁸ Also, the opposite is true. *One who doesn't conduct his worldly affairs in good faith, and who doesn't speak pleasantly with mankind, what do people say concerning him? Woe to so and so who studied Torah....*⁸⁸

“From this, we see that the things people say have real importance, which affect the sanctification of *Hashem*. The sanctification of *Hashem* on the part of a *Talmid Chacham* is determined by his relationship with mankind, and by the positive feelings he fosters.”

14. THERE ISN'T ANYONE WHO KNOWS HOW TO REBUKE

“The *Chofetz Chaim*, in his book, *Ahavat Chesed*, elucidates at length upon the *mitzvah* of doing deeds of

87. Tosefot, Pcsachim 113B, beginning, “That he saw....”

88. Yoma 86A.

kindness. He includes a teaching from the *Marganita Tava*, of Rebbe Yonaton of Volin, who writes: ‘To endeavor to benefit one’s fellow man, and to pursue peace; and to be careful not to transgress the prohibition to hate, even regarding the hatred of a totally wicked person, for it is forbidden, according to the *MaHaram* of Lublin, to hate someone as long as he hasn’t been reprimanded.’⁸⁹ There is no justification in hating a non-religious person, as long as he has not been rebuked. Just as there is a desire to love, there is also a desire to hate. But hatred must be prevented as long as admonishment has not been delivered. And since, in the words of Rabbi Akiva, **There isn’t anyone in this generation who knows how to properly rebuke,**⁹⁰ we are prevented from hating.’⁹¹

If no one knew how to deliver proper rebuke in Rabbi Akiva’s time, how much more so today, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. Therefore, **there is no place for hatred in our relations with people, irregardless of their level of Torah observance.**

89. *Marganita Tava*. 14. in *Ahavat Chesed*.

90. *Sifre*, Leviticus, 19:43.

91. “All matters of hatred, and all of the letters of the law which apply to them, these were only stated in cases where we already knew that the precept of reproof had been administered to someone. And since we don’t have in this generation, nor have we had for several previous generations, as Rabbi Akiva testifies, someone who knows how to deliver reproof – therefore, they are no longer applicable, and all of the laws referring to ill feelings and the hatred of brothers have become like the case of a rebellious son, a banished city, and a contaminated house, according to the one who says there were never such cases, and never will be in the future...” Letters of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Part 1, 305.

15. REBUKE AND PERSUASION

“The precept of rebuke is one of the most difficult commandments. The work of reprimanding demands great wisdom and understanding. If in the days of our Sages, there wasn’t anyone who knew how to rebuke, how much more is this true in our days. In the writings of the *Chofetz Chaim*, the expression, rebuke, תּוֹכָחָה, doesn’t appear. He uses the expression, הוֹכָחָה, (reproof) in line with the verse, *Avraham reproved Avimelech*.⁹² Reproving has the sense of persuading. If you don’t have the strength to reprove and to persuade, you aren’t the one to carry out this commandment.”

16. FATHERS AND SONS

“The matter of reproof and persuasion is a matter of presentation and substance. It resembles a man who says wondrous things in Turkish to someone who speaks only French. A style suited to the listener is needed. There’s a style suitable to parents, but not to their children. A style which speaks to the old, but not to the young. It is written concerning the future, *And you shall return to the Lord your G-d...And the Lord thy G-d will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed*.⁹³ My father, וַצִּי, said there was a distinction in the verse between the fathers and the sons. *Thy heart*, is separated from, *The heart of thy seed*, because each one, the father, and the son, requires a special type of persuasion.”

92. Genesis, 21:25.

93. Deut, 30:2–6.

17. LOVE FOR THE GENTILE NATIONS AND PEOPLES

“In *Midot HaRiyah*, we find the edifying guidance that the heart must be filled with love for all of the world, for all peoples, for every man, for all humankind.³⁶ In the Torah, there is a precept to, *Love your neighbor like yourself*.²⁰ Rabbi Akiva states that, *This is a great principle of the Torah*.¹ This is all of the Torah.¹ All of the Torah revolves around a love for mankind. This is obvious. However, there are levels of love.”

“There is a special book of *Mussar* (Ethics) called, *The Gates of Kedusha*, by Rabbi Chaim Vital, the great student of the *Arizal*, *Kadosh Yisrael*. The *Kedusha* of the *Ari* was unique. He belongs to a special class of people. His life is not measurable in the quantity of years he lived, but in quality, in tremendous quality.⁹⁴ It is told that when the *Arizal* departed from the world, he remained lucid until the final moment. At the departure of his soul, great people gathered around him – students who were fortunate to have learned from him during the brief time he lived in this world. He turned to them and said, ‘Do you think you know something of what we learned together these years? Know that you know nothing at all!’ Of course, these great men were all startled and speechless by this decree. The gathered students had a profound adoration for Rabbi Chaim Vital, the foremost scholar among them. One of the students turned to the *Ari* and said, ‘It’s true that we don’t know anything, but Rebbi, what of Reb Chaim?’

94. The *Arizal* lived to the age of 38.

The *Ari* responded in Ladino, *Ergo quanto* – a little. This same Rabbi Chaim, the closest person to the *Ari*, the foremost in the holy kingdom of the *Arizal*, wrote the book, *Gates of Kedusha*, a book of ethics, a guide to the attributes which prepare and educate a man to approach *Ruach HaKodesh* (Divine Inspiration.) The book offers some special guidance: *Love your neighbor as yourself*. This is a precept which concerns the love of every Jew; a precept which encompasses all of the Torah. But to achieve *Ruach HaKodesh*, **one must even love the gentile peoples!**⁹⁵

“An essential ingredient in attaining *Ruach Hakodesh* is that the heart be filled with a tenderness and love which encompasses the gentile nations of the world. This elevates a man to the heights of Divine Inspiration.”

“Here, in the writings of Rabbi Chaim Vital, we find something in common with HaRav, *Abba*, אבא – the advice and the teaching to accustom oneself, and to fill one’s heart and soul, with a love for all of mankind, with, **A love for every man.**”³⁶

This *Ahavah* of all nations doesn’t nullify any of the *Halachot* which set precise rules over our relationships with gentiles, Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed. Laws forbidding intermarriage, or even the drinking of gentile wine, or the eating of non-Kosher food, must always be strictly enforced. The *Ahavah* of gentile people does not contradict the different lifestyle which the Torah prescribes for *Am Yisrael*: *It is a people who shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the*

95. “Love all of mankind, even gentiles.” *Gates of Kedusha*, Part 1, Gate 1, Section 1.

nations.⁹⁶ Rather, it teaches a love of all people, even though there are clear *Halachic* boundaries which have to be maintained.

Does this all-encompassing *Ahavah* also include the haters of Israel? Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered that his father's teaching implied that it did.

“In relation to extraordinarily evil people, there's room to direct hate against the aspect of evil in them.¹⁷ But the general rule is a love for each and every nation and peoples.”

18. TRUTHFUL AHAVAH

“When we use the expression, *Ahavah*, one must understand it in its true, not spurious, form. In contrast to the state called Platonic love, which is a love which has no real attachment, true *Ahavah* is a relationship of sympathy, affection, and friendship. True *Ahavah* necessitates a great interest in the welfare of the loved one, a genuine interest and concern that the person feels good, that the beloved be healthy in spirit, and in body, and that he reach ethical and spiritual sanctification. The love of mankind needs to reach a great exalted level, to a sublime yearning that there be no ethical poverty. True *Ahavah* seeks to advance people's spiritual and material wellbeing.³⁶ One must love all of the upright gentiles, and wish that all of their spiritual, material, cultural, and ethical endeavors reach fulfillment.”⁹⁷

96. Numbers, 23:9.

97. “The *Ahavah* of mankind requires substantial effort in order to attain its appropriate station of constantly filling every aspect of life. This comes in

19. HATRED OF EVIL

“Within this context of *Ahavah*, there does exist a small place for hatred, as is written in the prayer, *And for the informers, let there be no hope...and may all of your enemies be swiftly cut off.*”⁹⁸ However, one must understand that the **hatred must be directed only against the evil**, and not simply against gentiles indiscriminately. There is a precept of the Torah to, *Love your neighbor*, but there is no precept in the Torah to hate gentiles. Hatred is only, ‘On the evilness and ugliness in the world,’³⁶ as it is said, *And all wickedness end like smoke.*”⁹⁸

“In every place where we find references of hatred, we understand clearly that the intent is only against the phenomenon of evil, against the impurity of evil, and not simply against people, as we say, *All wickedness end like smoke.*”⁹⁸ In the *Shemona Esrei* Blessing Against the

opposition to the superficial view which arises, at first glance, upon a cursory investigation of Torah and conventional ethics, which seem contradictory to this *Ahavah*, or, at best, apathetic to it. The most exalted level of *Ahavah* for mankind must encompass the love of the individual, and includes every person, regardless of all of the differences of religion and belief, race, and locale. One must endeavor to understand fully the mentalities of the various peoples and communities; to study, as thoroughly as possible, their characteristics and attributes, in order to know how to base human love on practical foundations. Only a person rich in *Ahavah* for mankind, and for each individual man, can attain a love for his own nation in its most noble dimension, and for its spiritual and material grandeur. The myopic vision, which views everything outside the boundaries of a particular nation, even that which is outside the boundaries of *Yisrael*, as ugly and impure, is a part of the awful darkness which causes the utter destruction of the universal spiritual goodness which every sensitive soul longs to see.” *Midot HaRiyah, Ahavah*, 10. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

98. *Shemona Esrei, Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur.*

Informers, בְּרִכַּת הַמִּינִים, there are different versions, such as in the wording, *May all of the blasphemers be instantly destroyed*, and, *All of the wicked be instantly destroyed*. We take our wording from the Gaon of Vilna: *May all wickedness be instantly destroyed*.⁹⁹ This is to be directed to our present situation, in our time, when the national aspirations of the gentile nations are united with the forces of evil to the point of inciting wars. The intent of the hatred is only against the phenomenon of evilness which forcefully disrupts the unity of nations."³⁶

20. DECLARE HIS WORKS AMONG THE PEOPLES

“The great sanctification of *Hashem's* Name, *Praise the Lord, call upon His Name, declare His works among the peoples*,¹⁰⁰ cannot appear in the world without a love for all peoples. Only by relating to the people of the world with sympathy and concern, can you, *Declare His works among the peoples*, and bring them to an awareness of *Hashem*. This message cannot be true if it isn't spoken out of love. ‘It is totally impossible to reach the exalted spirit of *Praise the Lord, call upon His Name, declare His works among the peoples*, without an inner *Ahavah*, from the depths of the heart and soul, to bring benefit to the entire world,³⁶ both in their spiritual uplifting, and, ‘To improve their material state; to advance the quality of their lives.’”³⁶

99. *Siddur* of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, *Olat Riyah*, Part 2, 412:56.

100. Isaiah, 12:4.

21. THE HEART OF THE NATIONS

The task of the nation of Israel is to lead the world to its optimal development, and to the perfection of all of creation. Out of this perfection, everything in creation will act to sanctify *Hashem* in the world. This spirit of idealism, to bring goodness and perfection to the world by uplifting mankind to the recognition and service of *Hashem*, is embodied in the inner soul of Israel.¹⁰¹

How is this universal uplifting achieved? Rav Tzvi Yehuda quoted a prophecy in *Isaiah*: *And many people shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the houses of the G-d of Yaacov, and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his path, for out of Zion shall go forth Torah, and the word of the Lord out of Jerusalem.*¹⁰² Mankind's uplifting comes when the nations of the world ascend to the Land of Israel, and to Jerusalem, to learn the ways of *Hashem*.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that with the revival and building of the Jewish nation in Israel, we actualize our role as a, *Segula to all of the nations*,¹⁰³ and as the heart of the world.¹⁰⁴ In our role as the heart of the nations, Israel functions in connection with all of the world, not as a lesser appendage, but as the central and most important organ, as the nation which gives life to the rest of the nations – life in its truest sense – the connection to *Hashem*.¹⁰⁵ For when the world is viewed in its proper understanding, in its relationship to the Creator, then the most important commodity of mankind is the knowledge of *Hashem*.

101. *Orot, Orot HaTehiya*, 4.

102. *Isaiah*, 2:3.

103. According to, *Exodus*, 19:5.

104. *Kuzari*, 2:36.

105. See, Rashi, on *Genesis*, 11:32, in reference to Terach, who is said to have died, even though he was still living: "For the wicked, even during their lifetime, are called dead."

As the heart of the nations, Israel also has a richness of physical and technological resources, in line with other nations, but the knowledge of Hashem is our specialty. Israel's vital role, comes to life when the nation of Israel returns to its Land; when it returns to being a sovereign nation alongside all of the other nations. Only then can it perform its intended task of raising all of mankind to the knowledge and service of *Hashem* – the true goal and purpose of all of creation.

22. INCREASING EMUNAH AND AHAVAH

Of course, to maximize the Divine light and goodness which Israel brings to the world, we must first strengthen the light of Torah within the nation.

“Only by increasing *Ahavah* can we bring hearts closer and illuminate the way for the generation,” *Rav Tzvi Yehuda* taught. “**We must increase Emunah through love, and not with hate and enmity.** There is no possibility to increase faith among our people without the understanding that everyone is a part of *Clal Yisrael* – both the *Haredi* Jew in the holy city of Jerusalem, and the ‘secular’ Jew from the holy community of Ein Harod (a non-religious kibbutz.)”

“We cannot, by zealously and shouting, increase *Hashem's* honor in *Eretz Yisrael*. Not only does this approach fail to attract, it repels. When the prophet Ezekiel came to reproach the leaders of Israel, he did not reprimand them for their lack of zealously, or for their failure to fight against the abandonment of Torah. Rather, he called to them, *Woe to the shepherds of Israel...that have not healed the sick.* ¹⁰⁶ The healing will

106. Ezekiel 34:2-3.

only come when *Talmidei Chachamim* grow in substance and style, and speak in a language which the generation can grasp, and not like a man who says wonderous things that no one can understand, nor explain. My father, Harav, זצ"ל, writes: 'The congregation of Israel awoke to rebirth in response to the will of the young generation. The forces rose up in an astonishing and wonderous mission. **There is absolutely no way of overwhelming them through opposition. They must be uplifted, raised to the loftier heights, and shown the way to the exalted and awesome light.**'"¹⁰⁷

"Our Sages explain that the Name of *Hashem* is sanctified and cherished in the world because of Torah scholars who conduct their affairs in righteousness, and who speak pleasantly with their fellow man.⁸⁸ Only in this fashion can we endear our people to the Torah, and to the *mitzvot*. And then, 'We can be certain, through *Hashem's* mercy, that all of our children, even those who appear to be outcast and lost, will become seekers of the Lord.'"¹⁰⁷

Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught us that *Ahavah* is not something limited, or just an abstract ideal. True *Ahavah* fills the heart with an active love which encompasses all of *Am Yisrael*, all of mankind, and all of creation. The *mitzvah* of loving your neighbor is a commandment which has to be kept with all of the thoroughness and precision of every other precept in Jewish law. *Ahavah* is not just an emotion, but a discipline requiring profound study and work. "The loving of Israel," Rav Kook writes in *Orot*, "And the work of finding merit in the Clal, and in the individual, is not only work on the emotional level. Rather, it is a great occupation of the Torah, and a vast and profound wisdom."¹⁹

107. Letters of Harav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook. Part I. Pg. 369.

Summary

AHAVAH

1. Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught that learning to love our nation is the foremost educational task of our time.
2. True *Ahavah* is achieved only through learning.
3. We need to love all of *Am Yisrael*. It isn't our task to judge the value of Jews.
4. On the question of how to bring someone closer to Torah, Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered, "With *Ahavah*."
5. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook saw the shortcomings of his generation as clearly as anyone else. However, he strove to find merit in every Jew, and in the nation as a whole.
6. *Ahavat Yisrael*, and the work of stressing the good in the individual and the *Clal*, isn't simply work on the emotional level alone, but a great occupation of Torah.
7. We must observe the commandment to love mankind in the same way that we must observe every section of the *Shulchan Oruch*.
8. Rav Kook said that since the Temple was destroyed by, אֶהְרַבְתָּ הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, it can only be rebuilt through אֶהְבַּתְּ הָעָם.
9. A lack of *Ahavah* in *Am Yisrael* causes a lack of unity, which weakens the nation, and complicates our settling in the Land.
10. The true way to protect Israel from its foes is by increasing the *Ahavah* and unity within the nation.
11. A person must love all of mankind, both individuals and nations. We learn this love from the example of Avraham Avinu.

12. The greater a *Talmid Chacham*, the greater his *Ahavah* for all people. One who truly loves *Hashem*, loves all of His creation.
13. Continuing from the towering *Ahavah* of Avraham Avinu comes the great *Miserut Nefesh* of Moshe Rabenu for *Clal Yisrael* in his readiness to sacrifice his life for the nation.
14. A religious person must guard against the inclination to dislike someone who does not observe the Torah. Only through *Ahavah* can one succeed in bringing the distant near.
15. A *Talmid Chacham* sanctifies *Hashem* in the world when he fosters a positive relationship with mankind. If he creates ill feelings, G-d forbid, and people speak negatively of him, this is a *Chillul Hashem*.
16. Rabbi Akiva said that no one in his generation knew how to properly deliver rebuke. This is certainly true today. Therefore, there is no place for hatred in our relations with people, irregardless of their level of Torah observance.
17. The *Ahavah* of all people includes the love of gentile nations. This includes an active love which seeks to benefit all people, both spiritually and materially.
18. In relation to extraordinarily evil people, one can hate the aspect of evil in them, but the general rule is a love for each and every nation and peoples.
19. Israel's role of uplifting mankind to a knowledge of *Hashem* comes to life with our return to the Land of Israel. It is through our life as a nation alongside the world's other nations that *Hashem's* rule is revealed.



HaRav Tzvi Yehuda



Years later, teaching a class in *Emunah*.

Issac Frieden



Addressing a lecture to soldiers in *Beit HaRav*



A class to *Mercaz HaRav* students in his small apartment on Ovadia Street in Geula. Taking notes in the center of the table is HaRav Shlomo Aviner, the editor of the Hebrew *Sichot* and *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Ateret Cohanim* in the Old City of Jerusalem. The masking tape which was fastened to the window panes during the Six Day War was never removed as a reminder of the battles the Jewish people withstood on their way back to Jerusalem.



Teaching a class to the students of *Tzvia*, a religious girl's school founded by his students.



On the Mount of Olives, overlooking his father's grave, the Temple Mount, and Jerusalem.

Part Three

ERETZ YISRAEL

Chapter Five

A VISIT WITH RAV TZVI YEHUDA

Eretz Yisrael

1. SEEING THE ACTS OF HASHEM¹

A feeling of anticipation was always in the air before Rav Tzvi Yehuda spoke, a sensation that something special was about to happen. The newcomers in *Rabenu's* tiny apartment, student representatives of the *Bnei Akiva* youth movement, who were visiting Israel from all over the world, felt this excitement as keenly as his regular students. You could see it on their clean-shaven faces and in their eyes. Not only was Rav Tzvi Yehuda the son of Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, ל"צז, a towering figure to many of these boys, he was also the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Mercaz HaRav*, a Yeshiva unlike any other in the world.

When Rav Tzvi Yehuda stepped into his study, everyone stood up until he was seated. We, his regular students, were used to his unique blend of gentleness and wisdom, and still, our *Emunah* was deepened each time we saw him. The boys from the Diaspora were perhaps even more inspired by the aura of Torah and *Kedusha* which surrounded him. Chairs stilled, and everyone edged forward to hear every word.

His first words to the visiting students were simple:

“בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם ה'”.

However, when a Torah scholar like Rav Kook welcomes you in the name of *Hashem*, you feel a great importance in the greeting. He

1. Based on *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, “Who Brings Back His Presence to Zion,” and, “Our Vital Connection to Israel,” Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim, Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.

said that their coming to Israel had been in the name of *Hashem*. They were a fulfillment of prophecy, a witness to the promise the Almighty had made to His people to return us to our Land. To illustrate this, he quoted a verse from the Torah:

*If your outcasts be at the utmost parts of heaven, from there will the Lord your G-d gather thee, and from there He shall fetch thee, and the Lord your G-d will bring thee into the Land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it.*²

Sitting in Rabbi Kook's study in Jerusalem, several thousand years after this verse had been spoken, was a group of students from America, Brazil, South Africa, England, and France. Rav Tzvi Yehuda would smile broadly on occasions like these. What a pleasure it was to see a prophecy fulfilled!

He asked the *Bnei Akiva* students to reflect on their coming to Israel; to understand that it was no simple visit. On the contrary, their coming was tied to the process of unfolding redemption. It was a part of a Divine plan which the Master of the Universe was bringing about, by arranging world events, wars, and international agreements to bring His people back home to Israel. Within this Divine scenario lay the value of their personal visit, Rav Kook told them. Not merely as individuals, but as part of the *Clal*. Everyone in the room, *Rabenu* said, had been hand-picked by *Hashem* to join in this phenomenal national process of Israel's return to its Land. Their coming to Israel was a part of *Hashem's* returning His Divine Presence to Zion.³

2. Deut. 30:4-5.

3. See Rashi on Deut. 30:3; "Our Rabbis learned from this that His Divine Presence dwells with Israel in all of the misery of their exile, so when they will be redeemed, He has the Scripture write in terms of His redemption - that He will return with them."

This was a theme that Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught us to see and to feel – our connection to *Clal Yisrael*. *Clal Yisrael* is the encompassing community of Israel, past, present, and future; not just the sum total of every individual Jewish soul, but the eternal continuity, and soul, of the nation of Israel. **The significance of our lives, Rav Kook taught, lay in the life of the Clal, and not only in our individual beings.**⁴

As usual in Rav Tzvi Yehuda's talks, the all-encompassing perspective which he brought to Torah, added a new dimension to our understanding. His faith was almost tangible, affecting you deeply, far beyond what can be cognitively fathomed. Rav Tzvi Yehuda made us see *Hashem* in everything. Not just in our personal lives, but on a global, historical level. When you left his small apartment after a class, and hopped on a bus back to the Yeshiva, it suddenly wasn't an ordinary ride. The Yemenites, Moroccans, Americans, and Russians riding with you were Jews whom *Hashem* was gathering from all over the world. We were all a part of the promised redemption. **The soldier at your side wasn't just an ordinary soldier. He was Kadosh, engaged in the mitzvah of guarding the Jewish State.** And when you stepped off the bus, the grapes on the vines across from the Yeshiva were more than just fruit. They were signs of our redemption – the words of our Sages in front of our eyes: ***When the Land of Israel yields her fruits in abundance, there's no surer sign of the Exile's end.***⁵

Rav Tzvi Yehuda's manner of teaching brought the Torah alive in a bold, new perspective. He taught us to see the concrete expression of the words of our prophets and Sages in the events we were experiencing in Israel today. The vision of the return of the Jewish people to Israel, and our yearning for Jerusalem, is the focus of all of our prayers. When Rabbi Kook explained how verses of Torah and

4. See, Chapter Two of this book. *Clal Yisrael*.

5. Rashi, Sanhedrin, 98A.

prophecy were happening today, our lives were uplifted from our own personal dramas, to a drama which spanned all of our nation, and all Jewish history. **Our individual lives were elevated to the higher life of the Clal.**

2. A NEW SOUL

Rav Tzvi Yehuda continued his talk with an interesting insight mentioned in the book *Chesed L'Avraham*, by Rav Avraham Azulai, who died in Hevron approximately 350 years ago, in the year 5404. He writes that the first night a person comes to *Eretz Yisrael*, his soul rises to a spiritual world during sleep, then returns in the morning from its nocturnal wandering. Normally, the same soul returns after sleep, but after coming to Israel, a remarkable change takes place. **After a person breathes and absorbs the air of Eretz Yisrael, he is transformed.** When he awakens his first morning in Israel, he has a new soul!⁶

Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained this phenomenon in detail.⁷ Normally, we view the physical world as reality, but Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught us that this was only a partial truth. In actuality, **the spiritual world is more real than the physical world.** We don't always recognize this, but our forefathers did. In Yaacov's dream upon his departure from Israel, he sees a ladder, with angels going up and coming down. The angels who ascend are angels who accompany him in the Land of Israel, and the angels who come down are the angels who accompany him on his descent into exile.⁸ When Yaacov returns to the Land, he once again

6. "If a man is outside the Land of Israel, he has a soul of lesser celestial forces. If he merits to enter the Land of Israel, a soul from a newly created source comes to him, and clothes itself with his old soul. The first night he sleeps in *Eretz Yisrael*, both souls depart from him and rise to worlds above, and in the morning, only the new soul returns." *Chesed L'Avraham*, The Third Spring, Spring of the Land, River 12.

7. See *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, #10:2.

8. Genesis, 28:12; Rashi.

sees this change of celestial guard – only this time in reverse.⁹ When the sun rises, he is not the same Yaacov. His soul has been transformed. *And he said, your name shall no longer be Yaacov, but Yisrael.*¹⁰

The Gaon of Vilna echoes this idea by saying that a person isn't complete until he comes to the Land of Israel. On the verse, וַיָּבֹא יַעֲקֹב, שְׁלָם עִיר שָׁכֶם, And Yaacov came Shalem, to the city of Shechem,¹¹ the Gaon of Vilna explains שְׁלָם in its meaning of wholeness, and says that Yaacov wasn't complete until he came to Eretz Yisrael.¹²

What happened to Yaacov is a sign for his children,¹³ and for the national transformation, and completion, which the Jewish people are experiencing today; as the prophecy says, *For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own Land...A new heart I will also give you, and a new spirit I will put within you...And you shall dwell in the Land which I gave to your fathers, and you shall be My people, and I will be your G-d.*¹⁴ Rav Tzvi Yehuda pointed to the order of the verse. **Only after we return to the Land, and are influenced by its special transforming powers, are our true, healthy spirits renewed.**¹⁵

3. ONE NATION IN THE LAND

“To understand this process, we have to understand the essence of this Land,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

9. Ibid. 32:2. Rashi.

10. Ibid. 32:29.

11. Genesis. 33:18.

12. *Kol HaTor*, Ch.3:7.

13. Ramban on the Torah, Genesis. 12:6. Also, *Tanchuma, Lech Lecha*.

14. Ezekiel, 36:24–29.

15. *Yalkut Shimoni*, Habukuk. 3.

The *Rosh Yeshiva* would return to this theme again and again. Even to his regular students, the majority of whom had grown up in Israel, he would explain with endless patience, until he was sure we understood, that *Eretz Yisrael* is not like every other land; just another geographic area with mountains and rivers, valleys, and lakes. *Eretz Yisrael* is something else entirely. Yes, it has mountains and rivers, but these mountains and rivers are a part of us, inseparable from our being and from our national task of uplifting mankind to a knowledge of *Hashem*. *Eretz Yisrael* is *Kadosh*. It is the Land chosen by *Hashem* for His nation, and created with unique holy properties. **Our connection to Eretz Yisrael is not based solely on the fact that it is our homeland. There is a reason it is our homeland. The Almighty created it especially suited to us.**¹⁶ We could only be a nation here. Only here, in *Eretz Yisrael*, could we genuinely fulfill our Torah;¹⁷ not just in the sense of observing all of the *mitzvot* applicable only in Israel (over one third of the 613 commandments,) but in the deeper, more fundamental sense of being an *Am Kadosh*.¹⁸

This concept was so new, and abstract, it was difficult to comprehend. Two-thousand years of exile, without our Land, without a sovereign Jewish nation, had dimmed our perceptions of *Am Yisrael*. Entire sections of the Torah dealing with the nation's living in the Land were not studied, including the agricultural laws unique to the Land of Israel, the laws of the Temple, Sacrifices, and Ritual Purity, which comprise literally half of the Mishna. The wide body of laws applying to Monarchy, the Sanhedrin, and War, also weren't learned. These foundations of Israeli nationhood were not relevant to our life in

16. See, *The Torah and the Land*, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1.

17. *There are ten measures of Torah in the world. Nine are in Eretz Yisrael, and one in the rest of the world. Esther Rabbah. There is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael. Bereshit Rabbah*, 16. Also, see *L'Netivot Yisrael*, loc. cit.

18. Exodus, 19:6.

foreign countries. **In the exile, our identity shifted away from our national character, forming a Judaism which focused on the individual, and not on the Clal.** To Jews in *Galut*, the Land of Israel was close to their hearts, yet a faraway dream. Our homeland, yes. *Kadosh*, yes. A place to perform extra *mitzvot*, yes. But a land vital to Torah? **A thinking evolved that we could be G-d-fearing Jews just as well in Berlin – a tragedy whose outcome is familiar to all.**¹⁹

Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught us to see with different eyes. *Eretz Yisrael* is not something external to us.²⁰ It is spiritually and physically a part of us, as integral to us as our souls. An individual can wander about from place to place without a permanent home, but a nation, to be a nation, requires a land.

“*Eretz Yisrael* is the Land of *Clal Yisrael*, the Land of the nation and community of Israel,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

To the students from the *Galut*, these terms and concepts were new. Even in Israel, before Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook began his Central Universal Yeshiva, few people had delved into these deep ideas. The great *Tzaddikim* understood these matters, but the

19. “If a Jew thinks that Berlin is Jerusalem...then a raging stormwind will uproot him by his trunk...a tempest will arise and spread its roaring waves, and swallow and destroy, and flood forth without pity.” *Meshech Chochmah*, by the *Ohr Somayach*. Rabbi Meir Simcha HaCohen from Dvinsk, Pg. 171–2. And see, Introduction to the Siddur, *Beit Yaacov*, by Rabbi Yaacov Emden: “When it seems to us in our present peaceful existence outside the Land of Israel, that we have found another *Eretz Yisrael* and Jerusalem, this is to me, the greatest, deepest, most obvious, and direct cause of all of the awesome, frightening, monstrous, unimaginable destructions that we have experienced in the Diaspora.”
20. “*Eretz Yisrael* is not an external entity...” *Orot, Eretz Yisrael*. 1:1. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

teaching of this deep aspect of Torah was only passed on to a selected few. We find explanations in the writings of the *Maharal*, the *Kuzari*, the Gaon of Vilna, and other holy works. Though these principles appear plainly in the Torah, the *Gemara*, and works of *Halacha*; they weren't learned by the masses. Throughout the long Exile, without a land or sovereign nation of our own, matters pertaining to nationhood, the Land of Israel, and *Clal Yisrael* simply weren't stressed. To us, it was a revolutionary understanding of Judaism, passed down from Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook to his son, and transmitted to us, who were chosen to be not the guardians of the secret, but its purveyors, and the generation destined to bring the Torah, in all of its fulness, to life.

At Rav Kook's Yeshiva, we learned that the Torah is not just a Divine moral code and a system of ritual practices. **Torah is a national constitution, a Divine cosmic and national law, embodied in a Divinely-chosen community, and fulfilled in a Divinely-chosen Land. A Divine community with a real government, a real army, a real economy, and all of the other down-to-earth aspects of normal, national life.** This orientation to Torah brought an enlightened understanding of the State of Israel today, which represents an important stage of the Divine historical process which brings Jewish sovereignty over Israel to its Messianic ideal.²¹

21. *HaTkufah HaGedola*, by Rabbi Menachem Kasher, Chapter 19: A letter which encouraged participation in the State's first elections reads: "We thank *Hashem* for gracing us with His abundant mercy and charity, to let us witness the first blossoms of the beginning of the *Geula* with the establishment of the State of Israel...." The letter was signed by hundreds of rabbis, including the former Chief Rabbis, Rabbi Yitzhak HaLevi Herzog, and Rabbi Ben Zion Meir Uziel; HaRav Tzvi Pesach Frank, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem; HaRav Y.M. Tiketchinsky, author of the *Luach Eretz Yisrael*; HaRav Yehezkiel Sarneh, Rosh Yeshiva of Hevron Yeshiva; HaRav Shlomo Yosef Zevin, author of the Talmudic Encyclopedia; HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, Shlita, Rosh Yeshiva, Kol Torah.

“Just who is this nation, Israel?” Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked.

He said that to properly understand our connection to *Eretz Yisrael*, we first had to know who we are. He answered by quoting verses of Torah, which speak of Israel’s unique, Divine creation: *This nation I have formed for Myself.*²² *And all the people of the earth shall see that you are called by the Name of the Lord.*²³

We are the nation created by Hashem to proclaim His Name in the world. And just as all other nations belong to a particular land, Hashem’s nation belongs to a particular land.

“This is a part of the order of Creation, that this air, these mountains and hills, these stones and plants, and all of the Almighty’s Creation in this portion of the globe, are uniquely connected to us. Just as Hashem, בָּחַר בְּנוֹ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים. *Chose us from all of the nations,*²⁴ He chose our Land from all of the lands. בְּיָ בָחַר ה' בְּצִיּוֹן. *For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for His habitation.*²⁵ כִּי יַעֲקֹב בָּחַר לוֹ יְהוָה, *For the Lord has chosen Yaacov for Himself, Israel for His particular possession.*”²⁶

“The Divinely chosen nature of our nation, and of our Land, is integral to the understanding of *Clal Yisrael*,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

22. Isaiah, 43:21.

23. Deut. 28:10.

24. Blessing over the Torah.

25. Tehillim, 132:13.

26. Tehillim, 135:4.

Both the nation and its Land are unique Divine creations. *Am Yisrael*, and each individual Jew, can only reach perfection by being bonded with the Land which the Almighty intended for us.²⁷ And by the same token, the Land of Israel only reveals its hidden treasures when her own people dwell upon her.²⁸

“The *Kuzari* explains that our unique essence is as a community, and not as individuals.²⁹ The *Maharal* also makes clear that our specialness is as a *Clal*.³⁰ There are individual *Tzaddikim* among the gentile nations of the world; saintly men, and sages, and people of spiritual insight and belief.³¹ But herein lies the basic difference between *Am Yisrael* and the nations of the world – our creation is unique, Divine. We are a nation brought into existence by the Creator of heaven and earth. **Our whole nation is Kadosh**, as Isaiah says, *Thy people shall ALL be righteous*.³² **All of our meaning and value is as a nation, a community, a Clal.**”

“And the specifically designated place on this planet for this segment of mankind is here in the Land of Israel. And who is like Israel, one nation in the Land.”³³ The

27. *Orot, Eretz Yisrael*.

28. Ramban, Leviticus, 26:15. “And that which is stated here, *And your enemies will rule over the desolate land*, is a blessing which guarantees that through all of the ages, our Land will not receive our enemies, and this is a great proof and promise for us. For you can not find in the entire world a land which is good and bountiful, that was once settled and is now as desolate as it is (Israel.) For since we left her, she refused to yield to another nation.”

29. *Kuzari* 1:95.

30. *Netzach Yisrael*, Chapter 11.

31. Rambam, Laws of Repentance, 3:5. And *Tanna Deve Eliahu Zuta*, 2.

32. Isaiah, 60:21.

33. Samuel 2, 7:23.

Zohar states: *In Israel, they are one nation,*³⁴ and not outside of it.”

In the exile, the national framework of the Jewish people is destroyed. We are reduced to communities scattered all over the world; whereas, in Israel, the Presence of G-d, the *Shekhina*, dwells in our midst. *And I will dwell among the children of Israel.*³⁵ The special connection between the Land of Israel, *Hashem*, and the Jewish people is not only a spiritual bond – it is manifested in a physical fashion as well. **Only in Israel can the Jewish people have a sovereign government, a Jewish army, or a national calendar based on the Jewish year.** These are all manifestations of the *Shekhina* in physical form.³⁶

Perhaps an example will help make this clear. Could *Tzahal* exist in America, Russia, or Spain? Obviously not. These nations would never allow an independent army in their lands. Or could we build the *Beit HaMikdash* in France? Such a proposition is equally absurd. **Jewish sovereignty in Israel is a manifestation of the Shekhina in the physical world, which appears not only as the Kingdom of Israel in its ideal Torah state, but as it exists in the modern State of Israel today.**³⁶

“Given the specialness of the Land of Israel to the Jewish people, we can understand why a man’s soul is transformed when he arrives here,”³⁷ The *Rosh Yeshiva*

34. Zohar, Emor, 93.

35. Kings 1, 6:13.

36. Shabbat 24A, Sec. Toscfot beginning, *B’Boneh Yerushalayim*, “For the prayer (to return His Shekinah to Zion) is a prayer to return the Jews to Jerusalem.” And, see, *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, “The State as Actualization of the Vision of the Prophets.”

37. “The encompassing soul of *Clal Yisrael* doesn’t rest on the individual Jew except in *Eretz Yisrael*. As soon as a Jew comes to Israel, his individual soul is engulfed in the great light of the encompassing soul which enters inside it.” *Orot, Orot Yisrael*, 7:18.

said. "This is not just a metaphor, but an actual occurrence, not always recognized on a cognizant level, but a phenomenon which has a profound internal effect. The more a Jew is connected to Israel, the deeper and greater the transformation and renewal he experiences.³⁸ This is what the Sages tell us in the *Gemara*, *But of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her... One who was born there, and one who eagerly yearns to see her.*³⁹ The more one is connected to *Eretz Yisrael*, and the more one understands and feels the need to live here, the greater the soul's renewal from her special power."⁴⁰

4. I COME FROM ERETZ YISRAEL

To illustrate a Jew's eternal connection to Israel, Rav Tzvi Yehuda often used an insight of Rabbi Meir Yechiel of Ostrovtza, one of the great Talmudic geniuses of the past generation. He was a prodigy, a giant in Torah, and a *Tzaddik* famous throughout the Jewish world. All of his life was spent in fasting, Rav Tzvi Yehuda told us. He felt a need to live this way – above the ways of ordinary men. Only occasionally would he taste something, or nap a bit, then immediately return to his learning.

"When Jews meet, they customarily exchange, 'Shaloms', and ask, 'Where do you come from?' The

38. "And this exalted essence takes effect, whether it comes with one's awareness and desire, or whether the person doesn't want it, or doesn't recognize its worth. However, there is a substantial difference in the manifestations and scope of this holy light of the encompassing soul, which appears in the person who desires to join with it (as opposed to the level of light of the encompassing soul in the person who doesn't recognize it.)" Ibid.

39. Ketubot, 75A. See also, *Orot*, *Eretz Yisrael*, 4:6.

40. Baba Batra, 158B: *The air of Eretz Yisrael causes wisdom.*

usual response is: I come from Belgium, Brazil, or Colorado. The *Admore* of Ostrovitz says, 'Every Jew is obliged to answer – I come from *Eretz Yisrael*.' This is a very deep insight, telling us that **every Jew, in his innermost essence, belongs to Eretz Yisrael.**"

Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained the *Midrash* behind this insight of the *Admore*, a *Midrash* which brings a curious criticism of Moshe Rabenu in comparison to Yosef. Yosef identified with *Eretz Yisrael*. He admitted it freely when he said, *I was certainly stolen from the Land of the Hebrews.*⁴¹ Therefore he merited to be buried in Israel. Moshe, in contrast, didn't acknowledge his homeland in the incident with Yitro's daughters, who reported to their father, *An Egyptian man saved us.*⁴² Moshe heard this and kept silent.⁴³ The *Admore* of Ostrovitz asks why the Sages find fault with Moshe for not saying he was from *Eretz Yisrael*. After all, he was born and raised in Egypt – how could he lie and say he was from *Eretz Yisrael*? The *Admore* of Ostrovitz replies that through *Hashem's* promise of the Land to Avraham's descendants, Moshe belongs to the Land.⁴⁴

"Because of our long exile amidst the impurity of the

41. Genesis, 40:15.

42. Exodus, 2:19.

43. "Moshe said, 'Master of the Universe, Yosef's bones will enter the Land, and I won't enter?' Hashem said to him, 'He who identified with his Land will be buried in his Land, and he who didn't identify with his Land, will not be buried there.' Yosef acknowledged his Land. Where? The wife of Potifar said, 'See, he brought us a Hebrew.' And he did not deny it. Rather, he answered, 'I was certainly stolen from the Land of the Hebrews.' He will be buried in the Land. You, who did not acknowledge your Land, you won't be buried there. How did this happen? Yitro's daughters said, 'An Egyptian man saved us from the shepherds.' And he heard and was silent. Therefore, he won't be buried in his Land." *Devarim Rabbah*, 2:5.

44. See, The *Admore* of Ostrovitz, *Hasidut and Zion*, The Masters of Poland Return to Zion.

gentile nations, we have become accustomed to think that our life in Galut is normal, and we forget that Eretz Yisrael is our natural, healthy, Divinely-intended place,”
Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

This situation, Rav Kook emphasized, was a disgrace and tragic mistake. The matter is illustrated clearly in the *Kuzari* of Rav Yehuda HaLevi. In Chapter Two of this classic treatise on the nation of Israel and Torah, the Rabbi extols the virtues of *Eretz Yisrael*. After he finishes his lengthy praise of the Land, the King of the Kuzars chastises him for not acting in line with his words, for the Rabbi does not live in Israel. The Rabbi confesses:

“You have uncovered my great disgrace, O King of the Kuzars! It is this sin which prevented the Divine promise from being fulfilled in the time of the Second Temple – *Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion.* (Zecharia, 2:14) For Divine Providence was ready to restore everything as it had been at first, if all of them had answered the call and returned to *Eretz Yisrael* in gladness. But only a small portion responded, whilst the majority, and the *Gedolim* among them, remained in Babylon, preferring exile and slavery under the gentiles, rather than giving up their houses and their affairs...If we had been willing to approach the G-d of our fathers with a pure heart, He would have granted us the same salvation which He granted to our forefathers in Egypt. Now, since this isn't so, our prayers to *Worship at His holy mountain; Worship at His footstool; and He who restores His glory to Zion*, and other prayers like these, are like the speech of the parrot and the chattering of the starling. We say these words, and others, without true belief in our hearts, as you rightly observe, O Prince of the Kuzars.”⁴⁵

45. *Kuzari*, 2:24.

5. GET YOURSELF FORTH TO THE LAND

Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that the special relationship between the Jewish people and *Eretz Yisrael* was made clear with *Hashem's* first revelation to Avraham.

“*Hashem* says to Avraham, *קַח-לְךָ*,⁴⁶ *Get yourself forth....* Avraham Avinu was commanded to journey to a specific place, *To the Land I will show you.*⁴⁶ Usually, a person knows his destination when he begins a journey, but Avraham wasn't told where to go. He was to discover this only during the trip. In this we can see the greatness of Avraham, *The greatest man among the giants.*⁴⁷ Even without knowing where he was going, Avraham picked up his family and went to find the place where he was to serve *Hashem.*”

“There's an expression in Latin – *Ex orient lux* – the light comes from the East. So too, spiritual light comes to the world from the East, from our Middle East. **From this spot on earth, Hashem educates mankind.** To do this, *Hashem* wants us here in Israel. We don't belong in other places. Haven't we already sufficiently tasted the life in Europe and Auschwitz?”

6. THE MITZVAH OF SETTLING THE LAND

When Rav Tzvi Yehuda paused, you could hear the pencils still writing. *Bnei Akiva* was a worldwide, Zionist youth movement which

46. Genesis, 12:2.

47. Joshua, 14:15. Tractate Sofrim, 21:9.

strove to foster a connection and identification with Israel among Diaspora youth, and these student representatives had the task of leading the way. It was a road filled with difficulties and pitfalls, often stemming from a confused understanding of Israel and Torah. These young people looked to Rav Kook to illuminate the path which would lead them, and others like them, to a true appreciation of the meaning of Zion.

“It is sometimes erroneously thought that living in Israel, conquering her, settling the Land, and keeping her under Jewish sovereignty, are only the means for observing a Torah lifestyle in Israel. This is a mistake. **The precept of conquering and settling the Land is, in itself, a mitzvah prescribed by the Torah** – to settle the Land so that it will not lay in desolation.”⁴⁸

“In Judaism, it is accepted that, among the *Rishonim*, second in importance to the Rambam (Maimonides) is his near contemporary, the Ramban (Nachmonides,) one of the most outstanding sages and Kabbalists, two things which go hand in hand. The Ramban concluded that the commandment to settle the Land of Israel is a positive *mitzvah* of the 613 commandments in the Torah.⁴⁸ He based his decision on the language of the verse, *And you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the Land and dwell in*

48. “That we were commanded to take possession of the Land which the Almighty, Blessed Be He, gave to our forefathers, to Avraham, to Yitzhak, and to Yaacov; and to not abandon it to other nations, or to leave it desolate, as He said to them, *You shall dispossess the inhabitants of the Land and dwell in it, for I have given the Land to you to possess it.* (Numbers, 33:53) and He said, further, *To inherit the Land which I swore to your forefathers,* (to give them,) behold, we are commanded with the conquest of the Land in every generation.” Ramban, Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam. Positive commandment #4.

it,⁴⁹ which is stated in the language of a command. We are enjoined with two tasks: first, to possess the Land through conquest; and, secondly, to dwell in the Land.”

“The Ramban clearly establishes that this Land, which *Hashem* promised our forefathers, must be kept under our control, and not under the control of any other nation.⁴⁸ This is clearly meant in a national sense, for everyone understands that ruling a land means the establishment of a state in that land. **The establishment of Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel is a fundamental precept of the Torah.**⁵⁰ To ensure that the Land does not remain desolate, we must actively promote the development and settlement of the Land, in every sphere possible.”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted the Diaspora students to know that there was absolutely no question of a Jew’s duty to live in *Eretz Yisrael*. The conquering of Israel, and the settlement of the Land, was a commandment of the Torah. This was clearly explained by the Ramban, and all of the *Rishonim* and *Achronim* who decided *Halacha* agreed.⁵¹ This obligation to live in Israel rests both on the individual,

49. Numbers. 33:53. “In my opinion, this is a positive commandment, enjoining that they dwell in the Land and possess it, because it was given to them, and that they should not despise the inheritance of *Hashem*....Here we are commanded with this *mitzvah*, for this verse is a positive command.” Ramban on the Torah, there.

50. See *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 2, Pgs. 158–159. by HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook.

51. *Pitchei Tshuva, Even HaEzer*. Section 75, Sub-section 6. Also see the book, *M’Afar Kumi*, by Rav Tzvi Glatt, for a detailed discussion on the *Halacha* of living in *Eretz Yisrael*. The following is a partial list of the *Halachic* authorities who state that the obligation to live in Israel is a Torah commandment binding in all times: Rambam, Laws of Marriage, Ch. 3:20; Laws of Slaves, Ch. 8:39.

and on the nation as a whole. While there were Orthodox communities who opposed the modern Jewish State, Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught us the opposite. **Medinat Yisrael was Kadosh in its fulfillment of this national mitzvah.**⁵² It is the vehicle *Hashem* is using to enable us to actualize this commandment, which is equal in value to all of the precepts of the Torah.⁵³

7. DWELLING IN ERETZ YISRAEL – EQUAL TO ALL OF THE COMMANDMENTS

“Our Sages have clearly explained the value of *Eretz Yisrael* to the Torah and the *mitzvot*, stating that the precept of living in Israel is equal in scale to all of the commandments in the Torah.⁵³ This is an awesome pronouncement. Obviously, this emphasis does not come to render all other precepts superfluous. Every precept is an integral part of the overall 613 commandments. However, the *mitzvah* of living in Israel is not just an ordinary commandment.⁵³ It is an all-encompassing precept – the fundamental prerequisite for *Am Yisrael* to

Sefer Haredim, Ch.7. Maharit, Responsa. 2:28. Rashbash, 1. Kneset Gedolah, Even HaEzer, 75, Notes to the Beit Yosef, 25. Gaon of Vilna, Yoreh Deah, 267:161. Avne Nezer, Yoreh Deah, 454. M'il Tzedakah, Responsa, 26. Rav Yaacov Emden, Mor Uktziah, Section 1, Pg.16. Chida, Responsa, Yosef Ometz, 52, and Ya'ir Ozen, 10:5. Chachmat Adam, Shar Mishpatei HaAretz, 11:3. Paat HaShulchan, Ch.1, Beit Yisrael, 14. Chatam Sofer, Responsa, Yoreh Deah, 233,234. Rav Haim Palagi, Responsa, Nishmat Kol Chai, Yoreh Deah, 48. Rav Shlomo from Lublin, in his introduction to the book Mitzvah Yishuv HaAretz. Maharam Shik, Yoreh Deah, 225. Ohr Somayach, Letter for the book Shivat Zion, printed in Kol Yisrael, 5687. Rav Yitzhak Elchanan Spector, Letters, Shivat Zion. Chazan Ish, Letters, 175.

52. See, *Amud Hay'mini*, Chapter 9, HaRav Shaul Yisraeli.

53. Sifre, Ekev, 10:1.

be able to function as a nation. **For the genuine keeping of the Torah is only in Eretz Yisrael.**⁵⁴ **In every other place, the commandments are imposed as a way of reminder, so that when we return to Israel, we will know how to keep them.**⁵⁵

Rav Tzvi Yehuda based this on a *Sifre*, which Rashi quotes in his commentary on the Torah: *Even though I am exiling you from Israel to outside the Land, distinguish yourself with the commandments, so that when you return, they will not seem new in your eyes.* Rashi comments: “This is like a king who became angry at his wife, and sent her back to her father’s house. He said to her, ‘Wear your jewelry so it won’t seem new to you when you return to the palace.’ Thus *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* says to Israel: ‘My sons, distinguish yourselves with precepts so that when you return, they won’t be new to you.’ This is what Jeremiah said, *Set up waymarks for yourself, make yourself signposts.* (Jeremiah, 31:20) These are the *mitzvot* which Israel is commanded.”⁵⁵

The true, intended, place for the *mitzvot* is in *Eretz Yisrael*. Their purpose in *Galut* is to keep us attached to the Torah, so that when we return to Israel, the performance of the commandments won’t seem unfamiliar and new. This teaching of the Sages emphasizes that *Eretz Yisrael* is not merely our geographical homeland, but a foundation of true Torah observance.

8. OUR NATURAL PLACE

A hand rose into the air, and a student asked a question: “Is it

54. See, *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, The Torah and the Land.

55. *Sifre, Ekev*, 11:18. And, Rashi. Deut. 11:18. Also, Ramban, there.

permissible for us, who understand the importance of *Eretz Yisrael*, to return to the Diaspora for a specified time to act as counselors?"

"Yes," Rav Kook answered. "If in truth, the intention is for a limited time. But first, a Jew must feel that his place is in Israel, and not in America, Mexico, or Afghanistan. This is our home, through *Hashem's* promise to our forefathers, which is valid for all generations."⁵¹

Every Jew, every stone, every city, every *mitzvah* which we were lacking in *Eretz Yisrael*, detracted from our optimal wholeness, Rav Kook said. *Eretz Yisrael* is the place designed for us, both in the communal sense of the Israeli nation, and in the individual life of every single Jew. Here we are at home. Here we are family. The air of *Eretz Yisrael* is healthy for us. As Rav Yehuda Halevi wrote in his poems, *The air of Your Land is the breath of our soul*.⁵⁶

Rav Tzvi Yehuda was more than answering the boy's question about leaving *Eretz Yisrael*. Often, he sensed a deeper level to a question that was asked, and he would answer accordingly. In his patient, thorough way, Rabbi Kook was trying to clarify for the student, and for everyone else in the room, the very real differences between the Land of Israel and everywhere else in the world.

"*The air of Israel makes one wise*," Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, quoting the well-known *Gemara*.⁵⁷ "It causes intelligence and wisdom. And **the beginning of intelligence is to understand that existence among the gentile nations is totally unpleasant.**"

56. Songs of Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi.

57. Baba Batra 158B.

A Jew who was born outside the Land of Israel, who spent his whole life in the Diaspora, doesn't know any other reality. He readily becomes a creature of the foreign culture which surrounds him. He becomes estranged from his natural connection to Israel. His sense of a need for his own Jewish government, or Jewish army, or Jewish calendar, or Land, is obscured. The governments of America, England, or South Africa take care of his needs. In the absence of Jewish nationhood, gentile cultures and pastimes occupy a significant role in his daily existence. Thus, the redemption of Israel can become a secondary issue in his life. **His life ceases to feel like an exile,⁵⁸ and, because of his alienation from the deeper aspects of Torah, his existence in a gentile land does not feel unpleasant to him, or to his soul.**

Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted us to know that, on the contrary, living outside of Israel was unpleasant indeed; not only in being a guest in someone else's country, but even in the very air that we breathe. It is a well-known fact that the food we eat influences our internal being. We are careful to eat kosher food, because a Jew understands that to live a life of *Kedusha*, he must observe the dietary laws which *Hashem* has decreed for His people. The food which we eat has an effect on our souls. How much more so our surroundings, the air we breathe,⁵⁹ and the land we walk on. In Israel, we are surrounded by *Kedusha*, by holy air and holy soil. And every moment we are here, we are performing a *mitzvah*, as our Sages say: *Everyone who walks four cubits in the Land of Israel merits a portion in the World To Come.*⁶⁰ In contrast, **outside of Israel, the air is impure, the land is impure, even Halachically, the Diaspora is categorized as possessing a state of defilement similar to that of a grave.**⁶¹

58. *Orot, Eretz Yisrael, 2.*

59. Rambam, *Essays on Health*; Letter on Healthy Behavior, Gate 4:1, Pg. 65, Mosad HaRav Kook. "First, a man should improve the quality of his air, then his water, then the food he eats."

60. Ketubot 111A.

61. Shabbat 14B: *Yosi ben Yoezer, from Tradar, and Yosi ben Yochanon from*

“We mustn’t forget that the gentile nations do us a favor by allowing us to stay in their lands – until they expel us. One must realize that we are on foreign soil there. It is not our society, nor government. Nothing is ours. Only in Israel, are we at home, with family, living according to our customs, and our uniquely Jewish year; living in the place designed for our *Kedusha*, for our psychological health, and even for our physical well-being. We must return to health, and turn away from unhealthy, polluted places, from environments which are sometimes so polluted and disorienting that one forgets who he really is, and thinks that it is normal to live among the gentiles. This is a tragic mistake.”

9. THE HEALING AIR

“A generation ago, the Rabbi of Jerusalem was Rabbi Shmuel Salant, a great scholar, famous throughout the world. During his childhood, he lived in Lithuania, in the city of Salant. In his youth, he contracted tuberculosis. The greatest doctors feared for his life and nearly surrendered all hope. They recommended he travel to a certain healthy locale, between Egypt and Ethiopia. Perhaps there he could live many more years. Rabbi Salant said to them, ‘This location is close to the Land of Israel. It is preferable to travel there.’ Thus he journeyed to Jerusalem, where he lived to the age of ninety-three, serving as rabbi of the city for sixty years.”

Jerusalem, decreed that the lands of the nations possess the status of ritual impurity. Also, Nazir 54B, Tosefot beginning, “Eretz...” Also, Gaon of Vilna, Likutei HaGra, end of Safra D’Tzni-uta.

“Similarly, there was an important doctor, a well-known researcher, neither religious, nor Zionist, yet he claimed that among the wide variety of diseases, there are certain sicknesses which occur more frequently among Jews. ‘The reason is because we are Asians,’ he said. ‘We belong to the Land of Israel. In the Diaspora, we don’t find a climate suited to us, and when this is compounded with a particular physical weakness, it takes its revenge.’”

10. THE LAND OF OUR LIFE

“*Eretz Yisrael* is the Land of our life,⁶² in every way, whether national, historical, social, or personal. Even in the aspect of our physical well-being and health. The atmosphere of *Eretz Yisrael* is our atmosphere. These mountains, these hills, these valleys, Jerusalem, Hevron, and Shechem, in both their spiritual and physical meanings, they are bonded to us,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

“And if, due to the routineness of our lives, we forget this connection – this is a catastrophe. **It is a tragedy when we fall in love with the Galut.** It is written in the Torah portion, *Mishpatim*, that after six years, a Hebrew slave must go free. If he refuses, saying, *I loved my master – I won’t go out to freedom,*⁶³ this is an awful thing. Likewise, when we fall in love with the *Galut*, saying, ‘I loved my master, the foreign nation,’ this is a tragic mistake.”

62. Tehillim, 116:9; See Rashi, there, Tehillim, 142:6; See Radak.

63. Exodus, 21:5.

“We need to foster the understanding, and the feeling, that we must live in Israel, that this is our normal place, in terms of religion, and in terms of our nationhood. If we are not here, we are unhealthy. And from time to time, the gentiles remind us that we are living in their domain, in an alien land.”⁶⁴

“This must be clear before anything else – no matter where a Jew is, he belongs only to *Eretz Yisrael*. This is his permanent home. Outside the Land, we have the status of guests. **For two or three years, it is possible to be there, in order to fulfill a mitzvah, but the aim of our life is to be here.**”

11. TEMPORARY DEPARTURE ABROAD

Therefore, Rav Kook said, one must root oneself in *Eretz Yisrael*, not abandon her, nor make her a foreign thing. Someone who wants to be close to the king doesn't travel to one of his territories on the other side of the globe – he goes to the palace. In the words of the *Kuzari*, prophecy only occurs, *In her or for her*. In the Land of Israel, or on her behalf.⁶⁵ Prophecy, the highest and clearest expression of our closeness to *Hashem*, occurs either in Israel or in a situation of

64. See the *Netziv*, in a discourse on the *Galut*, appended to his commentary to *Shir HaShirim*, where he writes that anti-Semitism erupts when the Jewish people forget they are Jewish, and *Hashem* sends the gentiles to remind them. Also, see, *Meshach Chochmah*, Pgs.171–172. And, *Mezudat David*, on Ezekiel 20:33–34: *And I will bring you out from the peoples, and will gather you out of the countries in which you are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with anger poured out: “By putting in the hearts of the nations that they expel them (the exiled Jews) and banish them from their lands.”*

65. *Kuzari*, 2:14.

yearning for *Eretz Yisrael*. As the *Gemara* says, “One who eagerly awaits to see her.”⁶⁶ Through his yearning to belong to *Eretz Yisrael*, he becomes a part of her, and shares in her special gifts.

Thus, the *Rosh Yeshiva* said, leaving *Eretz Yisrael* should not even enter one’s thoughts. However, *Shlichim* (emissaries) who go out to the Diaspora for a limited time, perform a great and important task. Brief departures on behalf of *Eretz Yisrael* are permitted, in order to educate Jews in the Diaspora, and to establish a connection between the Jewish people and their Land.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that the laws on this subject were made very clear in the *Gemara*. Generally, leaving the Land of Israel is forbidden, but exceptional cases of temporary departure are permitted. One such reason is to learn Torah, if it is impossible to learn Torah in Israel, in a case where *Eretz Yisrael* lies in ruins, and is desolate of Torah. Then a person has no choice, and one must seek Torah outside the Land.⁶⁷ Thank G-d, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, this is not the situation today. Also, it is permissible to temporarily leave Israel in search of a spouse, if it is impossible to find a suitable and proper daughter of Israel in *Eretz Yisrael*.⁶⁷

“And today,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “I don’t think that’s a problem.”

Yet even in a case where Torah, or a marriage partner couldn’t be found, departure from Israel must only be temporary; to learn, or to

66. Ketubot 75A. *But of Zion it shall be said, ‘This and that man was born in her.’ Both the one who is born there, and the one who yearns to see her.*

67. Avodah Zorah 13A. And see Tosefot, there, beginning, “L’mod...” And, *Mishpat HaKohen*, 147, sub-section 2, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

marry, and then to **return to Israel**, as the Rambam, in the *Mishna Torah* explicitly states.⁶⁸

12. ALIYAH AND THE PRECEPT TO HONOR ONE'S PARENTS

When confronted by these *Halachic* rulings for the first time, students from the exile are often dismayed. The obligation of living in Israel can mean uprooting oneself from one's birthplace, and separating oneself from the culture and language one knows; and even from family and friends. A student asked Rav Kook what the *Halacha* said in a case where parents are opposed to a child's moving to Israel.⁶⁹

"The ruling in Yoreh Deah states that if a father tells a child to transgress a positive commandment, even a rabbinical ordinance, the child should not listen to him."⁷⁰

The precept to live in Israel is a Torah commandment, which applies in every generation, to every Jew, even in the time of *Galut*.⁵¹ Therefore, a *Beit Din* can compel someone to leave the exile and move to Israel, even from a luxurious home in the Diaspora, to a miserable home in *Eretz Yisrael*; even from a city in *Galut* where the majority of residents are Jews, to a city in Israel where the majority are idol worshippers.⁷¹ The *Beit Din* has this

68. Rambam, Laws of Kings, 5:9: "In all times, a Jew is forbidden to leave *Eretz Yisrael* for *Chutz L'Aretz*; except to study Torah, or to marry, or to rescue (Jewish money) from the gentiles, and **then he must return to the Land**. One is also permitted to leave temporarily for business, but to dwell outside the Land of Israel is forbidden, unless there is a severe famine there...."

69. Responsa printed in, The Duty of Aliyah to Israel, World Mizrahi Organization Pamphlet.

70. *Yoreh Deah*, 240:15.

71. *Even HaEzer*, 75:3.

power of compelling someone to move to Israel, not because of the many precepts which one can only perform in the Land, but, rather, because of the *Kedusha* of the Land itself, an eternal *Kedusha* which has not changed, nor will ever change, for all eternity.⁷² Furthermore, the obligation of moving to Israel is all the more stringent when it stems from a desire to learn Torah in Israel, for, *There is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael.*⁷³ And the study of Torah is greater than the *mitzvah* of honoring one's father and mother.⁷⁴ Concerning women, because of the intrinsic *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael*, which is the foundation of the obligation to live here, they are also duty-bound in this *mitzvah*.⁷⁵

13. THE TORAH OF ERETZ YISRAEL

“The verse, *The Lord's Torah is perfect,*⁷⁶ finds its ideal expression in the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*, when the nation of Israel is in the Land of Israel. *Orot HaTorah* explains that the Heavenly Torah is revealed in all of its fulness and grandeur, only with its observance in *Eretz Yisrael.*⁷⁷ The Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* is the highest level of Torah. *There is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael.*⁷³ The Torah is natural to the Land of Israel.

72. Chatam Sofer, *Yoreh Deah*, 234.

73. *Bereshit Rabbah*, 16:7. Sifre, Ekev, 1: *The Torah is exclusively in Eretz Yisrael.*

74. Megilla 16B. *Shulchan Oruch*, *Yoreh Deah*, 250:25.

75. See, *Marcheshet*, Part 1, Ch. 22, Sections 6–7.

76. Tehillim 19:8.

77. *Orot HaTorah*, 1:3. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

Here, *Kedusha* is natural.⁷⁸ Here, Divine Providence is natural.”⁷⁹

“**Israel’s wholeness appears only in Eretz Yisrael.** The Divine value of this great nation appears only when it is situated in its own Land, in all of its health and stature. The revelation of *Hashem’s* honor in the world comes about through this nation in this Land. This is the order of creation, that *There is no G-d in all of the earth, except in Israel.*⁸⁰ When this portion of mankind is situated in this particular Land, the Torah is revealed in all of its truth.”

“There is a special chapter in *Orot HaTorah* on the difference between the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* and the Torah of the *Galut*.⁸¹ These are not idle words. The foundation of the matter is that the Torah is life, the vitality of existence. Can a Jew, whether the individual, or the congregational, be in a similar state of Torah vitality in his life in Brooklyn or Williamsburg, as in the air of Jerusalem, Petach Tikvah, or Kibbutz Ein

78. *Orot, Orot HaTehiya*, 28. “The *Kedusha* found in nature is the *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael*, and the *Shekhina* which went into Exile with Israel, is the ability to maintain *Kedusha* against the forces of nature (outside of the Land.)”
79. Deut. 11:12: The eyes of the Lord are upon it from the first of the year to the end. “In *Eretz Yisrael*, the spiritual spring of inner *Kedusha* flows in all of its fulness...” *Orot HaKodesh*, Vol. 1, 117. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.
80. Kings 2, 5:15.
81. *Orot HaTorah*, Chapter 13.
82. Kibbutz Ein Harod is a non-religious kibbutz. Nonetheless, Rav Kook states that it possesses the *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael*, as opposed to (religious) communities in the Diaspora, which possess the ritually impure status of *Chutz L’Aretz*. See, Ketubot 110B.

Harod?⁸² G-d forbid! It is impossible to observe the same Torah and precepts in an atmosphere of impurity as one can in an atmosphere of *Kedusha*. This matter is mentioned frequently by our Sages, in the *Gemara* and in the *Midrash*, that **the Torah of Eretz Yisrael, and the Torah of Chutz La'Aretz (outside the Land) are not the same Torah, nor the same mitzvot.**⁸³ The air of *Eretz Yisrael* is a Divine creation, which is Divinely bonded with our lives. The healthy, fundamental place of our intellectual endeavor and spirituality is here,⁸⁴ and this truth can never change. We can deceive neither ourselves, nor nature, nor the Almighty.”

14. THE SHEKHINA IN THIS WORLD

“There is another teaching of the Sages which begins with a question: *Do you desire to see the Shekhina in this world?*⁸⁵ The *Shekhina* is the manifestation of *Hashem's* Presence in this world, as it appears in *Am Yisrael*. The answer is: *Study Torah in Eretz Yisrael.*”⁸⁵

“The more one is connected to *Am Yisrael*, and to the labor of Torah study, the more one succeeds in cleaving to *Hashem*. The manifestation of the *Shekhina* is especially dependent on the health and wholeness of *Am Yisrael*, and this occurs exclusively in *Eretz Yisrael*. The *Gemara* says that, *Talmidei Chachamim* outside of the Land of Israel, *אֵינָן בְּנֵי מְקוֹמָן*, *Are out of place.*⁸⁶

83. Sifre, Deut. 11:18, Rashi, and Ramban, there. Also, Ramban, Leviticus, 18:25, “For the essence of all of the precepts is that they be performed in the Land of *Hashem*.”

84. *Orot, Eretz Yisrael*, 1:4-5.

85. *Midrash Tehillim*, *Tehillim*, 105.

86. Shabbat 145B.

Something is abnormal in their living there. **If you want to rise to the level of witnessing the Shekhina,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, “You need to be a part of the revelation of Torah in all of its purity, Kedusha, Emunah, and truth – something which is possible only in Eretz Yisrael.”⁸⁷**

15. EXPLAINING THE NEED FOR ALIYAH

Another student in the room asked a question: “In the Diaspora, we have to strive hard to influence people to come on *Aliyah*, and sometimes it’s difficult to find the right approach with people far from Judaism. How can one speak with them about the importance of living in Israel, in secular terms, without using a religious argument to convince them?”

“Firstly, it is important to realize, that even though we are speaking of people who don’t observe our religion, they still harbor a desire to be Jews. If not, this is truly a precarious situation. But, assuming that they do identify with their Jewishness, one needs to point to the great stream of assimilation in the *Galut*, and to our many hardships with the gentiles. Everyone can readily understand that this situation is hardly conducive to maintaining a Jewish identity. Assimilation is clearly a danger. There’s a need to insure the survival of Judaism. Let me ask you – among the young Jewish people studying in universities there – what percentage will marry Jews?”

87. *Orot, Eretz Yisrael*, 4, and 5. And, *Olat Riyah*, Part 1, Pg. 374: “Whoever has a greater connection to the Land of Israel, and whoever exerts himself more in regards to the settlement of *Eretz HaKodesh*, he is blessed first, and he is nearer to perfection.” HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

“They don’t always feel the dangers you are speaking about,” the student replied.

“Every now and then, the gentiles make them feel it, in many different forms,” Rav Kook said. “Before anti-Semites come and give them beatings, it is imperative that our people recognize our untenable plight in *Galut*. This is the general direction one needs to take when explaining the importance of living in Israel.”

“But this is a negative reason for coming to Israel,” the student said.

“Very true. This is an excellent observation. This negative reason for *Aliyah*, because of the oppression of the *Galut*, appears in Herzl’s first writings – he said it was impossible to remain any longer amidst the gentiles, and that we had to come home. Of course, it’s much more important to stress the positive aspect of the healthy life we have in *Eretz Yisrael*. This is the factor which should motivate us. But when this approach is not feasible, there is no other choice but to emphasize the negative factors.”

“Thus there are two sides. Firstly, the great truth of our need to be nurtured from Israel, from the Land of our life, the Land of our forefathers. This is the main and positive side. And no less than this, one must understand that it is impossible to live on foreign soil. One must understand that every single aspect of Diaspora existence is lethal to us. Often, the love of Zion is lost because of the stultifying influences of living in a foreign land. We forget Jerusalem. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand be forgotten.*⁸⁸ We forget

88. Tehillim, 137:5.

who we are. Then **the Master of the Universe manipulates nations, and history, to bring about the negative factors, so that we remember our true situation in the Galut.**"⁶⁴

16. WHEN THE LORD BRINGS BACK THE CAPTIVITY OF ZION

"Our expulsion from *Eretz Yisrael* wasn't a pleasant matter, neither for us, nor for *Hashem*,⁸⁹ but the exile is not forever. *Hashem's* wrath must subside. The, *Strong hand...and anger poured out*,⁹⁰ which we experienced in our time (in the Holocaust,) were a part of the Divine order of history to turn us away from the wilderness of the *Galut*, back home toward Jerusalem, *The place which I have prepared*."⁹¹

"There was a Divine need for the anger which scattered us amidst the impure, and a Divine reason for the awesome wrath and curse which lay on the Land. Only a short time ago, Israel was infested with malaria and diseases. Medical experts said it was impossible to live here. Yet Petach Tikva and Hadera rose out of the swamps. Now, with *Hashem's* blessing, *This Land which was desolate has become like a Garden of Eden*.⁹² This has happened physically – in Israel's technological development and agricultural rebirth, and spiritually – in the flourishing of Yeshivot and Torah. *The Lord was well pleased for His righteousness sake to magnify and glorify Torah*."⁹³

- 89. Berachot 3A, beginning. *Woe to the father who exiled his children...*
- 90. Ezekiel, 20:33–34. See also, the chapter, The Holocaust, in this book.
- 91. Exodus, 23:20.
- 92. Ezekiel, 36:35.
- 93. Isaiah, 42:21.

“The time has come to return home,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda told the visiting students. “Whether we want to or not; whether we recognize this truth, or whether we want to run away from it. *And I will bring them back to their Land.*⁹⁴ Hashem has decided that the time has arrived. Even if this requires the most unpleasant means, with *Hashem’s anger poured out*, the time has come to return to our country, and to our own special air. However, when we return, we **must realize that our restoration in Israel is not happenstance. This is not a coincidental shaping of history. Rather, we must see Hashem’s guiding hand, and His Divine ordering of events, for what they are – the fulfillment of, *When the Lord brings back the captivity of Zion.***⁹⁵ One must realize that this is all a manifestation of, *My spirit which is upon you, and the words which I have put in your mouth.*⁹⁶ It is the Lord’s glorious spirit which is surrounding all of the House of Israel today and bringing us back to our Land, and to our Torah. Each one of you, in your coming to Israel, is a part of this. *Hashem is returning His Presence to Zion.*⁹⁷ How fortunate we are to be a part of this national rebirth, to be a part of the restoration of our life to its original essence – the national community of Israel, *A Kingdom of Kohanim, and an Am Kadosh.*¹⁹ The more we are conscious of the Divine in the events of our time, the more we will merit to meet the Almighty, who returns His Divine Presence to Zion.”

94. Ezekiel, 36:22.

95. Tehillim, 126:1.

96. Isaiah, 59:21.

97. From the *Shemona Esrei*.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda addressed the students who had come from abroad:

“You too have merited a new Israeli soul, by inhaling the air of our Land, the Land of *Clal Yisrael*. We hope that we will see you here soon, to build *Eretz Yisrael*, and to be built by her. There are people who are blessed with an immediate *Aliyah* to Israel, and others who encounter spiritual and physical difficulties on the way. Sometimes coming to Israel to visit is a preparation for a permanent *Aliyah*, something which is essential to you, and to all of *Am Yisrael*.”

Summary

ERETZ YISRAEL

1. When a Jew comes to *Eretz Yisrael*, upon awakening in the morning, he has a new soul.
2. The Gaon of Vilna taught that a person isn't complete until he comes to the Land of Israel.
3. *Eretz Yisrael* is not like every other land. *Hashem* endowed it with holy properties especially suited to His people.
4. The Jewish people can only be a nation in Israel. The genuine fulfillment of Torah is achieved only in *Eretz Yisrael*. Only in Israel can the Jewish people be an *Am Kadosh*.
5. In the Exile, our identity shifted away from our national character, forming a Judaism which focused on the individual, and not on the *Clal*.
6. The Torah is not only a code of ritual practices and laws, but rather a national constitution, embodied in a Divinely-chosen community, and fulfilled in a Divinely-chosen Land.
7. Just as other nations belong to a particular land, *Hashem's* chosen nation belongs to a particular chosen Land.
8. Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael* is a manifestation of the *Shekhina* in the world. The Divine Presence appears, not only in the Kingdom of Israel in its ideal Torah state, but in the modern State of Israel today.
9. Because of our long exile amidst the impurity of the gentile nations, we have become accustomed to thinking that life in *Galut* is normal, and we forget that *Eretz Yisrael* is our true, Divinely-intended place.

10. The precept of conquering and settling *Eretz Yisrael* is a Torah commandment, and not just the means for observing a Torah lifestyle in Israel.
11. The establishment of Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael* is a fundamental axiom of the Torah. The Ramban clearly establishes that the Land which *Hashem* promised our forefathers must be kept under our control, and not under the control of any other nation.
12. *Medinat Yisrael* is *Kadosh* in its fulfillment of this national *mitzvah*. It is the vehicle which *Hashem* is using to enable us to actualize this commandment, which is equal in value to all of the precepts in the Torah.
13. *Eretz Yisrael* is the true place for the Torah's observance. In the Diaspora, the commandments are imposed as reminders, so that when we return to Israel, we will know how to keep them.
14. It is permissible to temporarily leave *Eretz Yisrael* to perform certain *mitzvot*, but a Jew must first understand that his true home is in Israel.
15. The air of *Eretz Yisrael* gives wisdom. In contrast, the air outside of the land is impure; the land is impure; and, *Halachically*, the *Galut* possesses a state of defilement similar to that of a grave.
16. If a person's parents oppose his making *Aliyah* to Israel, the person is not obligated to obey, for a parent is not permitted to interfere in a child's observance of a Torah command, nor of a rabbinic precept.
17. Because of its intrinsic *Kedusha*, women are also obligated in the *mitzvah* of living in *Eretz Yisrael*.
18. The Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* is the highest level of Torah. In fact, the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* and the Torah of *Chutz L'Aratz* are not the same Torah, nor the same *mitzvot*. Attachment to Torah, and

to *Hashem*, finds its fullest expression in the study of Torah in *Eretz Yisrael*.

19. The *Gemara* states that *Talmidei Chachamim* outside the Land of Israel are out of place.
20. In explaining the reasons for *Aliyah*, one should stress the positive benefits in living in the place where the Jewish people belong. When this approach fails, the negative aspects of assimilation, and the dangers of living amongst the gentiles, should be made clear.
21. The time has come for the Jewish people to return home to Israel. Whether we choose to realize it or not, *Hashem* is bringing His people back to His Land. The ingathering of the exiles which we have witnessed in our time is not just a coincidence of history, but the fulfillment of, *When the Lord brings back the captivity of Zion*.

Chapter Six

A VISIT WITH RAV TZVI YEHUDA

The Galut and The Geula

1. THE HOUSE ON OVADIA STREET¹

Long before Rav Tzvi Yehuda appeared, the group of *Bnei Akiva* leaders from the Diaspora had filled every seat in the house. They had heard what Rav Tzvi Yehuda was like from their friends who had visited Israel the previous year, but, of course, everyone was eager to meet him themselves. For some, the afternoon class would be the climax of their trip. Just to be in the house was exciting. How often in Brussels or France did one have a chance to sit in the house of a rabbi whose day-to-day decisions influenced the rebuilding of our nation in Israel?

For these students from Europe and South America, even traveling to the house was an adventure, like an excursion back in time, through Geula's old alleyways into a world of people who were markedly different in appearance, dress, and lifestyle from the average Israeli. The neighborhood would have resembled a Polish *shtetl* if not for the Israeli army base situated in its midst. Here, in one of the old buildings, lived a rabbi who dressed like his neighbors, but who said things incredibly relevant to the new generation, and to the modern Jewish State. A rabbi who linked the past to the present, and whose teachings opened your eyes to a prophesized future that was happening now.

1. Based on *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, Our Vital Connection to Israel; and Who Brings His Presence Back to Zion*. Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim. Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.

When the Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva moved from Rav Kook's old house on Yaffa Street to the new building in the Kiriath Moshe neighborhood of Jerusalem, Rav Tzvi Yehuda remained in his flat on Ovadiah Street in Geula. Everything in the modest apartment had its place. Even in the piles of books which crammed every corner, there was a purposeful order. Rav Tzvi Yehuda knew the location of every volume – not only its place in the room, but also its contents.

The weathered door creaked on its hinges. The peephole was unceremoniously covered with a piece of paper and tape. The furniture perhaps had been new at his wedding, some sixty years before. You wouldn't find a washing machine, radio, or TV in the small rooms, until the last years of his life, when a closed circuit TV system was installed in the house so that the overflowing gathering of students could watch his lecture in adjoining rooms. During classes, a wall divider was folded open, and more students sat on the small single bed, under a simply framed photograph of Rav Tzvi Yehuda's wife, who had died many years before. The window panes in the house were crisscrossed with the strips of masking tape a student had stuck to the windows to prevent glass from shattering during the shelling of the Six-Day War. They had become a part of the informal decor of the house, reminders of what our people had suffered in our long march home to Jerusalem. The room's greatest treasure was the small *Aron Kodesh*, which housed a miniature *Sefer Torah*, the height of a hand. Often, a student who had been summoned for army reserve duty would come to the house to say goodbye, and Rav Tzvi Yehuda, who had a warm embrace for everyone, would apologize for not being able to kiss him, because of the sacred Torah scroll in the room.²

Each time you met Rav Tzvi Yehuda, you were inspired anew. A lifetime of study and wisdom were reflected in his glance. He was eighty-six years old at the time. His eyes were bright and penetrating, with a gaze so deep and pure, you felt timid and exposed, as if he

2. *Kitzur Shulchan Oruch*, Section 13, Sub-section 1.

knew you completely. Yet, in his presence, you felt surrounded with love. Toward the end of his life, a chronic ailment caused him great pain, but his face never revealed even a shade of complaint. If someone hadn't told you, you never would have known he was suffering.

Behind the Rabbi's chair, photographs were framed on the wall. Alongside pictures of his father, and Rav Kook's father-in-law, the *Aderet*³, ל"צז, and other family members, was a photograph of another bearded man, Herzl, who looked perfectly in place with the rabbis on the wall. Above the study door was a poster of a sunrise, with the words of our Sages: *So too unfolds the redemption of Israel, slowly, slowly.*⁴ There weren't any pictures of children. Rav Tzvi Yehuda never had children of his own. We were his children. The children of Israel. Hundreds and thousands of sons and daughters. Once, during a class in *Isaiah*, he quoted a verse and smiled broadly, as if to infer that it was speaking about himself: *Behold I, and the children the Lord has given me, are for signs and portents in Israel, from the Lord of Hosts who dwells in Zion.*⁵

Often, after the start of a class, the front door would open, and another student would try to squeeze into the room. Half in the door, and half outside, he would stand there, not knowing quite what to do.

"Yes, yes," Rav Tzvi Yehuda would say. "There's plenty of space."

3. The *Aderet*, HaRav Eliahu David Rabinowitz Taomim, was the head of the *Beit Din* in the cities of Ponovezh and Mir, and later, the Chief Ashkenazic Rabbi of Jerusalem.
4. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, 1:1. *Rabbi Hiyah Rabbah and Rabbi Shimon Ben Halafia were walking in the Arbel Valley at the break of morning, before the light of day. They watched the dawn as the light began to shine. Rabbi Hiyah, the great one in wisdom, said to Rabbi Halafia, "Rabbi, thus is the redemption of Israel: in the beginning, little by little. And the more it progresses, it increases and grows."*
5. *Isaiah*, 8:18.

Usually, there wasn't any more room. We were bunched in so tightly, you could hardly find room for your notebook and pen.

"Yes, yes, there's room," the *Rosh Yeshiva* always insisted. Everyone would edge over to make room, and when the noise of the shuffling abated, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would start.

2. OUR UNFOLDING REDEMPTION

For this special gathering of students from all over the world, Rav Tzvi Yehuda chose to speak about the *Geula* and the *Galut*. **The thrust of the Torah, our prayers, and a Jew's daily life points toward Geula – the redemption of Am Yisrael, and, in its wake, the redemption of the world – when the nations of the world will come to the true recognition of Hashem.** This is our mission, the reason *Hashem* created the nation of Israel and placed us on the earth, *To perfect the world under the Kingdom of the Almighty.*⁶

Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught that the *Geula* was occurring in our day. It was coming to fruition in the Jewish people's return to the Land of Israel, through the restoration of Israeli sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael*, and through a widespread returning to Torah. All of these facets of *Geula* brought a clearer vision of *Hashem's* rule in the world.

The students from the *Galut* were not familiar with the wide body of *Halachic* and *Aggadic* material written by our Sages on this basic tenet of Torah, so Rav Tzvi Yehuda took the time to explain concepts of *Geula* in depth. Israel's long exile had made *Geula* seem like something mystical, and far removed from the everyday reality of our lives. For people who had grown up in the Diaspora, the thought of living in Israel, one of the essential elements of *Geula*, seemed often irrelevant. In their minds, America, France, or Switzerland were their countries. Often, **Israel seems like a foreign country to them, and the foreign country they lives in seems like their home!**

6. *Aleynu* prayer.

False Messiahs, and disappointed Messianic hopes, had further alienated us from a true understanding of our awaited salvation. For many people, salvation had already arrived. Didn't we already have equal status with the gentiles in many of the places where Jewish people lived? This was seen as the salvation, instead of the true salvation of returning to nationhood in Israel. Among all of the great Torah scholars of our time, **Rav Kook had most clearly restored the vision of redemption to our nation. He brought the seemingly mystical concepts down to the concrete reality of the modern events which were leading the Jewish people back to the settlement of Eretz Yisrael, and to the establishment of the State of Israel.** Time and again, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would return to his father's teaching, to help us understand that the redemption was unfolding before our eyes.

"The *Geula*," he said, "stands in contrast to the *Galut*, our exile from the Land of Israel. *Geula* is the opposite of *Galut*. **What is Galut? An aberration.** For instance, **in our normal state, we need to be here, the entire nation of Israel, in the Land of Israel.** And all of *Eretz Yisrael* needs to be in our hands. Thank G-d, *Hashem's* light is now shining upon us, and increasing, little by little, in gradual stages. How different things were before the establishment of the State of Israel, when we were outside the Land, and the gentiles were in it, and the possibility for a Jew to enter *Eretz Yisrael* rested in foreign hands. This was a time of *Galut*. We've progressed a bit since then and are returning to a normal condition: *Eretz Yisrael* is now in our hands! Jerusalem is now in our hands! And we are now independent! This process unfolds in stages.⁷ **Just as Hashem can bring the**

7. "It is not due to weakness in strength that the salvations of Israel come a little at a time, but it is the greatest demonstration of valor." Letters of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Vol. 3, Pg. 20.

redemption through miracles, He can do it without miracles, in a simpler way, through a natural process, via the conquest and settlement of Eretz Yisrael.”

“The redemption which is unfolding before us appears in stages – not all at once,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

This was a teaching that *Rabenu* emphasized. The Jerusalem Talmud compares the redemption to a sunrise, which dawns gradually, slowly spreading its light out over the sky.⁴ We progress slowly, very slowly. Often in stages, which at first glance, seem opposed to our Holy Torah. **Phenomenon like the non-religious pioneers, and Israel’s present form of Statehood, must be viewed in their true light, Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught, as important, and Divinely ordained steps on the way to our true and ultimate Geula.**

“We are fortunate to have merited this, to be witnessing the word of *Hashem* being realized in our time. This is the way the *Geula* unfolds, a little at a time, and one must recognize and see the hand of Divine Providence in it. The world has a Master. The Creator of the Universe hasn’t abandoned us, and in the End of Days, our return to the Land is promised. This is happening in our midst, through our actions, now. The end of the *Galut* comes in this developmental way, bringing the beginnings of *Geula* (*Atchalta D’Geula*).”⁸

The period of redemption had started, and yet, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, in contrast to our normal condition, when our nation is here in our Land, we are still, to our shame and disgrace, in a state of exile. We should feel this deep shame, he said, because the majority of our people were still living outside the Land. This is our *Galut*. **To return**

8. Megilla 17B. *Wars are also deemed the beginning of redemption.*

to health, to truth, to faithfulness to Torah, and to Hashem – all of our people have to be back in our Land.⁹ To reveal the Kingdom of *Hashem* in the world, and to bring redemption to all of mankind, the Jewish people have to be in Israel.

3. THE HEART OF THE NATIONS

Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted to make this point clear to the visitors in the room. He was about to move the world map around, to rearrange the pieces into their proper plan. For the students from America who had studied world history, America was the pinnacle and purpose of creation. Likewise, the textbooks of the students from England portrayed Her Majesty's Empire as the cradle of civilization, and of course, for the Frenchman, the world's *raison d'être* was France. Israel was hardly mentioned in their readings. The Fertile Crescent had been important, and Egypt and Mesopotamia merited chapters, yet King Solomon's influence over the world was not even given a glance. Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted us to be aware of something very different. **When the world is viewed in its proper light – as Hashem's creation – then its true center is Israel!** As it states in the Torah, *When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the Children of Israel.*¹⁰ Israel is the heart of the nations. Hashem's focus in the world is here.

“The Master of the Universe created the world and gave it to mankind. *The heavens belong to Hashem, and the earth He gave to man.*¹¹ He divided mankind into groups and apportioned each group its country, arranging mankind in a historical, developmental order. Thus,

9. *Kuzari*, 2:24.

10. Deut. 32:8.

11. Tehillim, 115:16.

peoples with interests in common formed into communities and nations in the lands suited to their natural needs and growth. This distribution revolved around one particular nation, a special Divine creation, distinguished from the rest. *He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.*¹⁰

At times like this, when Rav Tzvi Yehuda was leading us toward a new understanding, the room became very still. We were being guided toward a new self-image. The *Rosh Yeshiva* wanted us to understand that **Israel is truly unique, a special Divine creation, independent of the natural evolution of mankind, in effect a different species of man – individuals, and yet a Divine collective.** The sins which had led to the destruction of the Temple and to our national life in Israel, had interfered with our task of leading the world toward a knowledge of *Hashem*. Gentile nations temporarily rose in our stead, bringing a material rule to the world. In the exile, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome imposed their cultures over mankind,¹² while Israel's great spiritual message was dimmed. We were a kingdom stripped of our glory, our pride, and our Land. The idea that Israel was the center of the nations was a preposterous thought, as the King in the *Kuzari* expresses.¹³ Seemingly, we were the lowest of peoples, at the mercy of the gentiles wherever we lived. However, our glory was sure to return. If not for our sake, then for the glory of our Creator: *Thus says the Lord G-d: I do not do this for your sakes, O House of Israel, but for My holy Name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will sanctify My great Name, which was profaned among the nations ...For I will take you from among the*

12. See *Ner Mitzvah*, of the Maharal, for a discussion of the four kingdoms.

13. *Kuzari*, 1:4. "As for the Jews, their appearance speaks for itself – all of their existence is spent in lowliness. They are few in number, and hated by all."

*nations, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own Land.*¹⁴

“One has to accustom oneself to see the acts of *Hashem* in all of their encompassing wholeness,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, inviting us to see the world through his eyes. Over and over, he would guide us toward seeing *Hashem’s* hand in history. He taught us to understand that the present cannot be isolated from the future, nor the past. Jewish history must be viewed in its whole. We were to gaze down on the world from above, with an encompassing perspective, to see where Divine Providence was heading. In our century, this meant seeing Israel’s redemption unfold. How would this look on a satellite photo? An eye focused on the Divine would see lights of *Kedusha* converging from all over the globe to one special place – the Land of Israel. Just as our prophets had promised thousands of years ago.

This encompassing vision is the vision of Torah which includes everything in the world.¹⁵ Truth can only be found by perceiving a matter in all of its fullness. If seen in a fragmented light, with glasses shattered by pogroms, and with a vision which has been dimmed by ghetto walls, then Israel indeed seems insignificant when compared to the world’s great nations. This same fragmented vision caused the Spies to feel like grasshoppers when confronted with the giants of Hevron.¹⁶ It is a vision which doesn’t see *Hashem’s* special connection to His nation. Today, Israel has returned to its Land, re-established Jewish sovereignty, and achieved unparalleled success. For the first

14. Ezekiel, 36:22-24.

15. *Hashem looked into the Torah and created the world. Bereshit Rabbah, 1.* “All of the wisdoms of the world are for the sake of the Torah, and are included in it.” Gaon of Vilna, Introduction to *Paat HaShulchan*. See, Maharal, *Netivot Olam, Netiv HaTorah*, Ch.1: “The Torah is the blueprint of all of the universe.”

16. Numbers, 13:33.

time in nearly two-thousand years, we have a powerful army able to defend our Land from our enemies. But photographs from only fifty years ago tell a different story – the tragedy of a people in ruins, disgrace, and defeat. **To search for the truth of Am Yisrael in one isolated era, or generation, distorts the unity of the whole. The Torah of the Lord is perfect,¹⁷ encompassing all generations and time.** After a two-thousand-year exile, the Jewish people have returned to where we truly belong, in Israel, to the center of the international map. **This phenomenal saga of a people returning to live in their ancient land is not merely Zionism, or politics, or the solution to the “Jewish problem.” The return of the Jewish people to Israel is the deepest essence of Torah.**

Of course, all of us in the room wanted to believe in this exalted vision of redemption. But truly incorporating it into our psyches didn't come easy. Most of us had grown up with alien notions and foreign creeds: “All men are created equal!” “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.” And all of the “isms.” In our day, the Zion had been taken out of Zionism, and we were left with liberalism, humanism, socialism, communism, and capitalism. For the Israeli students of the Yeshiva, young people who had grown up through wars, and who had been nurtured on national pride, this world view of Israel came easier. **But for the students from the Galut, who never had a Jewish Land of their own, and had grown up as minorities in someone else's country and culture, this understanding of redemption was more difficult to grasp.** Therefore, Rav Tzvi Yehuda was careful to explain.

“We must view all of the world, in all of its entirety, as a single act of *Hashem*, as the revelation of His Presence in a multitude of peoples, varieties, and forms. We must gird ourselves with the valiant spirit of truthful

17. Tehillim, 19:8.

vision in order to see mankind as a whole, which constantly develops throughout time in different directions and into different forms. Just as there are diverse parts to every organism, some more important than others, and some which serve as vital centers, like the brain and the heart in the body of man, so it is in the body of mankind. There also is a center, a nation who is a *Segula* – a *Treasure from among all the peoples*.¹⁸ This unique portion of mankind has a special place in world history, which is illuminated by the great Sages of Israel, and given expression by Rav Yehuda HaLevi as *The heart of the nations*.¹⁹ As a heart which is connected to all the other organs and limbs of the body. **This is most truly Israel. An international, cosmopolitan nation.**”

The truest understanding of Judaism, Rav Kook taught us, lays in its national dimension, in the service of *Hashem* by the nation, and not just as a religion or spiritual force. This Torah nation has all of the needs of any other nation, such as an army, policemen, farmers, and courts. Political statehood is necessary in fulfilling the aspect of *Geula* which demands that the nation of Israel be independent in its Land.²⁰ The return of our scattered exiles to Israel is the call of our prophets, and forms the heart of our congregational prayers. Jewish sovereignty in Israel is a sanctified axiom of Torah. *Geula*, Rav Kook taught, is not a faraway, mystical concept. It is an actual, down-to-earth phenomenon, which is finding concrete embodiment now, in *Medinat Yisrael*, the State of Israel today.

18. Exodus, 19:5.

19. Kuzari, 2:36.

20. Ramban, *Supplement to the Sefer HaMitzvot of the Ramban*. Positive Commandment #4. Also, Rambam, *Laws of Kings and Their Wars*, 12:2. Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael*, Ch.1.

4. THE END OF GALUT

“The end of the *Galut* has come!” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones of all the House of Israel is crystallizing in front of our eyes, in the ingathering of our dry, scattered bones to national life in Israel²¹: *Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and I shall put My spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then you shall know that I the Lord have spoken, and performed it, says the Lord.*²² In these recent times, we have witnessed the spirit of *Hashem* upon us. And the first step of Israel’s revival is seen in our coming home.”²³

5. GEULA AND KIDDUSH HASHEM

“*Kiddush Hashem* (the Sanctification of *Hashem*’s Name) is a foundation of all of the Torah. *Chillul Hashem* (the desecration of *Hashem*’s Name) is the opposite. Today, we are in a struggle between these two forces. The greatest Sanctification of *Hashem* is that which involves all of Israel, as the prophecy of Ezekiel proclaims: *And I will sanctify My great Name which was profaned amidst the nations, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am*

21. “*The dead that Ezekiel brought to life... this was a metaphor.*” Sanhedrin, 92B. “A metaphor – to hint to them about the Galut. Just like a dead man comes to life, so Israel will return from the Galut.” Rashi, there.
22. Ezekiel, 37:12–14.
23. Ibid, 36:24. In this prophecy, the general repentance of the nation is preceded by the ingathering of the exiles: *For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all of the countries, and will bring you into your own Land. Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean...*

*the Lord, says the Lord G-d, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes.*²⁴

“How will *Hashem* bring about this great *Kiddush Hashem* in the world?” Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked. He answered with the words of the prophet: “*For I will take you from among the nations, and gather you out of all the countries, and will bring you into your own Land.*”²⁴

“This Sanctification of Hashem, which comes through the instrument of His nation, isn’t limited to the Orthodox and Haredim. The Sanctification of Hashem comes through all of the House of Israel.”

“We find an illustration of this in the Concluding Blessing of the *Hallel*: *All of Your works will praise You, O Lord, our G-d; the saintly and righteous who do your will; and all of Your nation, the House of Israel.* The righteous are essential in praising *Hashem*. But there is a greater *Kiddush Hashem* than this; through, **All of Your nation, the House of Israel.** The Almighty has chosen His nation in love.²⁵ All of the nation in love. The righteous, and the non-righteous alike. Today, we see with our own eyes that the national body of Israel is returning to its health, and to its healthy Land, from amidst the impurity of the gentile nations. This is the highest Sanctification of *Hashem* we can find.”

“In contrast to this, **the condition of Galut, is a Chillul Hashem.**²⁶ Woe to the father who exiled his children! And woe to the children who are cast away

24. Ibid, 36:23–24.

25. Blessing over the *Shema*. And see *Kuzari*, 3:17.

26. Ezekiel, 36:20: *And when they came to the nations, into which they came, they*

from their father! *G-d sits and roars like a lion and says, Woe to the children because of whose sins I destroyed My house, and burnt down My abode, and exiled them among the nations of the world.*²⁷

Even in the Rabbi's gentle, unaccusing manner, the impact of what he was saying affected everyone deeply. His words were taken from our prophets and Sages, who wanted us to understand that any Jewish community in the Diaspora, causes *Hashem* figurative sorrow and pain. The condition of Exile, of living outside of Israel, is a desecration of *Hashem's* Name. In the eyes of the gentiles, our presence in the Diaspora proclaims that *Hashem* lacks the power to keep His people in His land. **To restore the honor of Hashem in the world, the Jewish people have to return to being a nation in Israel.**²⁸

6. THE END REVEALED

“We find with our Sages, may their memory be for a blessing, a very clear definition of the end of *Galut*.²⁹ In the *Gemara*, after a full page of reckonings and mystical calculations, a very obvious indication appears. It is a verse from the book of *Ezekiel*: *But you O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they will soon be coming.*³⁰ **Rashi comments that there can be no surer sign of the End of the exile than this.**²⁹ There are two parts to this verse. First, the Land, which for so many years lay desolate, is Divinely commanded to give forth its fruits –

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.

27. Berachot, 3A.

28. *Mesillat Yesharim*, at the conclusion of Chapter 19: “The honor of *Hashem* can only increase with the redemption of Israel. Also, *Orot*, Israel and its Revival, 20: “The salvation of Israel is always the salvation of *Hashem*.”

29. Sanhedrin 98A.

not to the gentile nations, but to the nation of Israel. This abundant harvest is connected to the ingathering of the exiles, the second phase of the verse, *For they will soon be coming.*³⁰

These two phenomena are clearly happening in our time. History bears witness to the desolation which, for nearly two thousand years, characterized the Land of Israel. In a famous letter to his son, soon after his Aliyah to Israel, the Ramban mourns over the destruction of the Land, and the even greater devastation of Jerusalem. Also, לֵהַבְדִּיל, the American writer, Mark Twain, notes in "Innocents Abroad," the diary he kept on a visit to Israel, that the roads were more rocky than the hillsides, and he describes the unusual poverty of the land. *Eretz Yisrael* was conquered again and again, but only when her children returned, did she bring forth her fruit.

Interestingly, it wasn't the flourishing of Israel's spiritual life, seen in the *Baal Tshuva* movement, and the establishment of new Yeshivot throughout the Land, which Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized when he spoke about *Geula*. Instead, he pointed to the agricultural boom, in the down-to-earth harvest of oranges, bananas, and grapes, which the *Gemara* says is the surest sign of the Exile's end.

"The ingathering of the exiles, and the rebirth of the Land, are two sides of the historic, Divine prophecy which is unfolding now, in our very midst, and through our actions."

7. THERE IS NO COINCIDENCE

"If the Land of Israel gives forth her fruits in abundance, this is not just coincidence. We don't believe

30. Ezekiel, 36:8.

that the world is run by chance, G-d forbid. Only people of impoverished thinking, from intellectual laziness, believe that all the miracles we are witnessing today are only accidents of history. This is a mistake. If events happen in accordance with prophecy, we know that it is all a matter of Divine design.”

“Once, I met an important man from Hungary, known for his stature in the disciplines of philosophy and science, a totally assimilated Jew with a world outlook of crass materialism. People close to him mentioned that lately they had noticed a change in him. In the course of our conversation, he reflected a few moments and told me, **‘What people call circumstance is really Hashem incognito.’** This is a marvelous expression of *Emunah*. *Emunah* in Hashem’s providence over the world. It is a clear and lucid recognition that there is no coincidence or chance, but that everything comes from the Causer of Causes, who disguises himself in the world in the natural forces of history.”

8. EYE TO EYE

In the same way a Jew sees Hashem in his individual life, in his good health, in his daily sustenance, in his joys, and even in his misfortunes, Rav Kook taught us to see Hashem in the life of the nation. Rav Tzvi Yehuda more than taught us. He challenged us to meet the Living G-d of Israel³¹ in the events of our day – on a national level, where His Presence appears in full light. Ask a Jew how he is, and he will answer, *Baruch Hashem*. He understands that *Hashem* is guiding his life, and he is thankful for His interaction. In the same light, *Baruch Hashem* should be our national expression, thanking

31. Samuel I, 17:27.

Hashem for bringing us back to our Land. Rav Kook urged us to see *Hashem*, not just as the Master of our individual lives, but the Master of generations and history. He taught us to see that the Divine hand which had brought the Jews out of Egypt and led Yehoshua and the armies of Israel into *Eretz Yisrael*, was, likewise, bringing about wars between nations in our time in order to return His people to His Land.⁸ **Rabenu challenged us to understand that Hashem, the source of all goodness and love, is also the Master of wars,³² who unleashes foreign armies to expel His children from their Land, and who sends foreign armies to chase His children back.** Recognizing the acts of *Hashem*, we come to truly recognize ourselves, and understand where we stand in His Divine unfolding plan.

“We need to open our eyes,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “We have to see, *Eye to eye*, with our vision in line with the Divine perspective, in order to see what *Hashem* is doing in the world. *For they shall see eye to eye, the Lord returning to Zion.*³³ If we don’t accustom ourselves to recognize what *Hashem* is revealing, or to see His management of all our affairs, then the world is viewed myopically, in segmented pieces, instead of seeing the truthful, all-encompassing whole.”

“Today, we are moving forward, overcoming the obstacles and errors along the way, progressing and coming closer to *A new light on Zion.*³⁴ The desecration of *Hashem’s* Name caused by the *Galut*, and its terrible disgrace, will disappear, and, more and more, we will merit to sanctify the Name of the Lord in our midst.”

32. Blessing Preceding the *Shema*.

33. Isaiah, 52:8. The verse explains how *Hashem* will be revealed at the time of redemption: *For the Lord has comforted His people. He has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of the nations.*

34. Blessing Preceding the Morning *Shema*.

Summary

GALUT AND GEULA

1. The thrust of the Torah, the writings of our prophets, and our prayers, all point toward *Geula* – the redemption of *Am Yisrael*, and the redemption of the world in its wake – when the nations of the world will be brought to the true recognition of *Hashem*.
2. The *Geula* is occurring in our time through the return of the Jewish people to Israel; through the establishment of Jewish sovereignty in *Eretz Yisrael*; and through the return of more and more people to Torah.
3. More than anyone in our time, Rav Kook taught that the *Geula* was actually happening in the down-to-earth realities of re-establishing the Jewish nation in Israel.
4. Just as *Hashem* can bring the redemption about through miracles, He can do so without miracles, through the natural process of conquering and settling the Land of Israel.
5. The *Geula* is a historical process which unfolds in gradual stages. Zionism and the modern State of Israel are Divinely ordained steps in this developing process.
6. To reveal the Kingdom of *Hashem* in the world, all of the Jewish people have to be back in Israel.
7. When the world is viewed in its true light – as *Hashem's* creation, then the real “superpower” in the world is Israel.
8. Zionism is not merely a political question, or a solution to the “Jewish problem,” Zionism is a foundation of all of the Torah.
9. The highest sanctification of *Hashem* is not limited to religious Jews, but comes about through ALL of the House of Israel,

through the return of the Jewish people to Israel. In contrast to this, the condition of *Galut* is a *Chillul Hashem*.

10. Our Sages tell us that when the Land of Israel yields its fruit to a great ingathering of exiles – the end of *Galut* has arrived. This is happening today, plainly in front of our eyes.
11. There is no coincidence. *Hashem* is bringing the Jewish people home to Israel. We need only to look with open eyes to see the Divine Presence returning to Zion.

Chapter Seven

THE PRECEPT OF LIVING IN ISRAEL¹

1. THE NATION AND THE LAND

In Israel, from the time of the Six Day War until Rav Tzvi Yehuda's last day, on Purim, 5742, the Central Universal Yeshiva in Jerusalem (*Mercaz HaRav*) seemed to be the spiritual center of Israel. Not only in the intensity of Torah which filled the *Beit Midrash*, but in the Yeshiva's impact on the nation, and on the world. Out of Rav Tzvi Yehuda's *Beit Midrash* came scores of *Talmidei Chachamim*, *Roshei Yeshivot*, and founders of new religious schools all over the country. His students also became Knesset members, Air Force pilots, and army commanders, many of whom were rabbis when they weren't in uniform. The founders of the settlement movement, of *Gush Emunim*, and of the renewed Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria, were the students of Rav Tzvi Yehuda.

Visitors from the Diaspora, journalists, and people from all over Israel, would often come to the Yeshiva to get a glimpse of the celebrated *Rosh Yeshiva*, and to see for themselves what was so special about the school. Certainly, they could feel the spirit and intensity of the learning in the crowded *Beit Midrash*. But after only a casual inspection, most visitors might walk away thinking it was a Yeshiva like any other. In many ways, they were right. Like in other Yeshivot, students labored over their *Gemrot* all through the day, and late into the night. To understand what was unique, one had to listen to the

1. Based on *Sichot of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, The Mitzvah of Living in Israel. Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim. Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.

lectures of Rav Tzvi Yehuda, to the startling new things he was saying. One had to listen and grasp the inspiring approach to Torah which was being handed down to us by the son of Rav Kook – the new/old approach to the Torah which Moshe Rabenu had taught the nation on the eve of our entry into the Promised Land.

The national character of the Torah was a theme which Rav Kook stressed. The Torah hadn't been given to individuals, nor to the angels,² nor to the gentile nations.³ The Torah had been given **to the nation**⁴ which had stood at Mt. Sinai. The Torah, Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught, had been handed down to the nation of Israel from Heaven in order to sanctify *Hashem's* Name in the world. As our Sages say, *By whom is the king more praised? By those near to him, or by those far away? One has to say by those far away.*⁵ It is our task to sanctify *Hashem's* Name in the world as it is sanctified in the high heavens.⁶ This sanctification comes through the nation, the *Tzibur*, the congregation of Israel, which achieves its most complete expression in STATEHOOD as we approach our Messianic ideal. Rav Kook taught that the State of Israel is *Kadosh*,⁷ and that the Sanctification of *Hashem* is revealed in the broad political spectrum and affairs of the Israeli State, the State on which *Hashem's* Presence rests, as it says, *And I will dwell amidst the children of Israel, and I will not abandon My nation, Israel.*⁸ **It is through the nation of Israel, in its national character in the Land of Israel, and in its Statehood among the nations of the world, that the sanctification of Hashem's Name appears.**

2. Shabbat 88B
3. Sanhedrin 59A.
4. *Meshech Chachmah*. Leviticus, 18:4. And see Note 33, in Chapter One, *Emunah*, of this book.
5. According to Megilla, 11a.
6. *Kedusha* prayer.
7. See, in *L'Netivot Yisrael*, "The Absolute *Kedusha* of *Yom Haazmaut*", for an in-depth study.
8. Kings 1, 6:13.

This idea was so original, so unlike traditional teaching, it encountered fierce opposition from normative streams of Jewish thought, which had been shaped by the trauma of exile. In the battle against this bold Torah outlook, an effigy of HaRav Kook, Rav Tzvi Yehuda's father, was hung in Jerusalem's Zichron Moshe neighborhood because of Rav Kook's encompassing love for all Jews, including the non-religious who were building the new *Yishuv* in Israel.

What brought about this gesture of ugliness toward one of the outstanding *Talmidei Chachamim* of our time? What lay at the root of this tragic misunderstanding? In explaining these matters, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would sometimes remind us that both the Rambam and Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato had encountered great opposition in their times. Both the *Guide to the Perplexed* of the Rambam, and *Mesillat Yesharim*, had been banned by a public which didn't understand their vision. Yet, today, both works are standards of every Talmudic library.

Throughout the Exile, Jews were scattered all over the world. Without a land, or a state, or a government of our own, we lived as individuals, in unconnected communities, in foreign lands. The emphasis and understanding of Judaism became focused around the individual and around his private service of *Hashem*.⁹ The Sanctification of *Hashem* became consigned to the individual, to the great rabbis and *Tzaddikim*. The Hasidic movement caused a great stir throughout world Jewry by teaching that even the ordinary Jew, in his small private life, could sanctify his Creator. Yet the focus remained on the individual Jew. Rav Kook understood Judaism in a broader light.

The foundation of any nation is an independent homeland. The national character of the Jewish people and the Torah, expressed in

9. Berachot 8A. *Since the day the Temple was destroyed, the Holy One, Blessed Be He, has nothing in the world but four cubits of Halacha alone.*

the blessing over the Torah, *Who chose us from all of the nations, and gave us His Torah*, was lost with our Exile from our Land. Concurrently, the greatest Sanctification of *Hashem*, which appears through the Jewish nation in Israel, the nation of prophets, the Kingdom of *Kohanim*, was lost with it.¹⁰ With the Exile, the true service of *Hashem* could only be achieved through the return of the nation to the Land.

This new understanding of Israel and Torah was simply restoring the old, which commands us to be a proud nation in our own land. *Behold, the people shall rise up like a great lion, and lift himself up as a great lion.*¹¹ The establishment of the nation in *Eretz Israel* was the life-goal and teaching of Moshe Rabenu, Joshua, and the great Kings of Israel. Judaism is much more than an individual's private *mitzvot*. It is the constitution of the nation in our Land.

“The earth was given to all segments of mankind, to peoples and to nations,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “*The heaven is the heaven of the Lord, and the earth He gave to man.*”¹² There is a Divine proportioning, systematic in its exactness, which fits each segment of mankind into a specific geographic portion of the globe. Within this Divine division, there is a unique Land which was apportioned to a unique species of man, of whom it is said, *You are called man.*¹³ This particular segment of mankind is identified with a special place on the globe. There is a vital, Divine necessity in *G-d's portion, His*

10. Ezekiel, 36:20.

11. Numbers, 23:24.

12. Tehillim, 115:16.

13. Yevamot, 61A. In this *Gemara*, it is clear that אֲדָמָה refers to the Jewish people, and not to the gentiles.

nation,¹⁴ being situated in this Land. The very essence of a chosen and holy nation demands an attachment to a chosen and holy place. **The Kedusha of the nation, and the Kedusha of the Land are two facets of a single essence.**”¹⁵

2. LECH LECHA

“Therefore, on Avraham’s first notification that his life was to be the foundation and preparation of a unique nation, *And I will make you into a great nation*,¹⁶ he was given the Divine command to journey to a special Land – *Get yourself forth to the Land I will show you.*”¹⁶

“This is the first time we encounter this national declaration, *I will make you a great nation*; informing Avraham that he isn’t to be just an individual man. Rather, he is the root of a great nation. He is to be the foundation and preparation of a national phenomenon. This is his essence and purpose. His creation, soul, character, and strength are the foundations for the appearance of the nation of Israel in the world.”

“A single man can drift from place to place. But a community, a people, a nation has to be rooted in a fixed, permanent position on the globe. A man alone can manage both materially and spiritually without a permanent home. But a community cannot. Therefore, the Almighty told Avraham, *Eretz Yisrael* is the portion

14. Deuteronomy, 32:9.

15. See, *Orot, Eretz Yisrael*, 1. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

16. Genesis, 12:1-2.

set aside for your offspring. I will give it to your descendants, not as temporary passers-through, not as robbers who conquer the Land¹⁷, but as a great nation. Great in its spiritual depth, great in its prophetic capacity, great as an empire, and as a political state.”

3. FOR HASHEM HAS CHOSEN ZION

Once, Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained the bond between the nation of Israel and the Land of Israel by analyzing the יהי כבוד section of our morning prayers, found in the *Psukei D’Zimrah*, a collection of verses from the period of the *Gaonim*. When one studies the verses, one realizes that they aren’t a random collection without any order. On the contrary, there are two distinct halves to the prayer. The first half, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, is general, universal, cosmic in focus: *The glory of G-d will endure forever; the Lord will rejoice in His works*. The second half of the prayer has a national character, relating exclusively to the chosenness of the Land of Israel, and to the Israeli nation: *For G-d has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place*,¹⁸ and *For G-d has chosen Yaacov*.¹⁹ After these two Divine, absolute selections, there is a third verse which encompasses both: *For G-d will not cast off His people; and His inheritance, He will not abandon*.²⁰

In these prayers, we encounter two Divine selections; the chosenness of the nation, and of the Land. When we are called up to the Torah, we recite the blessing, *Who chose us from all of the nations*. Just as the nation is Divinely selected, the Land is Divinely selected. Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that in the order of the verses which the *Gaonim*

17. See Rashi, Genesis, 1:1.

18. Tēhillim, 132:13.

19. Ibid, 135:4.

20. Ibid, 94:14.

established, **the chosenness of the Land precedes the chosenness of the nation.**

Why is there even a need for the Land of Israel, some people ask? They see the Land of Israel as something external from the life of the nation. These people maintain that just as Jews survived thousands of years in Exile, we can survive now without our own land. Other people say that because of the many commandments which can only be performed in the Land of Israel, there's no alternative – the Land is needed to practice the laws. Both of these outlooks see the chosenness of the Torah and nation as the main foundations of Judaism, and, stemming from them, comes the need for a Land. However, the *Gaonim*, who directly follow the Sages of the *Gemara*, have a different opinion. They apportioned first place to, *For G-d has chosen Zion*, and afterward, *For the Lord has chosen Yaacov*. **The chosenness and sanctity of the Land is intertwined with the sanctity of the nation.**²¹

While this book explores Rav Kook's teachings on the nation of Israel, its redemption, and on *Eretz Yisrael*, it must be noted that the majority of Rav Tzvi Yehuda's classes dealt with a wide variety of other subjects. Foremost among them were classes on the study of Torah, the pinnacle of *Avodat Hashem*. The Torah's focus on the nation of Israel, and on *Eretz Yisrael*, which Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized, wasn't intended to relegate the Torah to an inferior status, G-d forbid, but rather, to emphasize that the Torah, and the nation, and *Eretz Yisrael* were inseparable in *Hashem's* plan for the Jewish people. This understanding strongly refuted the notion which maintained that since the Jewish people had survived two thousand

21. "*Eretz Yisrael* is not an external entity to the nation, an external possession of the nation, whose purpose is only the general unification of the nation, and her physical or even spiritual strengthening." And, "This understanding is fragile in light of the lofty, holy might of *Eretz Yisrael*." *Orot, Eretz Yisrael*, 1.

years in the *Galut* with Torah, but without *Eretz Yisrael*, then Torah was more important than *Eretz Yisrael*. In the *Galut*, the Jewish people survived spiritually, because of our attachment to Torah, but our national, physical life was utterly destroyed. Our spiritual survival is only a part of what *Hashem* demands of His nation. The Torah, and *Am Yisrael* only reach true expression in their union with *Eretz Yisrael*. This understanding brings the *mitzvah* of living in Israel into much clearer light.

“The chosenness of the Land, and of the nation, are a Divine perfect union, brought into unison by the Creator of the World and of history. They constitute one vital whole. *The heavens are the Lord’s, and the Aretz, He gave to man.*¹¹ First, the principle foundation of the Land is brought to light, this Divine tract of earth, and afterward comes the illumination of the nation inheriting its place in the Land. The earth was given to mankind, and the special, Divine Land was given to a special type of man. They are mutually intertwined, one with the other.”²²

4. GO IN AND POSSESS

“Thus when the Children of Israel depart from the wilderness, after a forty year period of wandering, we begin to approach our true goal – the wholeness of Torah, the wholeness of the commandments, the wholeness of *Clal Yisrael*, and the perfection of our life as a nation in Zion. In preparation for this, we are to receive the Torah anew, in the *Mishna Torah*, the book

22. Ibid. “*Eretz Yisrael* is an inherent unit, fused in a living bond with the nation, bound together with deep inner treasures.”

of *Devarim* – Moshe Rabenu’s review of the Torah. The new, of course, is the old, eternal and *Kadosh*, a review and an illumination of the Torah: *Moshe began to explain this Torah*.²³ Moshe begins by reviewing everything which has transpired until then, and then he clarifies the essence of Israel and Torah in a new light, in the *New light on Zion*.²⁴ The Children of Israel are ready to hear from Moshe Rabenu how to understand the Law in its truest sense, as it says, הוֹאִיל מֹשֶׁה בָּאֵר אֶת הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת, What are the words of Law which they hear? *The Lord, our G-d, spoke to us in Horev, saying, You have dwelt long enough in this mountain. Turn and take up your journey*.²⁵ Move yourselves onward to Israel – this is the Torah! בָּאוּ וּרְשׁוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ, *Go and possess the Land*.²⁵ עֲלֵה רֶגְלְךָ, *Go up and possess it*.²⁶ This is Moshe’s explanation of Torah, which comes to light as we near our healthy atmosphere – *Eretz Yisrael*.”

5. THE PRECEPT OF DWELLING IN THE LAND

This teaching of Moshe Rabenu that the Jewish nation is eternally commanded to live in Israel, faded in clarity over the years of *Galut*. A philosophy arose that the Torah could be practiced just as well in Berlin, as in the Land of Israel. This reasoning, still heard today in many places of learning, maintains that the Torah had been given at Sinai, and not in the Land of Israel, to show that Torah could be lived all over the world, not just in Israel. This point of view ignores the

23. Deut. 1:5.

24. First Blessing before the Morning Shema.

25. Deut. 1:6–8.

26. Deut. 1:21.

Kuzari of Rav Yehuda HaLevi which says that **the Torah was given in Sinai, precisely because it is in Eretz Yisrael.**²⁷

“It is well known that the Ramban established a fundamental *Halachic* ruling that living in the Land of Israel, and conquering the Land, are commandments of the Torah which apply in every age.²⁸ Among the supporting verses he cites is the verse, *Rise and possess*. The Ramban emphasizes that this is the language of a command. In contrast to this, the rejection of the precept, *Go up and possess*, is a rebellion against *Hashem*.²⁹ *And when the Lord sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying, Go up and possess the Land which I gave you, and you rebelled against the Lord your G-d, and you did not believe in Me, and did not listen to My voice.*³⁰ They didn’t listen to Hashem in conquering and possessing the Land. Possessing the Land is a *mitzvah*, and the opposite is a rebellion against *Hashem*.”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted the lesson of the Spies to be clear. The Torah is eternal. The Torah doesn’t change. What was true in the time of Moshe Rabenu is true for us today. The Spies rebelled against *Hashem* by refusing to obey His command to go up and conquer

27. *Kuzari*, 2:14.

28. Ramban. Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Command # 4.

29. “And the proof that this is a commandment is this: They were told to go up in the matter of the Spies, *Go up and conquer as Hashem has said to you. Don’t fear, and don’t be discouraged*. And it further says: *And when Hashem sent you from Kadesh Barnea saying, Go up and possess the Land which I have given you*. And when they didn’t go up, the Torah says: *And you rebelled against the word of G-d, and you didn’t listen to this command.*” Ramban. *Ibid*.

30. Deut. 9:23.

Israel. The lack of *Emunah*, which their mutiny expressed,³¹ was a sin far greater than the sin of the golden calf, where only three thousand people were punished.³² Because of the sin of the Spies, the entire generation of men perished in the wilderness. This great wrongdoing was not limited to the masses, but included the *Gedolim* of Israel, as Rav Chaim Luzzato explains in *Mesillat Yesharim*: “They feared a lessening of their honor, lest, upon entering the Land, they would no longer be princes of Israel, and others would be appointed in their place.”³³

Tragically, many of our people make the same mistake today. They don’t realize that living in the Land of Israel isn’t a matter of personal choice. It is the underlying basis of Torah.³⁴

6. STATEHOOD

Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed that the establishment of Jewish sovereignty over Eretz Yisrael is a commandment of the Torah²⁸. In its most straightforward understanding, sovereignty over a country means having an army to defend the land, a government to insure order, courts to establish justice, an economic system to sustain the nation, and all of the other facets of Statehood. By commanding us to rule over *Eretz Yisrael*, the Torah commands us to establish a State. Whether our sovereignty is brought about by a Prime Minister, a prophet, a judge, or a king, it is valid Jewish sovereignty when it comes on behalf of *Clal Yisrael*.³⁵

31. Ibid. 1:32.

32. Exodus 32:28. And see, *Kuzari*, 1:97.

33. *Mesillat Yesharim*, Chapter 11, on Honor. And *Zohar*, Numbers, 158A.

34. See, Rambam, *Sefer HaMitzvot*, Positive Command 153. And see, the Chapter, “Return to Zion”, Part One, in this book, for a detailed discussion of this topic.

35. “For, in a time when there isn’t a King, since the statutes of the ruling authority also relate to the general situation of the nation, the rights of the

“People occasionally ask, ‘Where is it written in the Torah that we have to build a State?’ Aren’t they familiar with the words of the Ramban, who determines that we are commanded that this Land be in our hands, and not in the hands of any other nation?²⁸ That it be in our hands in a national sense. Everyone understands that dominion over a geographic section of land demands political sovereignty and government. **All of the Poskim (arbitrators of Torah law) both Rishonim and Achronim, decide the law in this fashion, on the basis of the Ramban,³⁶ that the precept of conquering the Land applies in all generations – and all of them agree that it is a commandment of the Torah.**”

“Jewish sovereignty in *Eretz HaKodesh*, meaning the State of Israel and its army...is an essential and clearly stated commandment, a precept incumbent on all of *Clal Yisrael*.”³⁷

laws return to the hands of the general nation. And it especially seems that every Judge who arose in Israel has the legal status of King in several laws of the kingdom, particularly in matters affecting the public welfare... Everyone who leads the nation, is under the laws of the kingdom, since they pertain to the needs of the nation...In matters of jurisprudence of the monarchy which affect the public welfare, certainly Judges who preside with the majority’s mandate, and general leaders of the nation, stand in the place of the King.” *Mishpat Kohen*, 337, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook. Also see, *HaMeiri*, Sanhedrin 52B. And, *Rabenu Nissim, Drashot HaRan*, 11. And see, *Amud Hayimini*, Chapter 9, by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli.

36. *Pitchei Tshuva, Even HaEzer*, Section 75, Sub-section 6. And see, Note 51, in Chapter 5, of this book, for a partial list of Torah authorities who concur with this ruling.
37. “Jewish sovereignty in the Holy Land – meaning the State of Israel and its armed forces – is a definite commandment, vital in scope, a precept encompassing all of the nation.” *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 2, 159. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook. See also, *Kol Yehuda*, Pg. 108, by Rabbi Yehuda Gershuni.

7. THE PRECEPT OF COMPULSORY WAR

In the same way that the *mitzvot* of *Kashrut*, *Sukkot*, and *Tefillin*, are comprised of many details, so too the *mitzvah* of living in Israel has many different facets. At its foundation rests one of the Torah's most difficult precepts – a military command.

Certainly, the subject of war is not a pleasant topic. The prospect of having to wage war, even in defense of land and life, is a difficult matter to face. However, war is a facet of life, of Torah, and of our redemption, which has to be confronted and understood. The nearly two-thousand year Exile, without a land of our own, or a Jewish army, altered our orientation to matters of war. Without the means to defend ourselves, we adopted a self-image as victims. War was seen as something which belonged to the gentiles. We were to busy ourselves with Torah. War and religion were looked at as opposites. The idea that a rabbi, a *Talmid Chacham*, a man devoted to *Kedusha*, and to the service of *Hashem*, could be connected in any way to weapons, and killing, and the horrors of war, was simply out of the question.

However, a look at the Torah, at our history, and our Sages, clearly shows the distortion of this thinking, and how very far we strayed from our forefathers.³⁸ In addition to being our nation's holiest *Tzaddik* and *Talmid Chacham*, Moshe Rabenu was the Commander-in-Chief of the Israeli army. Out of his exalted *Kedusha*, he had to leave his wife and move his tent outside the camp of the people, yet he led the nation in war.³⁹ Rashi tells us that in the war with Amalek, Moshe's arms grew tired, and needed support in punishment for not having led the battle himself.⁴⁰ This connection between *Gedolei Yisrael* and the army appears again and again in our history. Joshua,

38. *Orot. Orot HaMilchamah*, 2. Also, note the title of the Rambam's *Halachic* work on the *Mashiach*, *The Laws of Kings and Their Wars*.

39. Joshua, 12:6.

40. Exodus, 17:12.

Samson, and King David, were all leaders of the nation, guardians of the Torah, and the commanders of Israel's armies. Rabbi Akiva supported the battles of Bar Kochva, and even carried his weapons.⁴¹ And the Rambam tells us that the *Mashiach* will restore all of Israel to Torah, and fight Israel's wars.⁴² Though wars are only waged out of necessity, if the occasion demands, the Torah commands us to war.⁴³ *Tzahal*, the Israel Defense Forces, is a precept of Torah!⁴⁴ Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught us to see this relationship between Torah and war in its true light. It was *Hashem*, he said, in His aspect of the *Master of Wars*,⁴⁵ who brings the *Geula*, as the *Gemara* states: **War is also the beginning of redemption.**⁴⁶

“*Come and possess.*²¹ How is this precept performed?” Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked. “If need be, through the waging of war to conquer the land – whether this be enjoyable to us, or whether it goes against our nature and spirit. *Baruch Hashem*, we don't choose between *mitzvot*, like certain ‘Orthodox’ Jews do. If it were possible to conquer the Land without spilling blood, certainly this would be better. This is obvious. However, until the End of Days, when, *Nation shall not lift up sword against nation*,⁴⁷ sometimes we have no choice but to act with our soldiers and army. We actualize this commandment, to hold the Land of Israel in our hands,

41. *Laws of Kings and Their Wars*, 11:3.

42. *Ibid.*, 11:4.

43. *Ibid.* 5:1,2. And, Ramban, Supplement to *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Command 4.

44. *Kol Yehuda*, Pg.145.

45. Exodus, 15:3. Also, First Blessing before the Morning *Shema*.

46. Megilla 17B.

47. Isaiah, 2:4.

and not to leave it under the rule of any other nation,²⁸ through our military actions, even in light of the unpleasant consequences which war involves.”

“Entering the land is no simple matter. Other people and nations live here, and there is a likelihood of conflict with them. The Children of Israel knew they were leaving Egypt for Jerusalem, so, וַחֲמִשִּׁים עָלוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, *The Children of Israel went up supplied*.⁴⁸ What is the meaning of supplied? Rashi explains: readied with arms.⁴⁹ We are to prepare for military conflict. There are levels of this conflict, and the severest is a מִלְחַמַּת מְצֻוָּה, *Milchemet mitzvah*, a situation where the Torah commands us to wage war. What is the criterion of a compulsory war? Its principle meaning is liberating the Land.⁵⁰ In its fundamental sense, the concept of a Torah-commanded war is bound up with entering the Land, as explained by the Ramban that this Land must be in our hands, under our active sovereignty and government, and not under the rule of any other nation.”⁵¹

8. WAR

“It is obvious that establishing ourselves throughout the Land of Israel is intertwined with military conflict

48. Exodus, 13:18.

49. “There isn’t another meaning to *supplied* other than armed...for they weren’t afraid in the war against Amalck, and Sichon and Og, and Midian, since Israel had weapons when they camped at Horev.” Rashi, *ibid*.

50. *The war of Joshua to conquer the Land is an obligation according to everyone*. Sotah, 44B.

51. *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, Precepts of the Land, P.118.

and war. I heard several reports on the reaction of the *Chofetz Chaim* to Jews serving in the armed forces of the gentiles. He indicated that it would be good training and preparation for serving in our army.⁵² There were young men who sought to evade serving in foreign armies. The viewpoint of the *Chofetz Chaim*, which encompassed all of the multi-sided facets of *Clal Yisrael*, is a healthy lesson, indeed. He said to them: 'In a short time the *Mashiach* will come, and we will have a State, and a State needs an army. Will you wait until then to learn how to be soldiers? Now you have the opportunity to learn how to fight. This is very important to us. The Master of the World is arranging this practice to prepare you for service in our army.'"

"Not everyone understood this. In the last generations, *Hashem* has shown himself as the *Master of war*.⁵³ He had us serve in the gentile armies, and out of this, several Jews became experts in strategy and warfare in our army. All of this is the working of the Master of the World, *Who proclaims the generations from the beginning*."⁵³

"Who was it who originated Israel's military posture? Moshe Rabenu. The structure of Israel's army is from the Torah. As a part of his learning and teaching, Moshe was to conduct the wars of Torah. As he comes to prepare for war, Moshe orders a roll call of, *כָּל יוֹצֵא צֶבֶא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל*,⁵⁴ *All who go forth to service in Israel*,⁵⁴ a statistical count

52. *L'Netivot Yisrael*. Part 2:6. Also, *Mishna Berura, Shabbat*, 329:7, Sub-section 17.

53. Isaiah, 41:4.

54. Numbers, 26:2.

on the eve of the military campaign to conquer *Eretz Yisrael*.”

“The terminology of, *Going forth to service in Israel*, initially appears in the Torah, not in its military sense, but in the service of the Tabernacle. *All who enter into the service to do the work in the Tent of Meeting*.⁵⁵ First, the army in Israel is an army of Divine worship, an army of Torah study. The service of the Sanctuary precedes all work in Israel. The statistical accounting of the hosts of Israel begins with the hosts of the Tabernacle, with עֲבוֹדַת הַקֹּדֶשׁ, and with the Yeshiva. The military host stems, and evolves, from this holy source.”

“Our Sages describe Joshua as, *The one who arranged the benches*, in Moshe Rabenu’s Yeshiva.⁵⁶ Along with this, he was commanded to, *Go out and wage war upon Amalek*.⁵⁷ From the spiritual depths, from the most profound recesses of Torah, the soul of Israel, from the heights of *Kedusha*, from the source of prophecy in Israel, comes the military aspect of the nation.”

“Only in its emergence from the Yeshiva, from the *Kedusha* of Torah, from the valor of Torah, and from the great spirit of Israel, does militarism find value, both in former times and today. *The Lord’s Torah is perfect*.⁵⁸ And the deeds of *Hashem* are perfect and whole. The Torah encompasses the whole of Israel’s soul, together

55. Numbers, 4:3; 4:23; 4:30.

56. Midrash Rabbah, 21:14.

57. Exodus, 17:9.

58. Tehillim, 19:8.

with the wholeness of its physical body. It encompasses the exalted spirit of Israel, and the *Shekhina*, together with the practical requirements of an army in its most basic sense, as the nation of Israel faces the reality of entering the Land.”

When Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained these matters, you could hear a special added meaning in his tone. He spoke with his usual forcefulness and certainty, but also with a matter-of-fact straightforwardness, as if he was merely reviewing what everyone already knew. Like the need to keep kosher, or to put on *Tefillin*, the precept of compulsory war is a commandment like any other. And like any other commandment, it goes without question that a Jew must strive to fulfill it, with all of its details and laws.

9. MILCHEMET MITZVAH AND VOLUNTARY WARS

“There are different levels of war. A difference exists between a *מלחמת מצוה*, and a *מלחמת רשות*, a war waged for voluntary reasons. A voluntary war is permitted for exceptional circumstances, when there is a need for expansion. The Mishna, in the beginning of Tractate *Sanhedrin*, rules that the nation can only wage a voluntary war after receiving permission from the *Sanhedrin*, the court of seventy-one Elders.⁵⁷ In certain political situations, expansion is necessary, however, the High Court must approve. On the other hand, a *Milchemet mitzvah* doesn't need the court's consent. Our situation today is clear. We are fighting a *Milchemet mitzvah*, twice over. Firstly, this is a compulsory war as defined by the Rambam: ‘What is a compulsory war? To

59. *Sanhedrin* 2A.

save Israel from the hand of an enemy.⁵⁸ Our army is called the Israel **Defense** Forces. Thank G-d, this is a very successful name. It would be wonderful if we didn't require military engagement, but for the time being, it is forced upon us."

"The second fundamental definition of a compulsory war is added by the Ramban, in the Torah commandment to conquer *Eretz Yisrael*.⁶¹ Among all the precepts of the Torah is a militaristic command. It doesn't enter our minds to choose which precept to do and which to ignore. This is a commandment of the Torah!"

"In a compulsory war, there's no need to receive permission from the *Beit Din*, or from the Rabbis to go to war. This commandment is incumbent on the Kingdom, whether of the King, or any other Jewish government of Israel, which, in its enforcement of Jewish sovereignty, fulfills the role of the King, provided that the government is not expressly opposed to the Torah."³⁵

"Compulsory war is the true sense of war. מלחמת רשות is subordinate. We don't have a commandment to broaden our boundaries, though political and economic

60. Rambam, Laws of Kings, 5:1.

61. "Since we were commanded to inherit this Land which the Lord, blessed be He, gave to our forefathers, to Avraham, Yitzhak, and to Yaacov, and not to abandon it to the hands of other nations, or abandon it to desolation. He said to them, *To inherit the Land and to dwell there, for to you have I given the Land to possess, and you shall inherit the Land which I swore to your fathers...* Behold, we are commanded with conquest in every generation." Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive commandment 4, Ramban.

situations can arise which demand this. However, the matter is not simple, and the advice of the great rabbis must be sought. The decision is made by the ruling authority, together with the Sanhedrin, which presides over the Torah in Israel. But **the real essence of war is *Milchemet mitzvah*, the conquest of the Land of Israel.**"

10. CONQUEST OF THE LAND IN EVERY GENERATION

"The Ramban clearly determines that conquering the Land of Israel to ensure Jewish sovereignty is the *Milchemet mitzvah* of the Torah. This is a precept of the Torah, and there is no way of getting around it. There is no nation without a land, and the concrete, living, here-and-now Israel is compelled to hold onto its Land. This precept continues in every generation, and the Ramban emphasizes this three times."⁶²

"In previous generations, including generations of *Tzaddikim*, we did not fulfill this *mitzvah*. Why? Because we were in a situation where, against our will, we could not. This is similar to what transpired a few times in Russia, when, just before *Sukkot*, the Four Species hadn't arrived. What is there to do? Nothing! *If he did not find an etrog, he is not to take a quince, nor a pomegranate, nor anything else.*⁶³ The precept is still in

62. "This is what our Sages call *Milchemet mitzvah* ...And don't err and say that this precept is the commandment to vanquish the seven nations... This isn't so ...This Land is not to be left in their hands, or in the hands of any nation, in any generation whatsoever." "Behold we were commanded with conquest in every generation." "If, so, this is a positive command which applies in every time." Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Ramban. Positive Commandment 4, Ramban.

63. Sukkah, 31A.

effect, but there is no possibility to perform it. This is similar to conquering the Land. Though the obligation always exists, it is impossible to perform it without the weapons of war. Thus, **previous generations did not have the technical capacity to fulfill the commandment. Today, thank G-d, we have the 'etrogim' of war, and this precept has returned to our hands.** *Hashem* brings down empires and raises them up. *Raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.*⁶⁴ *Hashem* toppled the Turks, and in their place, He raised up nations who recognized the Bible, and the people to whom it belongs. Out of the Balfour Proclamation sprang the Hebrew Fighting Brigade. Little by little, the chance to conquer the Land, and to renew the precept took form.⁶⁵ The *mitzvah* includes possessing the Land and dwelling there. Possession of the Land has the sense of conquest, and from this, the *mitzvah* of living in the Land is made possible,⁶⁶ so that the Land will not lie in desolation.

64. Isaiah, 14:9.

65. "If during generations of *Galut*, we were in situations preventing us from keeping the precepts due to the realities of *Galut*, both psychologically and practically, and because of the gentiles who established decrees in our Land, who seized from us the possibility of keeping this most serious precept in all of its wholeness, behold, this doesn't alter the essential obligation of this precept and all of its stringent requirements. The obligation to do a commandment isn't nullified because of a situation where one is prevented from doing it. In our generation, in which we merited to experience wonders of G-d and His righteous judgments in the complete crystallization of the End-of-Galut's revelation, as expressed by our Sages (Sanhedrin 98A), the impediments fell away and the obstructions separating us from our Land disappeared before us." *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, Pgs. 117-118.

66. *And you shall take possession of the Land, and dwell in it.* Numbers, 33:53. "You shall take possession of it from its inhabitants, and then you shall, *dwell therein* – then you will be able to remain in it; but if not, you will not be able to remain in it." Rashi, there.

Also, the spiritual wasteland, represented by people who deny the Torah, must be returned in repentance. The word, *ישׁוב*, is common to both the settlement of the Land, and to the learning of Torah *ישׁיבה*. There is a connection between them in the Holy Tongue. The drive toward settlement takes power from the spiritual might of Torah. **Torah, war, and settlement are three sides of a triangle. And how incredibly privileged we are to be assertive in all.**"

11. ENLISTMENT OF YESHIVA STUDENTS

The obligation of *Milchemet Mitzvah* in our time has many consequences for the individual and for the nation as a whole. For instance, what is the responsibility of Yeshiva students in regard to the army and war? If our wars are commanded by the Torah, why isn't the Yeshiva closed, and all of the students sent off to fight?

"To the extent that there is a need for them in the war, the same obligation rests on Yeshiva students as on everyone else," the *Rosh Yeshiva* said. "Within this general understanding, there's room to make a truthful assessment of how essential their participation is. The *Gemara* in *Megilla*, and Rashi, explain that if there is not a situation of immediate combat, there is no permission to neglect Torah learning.⁶⁷ To the extent the situation demands, a student has to enlist. But with this, an intelligent weighing and judgment is required, and a deferral can be granted since Torah learning has a

67. *Megilla* 3A. *Now you have disrupted Torah learning.* "Now – since it was night, you should have learned Torah, since you don't wage war by night." Rashi, there.

spiritual importance which also is needed. However, this does not nullify the necessity of military service.”

The matter of military deferral raised many questions. While a deferral could be granted, owing to the importance of Torah scholars to the nation, did this apply today, when Israel has a shortage of soldiers, and is on constant military alert?

“The people who stand at the head of the army are trustworthy and ethical, and they judge the situation,” Rav Kook said. “If they would come to the Yeshiva with a specific, individualized demand that they need such and such students at once, there isn’t a choice. It is an obligation to go. But until a special, personal request is made, one must make a judgment on each individual student to determine just how essential his immediate participation is. These calculations are extremely precise. There are some situations in which enlistment is not one-hundred percent necessary. The leaders of the military are responsible men, and if to a certain limited extent they agree not to pressure students whose occupation is learning Torah, one can believe them and trust their judgment.”

People often ask what right does a Yeshiva student have to sit in a Yeshiva and learn, when others are fighting and martyring themselves to sanctify *Hashem's* Name in defending the nation and the State?

“This decision belongs to the Minister of Defense,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “He is the expert in military matters and war. He maintains that Yeshiva students who make Torah their profession are not essential to the army today. Therefore, there is an option to postpone one’s military obligation. This is not an exemption, nor a

dodging of responsibility; only a postponement. It is recorded on the waivers we sign that the student is deferred, and not exempted. Truthfully, there are some Yeshivot which are opposed to the State in principle. This is not the case with us, G-d forbid. First one has to learn several years in Yeshiva, to deepen one's Torah knowledge and fear of *Hashem*, and afterward, one can go into the army. This is not a general program, but an individual determination according to each student's personal situation. There are two *mitzvot* here: the precept to learn Torah, and the precept to defend the nation. Each individual must examine how far he can progress in Torah, and decide in accordance with that. Obviously, one's ambition should be to grow in Torah knowledge and to be a *Talmid Chacham*. An abundance of Torah scholars is of critical importance to our nation today."

"The claim that deferments for Yeshiva students open a door to the avoidance of military service completely is not justified. We are not speaking about those who deceitfully dodge military service, but about those men whose Torah learning is their occupation and who can contribute important spiritual and cultural strength to the nation. Everyone in our Yeshiva participates in the army. They are either after their army service, before the army, or serving in the army now."

"Some people claim that Yeshiva deferments are a desecration of *Hashem* in the eyes of non-religious people," a student said.

"One must explain to these people, with great persuasiveness and vigor, the value of building numerous *Talmidei Chachamim*, who are filled with Torah on

behalf of the nation. The truth is the opposite of what these people say – the neglect of Torah is a desecration of *Hashem*. The sanctification of *Hashem* comes with the magnification of Torah. Valor is required to explain to the secular community how vital it is that there be men of true Jewish culture in Israel. From a strengthening of Torah learning, the power of explanation will be found. Thank G-d, there are pleasant and positive relations between the Yeshiva and the army. From the beginning of the State, through today, the leaders of the government understood that there is a need for Torah in the nation, and in the Land of Israel. There are exceptionally intelligent people in the government and the army, who look after the military, and they made the decision that the army would not fall apart without Yeshiva students. The understandings between the army and the Yeshiva are established in straightforward truthfulness, and, with the help of G-d, this will not change.”

“Here, we have two very great commandments. Military people are indispensable to the nation, and people filled with Torah are no less vital. However, extremism isn’t called for. G-d forbid that every Yeshiva student go into the army! And G-d forbid that none of them go! HaRav Tannenbaum, the righteous Secretary of the Council of Yeshivot in Israel, told me in the name of the *Gaon* Rabbi Issar Zalman Meltzer, ל”צו, that there is not any *Halachic* source to exempt a Yeshiva student from the army, and the reliance on the Rambam at the end of the *Laws of Shmitta and Yovel*⁶⁸ is falsehood in

68. Rambam, *Laws of Shmitta and Yovel*, 13:12–13.

the name of Torah. On the other hand, it is impossible to close every Yeshiva, and send every student to war. This is not a small detail of *Halacha* – this is an issue affecting *Clal Yisrael*. The heads of Yeshivot are obligated to stand guard over the growth of Torah in Israel. Yet, there is no contradiction between the Yeshiva and the army. On the contrary, there is harmony in the recognition and appreciation of one for the other. Yeshivot are obligated to stress the importance of the army to their students. Extremism has no justification, and we must look upon these matters in all of their wholeness.”

12. SURRENDERING LAND IS FORBIDDEN

“We have absolutely no right to relinquish control over any piece of Eretz Yisrael,”⁶⁹ Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “And we are not allowed to make a tiny, mini-state with the name of *Eretz Yisrael*, G-d forbid. We cannot do this, because we are not the only owners of the Land. We are the emissaries of millions of Jews, not only the Jews of today, but the Jews who will come after us as well. A short while ago, an important Zionist activist told me that an old Russian woman approached him in Vienna and told him, ‘Hold onto all parts of *Eretz Yisrael* for us. Don’t relinquish a meter. Soon we will be coming.’”

69. See the letter of Rabbi Yaakov Moshe Charlap, published in *Techumin*, Vol. 9, Pg. 272: “And there is no doubt that if circumstance shall necessitate, and they (the heads of state) will have to sign an international agreement that will include a statement relinquishing any iota of our rights to the Land of Israel, it is preferable to the signators to amputate their thumbs rather than amputate the heavenly garden of Zion.”

“There isn’t any man who is permitted to make territorial concessions on this Land. Are these kilometers ours? Is someone the owner of them? **These kilometers belong to the millions of Jews in Russia and America and throughout the world, no less than they belong to us. We are here as the representatives of the nation of Israel; we are not its owners without them.**⁷⁰ How can a person not feel ashamed by the thought of making do with a truncated state? No one has the right to relinquish lands which belong to the millions of Jews of all generations. This is a disgrace, a sorrowful shame, and a violation of the Torah, as *Halachically* derived from Tractate *Avodah Zarah*, on the verse, **אל תחנה להם**. *Not to show them mercy*,⁷¹ which means, *Not to give them (gentiles) a place on the Land.*”⁷²

70. See, HaRav Charlap’s letter, cited above, regarding the plan to partition the Land of Israel: “And even if a few Jewish souls are saved from the yoke of the *Galut* via *Aliyah* to what will be the Jewish State, this is still not cause to permit the truncation of the hearts and eyes of Israel, to save oneself with someone else’s possession (*Nemukei Yosef, Baba Kama* 117) that in this instance one should die and not save oneself with another’s wealth, and how can we save these few by relinquishing a portion belonging to all of Israel, and for all generations forever?”

71. Deut. 7:2.

72. *Avodah Zarah*, 20A. And, Rambam, *Laws of Avodah Zarah*, 10:3–4. “This law rests, of course, on every clod, on every footstep, taken in the Land of Israel,” *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, Pg. 89. And see the letter of HaRav Tzvi Pesach Frank, *Techumin*, Vol. 9, Pg. 276: “If we have the capability to acquire all of the Land of Israel that is ours, inherited to us from our fathers, then the matter is simple that we do not have permission to relinquish our claim to even one clod of earth, and to hand it over to foreigners, for we have learned in the Mishna (*Avodah Zarah* 19B) that one may not sell land (in Israel) to gentiles.”

13. WAR AND THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

One of the most important issues, and questions, of our time concerns the wholeness of *Eretz Yisrael* – whether we have the obligation and right to hold onto areas in Israel if this will cost Jewish life. How did, פְּקוּחַ נֶפֶשׁ, *Pekuach Nefesh*, the precept to guard the sanctity of life, fit in with the conquest of Israel? If it is truly a factor to consider, then we could *Halachically* give up territory in Israel for peace. Once again, Rav Tzvi Yehuda set the matter clear.

“*Pekuach Nefesh* exists in all wars. This is also the case in the *Milchemet mitzvah* of keeping all of *Eretz Yisrael* in our hands. We enter into war knowing that lives will be endangered. Rashi states that war is a situation where people kill and are killed.⁷³ This is the only precept of the Torah which demands this.⁷⁴ With every other precept of the Torah which states: ‘Allow yourself to be killed rather than transgress,’ there is absolutely no justification to stand at the outset in the face of certain danger and be killed. If it is possible to escape, one escapes. But the precept to conquer the Land of Israel and to rule over it, comes even at the risk of one’s life.”⁷⁵

73. Rashi, Genesis, 42:14.

74. “Granted that all of the precepts are not binding in situations of danger, in any event, this precept, that the Torah commanded that we war against them, remains. It is known that the Torah didn’t base its laws on miracles happening, as the Ramban explains, (Numbers, 13:2, 1:45) and in the normal course of the world, both sides suffer losses of life in wartime. Thus, we see that the Torah decreed that they war with them, even though there is a situation of danger. Thus the danger is not a factor in the performance of this precept.” *Minchat Chinuch*, 425.

75. “That we enter a situation of killing and being killed, in the normal course of the world, since that is the nature of the command.” *Mishpat Kohan*, Pg. 327.

14. SACRIFICING ONE'S LIFE FOR ERETZ ISRAEL

Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that in our time, another factor is involved in our settlement of *Eretz Yisrael* – other nations are trying to prevent us from observing this commandment of our Torah. In cases of decrees attacking our observance of Torah, we are commanded to sacrifice our lives, if need be, in the performance of the commandment.⁷⁶

“The Torah commands us to conquer *Eretz Yisrael* and to establish our sovereignty here. There is no option to abandon any territory, for any reason whatsoever. It is well known that the principle understanding of the ruling in the Torah, ‘To be killed and not to transgress,’ only concerns murder, incest, and worshipping idols. If someone compels us to commit one of these sins at the threat of our lives, we are to be killed rather than obey. This is true in normal situations, but in times of decrees and acts of compulsion against us, even a small matter assumes serious proportions, and one is to sacrifice one’s life.⁷⁷ It doesn’t matter where the compulsion comes from, even if, G-d forbid, it comes from other Jews.”⁷⁷

“This is similar to, ‘Those requiring death by the *Beit Din* are killed.’ We don’t say regarding this, that there is a precept that we don’t enforce the law when life is threatened – for this is the very essence of the precept.” *Ibid.*

76. Sanhedrin, 74A 74B. Rambam, Fundamentals of the Torah, 5:1–3.

77. “When there is the power to decree and compel, whether it comes from Jews or from the gentiles, then there is no difference between light and serious precepts, and all of the commandments, when it comes to this matter, are considered with stringency. Our history is filled with these instances, that in the hour when they wanted to force Israel to transgress, even when it was only a small infraction of the religion, the Jews stood against the enemy with all of their strength, and there are cases where they sacrificed their lives.” *Letters of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook*, Part 1, Pg. 284.

“We learn from the Ramban that the Torah commands that *Eretz Yisrael* be under our sovereignty and not be in the hands of any other nation.⁷⁸ When forced to violate a commandment of the Torah, a Jew is obliged to give up his life, even regarding a light precept. All the more so over a precept that is weighed in balance to all of the commandments in the Torah.”⁷⁸

“Standing against these clear matters is a *Halachic* question whether the obligation to give up one’s life applies only in a situation where the intention of the gentiles is to make us transgress the Torah, the commandments, and the religion; and not in a situation where they simply seek their own personal gain from the transgression.⁷⁹ For instance, if a gentile compels a Jew to cook for him on *Shabbat* for the gentile’s own enjoyment, and not with the aim of making the Jew transgress a commandment, then there’s no obligation of martyrdom for this. This, however, is not a valid argument in our case of surrendering our Land to the gentiles.⁸⁰ For their gain in taking Israel away from us is

78. Sifre, *Reah*, 12:29.

79. Rambam, Fundamentals of the Torah, 5:1–2.

80. “Regarding the opinion which is circulating over the clarification of matters concerning our standing with *Miserut Nefesh* against someone’s decree, in the matter of our performance of the precept to *Inherit and dwell*, on the question of the well-known differentiation which negates the obligation to perform the precept when it comes for the enforcer’s benefit, and not for the intention of forcing a violation of a religious command – we come to note and announce that all of this is null and vacant counsel, and it doesn’t change in the slightest way our own obligation on this – for their benefit is that they will be the rulers here in this Land, and not us. And on this we are commanded, as the Ramban explains, in every generation, by the word of the Lord our G-d, King of the Universe, that they should not rule here, in Jerusalem, in Judea, in the Shomron, the Golan, and Jericho. Rather, we are to rule here in our Land of

precisely the intention to rule over the Land, and to prevent us from doing so, and this is in direct opposition to the command of the Torah that we be the Land's rulers. **The intention of our enemies is that they rule here, and that we don't, and this is something the Torah forbids us to allow.**⁸¹

15. SETTLEMENT IN THE LAND

The question naturally arose, in the matter of Judea and Samaria, if all the nations of the world are against us, are we still required to hold onto all of it?

"We are inseparably attached to Judea and Samaria," Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, "And to all the expanses of our Land, through the eternal bond between the Am Kadosh and the Eretz HaKodesh. We must stand in defense of this to the utmost limits of dedication and sacrifice, without any surrender at all. There is absolutely no room to entertain thoughts of relinquishing even a single square meter of Hashem's inheritance to us. There is not to be any blemish in our borders, G-d forbid. We are to battle for this to the end, without any surrender at all."

The settlement of *Eretz Yisrael* is absolutely legal, the *Rosh Yeshiva* said.

all the myriads of the House of Israel..." Letter of Rav Tzvi Yehuda Kook to the newspaper, *HaTzofeh*, Adar 2, 5734.

81. See, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, The Precept of Living in Israel, Note 100. "One must differentiate between a benefit that a gentile can derive without a Jew violating a precept, such as eating food which was cooked on *Shabbat*, and a benefit whose entire essence comes through the nullification of a Torah precept, like gentile rule over *Eretz Yisrael*." HaRav Shlomo HaCohen Aviner, there.

“Anyone who prevents a Jew from settling in the Land, he is the one committing the illegal act. Who gave him the power to stop the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael*? These Lands belong to us from the days of Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaacov. They are the inheritance of our many millions of brothers around the world.”

“There is a rule in the *Gemara*, *Land cannot be stolen*.⁸² Rashi says that it stays in its owner’s possession forever. All those who interfere with the settlement of the Land – their names will remain a scandal and an eternal disgrace. Thank G-d, there are still great and powerful souls in the Israeli nation, who have retained their Jewish intelligence. Because of them, we will overcome these difficult times.”

“All of our settlements are legal, both according to Torah and according to the statutes of the State. It is true that there was, here and there, passing opposition – some of which was very unpleasant. But in the long run, **it is impossible to prevent settlement, in any shape or form**”.

16. BUY YOURSELF A FIELD!

Rav Tzvi Yehuda illustrated the imperative to continue settling the Land, even in times of distress, by pointing to an interesting prophecy of Jeremiah. Chapter thirty-two describes the situation on the verge of the seige of Jerusalem. The prophet, Jeremiah, has been imprisoned for his prophecies against King Tzidkiyahu. In the midst of the confusion before the enemy attack, Jeremiah receives a Divine order to buy a field.

82. Sukkot, 31A.

“How is he to understand this directive?” Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked. “Israel is in mortal danger. Multitudes are liable to be killed – is this the appropriate time to be busy with purchasing things? The prophet himself is confused: *Behold, the seige works are come to the city to take it; and the city is given into the hand of the Kasdim that fight against it because of the sword, and the famine, and the pestilence; and what Thou has spoken has come to pass...And Thou hast said to me, O Lord G-d, Buy the field for money...*”⁸³

Rav Tzvi Yehuda instructed us to remember the guidance of our Sages: Prophecy which was needed for future generations was recorded, and prophecy not needed for the generations to come was not recorded.⁸⁴ There is prophecy which was spoken to a generation for problems specific to it, yet its value extends to all times. Jeremiah continues to speak to us from his time forward, and it is incumbent upon us, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, to turn our ears to his Divine message.

The confusion over buying a field in the midst of the seige of Jerusalem continues until today, as seen in our political uncertainties regarding portions of our Land. Today’s difficulties, the *Rosh Yeshiva* said, focus on the demographic fear, and the fact that, *All the nations surround us*.⁸⁵ Being surrounded causes confusion. However, the Divine command is to secure ownership of the Land in a concrete, practical form. That’s the message of Jeremiah. We are not to pay attention to all of the uncertainties caused by the transient nations of the world.

83. Jeremiah, 32:24–25.

84. Megilla 14A.

85. According to Tehillim, 118:10.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that all confusion and worry over what the gentiles think and do, betrays a lack of strength and conviction on our part. We have to put our own house in order, in Divine order, according to the word of *Hashem* and His prophecy to us.

“The more we listen to *Hashem*, the more we will be protected against the gentiles around us,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

17. WEAKNESS OF SPEECH IS FORBIDDEN

Our obligation to further the settlement of Israel put us in conflict, not only with the gentile nations of the world, but also, at times, with our own government. What are we to do if the government tries to prevent the continuing settlement of Israel?

Rav Tzvi Yehuda cautioned that one must be careful of all types of questions like these:

“In our generation, we are in a situation of war, and we must be careful of what we say. *Sages be careful with your words.*⁸⁶ We must strengthen the conquest and settlement of the Land with intelligence and reason, boldness and strength, and with a guarding of our speech. We must guard against language which leads to discouragement. The Torah forbids this, *Lest his brother's heart melt like his heart.*⁸⁷ The Torah tells us, *Let not your heart faint; fear not, and do not tremble, nor be terrified because of them.*⁸⁸ All of these expressions of

86. Avot, 1:11.

87. Deut. 20:8.

88. Ibid, 20:3.

surrendering Land confuse people, and there is no need for them. All variations of questions like, ‘What will be if there is a withdrawal?’ are totally unnecessary. What is the value of all the demographic studies and polls if they bring about weakness? In our time, weakheartedness is as forbidden as pork.⁸⁹ **We must forsake all proposals of withdrawal, autonomy, federations, and the like. We are all commanded to be valorous and bold.** Nothing in the Torah tells us to make studies which bring no beneficial effect. We are commanded to build up the Land and the nation – not to hypothesize about them. Instead of these proposals, it is better to sanctify the time by spreading and magnifying Torah.”

18. MILITARY AND POLITICAL VALOR

“Conquest of the Land and of all of her borders is a war commanded upon us by the Torah. There is no doubt about this. People elevated to be leaders of Israel have no legal right to tamper with these borders.”

“To succeed in war, there is a need for both an army and for valor. Therefore the Torah tells us, *The man that is fearful and fainthearted, let him return to his house.*⁹⁰ Like every precept; *Tefillin*, *Tzitzit*, and the like, there are details and conditions which affect their performance.

89. “Everyone who begins to think, and hesitates in wartime, and who frightens himself, transgresses a negative precept, as it is said, *Let not your hearts faint, fear not and do not tremble, nor be terrified because of them*, and not only this, but all the spilled blood of Israel hangs on his neck....” Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, 7:15.

90. Deut. 20:8.

Here too, in the precept of war, there is a condition which the Torah demands – wisdom and bravery, and not faintness of heart. This is written regarding soldiers, and it applies of course to the army chief-of-staff, and to the government. One must act with valor, wisdom, and counsel, and not from weakness, as when we let ourselves be manipulated by the agreements and machinations of the nations of the world. Among our leaders are people who are not *Talmidei Chachamim*, yet they have a connection to Torah, and they provide the courage and the valor. There are others, who are empty of Torah and holy belief, and this makes them weak and soft at heart. The cure for this is to increase Torah and to strengthen *Emunah*. This will change the mood of all of the nation. The more we do away with emptiness, and strengthen our connection to Torah, the more we will discover our valor.”⁹¹

“A natural continuation of Torah is bravery in war. *And when you come near to the battle, the Kohen shall approach and speak to the people.*⁹² This national strategy is spoken from the lips of the *Kohen, the pious one.*⁹³ *And he shall say to them, Hear O Israel, you draw near today to do battle against your enemies: Let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, nor be terrified because of them.*⁹² We should remember, *The Lord, thy G-d; it is He who gives the power to be strong.*⁹⁴ And thus, *We shall not be afraid.*”⁹²

91. *There is no valor other than Torah.* Zevachim 116A.

92. Deut. 20:2-3.

93. Ibid, 33:8.

94. Ibid, 8:17.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained these matters with reference to the *Sefer HaChinuch*. He said it was worthwhile to meditate every week on this, "Pleasant, educating, *Halachic*, and ethical book," written by one of the *Rishonim*. The commandment not to be afraid in war is explained in the following language: "Not to be terrified or afraid in war – this prohibits us from being terrified or frightened by our enemies in wartime, or to flee from them. Rather, we are obligated to overcome them, and to strengthen ourselves and face them, and on this it is said, *Do not be terrified because of them*. The foundations of the precept are that every man in Israel put his trust in *Hashem*, and not to be frightened for himself in a situation where he can bring honor to *Hashem*, blessed be He, and to his nation."⁹⁵

These two matters go together, Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, the honor of the nation is the honor of *Hashem*.⁹⁶ The *Sefer HaChinuch* continues with some fine points of the law, "That a man shouldn't think at the time of war, of his wife, nor of his children, nor of his possessions, but must free his heart of everything and set himself to the battle. And more: he should think that the entire existence of Israel depends on him. And if he is afraid and turns back, it is as if he spilled the blood of all of his comrades. And regarding this it is written: *Not to melt his brother's heart like his heart...* For everyone who fights with all of his heart, and with the intention to sanctify the Name of *Hashem*, is promised that he won't be harmed...and he will merit the life of the World to Come."⁹⁵

19. MARTYRDOM AND MIRACLES

"When there is *Miserut Nefesh*, and a willingness to sacrifice one's life, miracles occur. The Gemara asks,

95. *Sefer HaChinuch*, Precept 525. Ramban, Laws of Kings, 7:15.

96. *Mesillat Yesharim* Chapter 19, in the discussion on *Hasidut*. And see, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, P.144.

*What's different about the former generations, for whom miracles were performed, and our generation, which has no miracles?*⁹⁷ The first generations of Am Yisrael merited miracles. Later generations did not. The Gemara answers, *The first generations were ready to sacrifice their lives for Hashem's Name, and we don't sacrifice our lives for the sanctity of the Name.*⁹⁷ The Rishonim were more accustomed to situations of martyrdom. In the same light, when there is a willingness to give up one's life for the State of Israel, as we have witnessed in our time, then miracles occur today."

20. ERETZ YISRAEL IS ACQUIRED THROUGH SUFFERINGS

Rav Tzvi Yehuda would remind us that the *mitzvah* of living in the Land of Israel was not easily fulfilled. Not on the personal level, and not for the nation as a whole. Many things in life follow a course filled with difficulties. The growth of a child into manhood is one example. This same path of growth applied to the settling of Israel. *Get yourself forth to the Land I will show you...and I will make you a great nation.*¹⁶ This was happening today. Rabbi Kook said, but maturity does not occur all at once. The return of our people to our Land is an evolving, developmental process.

"The Gemara asserts that the Land of Israel is acquired through sufferings.⁹⁸ Only after generations of, *Your offspring will be strangers in a land not their own,*"⁹⁹ does Israel come into our hands. Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught us to see this Divine plan. He taught us to understand

97. Berachot 20A.

98. Berachot 5A: *Three good gifts, Hashem gave to Israel, and none were given without having to suffer for them. They are Torah, Eretz Yisrael, and the World to Come.* See also, the Gaon of Vilna, *Kol HaTor*, Ch.1.

99. Genesis, 15:13.

that *Hashem's* guiding hand lay behind the difficulties, conflicts, and wars, and to understand that the events of our time were all Divinely arranged.

“The setbacks we face are temporary. All steps backwards are transitory and passing. Just as there are levels in everything, there are levels of conquest. Advances sometimes come in hidden stages, *בְּסִתְרֵי הַמְדַרְגָּה*,¹⁰⁰. But these are only temporary delays. One shouldn't be juvenile. One must look at the global upheaval involved in bringing us back to our Land, and recognize the Divine unfolding of, *When the Lord brought the exiles to Zion*.¹⁰¹ **Because of its staggering scale, the process naturally undergoes difficulties and problems.** The greater a thing is, the more complicated it is. **The unfolding of our redemption is a historical event of colossal proportions.** Anything which stands in the way of our inexorable march to fulfillment is merely a brief delay of, *His anger is only a moment*.¹⁰² All of the disturbances are trivialities which have no substance in this sweeping historical process. It is true that occasionally there are difficult, trying situations, but we shall overcome. The actions of the gentiles, or of superficially-thinking Jews, which oppose this Divine, historic plan, carry no weight whatsoever. These become null and void in light of the Torah and *Hashem's* providence over His people.”

The setbacks which Rav Tzvi Yehuda was speaking about were the actual day-to-day problems we face here in Israel; problems of the

100. Song of Songs, 2:14.

101. Tehillim, 126:1.

102. Ibid, 30:6.

economy, politics, international pressure to relinquish parts of our Land, terrorism, and all the different difficulties which confront our nation. These were all a part of the precept of settling the Land, which the *Gemara* tells us can only be achieved through struggle.⁹⁸

21. MINORITIES IN ERETZ ISRAEL

Rav Tzvi Yehuda didn't teach us about the *Halachic* details of living in Israel in a hypothetical manner. He spoke with an awareness of all the realities which our nation is facing in rebuilding Jewish life in our homeland. For instance, there are Arabs in the Land. What are we to do about them? Of course, the love we are required to feel for all of mankind¹⁰³ includes Arabs, and all other people living in Israel. On several occasions, Rav Tzvi Yehuda publically emphasized the respect and goodwill due to our neighbors, and published his words in newspapers for the public to see.¹⁰⁴ One incident which he personally witnessed, prompted him to write the following letter to the principal of an elementary school in Jerusalem:

“I am obligated to notify your honor of the following matter. Today, in the afternoon hours, as I was passing your school and continuing down toward Jaffo and Ben Yehuda Streets, I saw a group of children come out of the school, and several of them repeatedly offended, in a most vulgar and offensive manner, Arab vendors who were passing at the time. This behavior was repeatedly

103. *Midot HaRiyah, Ahavah*, 5. And see, Chapter 4, *Ahavah*, Section 17, of this book.

104. In a letter to the newspaper, *HaTzofeh*, the 17th of Tammuz, 5720, Rav Kook strongly condemned an incident in which an Arab was ridiculed by Jews on a bus ride to Eilat, and called such behavior, and all expressions of approval of it, a desecration of *Hashem*.

directed against two Arabs, one young and the other elderly, who were apparently working together. It began with the youth and continued with the old man in a particularly unpleasant fashion. This incident occurred a short distance from the school gate....I was anguished and very ashamed to witness this ugly sight. The children's running and racing about prevented me from catching them and scolding them. I don't know who these children are, nor the identities of their parents or teachers. I only know that they came out of the school. Not all of the children who came out of the school participated in this offensive incident, rather a small number of them, and I believe that one of them protested against their behavior. Nonetheless, the pain and insult which I felt over this, obligates me to draw your attention to the additional educational effort needed to prevent other incidents of this nature, both from the standpoint of Torah and proper ethical values, and the important, practical side of social and political policy, represented by the preservice of peaceful behavior and good relations between neighbors...."

The active caring and respect for all peoples, however, did not include granting other nations rule over Eretz Yisrael. The *Halacha* was explicit in this regard. Arabs, and other gentiles were welcome to live peacefully with the Jewish people in *Eretz Yisrael*, but they could not have any sovereign rule.¹⁰⁵

105. "If they accept upon themselves the tribute to the government, and not the servitude, or if they accepted the servitude, and not the tax, we don't listen to them until they accept both. And the servitude they must accept is not to rise up against Israeli rule, but rather to agree to be subjugated under Israel, and the tariff is that they should be prepared to serve the King, both physically in their work, and with their money." Rambam. *Laws of Kings*, 6:1.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught that the status of minorities in Israel was clearly explained by the Rambam, who cites the three letters which Joshua sent to the inhabitants of Canaan before he entered the Land. The first letter invited anyone who wanted to leave the Land to leave. In the next letter, he agreed to honor any overtures of peace. And finally, he wrote that anyone who wanted to make war – let him make war.¹⁰⁶

Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized that anything which the *Tanach* tells us about Joshua has value for all time. *Prophecy which was needed for all time was recorded.*⁸⁴ Joshua's Divine mission was recorded because its truths are eternal. First he announced that the armies of Israel would not chase after anyone who was willing to depart from the Land. And indeed, Rav Tzvi Yehuda noted, seven nations are mentioned as living in Canaan,¹⁰⁷ and then only six.¹⁰⁸ Our Sages say that the Girgashites picked up and left for Africa.¹⁰⁹ In his second letter, Joshua wrote that Israel had to place the Land under its rule. If the nations abandoned their idol worship, they could stay. Even though it is written regarding the seven nations, *Not a soul shall remain living,*¹¹⁰ Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that this was in the general sense of the precept to conquer the Land, but that under the proper conditions, exceptions applied.¹¹¹ Joshua expressed his point clearly: this is our Land. It is under our jurisdiction. If you decide to stay here, permission will be granted if you agree to two conditions:

106. Rambam, Laws of Kings, 6:5. Based on the Jerusalem Talmud, Shvi'it 6:1.

107. In the Torah, and then in Joshua, 3:10.

108. Joshua, 9:1; 11:3.

109. *The Girgashites departed and believed in the Holy One Blessed Be He, and moved to Africa.* Jerusalem Talmud, Shvi'it 6:1.

110. Deut. 20:17.

111. According to the Rambam, Laws of Kings, 6:5, and the Ramban, Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot*, Positive Commandment 4.

that Israel is the ruler; and that you cease worshipping idols. *Eretz Yisrael* is the Land belonging to Avraham Avinu, and his offspring must be surrounded with *Kedusha* and purity. Israel must be cleansed of idol worship. The war against the seven nations is not a command for their absolute destruction. It comes, Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, so that, *You won't learn to do after all the manner of abominations that they do.*¹¹² Therefore, if they gave up their idol worship¹¹³ and didn't interfere with Israeli rule and dominion over the Land,¹⁰⁵ they had the option to live as a minority amongst the Jews. There are differences in the law between Christians, who the Rambam classifies as idol worshipers,¹¹⁴ and the Moslems, who are not,¹¹⁵ regarding permission to remain in the Land. **But first of all, Rav Kook said, it has to be clear that this Land is ours!**

“It is imperative to know that we are not obligated to give the Arabs any sovereignty over this land. As individuals, they can remain here as a minority. If they do not cause us trouble, and do not rebel against our rule, but accept our sovereignty over this Land,¹⁰⁵ then we won't trouble them. It is important to speak with them, to explain, to convince, and to endeavor to lessen the animosity between Arabs and Jews; to increase friendly and closer relations; and to eliminate all discrimination – but, first, it must be clear that this is our Land, from the beginning of time to the end! **On this point, there is nothing to discuss!**”¹¹⁶

112. Deut. 20:18.

113. *Sec Mishpat Kohen*, Section 63.

114. “Christians are idol worshipers, and Sunday is their day of worship.” Rambam, *Avodah Zarah*, 9:4. Uncensored version. And, Rambam's Commentary to the Mishna, *Avodah Zarah*, 1:1, (The version of Rav Kapach.) See also, *Sichot of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, #3.

115. *Shulchan Oruch, Yoreh Deah*, 146:5, Remah.

116. *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, #19:7.

22. OUR RIGHT TO THE LAND

To statements people made saying we stole land away from the Arabs, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said,

“We are commanded to conquer the Land, but the truth is that we didn’t take away from the Arabs any aspect of rule or sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael*, and we didn’t expel them from here. The Land was in the hands of the Turks, who then turned it over to the British, who were to help us establish a State. The Arabs ran away on their own.”¹¹⁷

“In private legacies, there are inheritors. How much more so in matters of empire. **We are here on the strength of parental inheritance, on the foundation of the Bible and history, and nobody can change this fact.** What does this resemble? A man who left his house, and others came and trespassed inside. This is exactly what happened to us. There are people who claim that there is an Arab national land here. This is a complete and utter falsehood! There is absolutely no national Arab land in Israel.”

117. “In our returning... to the Land of our forefathers, this *Eretz HaKodesh* of our life, we didn’t take from the Arabs who dwelled here in the Land’s desolation, any governmental rule, for they didn’t have any here. Rather, we returned to the Land with the collapse of the foreign government who temporarily ruled over it.” “Also, something which is not known to everyone, we didn’t expel them from their residences here in our Land and inheritance from our forefathers...rather they themselves, whether from cowardice or exaggerated fear, or from the invention of political schemes, and the multiplication of lies, and the creation of ‘refugee camps’ in the eyes of the world, near and far – they fled from and abandoned several of the areas where they lived.” HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook, in the public proclamation, “You Shall Know!”

“The leaders of the gentile nations also know that *Eretz Yisrael* belongs to the nation of Israel. Even in the Koran and other books of Islam, it is mentioned that this Land belongs to the Jews, and that in the end of days the offspring of Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaacov will return to their inheritance.”¹¹⁸

“One time, a lady approached me with a grand idea,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda told us. What was the idea? That men of religion and literature should meet, Jews and Arabs together.

“‘Why not? Let’s meet’, I answered her. I took a positive view of the matter, and we met once or twice. Afterward, I said to the lady: you meet frequently with Arab officials. Please find out from them if they admit that we didn’t take any rule away from them, since they never ruled here – the Turks did. If they admit this, we can continue to meet. If not, I won’t have anything to do with liars. There were people who expressed reservations about all such meetings and suspected that the Arabs who participated were propagandists in disguise, but I said it was important to meet informally with a goal to reduce hatred. But first they must acknowledge that they have no claims of sovereignty here.”

“How are we to behave toward minorities? This is something which is possible to work out so that discrimination will not exist. But as regards to statehood and politics, it is impossible to refute this truth – that we

118. Koran, 5:24, 26, 125.

do not have to give them any sovereignty over the Land! Only after this is accepted is there room for dialogue. I told them that if they did not acknowledge this, there was no possibility of meeting. The woman actually went to clarify this, and these same prominent Arabs admitted that we didn't take away from them any rule over *Eretz Yisrael*, and I have this admission in writing."

23. INHERITING AND LIVING IN THE LAND

"Thus, there are two parts to our role in settling the Land of Israel. To inherit the Land, and to dwell in it. The meaning of inherit is to conquer. We've already partially achieved this. But we still haven't finished. For, *There are three lands: (in the Land of Israel) Yehuda, Galilee, and the other side of the Jordan.*¹¹⁹ Once, an important representative of the 'Greater *Eretz Yisrael* Movement' met with me. He had a slip of the tongue and said, 'Now all of Israel is in our hands.' I answered him, I can't take part in your movement, because the area in our hands today isn't everything. Just as, *The Lord's Torah is perfect – Eretz Yisrael* has to be perfectly and completely whole."

"We must strengthen the conquest of Israel," Rav Tzvi Yehuda told us. "Everything which the gentiles do to interfere, this is null and void in its essence. We must stand against their opposition with dedication and sacrifice, with counsel and with valor, without fear. We are not beholden to anyone. From a feeling of deep

119. Shvi'it 6:1, 9:2. Baba Batra 38A.

security, we must continue the vital activities of conquest and settlement, as the Ramban states: that all of Israel be under our rule and not be abandoned. We must strive to strengthen the settlement all over, both near and far.”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught these concepts, not as practical tactics for today, but as the ideal direction toward which we should aspire, as *Hashem* guided world events to bring about our complete *Geula*. Rav Tzvi Yehuda’s method was always to take steps in line with the *Tzibur*, and not to run impulsively ahead of it.

The incomparable valor of Rav Tzvi Yehuda wasn’t only to be found in his teaching the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*, but in his personal practice of it. He, more than anyone in our generation, strengthened the Jewish settlement of Eretz Yisrael. The founders of Keshet in the Golan Heights, and Atzmona on the sand dunes of Aza, and of the renewed Jewish settlement throughout Judea and Samaria, literally dozens of new Torah communities, these young idealists were the students of Rav Tzvi Yehuda. He encouraged many of them to leave the Yeshiva in Jerusalem and go forth to settle the Land. Many times, in the middle of an address to all of the Yeshiva, he would say that the settlement of Israel is not *Bitul Torah*, the neglect of Torah study, but the natural complement of Torah. He called the students who left the *Beit Midrash* to settle the Land, outstanding Torah scholars, who bring glory to Torah, and sanctify *Hashem*. Their actions, he said, bring blessings to the whole nation.¹²⁰

120. The booklet, *Gadol Shimusho*, on HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, Part 2:12.

Summary

THE PRECEPT OF LIVING IN ISRAEL

1. The highest sanctification of *Hashem* occurs through the nation of Israel in *Eretz Yisrael*.
2. Judaism is much more than an individual's private *mitzvot*. It is the constitution of the Jewish nation in its Land.
3. The *Kedusha* of the nation, and the *Kedusha* of the Land are two facets of a single essence.
4. Avraham Avinu is the foundation for the appearance of *Am Yisrael* in the world.
5. In the order of the *Psukei D'Zimrah* prayer, the chosenness of the Land of Israel precedes the chosenness of the nation.
6. The *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael* is intertwined with the *Kedusha* of the nation.
7. Moshe Rabenu's explanation of the Torah starts with the command to rise up and conquer the Land of Israel.
8. The *Kuzari* states that the Torah was given in Sinai precisely because it is in *Eretz Yisrael*, and not in *Chutz L'Aretz*.
9. The Ramban established the fundamental *Halachic* ruling that living in the Land of Israel, and conquering the Land, are commandments of the Torah which apply in every age.
10. The Ramban explains that settling in Israel is a *mitzvah*, and that its rejection is a rebellion against *Hashem*.
11. The establishment of Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael*, as seen in the State of Israel, is a commandment of the Torah.
12. War is also the beginning of redemption.

13. *Tzahal*, the Israel Defense Forces, is a precept of Torah.
14. The *Chofetz Chaim* encouraged Jews to serve in the armed forces of the gentiles to prepare themselves for service in Israel's army.
15. Like the need to keep Kosher, or to put on *Tefillin*, the precept of compulsory war is a commandment like any other.
16. Today, in settling the Land of Israel, we are fighting a *Milchemet mitzvah*, according to the definitions established by the Rambam and the Ramban.
17. Previous generations did not have the technical capability to fulfill this commandment, but today, the means have returned to our hands.
18. There is no contradiction whatsoever between Yeshiva learning and the obligation to serve in the Israeli army. Yeshivot are obligated to explain the importance of the army to their students, and at the same time, to explain to the nation the importance of developing an abundance of *Talmidei Chachamim*.
19. We have absolutely no right to relinquish any control over any piece of *Eretz Yisrael*.
20. The *Milchemet mitzvah* of conquering Israel and keeping it in our hands comes even at the risk of one's life.
21. We must guard against language which leads to discouragement and weakness, and not be afraid in settling the Land of Israel, even in the face of opposition from all of the nations of the world.
22. When there is a willingness to sacrifice one's life for the State of Israel, miracles occur.
23. All setbacks we face in settling the Land of Israel are temporary. Because of its staggering scale, the return of the Jewish people to Israel is beset with problems, but these have no lasting significance in light of *Hashem's* guarantee to return our nation to Zion.

24. The love and respect which Jews must feel for all peoples does not include granting other nations rule over *Eretz Yisrael*.
25. Gentiles who do not worship idols, and who recognize Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael*, are welcome to live in the Land of Israel, but first, it has to be clear that this Land is ours.

Chapter Eight

RETURN TO ZION

*With joy you shall welcome a new learning from the elite tzaddikim.*¹

With joy and with a bounty of questions. Few of us saw things so clearly that we didn't need clarifications, explanations, and proofs from the sources and Sages. Like anything new, the new light on Torah and Zion, which found illumination in Rabbi Kook's teachings, provoked controversy. There were seeming contradictions, misunderstandings, and even vehement opposition from segments of Orthodox Jewry who feared that the awakened spirit of nationalism would lead to an abandonment of Torah. Rav Tzvi Yehuda welcomed our queries. He encouraged us to bring our full personalities and intellectual capacities to everything we learned. We were not to accept things blindly. Rather, along with the detailed study of *Gemara* and *Halacha*, we were to discover what *Hashem* wanted from us in the great sweep of history, and in the events which were unfolding in our time.

HaRav Shlomo Aviner, *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Ateret Cohanim* in the Old City of Jerusalem, once asked Rav Tzvi Yehuda what he should do with his life. "What do you want to do?" Rav Kook asked? "I want to do what the Rav wants me to do," his dedicated student responded. "But what do **you** want to do?" Rav Tzvi Yehuda repeated. Once again, Rav Aviner answered that he wanted to do whatever the *Rosh Yeshiva* advised. Patiently, Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked him a third time, with a tone that demanded a more introspective response. Finally, the student revealed his heart's true desire. "Then do it!" Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

1. Targum Yonaton, Isaiah, 12:3.

This was Rav Tzvi Yehuda's way, to educate each student according to his natural direction, according to his individual talent and leaning, to encourage creativity and the free, healthy development of each person's potential.² The students who matured under Rav Tzvi Yehuda's teaching, developed into creative, independent thinkers. He taught us to treasure our individual gifts, and to direct them, with all of our energies and hearts, toward the enhancement of our Torah, our nation, and our Land.

1. DWELLING IN ERETZ YISRAEL – AN ENCOMPASSING MITZVAH³

One of the questions concerning living in Israel which new students invariably asked is why the Rambam does not list living in Israel as one of the 613 commandments of the Torah. The *Gemara* establishes that there are 613 commandments in the Torah.⁴ However, there are differences of opinion over which precepts belong to the list, called, 'Taryag' תריג, the alphabetical way of writing 613. While the Rambam doesn't enumerate the precept of dwelling in Israel as one of the 613 commandments, The Ramban does include this commandment in his list.⁵

Rav Tzvi Yehuda noted that these lists of precepts by themselves have no *Halachic* ramifications. *Halacha* is drawn from the legal codes, which find expression in works like the *Shulchan Orach*, and the

2. Proverbs, 22:6.

3. Based on the *Sichot of Harav Tzvi Yehuda*, Return to Zion, Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim, Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.

4. Makot, 23B.

5. Supplement of the Ramban to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Commandment 4.

Mishna Torah, but not from the many differing lists. A Jew seeking to conduct his life according to the commandments of the Torah, naturally looks for *Halachic* guidance on all aspects of his life, including the all-important *mitzvah* of dwelling in *Eretz Yisrael*.

The Rambam, in his classic work of *Halacha*, the *Mishna Torah*, makes the obligation of living in Land of Israel quite clear. In the *Laws of Kings and Their Wars*, Chapter Five, he details the prohibition against leaving the Land of Israel to dwell outside of the Land, describes the great love the Sages have for the Land, and quotes the *Gemara* in *Ketubot*,⁶ which states: *In all times, a Jew should live in the Land of Israel, even in a city where most of the residents are idol worshippers, and not live outside of the Land, even in a city where most of the residents are Jews.*⁷

Also, in the *Laws of Marriage*, the Rambam rules that in a case where the husband wants to go on *Aliyah* to Israel, and the wife does not, the *Beit Din* forces her either to go (even if their *Aliyah* means leaving a place where the majority of residents are Jewish to live in a city in Israel where the majority are gentiles); or to agree to a divorce without receiving her *Ketubah* (dowry).⁸ This decision is stated in the *Shulchan Orach*⁹. There, the *Pitchei Tshuva*, a compilation of all of the *Poskim* who decide Torah law, quotes the Ramban's ruling that **the commandment to live in Eretz Yisrael applies in all generations**, and furthermore emphasizes that all of the *Poskim*, both *Rishonim* and *Achronim* (early and later *Halachic* authorities) agree.¹⁰

The question why the Rambam does not list living in Israel as one of the 613 precepts is more of a philosophical inquiry than a Halachic one,

6. Ketubot 110B.

7. Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, 5:2.

8. Rambam, *Laws of Marriage*, 13:19.

9. *Shulchan Orach*. Even HaEzer, 75:3.

10. *Pitchei Tshuva*, there, sub-section 6.

for, as Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed, the appearance, or non-appearance, of a precept on the list has, by itself, no *Halachic* significance, for the commandments, and the obligation to do them, comes from the Torah, and not from the varying lists. **The lists don't determine which precepts we do – the Torah does.** There are instances where commandments do not appear on the list, because they are commandments which encompass all of the Torah, as the Rambam himself explains in his introduction to *Sefer HaMitzvot*; or because they derive from Rabbinic decree; or because they were not practiced at the time of the list. When answering this question, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would clarify the Rambam's methodology to the enumeration of precepts on his list, as set forth by the Rambam in his introduction.

“The reason the Rambam does not list living in Israel in the *Taryag mitzvot* is not because he thinks it is less than a mitzvah – he thinks the opposite! **It is more than a mitzvah.**¹¹

“The Rambam established fourteen rules by which certain commandments are not included in the list, like precepts of Rabbinic ordinance, which are categorized differently than commandments from the Torah.¹² Also, an encompassing commandment, which is above the normal value of the precepts, is not included in the list.¹³

11. “And also the Rambam, who didn't include it in the list of 613 *mitzvot*, behold, this isn't because it has less value than the other *mitzvot*; rather it is above the usual value. And also because, according to the underlying foundations of *Sefer HaMitzvot*, precepts which encompass all of the Torah aren't included in the list.” *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, P.117, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, Jerusalem, 5727.
12. *Sefer HaMitzvot*, Rule 1.
13. *Ibid.*, Rule 4.

Dwelling in Israel is an encompassing commandment.¹⁴
 Because of this, the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* wrote,
 'For living in Israel is a *mitzvah* encompassing all of the
 Torah.'¹⁵

In the introduction to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Rule Four states, "Commandments which affect all of the *mitzvot* of the Torah are not included (in the list.)" As an example, he mentions the Torah command, קְדוּשִׁים תִּהְיֶיךָ, *You shall be holy*,¹⁶ which he explains as meaning to keep all of the Torah, and therefore, he does not list it as a separate command. So too with the *mitzvah* of living in *Eretz Yisrael*. It is an all-encompassing *mitzvah*, not simply because over a third of the precepts can only be performed in the Land of Israel, and therefore, obviously, one must live in Israel to truly keep all of the Torah. Living in Israel is more than this. **It is a *mitzvah* which all of the Torah depends on, above and beyond the precepts specific to the Land.** Not only did the Rambam think living in Israel is a Torah commandment, he believed it to be a major foundation of our faith, and a pillar of all of the Torah.¹⁷

2. THE CENTRALITY OF ERETZ YISRAEL

The Rambam emphasizes the centrality of *Eretz Yisrael* to Torah in *Sefer HaMitzvot*, concerning the positive precept of the Sanctification

14. *The precept of living in Israel is equal in weight to all of the precepts of the Torah.* Sifre, *Reah*, 12:29. See also, in the name of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, in the book, *Torat HaMoadim*, HaRav Shlomo Goren. P.35. Also the pamphlet, *The Sparkling of the Light of Redemption*, by the Nazir, P.17.
15. *Ohr HaChaim*, on Deuteronomy, 30:20.
16. Leviticus, 19:2.
17. Rambam, *Sefer HaMitzvot*, Positive Commandment 153. See also, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, The Torah and the Land.

of the New Month.¹⁸ In a lengthy discussion, he makes it clear that **it is the Jews of the Land of Israel who constitute the Jewish nation. Even if the majority of Jews are exiled from the Land, it is not the Torah centers outside of the Land which make up the heart of the nation, but the Jewish peasants who live in Eretz Yisrael.** This is illustrated by the calculation of the Jewish calendar, which can only be established by the Jews in Israel, irrelevant of their status in Torah.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda guided us through a step-by-step understanding of this very deep concept, which, “Not every rabbi knew.”¹⁸ He explained that the calculation of the new moon, and hence of the months, and the years, and the dates on which the holidays fall, can be done only in the Land of Israel.¹⁹ This was performed by witnesses, who upon observance of the new moon, would travel to Jerusalem to testify before the *Beit Din*.²⁰ When the Sages saw that foreign persecution and rule over Israel threatened to disrupt the line of rabbinic ordination (*Smichah*) handed down from Moshe to the succeeding leaders of each generation (the *Beit Din*.) they sanctified, for all time, the calendar which we use today.²¹

The Rambam makes clear in the *Sefer HaMitzvot*, concerning Positive Command 153, which deals with the establishment of the months, that this calculation can only be done in Israel:

“Know! This accounting of months which we calculate today, and know from this the beginning of the months and the holidays, is not allowed to be made, except in the Land of Israel, exclusively...and **here lies a very great foundation from the axioms of our belief, which was not known or understood except among the deep learners of**

18. Rambam, *ibid*.

19. *Ibid*. Also see, Berakot 63A and 63B. Sanhedrin 11B. Deut. 12:5.

20. Mishna, Rosh HaShana, 1:3–3:1.

21. Rambam, Laws of Sanctifying the Month, 5:3.

Torah....We only make this accounting today to know the day that the Jews living in Israel established, for from their accounting we calculate and establish the months today, and not by our observation of the new moon. We base our calculation on their fixing and not upon ours. And our accounting is nothing more than the substantiation of their words.”¹⁸

The Rambam adds, “If we could suppose, for example, that the Children of Israel disappeared from the Land of Israel; G-d forbid the Almighty ever do this, since He has already promised not to totally erase or uproot all signs of the **nation** – then our reckoning of the months would not help us at all, in any way whatsoever, because we are not empowered to make the reckonings outside the Land of Israel...as we explained, *From Zion shall go forth Torah.*”¹⁸

The *Chatam Sofer* explains the deep import of what the Rambam is saying. “**If, G-d forbid, a single Jew wasn’t living in Israel, even if there were Jews living outside the Land, this would be the destruction of the entire nation, G-d forbid....**The Rambam asserted that the times of the years, and the months, and the holy days which the *Rishonim* calculated were valid only if there were at least vine growers and farmers in Israel who would determine when the time had arrived...And if this wasn’t so then the reckoning and sanctification of the early Sages would have no affect, and the entire Torah would be null, G-d forbid, and there wouldn’t be any nation of Israel, G-d forbid, and our existence as a nation would be utterly destroyed, G-d forbid. But our Creator promised that this would not be.”²²

Not only did the Rambam think that living in Israel was a mitzvah;

22. Responsa, Chatam Sofer, Yoreh Deah, Responsa 234.

he felt it was a mitzvah on which the whole Torah was based! Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained this point further by citing a *Gemara*:

“This is made clear at the end of tractate, *Berachot*, regarding Rabbi Haninah, the son of Rabbi Joshua’s brother, a *Talmid Chacham* who descended from *Eretz Yisrael* to the *Galut*. At the time, the nation was in a sorrowful state, and many *Gedolei Yisrael* remained outside of Israel. Rabbi Haninah was a leader of the generation, and a giant in Torah. He began to intercalate years, and determine the beginnings of the new months outside of the Land of Israel. This is something completely forbidden. Therefore two *Talmidei Chachamin* were sent from Israel to fight against this. Upon their arrival in Babylon, they took part in official ceremonies and didn’t reveal the purpose of their visit. They were received with great honor. Gradually, they started to vent their opposition. Finally, they entered a crowded assembly and said to the Jews of Babylon, ‘Behold, you are a great congregation. You can be independent. You don’t need *Eretz Yisrael*. You don’t need Mt. Moriah.’ Their sarcasm was purposefully stinging in order to shock the Babylonian Jews. ‘And you’ve also got Rabbi Ahia here. Let Ahia build an altar, and let Haninah play on the harp. **But know that if you detach yourselves from the centrality of Eretz Yisrael, you have no portion in the G-d of Israel!**’²³

“Separating oneself from the centrality of *Eretz Yisrael* in Jewish life and in Torah is heresy,” Rav Tzvi

23. *Berachot*, 63A and 63B.

Yehuda stressed. “The *Gemara* concludes, *Immediately, the people cried out in tears and said, G-d forbid, We do have a portion in the G-d of Israel!..For from Zion shall go forth Torah, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*”²³

Thus, the Rambam emphasizes living in *Eretz Yisrael* is one of the fundamentals of our belief. Any understanding of Torah which does not place *Eretz Yisrael* in the center of Jewish life is a false and heretical doctrine. **An in-depth study of the Rambam reveals that he does not view living in Eretz Yisrael as something peripheral to the nation. On the contrary, he sees the settlement of Jews in Israel as a necessary foundation of Torah, and as a foundation of Am Yisrael.**

3. ERETZ YISRAEL – OUR TRUE PLACE

“In contrast to the *Galut*,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, “*Eretz Yisrael* is our natural, normal, healthy place. The principal manifestation of *Hashem's* Presence is in *Eretz Yisrael*. The principle place of prophecy is *Eretz Yisrael*. The principle place of Torah is *Eretz Yisrael*. **The Chofetz Chaim stated in his practical way, that the value of a commandment which a Jew performs in the Land of Israel, like putting on Tefillin, is twenty times greater than the performance of the same precept outside of the Land.**²⁴ In Israel, the performance of a commandment is natural to our lives. Even song is possible only in *Eretz Yisrael*, as it says, *How can we sing the Lord's song on foreign soil?*”²⁵

24. *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, Pg.197.

25. *Tchillim*, 137:4.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted us to know what his father had recognized so clearly – that a Jew, and the Children of Israel as a nation, could only be true to themselves in Israel.²⁶ Perhaps, an example of this can be seen in the new immigrant to Israel who soon begins to speak in Hebrew, the language of his forefathers, as opposed to Russian, English, or French, the languages of gentile nations. Outside the Land, we are Jewish Americans, and Mexicans, and Australians, with foreign identities, cultures, and speech. In Israel, we become what *Hashem* intended us to be: the Children of Israel.

Some people maintain that there is an unhealthy chauvanism, and a self-limitation, in the insistence that all Jews live in Israel. Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that, on the contrary, the strengthening of Israel's *Segula*, of our nation's uniqueness, distinction, and character, is, "A great treasure to Israel and to the world."²⁶

This benefit which the Jewish nation in Israel brings to all of the world is expressed in the prophecy of Isaiah: *For from Zion shall go forth the Torah, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*²⁷ *Am Yisrael's* true contribution to the world comes from Jerusalem, and not from the *Galut*. **The benefit we bring to mankind reaches its fullest expression with the ingathering of all of the exiles, when all of the nation of Israel lives in the place Hashem wants us to be.**

4. THE JERUSALEM TALMUD

If *Eretz Yisrael* is truly the center of Torah and national Jewish life, how can one explain all of the great contributions to Torah, like the

26. *Orot*, Eretz Yisrael, 3, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook. Also, *Kuzari*, 5:23, "The Land of Israel is especially distinguished by the G-d of Israel, and no function can be perfect except there...heart and soul can only be perfectly pure and clean in the place especially selected by *Hashem*."

27. Isaiah, 2:3.

Babylonian Talmud, which developed during our exile in the *Galut*? Although the *Gemara* says, *In the darkness, He put me – this is the learning of Babylon*,²⁸ Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained this to mean that the light of the Torah continues **even in the darkness** of the *Galut*. The Babylonian Talmud does not originate from the *Gemara* itself, but from the Mishna, which is a creation of *Eretz Yisrael*. In the Babylonian Talmud, the light of the Torah from Israel continues, even in the darkness of *Galut*.

“Indeed, the time of the Jerusalem Talmud has come. After the Sages of the *Gemara*, the Rambam appears. He encompasses the entire Torah, from the *Laws on the Fundamentals of Torah*; to the delineation of the Kingdom of Israel, in the *Laws of Kings and Their Wars*. According to most of the *Poskim*, whenever there is a disagreement between the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmuds, the *Halacha* is like the Babylonian.²⁹ But the Rambam decides the law a number of times like the Jerusalem Talmud.³⁰ The *Gaon* of Vilna mentions, in his commentary on the *Shulchan Orach*, that the Rambam, ‘Relied on the Jerusalem Talmud, as he usually did in the majority of places.’³¹ This is because the Rambam so totally identified with *Clal Yisrael*. He is Messianic in scope. Redemptional in his essence. Thus he decided *Halacha* like the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*.”

5. THE RENEWAL OF PROPHECY

“A certain *Talmid Chacham* told me that he planned

28. Sanhedrin, 24A.
29. See the *Rif* and the *Rosh* at the end of Eruvin. Also *Sefer HaMitzvot Gadol*, Negative Command 65.
30. Rambam, *Laws of Reading the Shema*, 3:6. Also *Rived* and *Kesef Mishna*.
31. *Shulchan Oruch*, *Yoreh Deah*, 63, Sub-section 1.

to settle down in Israel. I answered that one does not settle down in Israel. **Outside the Land, one settles down, and sinks. In Israel, one rises up.**"

"As the ingathering of the exiles comes to completion, we rise to greater and greater heights. When millions of Jews come to Israel to live, prophecy will begin to appear among us.³² The *Kuzari* explains that if all of the Jews had come back to Israel in the days of Ezra, prophecy would have been restored, like it had been at the time of the First *Beit HaMikdash*.³³ The *Gemara* in Yoma also points to this.³⁴ In *Orot*, and *Orot*

32. *Kuzari*, 3:65.

33. "Ezra who pleaded with them, and Nehemiah, and the prophets, until a portion of them grudgingly agreed to return. In accordance with their small spiritedness, they did not receive full measure, for Divine Providence only falls on a man as much as he is prepared to receive; if his receptive capacity be small, he receives little, and if it be great, he receives a full measure. If we had been prepared to meet the G-d of our forefathers with a full heart, and with a desiring soul, we would have met with the same salvation that our forefathers had in Egypt." *Kuzari*, Part 2, 24. "'Until the nation of G-d passes, until the nation which I have acquired passes.' Until the nation of G-d passes – this is the first entry into the Land. Until the nation which I have acquired passes – this is the second. From this the Sages said that Israel was worthy of having G-d perform for them miracles in Ezra's time, like He had in the time of Joshua ben Nun, but they sinned." *Berachot*, 4A. "That is to say, they sinned because not all of them came back to Israel." *Maharsha*, Yoma, 9B, beginning, 'Like a wall.'

34. 'If she be a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.' If you made yourselves like a wall, and all of you came back to Israel in the days of Ezra, you would have been like silver which decay can't affect. Now that you have come back like doors (opening and closing a little at a time) you are like cedar which rots. Why cedar?...A heavenly voice; like we learn, since the last prophets died, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the spirit of prophesy left Israel, and they had only a heavenly voice. Yoma, 9B. "The Babylonian Jews who didn't return to Israel in

Hakodesh, the absence of *Ruach HaKodesh* (Divine Inspiration) in Israel is described like a temporary illness: ‘In truth, the absence of *Ruach HaKodesh* in Israel is not a total cessation, but a blemish and a sickness. In Israel, it is a painful disease which is destined to heal.’³⁵

“The more the nation of Israel grows in the Land, the healthier our body and spirit will be; and we will advance toward the condition proper for prophecy.”³⁶

Rav Tzvi Yehuda was expressing much more than his optimistic belief that Israel’s most precious talent, prophecy, would return. He was saying that **the ingathering of the Jewish people in Israel is more than the physical building of Israel – it is also the holy means of bringing the Jewish people to optimal spiritual health.**³⁷

6. SECOND DAY OF YOM TOV IN THE DIASPORA³⁸

Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized the centrality of Israel, because he

Ezra’s time, and prevented the Divine Presence from returning to rest on the Second Temple...were like doors half open.” Rashi, there. “A shallow echo of the voice of prophecy remained, just as only a small residue of rotting cedar....” Ibid.

35. *Orot HaKodesh*, Part 3, Pg.355. *Orot, Orot Yisrael*, Pg.171. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

36. *Orot, Orot HaTechiya*.

37. Ezekiel, 36:24–28.

38. The fixing of the dates of the holidays was founded on the practice in Israel of witnesses appearing before the *Beit Din* in Jerusalem to proclaim the sighting of the new moon. To alert the Jewish communities living far away in the Diaspora, messengers were sent forth so that they would know when to celebrate the holidays. Since the messengers might not arrive to distant places before the time, Diaspora communities had to hold two days of Yom Tov to be certain they celebrated on the correct day. Even after the calendar was calculated for all time, the custom was maintained.

wanted us to understand, and to feel **the very real difference between Israel and outside the Land**. To illustrate, he related the following incident:

“We were once outside of Israel on the last day of *Pesach*, on the second day of *Yom Tov* in the *Galut*. We prayed with the custom of people in Israel, and put on *Tefillin* with the required modesty.³⁹ When this became known to the residents of the community who were not *Talmidei Chachamim*, they were filled with interest and wonder. They said, ‘People come from Jerusalem who put on *Tefillin* on *Yom Tov*?’ I explained to them that in Israel there isn’t a second day of *Yom Tov*, and since we had only left Israel for a limited time, we had to continue the customs of *Eretz Yisrael*. They said that if there is a difference of customs between Israel and the Diaspora, obviously the Jews from Israel are right, and so they too should do like the Israelis, and only hold one day of *Yom Tov*. I told them that since they recognized the difference between the Judaism of Israel and of the *Galut*, they could understand that complete Judaism only makes sense in Israel. **In the Diaspora, Judaism isn’t precise. There is only Kedusha from a position of doubt** (from not knowing the day on which the holiday actually falls.) Thus they must keep two days of *Yom Tov*.”

7. THE YEARNING TO LIVE IN ISRAEL

Rav Tzvi Yehuda would often tell us that Israel was the Land of the living nation of Israel. What did he mean by these words? What did he mean when he said that our vitality was revealed in this Land?

39. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, 496; Mishna Berurah, sub-section 13.

It is impossible to convey all of the spiritual depths of this concept, which connects the vitality and life of the Jewish people with *Eretz Yisrael*. It is equally difficult to portray the awesome spiritual impact which our living in Israel has on the most remote reaches of the world, but, perhaps, a mundane example from our everyday lives can hint at what Rav Tzvi Yehuda was saying. Jews live all over the world, from London to Honolulu, Melbourne, Las Vegas, Fairfax, Zurich, Palm Springs, Johannesburg, and Jerusalem. Yet if one opens a newspaper or turns on a television, he is most likely to find a story about the Jews in Jerusalem. The attention of the world is focused on the Jews in the Land of Israel. They are the ones who make up the nation.¹⁷ *One nation in the Land.*⁴⁰ In the Land of Israel, we are one nation, the *Zohar* states, and not outside it.⁴¹ The world has become familiar with nightly news broadcasts, "Live from Jerusalem." The living is going on in Jerusalem. The vitality of the Jewish nation is here. The news, and the Torah, and the word of *Hashem* comes from here.²⁷ The Jew outside of the Land of Israel lives a much different reality. Instead of making *Eretz Yisrael* the center of his life, he has chosen a gentile land. Politically, he is a citizen of a gentile country, voting in that country's elections. His taxes go to support a non-Jewish government.⁴² He speaks a gentile language, and lives his life according to a Christian calendar.⁴³ He has abandoned the national aspect of Judaism, and chosen instead to belong to a foreign nation. Like the Jews of Babylon in the time of Rabbi Haninah, he has cut himself off from the centrality of *Eretz Yisrael*.²³ When a Jew is able to live in *Eretz Yisrael*, and doesn't, the *Gemara* compares him to someone who has severed his connection to *Hashem*, saying: *Everyone*

40. Shabbat Mincha *Shemona Esrei*.

41. *Zohar*, Emor, 93.

42. Rashi, on Deut. 4:28; and 28:64.

43. On the prohibition of writing the date according to the gentile calendar, see, Responsa, *Maharam Shik*, Yoreh Deah, 171.

who lives in the Land of Israel is as if he has a G-d, and anyone who lives outside the Land of Israel is like one who has no G-d, as it says, "To give you the land of Canaan to be your G-d."⁴⁴

Fortunately, the yearning to return to Israel is inherent in the general nation. Rav Kook writes in *Orot*, that even in the Exile, "The Israeli flame grows stronger,"⁴⁵ growing toward wholeness, and toward the regathering of our nation in our Land. This is a yearning which encompasses *Clal Yisrael*, yet, as Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, there are different levels in its strength. The flame of *Clal Yisrael* is refracted into multitudes of sparks and rays. "The rays glow with valor in the hearts of the *Tzaddikim*," Rav Kook writes.⁴⁵ Among the *Tzaddikim*, the foundations of the world,⁴⁶ the fire of Israel is revealed in all of its force. However, Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted us to understand that the fire, the yearning for completion, also exists hidden in the nation as a whole, even, "In the heart of every vacuous soul and sinner of Israel."⁴⁵ Together, we rise to rebirth; we return to our life, in all of its fullness, in the return to our Land. This yearning for fulfillment is the foundation of Zionism, even among secular Jews. When the flame of this inner, national, Israeli spirit is felt among non-observant Jews, the Zionism which awakens is expressed in secular garb, but its source is a deep *Kedusha*, rooted in our national essence and psyche.⁴⁷

Rav Tzvi Yehuda pointed to an expression of Israel's yearning for vital fulfillment in the writings of the *Gaon*, Rabbi Yehoshua of Kutna. He was one of the leading Torah scholars of his generation,

44. Ketubot 110B. And see, Rambam, Laws of Kings, 5:12.

45. *Orot, Eretz Yisrael*, 8.

46. Proverbs, 10:25.

47. Letters, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Part 2, Letters 473, and 546; and Part 3, Letter 871.

and the compiler of numerous responses to questions of law, the *Yeshuot Malko*. Regarding the return to Zion which was gaining momentum in his time, he wrote, "There is no doubting that this is a great mitzvah, for the ingathering of the exiles is the beginning of the Geula. And especially since we have now seen a tremendous yearning, both amongst non-believers, amongst ordinary men, and amongst the righteous, we are close to absolute certainty that the spirit of redemption has budded."⁴⁸

"A national movement of *Clal Yisrael* has budded," Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained. "A tremendous resurgence encompassing all of the nation, on all of its levels: amongst the non-believers and sinners; amongst ordinary men; and amongst the *Tzaddikim*. This great yearning is not a casual thing, or a fortuitous concatenation of circumstances. One must see this as something from *Hashem*, especially when this yearning starts with, 'the non-believers' of Israel."

The yearning to live with full vitality, which finds its expression in the return of the nation to Israel, surrounds *Clal Yisrael*. This is a *mitzvah* which unifies all of Israel, and everyone longs to fulfill it. This yearning is the source of Zionism, even among non-observant Jews. **Whether aware of this holy yearning or not, everyone who comes home to Zion is not only fulfilling an age-old dream, he is fulfilling the call of our prophets, and performing a precept which is equal in scale to all of the commandments of the Torah.**⁴⁹

"It is important to understand that every Jew who comes to live in Israel is fulfilling a Torah

48. Responsa, *Yeshuot Malko*, Section 66.

49. *Em HaBanim Simaicha*, Pgs. 58-59. Rabbi Yissachar Shlomo Teichtel.

commandment.⁵⁰ This is true whether he is an observer of Torah, or not; whether he knows it is a *mitzvah*, or not; whether he comes with the intention to do the *mitzvah*, or not.⁵¹ Contrary to this, every Jew who dwells in the Diaspora, even if he is religious, commits a transgression, and the religious Jew's transgression is certain, because he is not acting from a lack of intention (for he knows that he is not doing a *mitzvah*.)⁵²

Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed that the duty of Aliyah and settlement in *Eretz Yisrael* exists in all generations, even when gentiles rule in the Land, or when the majority of Jews are not observant.⁵³

“Therefore, the first obligation before us is the ingathering of our exiles, from all of the lands of the Diaspora, and the ingathering of every Jew, whether he is healthy or ill, whether he believes in the Torah, or denies it. **Being a Jew today comes with the basic requirement to be in Eretz Yisrael.**⁵⁴ Every Jew who comes to Israel brings back to Zion an aspect of the *Shekhina* from the exiled nation.⁵⁵ Every additional Jew who comes to Israel, and every additional tree which is planted in the soil of *Eretz Yisrael*, is another spiritual stage and step of the *Geula* – in the very same way that every additional piece of Torah which is learned, and

50. See the interview with HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, *Maariv*, Erev Pesach, 5723.

51. See the article by HaRav Gantz, in *Machane Haredi*, 7 Sivan, 5743.

52. Berachot 57A, Rashi. “Because the Diaspora has no merit, rather it is a sin to dwell there.”

53. See section 9 of this Chapter, Return to Zion, Part 1. And, Responsa, *Dvar Halacha*, Section 38, Pg.28.

54. See, Responsa, *Tzitz Eliezer*, HaRav Eliezer Waldenberg, Section 7:48, Chapter 12.

55. *Orot, Orot Yisrael*, 3.

every Yeshiva which is built, is another stage in the returning of *Hashem's* presence to Zion.”

8. THE LAND EXPELS

“In contrast to the yearning for the Land of Israel, a negative phenomenon of speaking evil about the Land also exists. HaRav Shmuel Mohliver, who worked fiercely for the building of Israel and for *Aliyah*, was a *Tzaddik* and a *Gaon* in Torah. Rav Yitzhak Nissenbaum was his secretary, and he related a story in the name of HaRav Mohliver. A certain G-d-fearing Jew abandoned the Land of Israel and was accustomed to say bad things about it. HaRav Shmuel Mohliver said, ‘This does not make sense. All of the Torah is filled with praise for *Eretz Yisrael*. How could a G-d-fearing Jew say the opposite of what is written in the Torah?’ To explain, he told a parable: A *Shidduch* was once arranged between two young people. Before the meeting, the girl realized that she already knew the boy, and it was clear to her that he wasn’t the right partner for her. However, she didn’t want to embarrass the boy by not going to meet him. So she showed up disheveled and dirty in hopes that the boy wouldn’t like her. This is similar to our case of the Jew who was expelled by the Land. This is a sign that something was at fault with him. However, the Lord loves every Jew and does not want to humiliate someone by expelling him outright from *Eretz Yisrael*, so He makes the Land appear in an opposite light from what the person hopes for, (and the person seemingly decides to leave the Land on his own.)⁵⁶

56. HaRav Yitzhak Nissenbaum, “Rishonim L’Zion,” The Hebrew, New York, Edition, 46, 20 Tevet, 5681.

People of this sort are expelled from the Land in a gentle fashion, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. **They believe they are rejecting the Land, and don't realize that, in truth, the Land is rejecting them.**

9. SPIRITUAL DANGERS IN ISRAEL

“Similarly, there are people who argue against Aliyah to Israel because they believe it is fraught with physical and spiritual dangers.”

“The Mishna establishes the principle, *Everyone ascends to Eretz Yisrael*.⁵⁷ If the husband wants to move to *Eretz Yisrael* and the wife does not, the *Beit Din* can compel her to go, or to undergo a divorce without receiving her *Ketubah* payment. When the situation is reversed, and the man does not want to move to Israel, the court compels him to either go, or to divorce his wife with all of her *Ketubah* rights.⁵⁷ *Tosefot* states, in the name of R. Chaim Cohen, ‘This is not kept in this time because of danger on the way.’⁵⁸ And the *Shulchan Aruch* decrees that one must take danger into account.⁵⁹ Thank G-d, today it is easy to come here, and there is no situation of danger.⁶⁰ Even in the *Halacha*, the *Pitchei Tshuva* records, in the name of the *Meil Tzedakah*, that if merchants are not prevented from traveling (to *Eretz Yisrael*) on business, this is a sign that no danger exists.”⁶¹

57. Ketubot, 110B.

58. Tosefot, loc. citcd, beginning, “He.”

59. Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer, 75:1:3.

60. Over a million tourists come to Israel each year. Ed.

61. Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer, 75:3, *Pitchei Tshuva*, Sub-section 6.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda also mentioned the *Halachic* opinion that one does not have to move to Israel if one does not have a livelihood waiting, since poverty removes a man from his senses, and from the proper service of *Hashem*. The *Pitchei Tshuva* states: "If he travels there, and because of this, he needs to make his livelihood from charity, whilst, if he were outside the Land, he could earn a living from the toil of his hands, he doesn't act properly in moving, because of the great value of earning one's living by working."⁶¹

This ruling also has limited application in our time, for a person does not have to rely on charity to earn one's living in Israel today. For someone who wants to work, there is sufficient work to be found. Furthermore, Rav Tzvi Yehuda pointed to a clarification of this argument in the responsa, *Dvar Halacha*, of Rav Eliahu Klotzkin. He lived in Jerusalem at the end of his life and wrote an opinion on the *mitzvah* of *Aliyah* to Israel.⁶² He notes that one must also examine what livelihood the Jews have outside the Land, because a portion of them are not involved in legitimate enterprises, but, rather, with dishonest dealings and stock holdings which rise and fall in line with the market price, a livelihood which resembles the forbidden practice of gambling with dice.⁶³

"Also, there are people who claim that there are *Apikorsim* (heretics) in Israel, and therefore it is dangerous to live here – as if their Judaism is secure in the *Galut*! Rabbi Eliahu Klotzkin answers with the law: ***A Jew should always live in the Land of Israel, even in a city where the majority of residents are idol worshippers, and not live outside the Land, even in a city where the majority are Jews.***⁵⁹ Rav Klotzkin emphasizes that this is

62. Responsa, *Dvar Halacha*, Section 38, P.28.

63. Sanhedrin 24B.

also the law in a location where the majority are Sadducees and Jewish transgressors. Rav Klotzkin adds, 'For one isn't to nullify the performance of a precept because one decides, in his opinion, that the doing of the precept will lead to evil results'⁶⁴ ...as if one is permitted to intellectualize over the commandments of *Hashem!*' We learn this from Isaiah, the prophet, who rebuked King Hezekiah because he refused to marry. Hezekiah saw with Divine Inspiration that his children would not be righteous, so he abstained from the commandment to procreate. Isaiah rebuked him, saying, 'What do you have to do with the secrets of *Hashem*? You have to do what is commanded of you. And what is fitting in *Hashem's* eyes, He will do for Himself.'⁶⁵

This is also true regarding the *mitzvah* of living in Israel. Considerations of what the future will bring are for *Hashem* to decide. Our obligation is to obey the commandment. Furthermore, a Jew is not allowed to prevent others from fulfilling this *mitzvah*.

"Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Shragai, who was responsible for matters of *Aliyah* in Israel, recounted that when he saw young people from North Africa and Yemen corrupted when they came to Israel, he asked the *Gaon*, HaRav Zvi Pesach Frank, זצ"ל, Rabbi of Jerusalem, if it was worthwhile and permitted to continue to bring these Jews to Israel, or, on the contrary, to prevent them from coming. G-d forbid, HaRav Frank responded. It is an obligation to bring them. If they become corrupted, you are not the one responsible for that. **First of all, Jews**

64. Megilla 17B.

65. Berachot 10A.

must come to Israel. Afterward, the proper frameworks must be provided for them. Here we have a clear *Halachic* decision.”

10. THE LAND'S INTRINSIC KEDUSHA

Another, perhaps even more basic point which is often misunderstood, concerns the sanctity of the Land of Israel itself. Why is *Eretz Yisrael* recognized all over the world as the Holy Land? What makes it *Kadosh*? One might think that the *Kedusha* of the Land comes from the *Kedusha* of the commandments which are performed here. Accordingly, if no commandments were done here, G-d forbid, the Land would not be *Kadosh*. Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that this reasoning is false. **The Land of Israel is Kadosh, in and of itself.** For this reason alone, a Jew should long to live here.⁶⁶

Rav Tzvi Yehuda cited the teachings of his father, who delineated these matters in his book, *Shabbat HaAretz*, a study of the Sabbatical year, which requires the Land of Israel to lie fallow every seventh year. The *Ridbaz* argued against the use of the היתר המכירה, *Heter HaMechirah*, the *Halachic* allowance to sell the land in Israel to a gentile, so that the precept of *Shmitta* which depends on the Land needn't be kept. The *Heter HaMechirah* allows a Jew to continue certain work on the Land, and thus strengthen the Jewish settlement here, but, the *Ridbaz* said, by selling the Land to a gentile, we transform *Eretz Yisrael* into a gentile land! This was a superficial phrasing, Rav Kook explained. **The sanctity of Eretz Yisrael does not change if gentiles own the Land.** This only influences the performance of the commandments which depend on the Land.

66. *Kuzari*, 2:23. “Your forefathers chose it as their abode in preference to their birthplaces, and lived there as strangers, rather than as citizens in their own country. They did this even at a time when the *Shekhina* was not yet visible, and the country was full of unchastity, impurity, and idolatry. Your fathers, however, had no other desire than to remain there.”

“The concept of precepts dependent upon the Land is clear, but we have never found the concept of the Land being dependent upon the precepts. The obligation of the commandments relating to the Land evolves from the *Kedusha* which *Hashem* placed in His Land.”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that Israel’s connection to the Land is not due to the commandments, but because of the deep, spiritual connection between the Land of Israel and *Am Yisrael*.⁶⁷ The *Kedusha* of the Land of *Hashem*, and of the people, *Who cleave to G-d*,⁶⁸ binds *Am Yisrael* and *Eretz Yisrael* together in an inseparable bond. This attachment between the nation of Israel and the Land is an inherent, intrinsic bond which transcends the *Kedusha* brought about by the precepts.

“The *Chatam Sofer* also emphasizes this basic philosophical rule. He writes: ‘**The *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael* comes from itself, and not because of the precepts related to it.**’”⁶⁹

“Thus, there is no justification for the words of R. Chaim Cohen which appear in the *Tosefot* that, ‘Today there isn’t a commandment to live in *Eretz Yisrael* because there are some precepts dependent on the Land, and some punishments which we can not enact.’⁵⁸ If a

67. “The principle *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael* is the living there, in and of itself. From this comes the merit of the precepts dependent upon the Land....”
“Likewise the book, *Kaftor and Perach*, explains that the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael* is a value in itself, independent of the precepts dependent upon the Land.” *Shabbat HaAretz*, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook. Pgs.62–63.

68. Deut. 4:4.

69. Responsa, Chatam Sofer, Yoreh Deah, 234.

person is unable to perform the precepts dependent on the Land by reasons beyond his control, the Torah exempts him; however the sanctity of the Land (and the obligation to live here) continues unabated.⁷⁰ Furthermore, the *Maharit* proved that this *Tosefot* (which says that Aliyah to Israel is not an obligation today) does not express the opinion of R. Chaim Cohen, but, rather, represents the opinion of a mistaken student.”⁷⁰

11. FOR YOUR SERVANTS DESIRED HER STONES

“At the end of tractate *Ketubot*,⁷¹ several matters are cited regarding the love our Sages felt for *Eretz Yisrael*. *Rabbi Abba kissed the stones of Acco*. And, *Rabbi Chibbar Gamda adorned himself with her dust*. He didn’t simply bend down to kiss the ground, he rolled in the dust, in order to actualize the verse: *For Your servants desired her stones and cherished her very dust*.”⁷²

Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized that Rabbi Abba did not kiss the ground, which nurtures the fruit over which the precepts are performed, but rather, he kissed **the boulders**, to show the inherent *Kedusha* of the Land itself. Also, Rashi, in his commentary, duplicates the verse, *For Your servants desired her stones and cherished her very dust*, without adding any new information, to emphasize the importance of **her stones** and the intrinsic *Kedusha* of **the Land**, in and of itself.⁷¹

70. *Maharit*, Responsa 28, and *Chidushim* on *Ketubot*, 110B. And, *Pischei Tshuva*, Even HaEzer, 75, Sub-section 6.

71. *Ketubot* 112B.

72. *Tehillim*, 102:15.

12. ZIONISM AND TORAH

If the obligation to live in *Eretz Yisrael* is so clear, how can one explain the phenomenon that the modern pioneers of Aliyah and settlement were not religious Jews? Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that this assumption simply was not true.⁵⁰

“First of all, in the name of historical accuracy, the movement of Geula in our time did not begin with Herzl, but with (the religious group) Chebat Zion, the Lovers of Zion. At the head of this movement were *Talmidei Chachamim* of immense, holy stature, HaRav Tzvi Hirsh Kalisher, and HaRav Eliahu Guttmacher. Both of these men were graced with Divine spirit, and all of their words and deeds were directed toward Israel’s *Geula*. Afterwards, when the movement spread, new spokesmen arose, and new directions developed, with a multiplicity of organizers and supporters. The Almighty brought these events about from many directions and sources. *From four directions the Spirit comes.*⁷³ The spirit of *Hashem* comes from every direction; through the physical world; through the phenomenon of anti-semitism; through the national awakenings of foreign nations (and their wars;) and also through the secular side of *Am Yisrael*.”

A general lack of awareness concerning the religious beginnings of the Zionist movement has led to a distorted understanding of Zionism, and to many mistaken beliefs. Perhaps the most damaging is the belief that the leading Torah scholars of the generation opposed the return of the Jewish people to Zion. A proper investigation of this subject deserves a chapter of its own.

73. Ezekiel, 37:9.

Summary

Return To Zion

1. The Rambam does not include the *mitzvah* of living in Israel in his list of precepts because he considers it a commandment which encompasses all of the Torah, more important in value than normal *mitzvot*.
2. Even if the majority of Jews are exiled from the Land of Israel, it is not the Torah centers outside of the Land which make up the heart of the nation, but the Jews who live in Israel.
3. Anyone who separates himself from the centrality of *Eretz Yisrael* does not have a portion in the G-d of Israel.
4. The principal place of the *Shekhina*, of prophecy, of Torah, and of song are in *Eretz Yisrael*. Israel's special *Segula* is only manifest here.
5. The greatest blessing comes to the world when the nation of Israel, in all of its fullness, returns to *Eretz Yisrael*.
6. The light of the Babylonian Talmud originates from the Mishna, which is a creation of *Eretz Yisrael*.
7. As the ingathering of the exiles continues and grows toward completion, prophecy will return to the nation. It is precisely this physical ingathering and building of the nation in Israel which brings us to our spiritual health.
8. The source of secular Zionism is a deep *Kedusha*, rooted in our national will to be in *Eretz Yisrael*.
9. Rabbi Yehoshua of Kutna wrote that when the yearning to return to Zion starts with the "non-believers" – this is an almost positive

sign that the redemption has budded.

10. A Jew who comes to live in Israel is fulfilling a Torah commandment – whether he realizes it or not.
11. Every additional Jew who comes to Israel, and every additional tree which is planted in the soil of *Eretz Yisrael*, is another spiritual stage of the *Geula* – in the very same way that every additional Yeshiva which is built in Israel is another stage in returning the Divine Presence to Zion.
12. People who abandon the Land of Israel think they are leaving of their own free choice, but really, the Land is expelling them in a gentle fashion.
13. The *Maharit* states that the *Tosefot* in the name of Rav Chaim Cohen (which states that the precept of settling in Israel is not kept today) is the opinion of a mistaken student.
14. The argument against living in Israel because of the non-observant Jews who live here has absolutely no basis in *Halacha*. The *Gemara* clearly states: *A Jew should always live in the Land of Israel, even in a city where the majority of its residents are idol worshippers, and not live outside the Land, even in a city where the majority of residents are Jews.*
15. The Land of Israel is *Kadosh*, in and of itself, not only because of the precepts that are performed here.
16. The Zionist movement did not begin with Herzl, but with the religious group, the Lovers of Zion, which was led by two *Talmidei Chachamim*, HaRav Tzvi Hirsh Kalisher, and HaRav Eliahu Guttmacher.

Chapter Nine

RETURN TO ZION

Part Two

1. GEDOLEI YISRAEL IN FAVOR OF ZIONISM

Arguments opposing the philosophy of religious Zionism often claim that the majority of *Gedolim* were, and still are, against the settlement of Israel in our time. Rav Kook emphasized that this assertion is founded on misinformation. **The leaders of the Torah world were not against Zionism, nor against the State of Israel.**

There were, to be sure, *Gedolim* who were unequivocally opposed to the Zionist movement. However, there were also many *Gedolim* of equal stature who supported Zionism and *Aliyah*. The majority of rabbis formed a silent majority and chose not to publicize their opinions – a situation somewhat similar to the one today.

HaRav Avraham Elkanah Kahana Shapira, the Chief Rabbi of Israel, and the present *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Mercaz HaRav*, would often discuss this point at the *Yom Haazmaut* celebration at the Yeshiva. He said that there is no one in our generation who can equal the Torah stature of either Rabbi Meir Simcha HaCohen of Dvinsk, commonly known as the *Ohr Somayach*, or of Rabbi Avraham Bornstein, the Rebbe from Sochatchov, otherwise known as the *Avnei Nezer*. Both of these Torah giants expressed keen support for Zionism. Therefore, anyone wishing to follow the path of religious Zionism should not be deterred by mistakenly thinking that the *Gedolim* were, or are, against it.

Because this issue is prone to such disinformation and confusion, it is important to elaborate on the support which Torah leaders expressed for the Zionist movement.

2. THE OHR SOMAYACH

Rabbi Meir Simcha was known for his constant support of the Zionist movement from the time of his learning in Bialistok. The Chief Rabbi of Bialistok at the time was the Torah *Gadol*, Rabbi Shmuel Mohliver, the founder of the Zionist movement, *Chebat Zion*. The *Ohr Somayach* was aware of the controversy surrounding the Zionist movement, and he spoke out sharply in its behalf. After moving to Dvinsk, he was asked by an antagonist how he could support Zionism and thus increase the amount of sinners in the Land of Israel. He responded that the Zionists deserve support because they were actualizing: *יְהַדְדֵל*, greatening the Name of *Hashem*. And he expressed his conviction that they would end up by sanctifying *Hashem's* Name, *שְׁתַּקְדֵּל*, as well.¹ When the Mizrachi movement was formed, he was especially happy and said, "Now the *Haredim* will no longer claim that only the sinners are Zionists."¹

After the Balfour Declaration, the leaders of the Mizrachi movement in Dvinsk asked him for a letter of support for the *Keren HaYesod* fund for Israel. The rabbi immediately sat down and wrote a special letter of support for the Zionist establishment.² Among his many subsequent letters is the following:

"In this century, the rays of light shine forth with a great awakening through the channels of the great men of action such as Montefiore and those like him; and from the rabbis, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh (Kalisher) from Talyron, and Rabbi Eliahu (Guttmacher) from Gridetz, to build and to develop Jerusalem, and to remove its desolation, almost to the extent which the enthusiasts' (the non-religious Zionists) have widened the cause. Many rabbis stood in opposition, and even many rabbis who praised the matter (Zionism) in

1. *Sarai HaMayah*, Vol.6, Pgs.233-234. HaRav Yehuda Lev HaCohen Maimon.
2. Printed in, *HaTor*, second publishing year, third edition.

their hearts, put their hands on their mouths, in fear of the enthusiasts' zeal, and in fear of the Three Oaths which *Hashem* made the daughter of Jerusalem swear.³ Now, however, Divine providence has brought together the League of intelligent Nations in San Remo, and a dictate was established that the Land of Israel shall be for the Jewish people. **Since the fear of the Oaths has been removed with the permission of the nations, the mitzvah of settling the Land of Israel arises, a mitzvah equal to all of the other precepts in the Torah, and this mitzvah returns to its place.** It is a *mitzvah* on everyone to help with all of their power to observe this *mitzvah*, and if *Hashem*, may His Name be blessed, will allow this to come about, and if the matter will increase and expand, then surely it is a matter which stands at the zenith of the universe."⁴

3. THE AVNEI NEZER

Rabbi Avraham Bornstein also proclaimed his support for the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* and *Aliyah*. Within his seven volume Responsa, the Rabbi specifically addresses the questions of *Aliyah* today,⁵ and why the *Gedolim* don't make *Aliyah*.⁶ Within his answer, he quotes the *Kuzari* of Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi. In the lengthy discussion between the Rabbi and the king, the Rabbi answers all of the king's questions on Judaism except one. When the king asks the Rabbi why the Jews don't make *Aliyah*, the Rabbi is left without an answer. He says:

"You have indeed shamed me, King Kuzar, and it is this sin that withheld us from realizing the culmination of the Divine promise

3. The "Three Oaths" which *Hashem* made Israel to swear when it went into exile are: Not to rebel against the nations of the world; Not to hasten the End; and Not to go up to Israel like a wall (Ketubot 111A.) See Chapter 11, Section 7, in this book for a more detailed discussion.
4. *HaKetufah HaGedolah*, Pg.174. HaRav Menachem Mendel Kasher.
5. Responsa, *Avnei Nezer*, Yoreh Deah, Part 2, Section 454.
6. *Ibid*, Sub-section 8.

during the Second Temple...for only a minority returned, and **the majority, along with the Gedolim, remained in Babylon, preferring exile and dependence, rather than leaving their homes and affairs.**"⁷

The *Avnei Nezer* adds that: "Nevertheless, Heaven forbid us to make the *Gedolim* of Israel mistaken or conscious sinners, Heaven forbid."⁶ He prefers to explain that the *Gedolim* of his generation did not make *Aliyah* because they were simply unable to secure visas. He ends his response with the following plea:

"And so you leaders and aristocracy of Israel who have the capability to acquire a visa and actualize this honorable idea – upon you is this great *mitzvah*, and there is no end to the reward of those who help in this matter, whether by attempting to obtain visas, or in the essential matter of purchasing land in Israel."⁶

4. THE NETZIV

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, known as the *Netziv* of Volozin, is the author of the Torah commentary, *HaAmek Davar*. He was the last *Rosh Yeshiva* of the influential Volozin Yeshiva and was known for his unequivocal support of Zionism. For many years, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook learned under his personal tutelage. In a letter, the *Netziv* writes:

"Similarly, it is the will of G-d that the Land of Israel be settled, slowly, slowly, by the outcasts of Israel. *Hashem* altered the heart of the Czar, may his glory be exalted, and of his ministers, to allow us to form a committee and company to gather money to support our brethren who are working the Land, and craftsmen in the Land of Israel and Syria. And the fact that this committee acts in the knowledge and accordance of the government and its laws, is a sign that it is G-d's will to make a settlement in His Holy Land. It is upon

7. *Kuzari*, 2:23.

us to rise and roar, in the spirit of the Land, and to act in accordance with the will of G-d in every possible way, whether with the physical work in the Land, in business, in craftsmanship, or in spiritual endeavors, especially in printing books which will help this great matter – and we shouldn't entertain thoughts that this great matter be otherwise, as some people may imagine. And it is especially an obligation on the *Gedolim* to participate in the will of G-d by giving counsel to the people which G-d has blessed to donate to this matter, and to the holy committee which was appointed in charge of settling the Land, and through this, they too will merit to see Israel settle in the Land where the Almighty resides.”⁸

5. THE CHOFETZ CHAIM

The most authoritative biography of the *Chofetz Chaim* was written by his son, Reb Aryeh Leb HaCohen, who was the head of the *Beit Din* in Radin, and the *Radin Rosh Yeshiva* after his father's death. The biography stresses his father's positive attitude towards *Eretz Yisrael* and *Aliyah*:

“I remember that in the years 5650–5651, when our Jewish brothers were expelled from Moscow, a great movement to make *Aliyah* to our Holy Land arose. The hundreds and thousands of refugees sought shelter in the land of our fathers. There they bought land, planted trees, and established settlements...At this time I received a letter from my father of blessed memory in which he pointed out to me the great surge amongst all facets of our nation to make *Aliyah* to Israel. He assumes that these are now the days of ‘the footsteps of the *Mashiach*’, that *Hashem* has redeemed His nation, and that it is very probably the beginning of the ingathering of the exiles which precedes the coming of the *Mashiach*. If we had the capability, it would be proper to buy land and to make *Aliyah* to Israel...”⁹

8. *Shivat Zion*, Pg.17.

9. Letters of the *Chofetz Chaim* to his son, Reb Aryeh Leb HaCohen, Pgs.43–44.

In spite of the fact that the *Chofetz Chaim* was vehemently opposed to the anti-Orthodox spirit of the secular Zionists, he encouraged the *Aliyah* of G-d-fearing Jews.⁹

6. ZIONISM AND THE SILENT MAJORITY

HaRav Tzvi Yehuda illuminated the true course of Zionism and the controversy it encountered by presenting a short history of the movement, and the responses it evoked throughout the Torah world.

“It isn’t correct that the majority of *Gedolei Torah* opposed Zionism,” he said. “Around the year 5660 (approximately fifty years before the establishment of the State of Israel,) a pamphlet defaming Zionism was published in Kovna. It was called, ‘Light to the Just.’ At the end of the pamphlet, a few letters from *Gedolei Yisrael* were included: from Rabbi Chaim of Brisk, Rabbi David Friedman of Karlin,¹⁰ and others. Afterward were some letters from some *Admores*, such as Rabbi Shalom Ber of Lubavitch, who was then in his youth. At a time when all of Eastern Europe, and especially Lita, were filled with a bounty of *Gaonim* and *Talmidei Chachamin*, they only managed to obtain the signatures of eight Torah scholars who had the stature of Rabbi Chaim of Brisk. To strengthen their contention, the compilers of the pamphlet had to go out of their way to obtain a letter from Rabbi Natan Adler from London. The editors of the pamphlet claimed that the community of Israel was going up in smoke because of Zionism. If so, why didn’t they gather the signatures of the hundreds and thousands

10. On R. David of Karlin’s opposition, see *Shivat Zion*. Part 1, 18.

of great Torah personalities and *Tzaddikim* who lived at the time?! What happened that the great sea of *Gedolim* and rabbis didn't respond? If *Clal Yisrael* was burning in flames, how are we to comprehend their failure to sign?"

"The reason is that only handfuls took sides on the two extremes of the issue. On the positive side were *Gaonim* like Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, the *Chofetz Chaim*, Rabbi Shmuel Mohliver, and Rabbi Yitzhak Rinnes;¹¹ and on the other side were *Gaonim* like Rabbi Chaim of Brisk, and Rabbi David of Karlin. But the majority of *Gedolei Yisrael* were in a quandary. They didn't know in which direction to lean. They neither supported Zionism, nor rejected it. They were afraid to express a definite opinion, and thus became a silent majority."

Parenthetically, Rav Tzvi Yehuda added that Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan wrote that someone tampered with the letter of Rabbi Chaim of Brisk and altered the style to sound more harsh in his protest against Zionism.¹²

11. For a further discussion of *Gedolim* who emphasized the great *mitzvah* of settling in *Eretz Yisrael*, see the book, *Shivat Zion*, Part 2. Prominent among them are: the Baal Shem Tov, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, the Gaon of Vilna, the Chatam Sofer, Rabbi Akiva Yosef Schlesinger, Rabbi Akiva Eiger, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh Kalisher, Rabbi Eliyahu Guttmacher of Grieditz, the Malbim, Rabbi Yisrael Yehoshua of Kotna, Rabbi Elchanan Spektor of Kovno, Rabbi Yehoshua Leib Diskin, the Netziv, Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman (although a fierce opponent of secular Zionism, he stressed the greatness of the Torah command to live in Israel, and he recognized the end of the Exile in his time,) the Rebbe of Piloy, Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, the Chazon Ish, the Rebbe of Obstrovtsa, and the Ohr Somayach.
12. "In those days, a book of propoganda opposing Zionism, called 'Light of the Just' was circulated. Inside is a letter of Rabbi Chaim of Brisk in which he

6. GEDOLEI YISRAEL IN FAVOR OF ZIONISM: PART TWO

“**Rabbi Shlomo HaCohen of Vilna** (the head of the Vilna *Beit Din*, and author of the Responsa *Binyan Shlomo*) said that he was amazed how Rabbi Chaim of Brisk and other rabbis were not more careful in their harsh declarations against masses of Jews.¹³ When Herzl came to Vilna, Rabbi Shlomo HaCohen went out to greet him with a Torah scroll and showed him the honor due to a king. HaRav Abromsky told me: ‘It’s well known that Rabbi Shlomo’s house was filled with Zionism.’”

writes about Zionists, ‘Who are known as evil people in their localities.’ Those who knew Rabbi Chaim, and his wonderful character; and his great carefulness in everything he uttered, asked him how such a harsh expression left his lips. He answered that he had written something else: ‘**And among them** are men known as evil people in their localities.’ A ‘small’ difference which the compilers altered ‘a bit.’” From, “Volozin to Jerusalem,” P.224. On the negative attitude of R. Chaim, see, “Interference of *Gedolei Yisrael*”, R. Yaakov Mark.

13. “The editors of the book perpetrated a vile deed in designating as ‘heretics, disbelievers, and followers of Shabbatai Zvi,’ a hundred thousand men of Israel who hold to the Zionist position, among them several hundred rabbis, *Gaonim*, *Tzaddikim*, and men of learning and fear of G-d, and wise, intelligent people. Therefore, it is forbidden for any Jew to possess the book, ‘Light of the Just’ in his house, and thus transgress, *There shall not be in your house a shameful thing*. For this book is bound to inflame a blaze of shameful controversy in the tents of Yaakov, and to split the house of Israel into pieces, G-d forbid.” And, “How these rabbis left their pious ways to transgress a commandment of our Sages in *Avot*, to be like the students of Aharon, *Loving peace and pursuing peace; loving mankind, and bringing them close to Torah*, to send this fire into the hands of the editors of this book, to kindle the flame of controversy in the dwellings of Yaakov. Who can envision the end? Therefore, the obligation and *mitzvah* rests on those rabbis to repent and nullify the words of their letters in front of the public, for the honor of Torah and its students, and for the peace of the Israeli nation.” Rabbi Shlomo HaCohen of Vilna. “The Advocate”, year 5650. See also, the book, “Forged Letters Against Zionism,” Shmuel HaCohen Weingarten. Mosad HaRav Kook.

“**Rabbi Yitzhak Blazer**, author of the book, *Light of Israel*, was a student of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter. After Rav Yisrael, the students who continued his teachings splintered in their ways, and their pronouncements require evaluation, but Rabbi Yitzhak Blazer remained true to the completely holy source. Rav Elchanan Wasserman, may the Lord avenge his blood, told me that when the issue of Zionism fell before the community, Rabbi Yitzhak Blazer sat a whole day and thought, ‘*Vas iz dos?* What is this? If this is the coming of the *Mashiach*, this is something awesome, and we are all obligated to join hands to pull the wagon of the *Mashiach* onward. But if these are the birthpangs of the *Mashiach*, then these are the esoteric matters of *Hashem*, which the Master of the World is bringing about, and which we are not obligated to assist.’ This spiritual giant sat a full day and pondered. And he was left with a problem he could not solve.”

“I publicized these words openly, and the youth movement of *Agudat Yisrael* challenged me. How was it possible to even think that Rabbi Yitzhak Blazer had anything to do with Zionism, they said. For a period, he had administered in the Slabodka Yeshiva, and once refused to accept a student who had been preoccupied with Zionism. There’s no contradiction in this. Certainly in a Yeshiva, one has to be devoted exclusively to learning Torah without being busy with other affairs. To this response, they brought another proof. Zionist groups proposed that Rabbi Blazer buy a ‘Zionist Shekel’, and he had refused with the comment that this was the birthpangs before the *Mashiach*, and he wasn’t obligated to take part. However, this exactly supports his position of doubt. And this is reinforced by the fact that they

didn't even approach Rabbi Chaim of Brisk with the 'Zionist Shekel' because they knew he wouldn't agree. And in the pamphlet, 'Light of the Just,' among the signatures opposing Zionism, Rabbi Blazer doesn't appear. Rather, he stood in the middle, and the matter wasn't clear to him. *Gedolei Yisrael* who were decidedly negative were a minority."

"**The Admore of Hosiatin** told me: 'I was truly leaning toward Mizrachi, but I had to think of the *Hasidim*.' And with this, he said that we had to guard ourselves from being condescending in our relations with the non-religious: On the verse, *How can I myself alone bear your care, and your burden, and your strife?*¹⁴ Rashi says, 'Your care teaches us that Israel was troublesome. Your burden teaches us that they were heretics.' And still, later on, in reference to the verse, *So I took the chiefs of your tribes*, Rashi says over the same Children of Israel, 'I drew them with kind words: Fortunate are you. Over whom have you been appointed? Over the children of Avraham, Yitzhak, and Yaacov, over the people who are called brothers and friends, a portion and an inheritance, and every term of endearment.'¹⁵ These are expressions of love regarding these very same troublesome heretics."

"**The Admore of Ostrovta** was a *Gaon* and holy *Tzaddik* who spent all his days in fasting and wakefulness, with hardly any sleep. He decreed on the phenomenon of Zionism: 'Surely this is it!'¹⁶ When Rabbi

14. Deut. 1:2.

15. Deut. 1:15, Rashi.

16. "R. Meir Yechiel, the Rebbe of Ostrovta, was certain, with the appearance

Eliahu Chaim Miezal from Lodz spoke strongly against Zionism because of the severe desecration of *Shabbat* in *Eretz Yisrael*, the Rabbi of Ostrovtza exclaimed, **‘What is going on here?! Hashem sent His holy children to build the Holy Land, and here people condemn them!’**¹⁷ When signatures were organized against the Jewish National Fund for Israel, he refused to sign.¹⁸ Where one finds wholeness in a giant of Torah, one finds valor and not cowardly fear.”

“**The Admore of Gur**, the *Safat Emet*, also shares with us a closeness of thought, and a closeness in our relationship to *Eretz Yisrael*. Upon his urging, many *Haredim* made Aliyah to Israel and even founded settlements. He always emphasized that there was a *mitzvah* to live in the Land of Israel. The *Hasidim* of Gur were at the head of all the *Hasidim* when it came to the settlement of Israel. Also in the dynasty of Rejin, many pleasant and important things were said about *Eretz Yisrael*, but it never reached actualization in deeds – theirs was a type of platonic love – in contrast to the Rebbe of Gur, who was a doer and who fostered the settlement of the Land. If there had been many like him, the situation today in Israel would look entirely different.”

- of political Zionism, of the obligation to awaken the holy flame of all Israel and announce that, ‘This was indeed it.’” *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, Pgs.197,199.
17. “Also, because of the pressure of R. Eli Chaim Meisel, the Rav of Lodz, his inner opinion was held back. In the end, his position became clear and he fought against the slander directed upon the settlers on the lands of the Jewish National Fund.” *Ibid*.
 18. “And also in his withholding his participation in the propaganda proclamations excommunicating the Jewish National Fund because of these sins.” *Ibid*.

8. HE WHO LABORS ON EREV SHABBAT

In discussing the Hassidic response to the Zionist movement, Rav Tzvi Yehuda mentioned an encounter he had with the influential writer, Menachem Ushishkin.

“Ushishkin was a religious man, a genius, a Chabadnik,” he said. “Once, we met at a *Kiddush*, and he was agitated and shocked. He had received a letter from the Rebbe of Lubavitch, who saw a danger to the lives of three *Talmidei Chachamin* in *Galut*, among them Rabbi Nathan Raanan.¹⁹ Ushishkin was told to work quickly to bring them to Israel.”

“Ushishkin said: ‘This is the sin of religious Jewry! If the religious would come to live in Israel, there would be a completely different religious situation here.’²⁰ First they rioted against the return to Zion, and now they complain that things here in Israel aren’t what they should be!’”

“One time, sects of *Haredim* complained to Ushishkin about the religious situation in Israel. He told them, *He who labors on Erev Shabbat will eat on Shabbat.*”²¹

19. Rabbi Natan Raanan Kook was the son-in-law of Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.
20. “According to the measure that we – all Israel and all those faithful to her Torah – come to build the House of Israel in its Land and to establish its State, with a full heart and a pure faith, with an overflowing of *Kedusha*, and courage, and fear of *Hashem*, to the measure which we do this, we are promised more and more, and from the importance of our actions themselves, by the strength of our spiritual and practical influence over our brothers far from Torah and over their work in *Eretz Yisrael*, and also through the manifestations of Divine assistance and the revelations of the inner powers of the Holy Land and its settlement – *Eretz Yisrael* and her State will be built and will be conducted in the way fitting to it, according to the Torah.” *L’Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, P.63.
21. Avodah Zorah 3A.

9. HARAV AVRAHAM YITZHAK HACHOHEN KOOK

“A great deal of pressure was placed on my father, HaRav, ל"צו, to participate in the congress of *Agudat Yisrael*, which was to take place in Berlin. *Agudat Yisrael* planned a great assembly, which they were calling, ‘The Faithful Judaism,’ and they publicized that *Gaonim* from Lita, like Rabbi Avraham Dov Kahana of Kovna, author of *Dvar Avraham*, would attend. It was very painful for Abba, HaRav, ל"צו, to travel outside of the Land, as we see in his letters.²² His doctor also joined in with the voices pressuring him, by claiming that the journey would be beneficial to his health. He advised him to travel to Kissingen in Germany, known for its healing springs, and advised that my mother, the *Rebbitzin*, ל"צו, seek medical treatment in Berlin.”

“The Jews of Germany received him with great honor, and HaRav Bamburger, the Rabbi of Kissingen, hosted him in his house. The first day after *Shabbat Hazon*, the First World War broke out.²³ The *Agudah* conference was canceled, and HaRav, ל"צו, lingered in Switzerland while efforts were made to secure return passage to Israel. But all routes had been closed. So he

22. “It is exceedingly difficult for me to decide something in regard to the request of *Agudat Yisrael* to journey to Berlin for the Rabbinical Congress. You know, my son, how heavy the consent to travel outside the Land weighs on me, even a temporary departure, though I invest great value on my actions in an assembly of rabbis like the rabbis of the *Agudah*. The problems of agreeing to go overpower me. I lack my soul’s consent to this, and the matter presses, and here I stand pressured without knowing how *Hashem* will put it in my heart to reach a solution.” Letters of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Part 2, 285. See also, Letters 286, 295, 296, loc. cit.
23. Ibid, Letters 301–302.

traveled to England after the *Machzekei HaDat* Congregation of London invited him to lead their community during the time he was prevented from returning to Israel.”

“At the same time, Sokolov and Weitzmann met with representatives of the British government in order to clarify our rights to *Eretz Yisrael*. They worked to compile a petition signed by one million Jews – not as Zionists – but simply as Jews, demanding an acknowledgment of our rights to *Eretz Yisrael*. Once again, *Agudat Yisrael* wanted to sabotage this effort and announced that the people who were negotiating with the gentiles weren’t the true representatives of the millions of Jews. They planned their assembly and invited the Rav of Kovna in order to weaken the activities of the Zionists. They also tried to seduce and pressure Abba, ל”צו, to participate in the assembly. But *Abba* was a man never to be influenced by subterfuge or pressure.”

“The Rav of Kovna wrote Abba, ל”צו, in these words: ‘In my opinion, the central committee of *Agudat Yisrael* seeks to evade and hide from me in everything they do. I hope that they will not spoil this matter (England’s recognition of the Jewish people’s right to the Land of Israel). Almost certainly, they will not succeed in injuring *Clal Yisrael*, but I fear that they will injure the Orthodox, who they are alleging to protect, except that, by their actions, they are doing the exact opposite, G-d forbid.’”

“There were good relations between the Jews and the gentiles for two or three years at the time of the Balfour Proclamation. According to the Almighty, this was how

things had to be. Balfour himself was an outstandingly good individual, a towering idealist. He even composed poems about the nation of Israel and her revival in her Land. My father, אבא, was requested to come to London, and he complied. The business of the proclamation was progressing, as his letters explain.²⁴ Abba, אבא, waged a fierce fight against the assimilated Jews in England, who wanted to sabotage the proclamation. They claimed that nationhood was opposed to religion, and that it wasn't proper for the English nation, the 'People of the Bible,' to assist the Zionists in their efforts. Abba, אבא, triumphed. A great debate was held in the English Parliament, and a letter he wrote was read. One of the speakers said, 'Who is a greater expert on Judaism? The Jewish lords of Parliament who have assimilated from their faith, or Rabbi Kook?'"²⁵

“Not only the assimilated Jews of England opposed the Balfour Proclamation, but also the Orthodox Jews of Germany. But they couldn't come into London as Germans and risk being branded enemies of England. Their coming could have caused serious damage to the proclamation, since they weren't assimilated English Lords, but righteous *Haredi* Jews from Frankfurt, who would have created a strong impression in the English Parliament. Their entry into England was blocked from Heaven. Because of his Russian origin, Abba, אבא, was considered an ally, and was granted a visa into the country. **The one who needed to enter, entered; and the ones who weren't needed, were barred – all according to the Divine plan of history.**”

24. Letters, Part 3, 130–131.

25. “3 Elul,” Pg. 64, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook.

“In Vienna, many Jewish refugees gathered, including many great Torah scholars. The activists of *Agudat Yisrael* organized an assembly against the Balfour Proclamation. A statement which had been prepared beforehand was presented there for the *Gedolim* to sign. Its principal assertion was that the Balfour Proclamation was a grave danger to Judaism, and thus, they were requesting the English government to nullify it and forego their good intentions. At the head of the assembly were Rabbi Meir Arik, and Rabbi Yosef Engel. Rabbi Yosef Engel stood up and said, ‘The hand that signs will be chopped off!’ That ended the assembly.”

10. GEDOLIM CAN ERR

The question was often asked, how could *Gedolei Yisrael* make a mistake in such a serious matter as the return of the Jewish nation to Israel? Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered that *Gaonim* and *Tzaddikim* can also make occasional mistakes, as seen in their opposition to *Hashem's* returning the Jewish people to Israel in our time.

He discussed this very sensitive matter with us, in spite of the reverence he held, and taught us to feel, for our Sages, and for all Torah scholars. However, he wanted us to understand that even great *Talmidei Chachamim* can err.

There is a prevalent myth in the Torah world today that holds Torah scholars infallible and claims that their decisions are inspired by *Ruach HaKodesh*, which by definition must always be right. This misconception is based more on fantasy than a knowledge of Torah and a familiarization with Jewish tradition.

The fourth chapter of Leviticus deals with special kinds of sin offerings. Situated between the offerings of a *Kohen Gadol* who sins,

and a King who sins, are the laws of a sin offering for the whole congregation: *And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the matter be hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have transgressed any of the commandments of Hashem concerning forbidden acts, and are guilty....*²⁶ The tractate, *Horiot*, explains this as a case where, *the majority of the Great Sanhedrin makes a mistake*, and because of their error in deciding the law, a majority of the congregation transgresses. Here, **the Torah itself recognizes the possibility of the majority of the Gedolim making a mistake.**

11. THE SIN OF THE SPIES

More than once, Rav Tzvi Yehuda reminded us of the tragic sin of the Spies, who had rebelled against *Hashem* in the wilderness, by refusing to go up to Israel. They were the outstanding *Talmidei Chachamim* of the era, the chiefs of the Sanhedrin, the heads of the tribes, whose sin was so severe, the entire generation was punished with death in the wilderness.²⁷ Our Sages inform us that this sin was the foundation of the destruction of both the First and Second Temples.²⁸ **The taint of this sin still exists in the nation, and even Talmidei Chachamim can be affected by it.**²⁹

26. Leviticus, 4:13.

27. *Mesillat Yesharim*, Chapter 11, In the discussion on Honor.

28. *Tanchuma*, Numbers, *Shelach*, 11-12.

29. See the Vilna Gaon, *Kol HaTor*, Chapter 5: "This sin of the Spies...hovers over the nation of Israel in every generation." And, "How strong is the power of the *Sitra Achra* that it succeeds in hiding from the eyes of our holy fathers the dangers of the *Kleipot*: from the eyes of Avraham Avinu, the *Kleipah* of *Galut*...and in the time of the *Mashiach*, the *Sitra Achra* attacks the guardians of Torah with blinders." And, "Many of the sinners in this great sin of, *They despised the cherished Land*, and also many of the guardians of Torah, will not know or understand that they are caught in the sin of the Spies, that they have been sucked into the sin of the Spies in many false ideas and empty claims, and they cover their ideas with the already proven fallacy that the *mitzvah* of the

Instances of *Gedolim* who erred can be found in the Torah, the Prophets, The Mishna, the *Gemara*, and in the writings of the *Rishonim* and *Achronim*. From the fall of the first man Adam, the potential for error has been a theme of man's existence. Even in the world of Torah, the freedom to err is not only a possibility, but a foundation of growth and free will, as our Sages teach, **אין אדם עומד על דבריו**, *A man doesn't stand on words of Torah unless he fails in them.*³⁰

To the question, how could Torah leaders err in their opposition to the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* in our time, Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered:

“When one believes that the redemption of Israel, and the coming of the *Mashiach*, have to appear miraculously, from out of the heavens, in a way which transcends the natural order of life, then one fails to see the hand of *Hashem* in all of the events of the world. The redemption is not obligated to appear with obvious miracles, nor does it have to be absolutely natural. Both miracles and natural world development belong to the Almighty's domain. The Rambam explains that the appearance of *Mashiach* is also a natural historical process, which is revealed by the ingathering of the Jewish people to Israel, and even through wars.³¹ **The**

settlement of Israel no longer applies in our day, an opinion which has already been disproven by the giants of the world, the *Rishonim* and *Achronim*.” loc.cit. See also, the letter of Rav Eliahu Guttmacher in the beginning of the book, *Em HaBanim Simaicha*, Pg.13; also quoted in Responsa, *Nefesh Chaya*. Rabbi Chaim Eliezar Vax, at the end of Responsa 1: “We can see how important this matter is, that the *Kleipah* attacks even the biggest *Tzaddikim* to negate this great thing (the settlement of Israel). For the whole power of the *Kleipah* depends on the *Galut*. With the cessation of *Galut*, the *Kleipah* comes to an end.”

30. Gittin 43A.

31. Rambam, Laws of Kings, 12:1-4.

redemption of the Jewish people which comes to pass in a natural way is also from the Almighty.”³²

“Certainly, the redemption hasn’t yet reached completion. **Many Torah personalities withdrew from the Zionist cause, and even fought against it, because they wanted the redemption to be instantly complete.** They attached themselves to the idea that the redemption had to be complete from its inception, as opposed to its being a gradual process which had to be brought to its final fulfillment. Thus, they couldn’t accept a redemption which spread out in many directions, including secular paths replete with *Apikorsim* and free thinkers who had thrown off the yoke of the Torah. Nor could they come to terms with the redemption’s natural unfolding, in down-to-earth events.”³²

“When the Rebbe of Belz came on *Aliyah* to Israel, he met with Rabbi Natan¹⁹ and said to him, ‘We realize now that we erred in our estrangement from *Eretz Yisrael.*’ Other *Gedolim* also repented over this. If this repentance had occurred thirty years before (in the years preceding the Holocaust), the situation in Israel would have been very different.”³³

Rav Tzvi Yehuda told us one other story. “Rabbi Yerocham Varhaftig, the father of Rabbi Zerach Varhaftig, came to visit Israel as a tourist. A few times, Abba, אבא, asked to see his passport and asked him a few questions. One day, Abba, אבא, said to him, ‘there

32. See the interview with HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, *Maariv*, Erev Pesach, 5743.

33. See also, *HaTekufah HaGedolah*, Pg.390, Rav Menachem Mendel Kasher.

aren't any policemen here who will demand your passport from you; you don't have to personally watch over it; I can keep it for you'. Rabbi Yerocham, who was very gentle and noble, agreed, even though this was all a puzzle to him. After a few days, Abba, ל"צו, gave him back the passport with an amendment of the *Aliyah* Department. He had been registered as a permanent resident. Rabbi Yerocham accepted his new status and remained in Israel, and thus he was saved from the Holocaust in Warsaw."³⁴

"My father, ל"צו, noted that the beginning of the Zionist awakening was replete with uncertainty, but that today, **there aren't any doubts**, and we see eye to eye³⁵ the acts of Hashem revealed in the rebuilding of the Land. **It becomes increasingly clear that those who supported the return to Zion were right.**"³⁶

Which acts of *Hashem* was Rav Kook speaking about? About the establishment of Jewish sovereignty over the Land of Israel for the first time in nearly two-thousand years; about the destruction of the Torah centers in Europe and their reappearance in Israel;³⁷ about the ingathering of exiles; about Jerusalem's rebuilding, and the settlement of the Land; about the blossoming of the desert; about miraculous victories in wars; about the magnifying of Torah; a great returning in

34. "3 Elul," Part 2, Pg. 51.

35. Isaiah, 52:8.

36. "And in the matter of *Eretz Yisrael*, we have already reached the stage where there isn't any question of controversy, and it is becoming more and more clear that the halacha is according to those who are sharper in the illumination of the truthfulness of this matter." "3 Elul," Part 2, Pg.52.

37. Megilla 29A. *In the future the synagogues and the houses of learning will be relocated in Eretz Yisrael.*

Tshuva; and the incredible *Aliyah* from Russia – phenomena which HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook didn't see completed in his lifetime; rather he foresaw them in the words of the Torah and in the visions of our Prophets, which began to be revealed in his day.³⁸

12. SHOULD WE LISTEN TO A GADOL WHO ERRS?

Once we realize that even a *Gadol* in Torah can err, the question arises if we should adhere to his opinions or not. We must of course realize that if a *Gadol* can err, then certainly we can err also, and thus **we should be very careful before deciding that a rabbi is mistaken**. The opinions of a Torah sage are generally correct, and therefore, in the case of a doubt, we should adhere to his rulings.

On the Torah's injunction not to deviate from the decisions of the Judges, *To the right or to the left*,³⁹ Rashi quotes the *Sifre*, saying, *Even if they tell you that right is left, and that left is right*. This is usually taken as meaning that one must unequivocally adhere to the *Gedolim*. The Jerusalem Talmud, however, understands the verse in a different light: *Can it be that if they tell you that right is left, and that left is right, that you should listen to them? It comes to teach us to go right and left only if they tell you that right is right and left is left*.⁴⁰

Both the *Chefetz Hashem* and the *Beer Sheva* explain that the *Yerushalmi* is speaking about a person who is certain that the sage is mistaken – he shouldn't follow the decision; whereas the *Sifre* is addressing a person who isn't certain whether the ruling is the right one or not – he should rely on the sage.⁴¹

38. See, *Chiddushei HaRan*, on tractate, Shabbat 31A, regarding the obligation to yearn for the Redemption in one's lifetime.

39. Deut. 17:11.

40. Jerusalem Talmud, tractate Horiot, 1:1.

41. Commentary, Horiot, Ch.1.

12. THE LAND OF ISRAEL AND THE SECRETS OF TORAH

The vitalness of Eretz Yisrael to Jewish life and Torah can readily be overlooked, even by a Talmid Chacham,⁴² if he is estranged from the deeper aspects of Torah.⁴³ This happens in our time, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, because not all Torah scholars learn the Kuzari, Maharal, and Orot.

“When you learn the book *Orot*, and grasp the matters in all of their wholeness, the issues are illuminated in a different light. It is possible to understand the national, religious, historic value of *Eretz Yisrael*. But the essential vitalness of our Land to our people is something deeper, mysterious, mystical, and secret. In *Orot*, these things are made clear: ‘By becoming far removed from the secrets of Torah, the perception of Israel’s *Kedusha* becomes blurred.’”⁴³

“It is impossible to truthfully recognize the value of *Eretz Yisrael* except through the hidden lights of the Torah. Otherwise, everything is seen in a superficial way.”

“One who learns Torah for its own sake, secrets of Torah are revealed to him.”⁴⁴ Contrasting this is the situation where one becomes alienated from the inner depths of the Torah, and even worse, when one becomes

42. See, *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Command #153, regarding the centrality of *Eretz Yisrael*: “Here lies a very great axiom from the foundations of our belief which was not known or understood except among the deep learners of Torah....” See also, Chapter 8, Section 2, of this book.

43. *Orot, Eretz Yisrael*, 2. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

44. Avot, 6:1.

foreign to them. "Through the estrangement to the secrets of *Hashem*, the exalted treasures in the depths of Divine life are made into inconsequential matters which don't enter the recesses of the soul, and thus the mightiest strength of the nation's soul and of the individual's soul is lost, and the *Galut* is experienced as a pleasing thing."⁴³

"*Eretz Yisrael* is transformed into a side concern, a secondary thing, neither essential, nor vital to our lives. The Land of Israel is not seen as necessary to existence, and the thought takes form that it is possible to continue Jewish life outside of the Land. Out of superficial understanding, a compromise is made with the *Galut*, and one thinks it is possible to continue to survive there."

"There are two possible orientations to Israel: a vital, mystical, deep connection; or a shallow, superficial approach, as if only the practical sides of Judaism are important, 'For to seize just the revealed aspect (of Judaism), one won't miss anything fundamental in the absence of the Land, or in the absence of a Jewish state, or in any aspect of nationhood and its building.'⁴³

How were we to uncover this deeper level of Judaism? Through a deeper learning. Through a deeper valor. Through the bravery of opening ourselves to hear the clear call of our Torah. And by simply opening our eyes to see the words of our prophets being fulfilled in our time.

Summary

Return To Zion

Part Two

1. A lack of knowledge and misinformation has led some people to believe that the *Gedolim* opposed Zionism and the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael*. This is not true. While some Torah giants were antagonistic to the Zionist cause, many of equally great stature supported Zionism. The majority remained either undecided, or unwilling to disclose their opinions.
2. The *Ohr Somayach* noted that nations of the world had nullified the "Three Oaths," in allowing the Jewish people to return to Israel, and that the *mitzvah* of making *Aliyah* to Israel had returned in full force.
3. Although the *Chofetz Chaim* was vehemently opposed to the anti-Orthodox spirit of the secular Zionists, he was committed to the *Aliyah* of religious Jews.
4. One of the reasons that Israel has a secular State today is the failure of the religious community to make *Aliyah*.
5. Even *Gedolim* make occasional mistakes. The Torah takes this possibility into account by providing a special sin offering in a case where the majority of the Great Sanhedrin makes an error in deciding a law, which causes the congregation to sin.
6. The effect of the sin of the Spies still exists in the nation, and even *Talmidei Chachamin* can be influenced by it.
7. Many Torah leaders believed that the redemption would miraculously occur all at once. They didn't accept that the redemption is a process which develops gradually, in a natural way, over a course of time, and thus they rejected the way

Hashem was bringing back the exiles to Zion.

8. When the Rebbe of Belz came on *Aliyah* to Israel he admitted that his community had erred in their failure to come to Israel sooner.
9. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook said that if there were doubts at the beginnings of the Zionist movement, now there are no doubts. It is increasingly clear that those who supported the return to Zion were right.
10. The vitalness of *Eretz Yisrael* to Jewish life and Torah can readily be overlooked, even by a *Talmid Chacham*, if he is estranged from the deeper aspects of Torah. For this reason, it is important to study the *Kuzari*, the writings of the Maharal, and the book, *Orot*.

Chapter Ten

THE HOLOCAUST¹

What happened to the Jewish communities who remained in Eastern Europe, rather than journeying to a new life in *Eretz Yisrael*? Almost without exception, both religious and assimilated communities perished in the Holocaust. In the wake of their destruction, the Land of Israel developed into the physical and spiritual center of the Jewish nation.

The magnitude of the Nazi genocide left our nation in shock. Why did it happen, we asked? How could *Hashem* have allowed such evil to occur?

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**

1. Based on, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda. The Tenth of Tevet, and the Holocaust*, Yeshiva Ateret Cohanim, Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.

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.

1. WONDERING OF THE HEART

“A Jew,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, “Should not approach the Master of the Universe with objections and complaints.”

On *Yom Kippur*, we recite the confessional prayer, *על חטא*, *On sins*, which is structured according to alphabetic arrangement, and which encompasses sins between man and *Hashem*, and between man and his fellow man. The last thing which we mention is, *על חטא נעל חטאנו לפניך בתמהון לבב*, *On the sin which we sinned before you by a wondering heart*. The *Maharil Diskin* asks, “What sin is there in a wondering heart?” Is there a negative prohibition, or forbidden act, in confusion, in perplexity, in astonishment and wonder? And he answers that the sin of a wondering heart is the severest of all sins, in its confusion, questioning, and doubt about *Hashem*.

“Sometimes,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught, “There are situations in a man’s life where Divine Providence is not understood, and a person has objections and complaints

2. Zohar, Emor, 93A,B.

against *Hashem*. **Criticism of the Almighty is the greatest sin, evolving from a lack of Emunah in Hashem's management over the world.** Similarly, objections to the Holocaust also fall into the category of complaints against the Holy One, Blessed Be He."³

2. DIVINE RECKONING

"Everything which happens in the world is a Divine mystery. The understanding of Divine Providence, in all of its complexity, is not revealed to us. Analytical studies of the Holocaust are a juvenile activity. Only with great sensitivity, and with a mature spiritual perspective, is it possible to approach this awesome topic. First, one must remember that there is a difference between human comprehension and Divine reckoning. The true understanding of the world, and true *Emunah*, demand an understanding of, *The years of many generations*, as in the verse, *Remember the days of old; consider the years of many generations.*⁴ This is the understanding of *Hashem's* revelation in the world, in all of its varied appearances; the revelation of *Hashem* in nature, and in history – in, *The years of many generations*. This true understanding includes a deep *Emunah* in Divine reckoning, an *Emunah* that everything comes from *Hashem*. But with this, one must remember that, *My thoughts are not your thoughts, and My ways are not your ways, says the Lord. For My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts are higher than your thoughts.*"⁵

3. Sec, Sotah 42A, that scoffers are banned from the countenance of *Hashem*.
4. Deuteronomy, 32:7.
5. Isaiah, 55:8-9.

“A weakness of Emunah, and a narrow world outlook, causes one to measure Divine Providence according to the yardstick of our understanding, which is limited by nature. Human understanding is finite, and cannot grasp the Divine workings of, *Thy Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom*.⁶ Our reckoning is human reckoning, a reckoning of the here and now, in comparison with the Divine reckoning, which is an accounting of ages. The management of the world embraces great and awesome matters, and we are not qualified to understand them, or to raise objections over them. Sometimes, man forgets that matters aren’t dependent on, nor begin with, him. In truth, events are connected by a Divine, historical plan. Thus, our understanding of them is dependent upon our ability to elevate ourselves and recognize the overall Divine reckoning.”

“Rising to this level is not easy. Therefore, there were people who abandoned their faith on the heels of the Holocaust, because they did not succeed in lifting themselves up to the knowledge of the true G-d. Obviously, one sympathizes with them. As our Sages said about Job, *A man isn’t blamed for what he utters in agony*.⁷ There is room to understand wrongdoings committed in an hour of suffering. Yet, difficulties do not justify sin.”

3. NOTHING IS HAPPENSTANCE

“One mustn’t subject *Hashem* to our reasoning and perception. Only after we understand this, is it possible

6. Tehillim, 145:13.

7. Baba Batra, 16B.

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

4. THE HORROR OF THE HOLOCAUST

"There aren't words to describe the shocking, frightening, and horrifying atrocity of the Holocaust. It will remain this way forever. It is impossible to stop the

8. Leviticus, 26:21–22.

9. Shabbat 89B. See Also, *Orot HaKodesh*, Part 2, 479, by HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook: "World evil, whether in its general or specific appearance, whether in ethics or deed, in every manifestation in which it is found, when we observe it in detail, and in panorama, we find an organic order and structure, impossible to attribute to chance. This is a supposition which leads those who perceive it to recognize the foundation of evil in the world as a working force, which automatically takes on the attributes of a wisdom and life...."

anger one feels against the Nazis, may their names be erased. They not only perpetrated an unspeakable evil against us, they also damaged our psyches, leaving us psychologically scarred. All of our national identity and pride was uprooted by them. This is even more pernicious than the killing and murder.¹⁰ All of the national, social, and political uncertainty we now experience, all of the confusion in our world-outlook and lifestyle, follow from this destruction of the Israeli community. The Holocaust caused an upheaval in our attitudes and worldview, and damaged our *Emunah*.”

More than just physical destruction, the Holocaust had caused a devastating blow to our national psyche. Instead of seeing ourselves as the strong and eternal nation of Israel, and the proud sons of the Living G-d, we looked upon ourselves as victims, helpless, and weak. We became a hollow echo of our former selves. We were refugees at everyone’s mercy, and not the young Lion of Judah which rises from slumber to majestic rebirth in its Land.¹¹

This trauma spread far beyond the Jewish communities which were destroyed in the Holocaust. Because the nation of Israel is bonded together into one organic whole, the psychological and spiritual havoc which the Nazis inflicted, affected all segments of *Am Yisrael*. **The horror had damaged all of the nation, Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, and for this reason, one had to understand its meaning for the nation as a whole, without seeking to find causes by fragmenting Am Yisrael into parts, or by blaming this group or that.**

Focusing the blame for the Holocaust on Germany’s assimilated

10. *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, in the chapter, “The Salvation Will Come From It.”

11. See the Letters of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Vol. 2, Letter 571.

Jews, or on the secular Zionists alone, was a simplification which ignored the oneness of *Clal Yisrael*. A true understanding required a consideration of the nation as a whole, in the context of generations, and in the context of our unfolding history, as we were guided by *Hashem* toward our promised redemption.

5. CLAL YISRAEL

“We are commanded to rise up to a sublime vision, to, *Contemplate the years of many generations*,⁴ to rise up over the trivial explanations, to go beyond mere superficial perception. **One must guard against thinking in a condensed and myopic fashion when clarifying the historic reckonings of Clal Yisrael.** One must elevate one’s perception to an overview of all worlds. Only in this manner, can one truly meditate on the great acts of *Hashem*. *The Lord’s Torah is perfect.*¹² Out of the Torah’s wholeness and perfection, it, *Restores the soul.*¹² But only if it is grasped in its wholeness. Likewise, only when the understanding of the nation of Israel is grasped in its wholeness, does it restore the soul.”

“The nation of Israel is a single unity which arrives at its wholeness only after a continuum which spans all ages. In contrast to an understanding of isolated fragments of Israeli history, the whole, truthful vision – the vision which is grounded in a cleavage to *Hashem* – beholds the entire nation of Israel in all of its generations. It is true that there are many levels in the nation of Israel, from complete *Tzaddikim*, to people of average deeds, *בְּיִנוּיִם*, to doers of evil, *רָשָׁעִים*, which the letters of *צְבוּר* imply. However, all of these categories are levels of one complete entity. Just as *The Torah of the*

*Lord is perfect,*¹² so also is the nation of Israel perfect and whole. Like in the body of man, which is made up of different organs having varying functions and levels of importance, yet which together, each performing its task, constitute the complete man – so in the nation of Israel, each tribe has a special value, and all of them together make up the nation. A perspective of the nation of Israel which divides the whole into parts (religious and secular, Zionist and anti-Zionist), without sensitivity to the overall oneness of the nation, is a narrow-minded perspective which brings many crises in its wake. **All of Israel's millions are bound together, in one body, one soul.**"

6. RISE UP FROM THE DUST

"This single, complete body of the nation of Israel is whole only in *Eretz Yisrael*.² In the *Galut*, we are not in our normal situation, nor in our vibrant state. The return to the Land of Israel is a return to normalcy and to health. *Hashem's* presence among the Jewish people only appears, in its true state, in *Eretz Yisrael*.¹³ Because of this, *There is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael*.¹⁴ There is even a difference in the value of a precept which a Jew performs in the Land of Israel, compared to the value of the same precept when performed outside the

12. Tchillim, 19:8.

13. Deut. 11:12. And see, *Kuzari*, 4:17.

14. Sifre, Ekev. *Bereshit Rabbah*, 16:7.

Land.¹⁵ The actualization of the nation of Israel in all of its wholeness is only in *Eretz Yisrael*. Outside of the Land, we aren't healthy because the national component of *Clal Yisrael* is shattered, and we exist as solitary individuals, the remnants of Israel. The *Galut* causes a delay in the revelation of *Hashem's* light on *Clal Yisrael*. *Galut* destroys our congregational, national form, and we remain isolated souls. However, the bones of Ezekiel's prophecy do not disintegrate forever, and we wait for the appearance of a new burst of life.¹⁶ And now, the time has come to return to health. The End of *Galut* has arrived. Everything has stages, and the redemption doesn't appear all at once, but gradually, a little at a time.¹⁷ The Master of the World arranges history in such a way that for a certain time we are confined to *Galut*, and afterwards, He arranges historical events which cause *Clal Yisrael* to begin to awaken, in a process which spans generations. *Awake, rise up from the dust.*¹⁸ This awakening builds in momentum toward a complete revival."

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

15. Rashi, Deut. 11:18. And see, Rabenu Bachya, there: For even though we perform the precepts outside of the Land of Israel, and they are incumbent upon every individual, nevertheless our Sages have taught us that the essence of their performance is only in the holy Land. Also, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, The Torah and the Land. See note 24, Ch. 8.
16. See, Ezekiel, 37:3-5. Also *Likutei HaGra*, at the end of *Safra D'Tzniuta*.
17. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, 1:1.
18. Sabbath Song, *Lecha Dodi*.

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.

Rabbi Yaacov Emden writes in the introduction to his scholarly *Siddur, Beit Yaacov*, **“When it seems to us, in our present peaceful existence outside of the Land of Israel, that we have found another Eretz Yisrael and Jerusalem, this, to me, is the greatest, deepest, most obvious, and direct cause of all of the awesome, frightening, monstrous, unimaginable destructions that we have experienced in the Diaspora.”**¹⁹

Rabbi Yehuda Chai Alkali writes in *Kol Korai*, “Because Israel didn’t rise up to return to our Land, and to the inheritance of our forefathers, the decrees began, the expulsions and slaughters, for the matter is dependent on the repentance of returning to *Eretz Yisrael*.”²⁰

In Chapter One of the book, *Em Habanim Simaicha*, an interesting analogy is brought in the name of Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Pashischa. He compares the situation of *Geula* to the two ways which an animal is acquired: a person calls to the animal, and it follows after him; or he hits it with a stick, and it runs in front of him. Therefore, he says, we must return to the Land of Israel by ourselves, and not wait until *Hashem* hits us with a stick.²¹

The *Meshech Chochmah*, written by the *Ohr Somayach*, Rav Meir Simcha HaCohen from Dvinsk, states that, “If a Jew thinks that Berlin is Jerusalem... then a raging stormwind will uproot him by his trunk...

19. *Siddur, Beit Yaacov*, Introduction, P.13.

20. *Kol Korai*, Rabbi Yehuda Chai Alkali. The Writings of Rav Alkali.

21. *Em Habanim Simaicha*, Rav Yissachar Shlomo Teichtel, Ch. 1.

a tempest will arise and spread its roaring waves, and swallow, and destroy, and flood forth without pity.”²²

These matters were stated by our Rabbis years before the Holocaust. The *Natziv*, Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, writes the following in his *Hagadah*, on the verse, *And G-d brought us out with a strong hand*, – “The Jews who didn’t want to leave Egypt died in the three days of darkness.²³ And we must remember all of this in our time also, when many Jews deny our future redemption, may it come soon, but *Hashem* will reign over us with a strong hand.”

Noteworthy also, are the words of the Gaon of Vilna, which are recorded in *Kol HaTor*. He says that if we devote ourselves to bring the *Geula* through human endeavor, exemplified by the return of the Jewish people to Zion, then we need not fear the warnings of our Sages concerning a ruler whose decrees will be harsher than Haman’s.²⁴ But, he warned, if the Jewish people do not return to Israel on their own accord, then *Hashem* will bring about our return through the severe decrees of the gentiles who rule over us in the lands of our dispersion.

“Our teacher, the Gaon of Vilna, *Kadosh Yisrael*, with words carved in flames, advised his students to go on *Aliyah* to Israel, and to further the ingathering of the exiles. Furthermore, he encouraged his students to hasten the Revealed End, and the fulfillment of the redemption, through the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael*. Almost every day, he spoke to us with trembling and emotion, saying that, in Zion and Jerusalem there would be a refuge, and that we shouldn’t delay the opportunity to go. Who can articulate, or who can describe, the

22. *Meshech Chochmah*, P.191–2.

23. Four-fifths of the Jews in Egypt died in the plague of darkness. Rashi, Exodus, 13:18.

24. Sanhedrin 97B.

magnitude of our teacher's worry when he spoke these words to us, with his *Ruach HaKodesh*, and with tears in his eyes?"²⁵

Similarly, another student of the Gaon of Vilna wrote, "This prophetic speech, that a refuge would be found in Zion and Jerusalem,²⁶ extremely worried our teacher, *HaGra*, since, according to this, the time of the, *עֵיקֶבְתָּא דְּמָשִׁיחָא*, *Footsteps of Mashiach*, would bring the ingathering of the exiles in a path of refugees, with tribulations and harsh decrees, and only remnants of the refugees would reach Zion and Jerusalem."

Ten years before the destruction of Europe, when Hitler, may his name be erased, rose to prominence, the *Chofetz Chaim* said that the surviving camp for refugees would be in *Eretz Yisrael*, as is written, *For on the mountain of Zion, there will be a refuge.....*²⁷

And finally, several years before the Holocaust, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook foresaw the horror which was coming. In a speech delivered in the *Churvah* synagogue in Jerusalem, on *Rosh Hashana*, in the year 5694, several years before the Second World War, he said: "If there will cease the holy fervor, and the desire for exalted redemption which stems from it; and if the natural, human feeling for nationality, and the yearning for the honorable life of the nation, will disappear – the enemies of Israel will come and blow a shofar in our ears which calls for our redemption. They force us to hear the voice of the shofar. They sound an alarm, and set off a cannon in our ears, and don't grant us rest in the *Galut*. This shofar of an impure beast will be transformed into the shofar of *Mashiach*. **Amalek, Hitler, and others like them, awaken the redemption. And**

25. *Kol HaTor*, End of Chapter Five.

26. Yoel, 3:5: *For in Mount Zion and Jerusalem there will be those who escape.* Also, Ovadiah, 1:17.

27. The book, *Chofetz Chaim*, P. 73.

he... who didn't want to hear, because his ears had become blocked, he will hear... out of absolute coercion, he will listen.''²⁸

“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

28. The Essays of Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, P.269. See also, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 1, Pgs. 36, 47, 55, 56, 74, 89, 97, 106, 128, 177.
29. Ezekiel, 36:8. Sanhedrin, 98A.
30. Exodus, 21:5.
31. Ezekiel, 36:20.

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."

The Holocaust uprooted the Jewish people from Europe. Suddenly, after two thousand years, in the wake of the Holocaust, the Jewish people returned to Israel. This is not happenstance. There is no denying the inner connection of these two awesome events.

32. Ibid, 8:3. See, the book, *Paamei Geula*, P.12, on the verse, "And the Lord your G-d will return your captivity," (Deut, 30:3) Rashi says, "So great is the day of the gathering of the exiles, and so difficult, that it seems as though He himself has to seize each man by the hand, and remove him from his place." The Rabbi of Kotzk adds, "At the time of the End, G-d will lift us up, so to speak, even the *Tzaddikim* of the generation, by the side locks of their heads, and not all will rise up and make haste." R. Shragi.
33. Tehillim, 106:24.

Summary

THE HOLOCAUST

1. Criticism of *Hashem* is a grave transgression, stemming from a lack of *Emunah* in *Hashem's* providence over the world. Objections to the Holocaust fall into this category of complaints against the Almighty.
2. Human understanding is finite and cannot grasp the workings of Divine Providence, which encompasses all ages. Only by raising ourselves to a higher vision can we begin to approach an understanding of the Divine historical plan.
3. In our time, we have witnessed an awesome new form of destruction (the Holocaust), and an incredible revival and building (the State of Israel). These two awesome historic events are Divinely connected.
4. In addition to the unforgivable murder of our people, the Nazis shattered our national identity, confidence, and pride. Rather than seeing ourselves as the strong Lion of Judah, and *Hashem's* chosen nation, we saw ourselves as victims, dependent upon the gentile nations for survival. Because *Am Yisrael* is one indivisible whole, this trauma affected all of the nation.
5. Theories which blame the Holocaust on the reform Jews of Germany, or on Zionists, don't understand the unity of *Clal Yisrael*. Only in the context of its meaning for all of the nation, and in the context of all Jewish history, can the Holocaust begin to be understood.
6. When the time comes for the Jewish people to return to *Eretz Yisrael* from the *Galut*, and the nation as a whole fails to heed G-d's call, a cruel Divine amputation is needed to uproot them

and bring them back to Israel.

7. Several years before World War II, Rav Kook said that, “Amalek, Hitler, and others like them awaken the redemption. And he...who didn’t want to hear (the shofar of redemption) because his ears had become blocked, he will hear...out of absolute coercion, he will listen.”

Chapter Eleven

TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF MASHIACH¹

Part One

1. MASHIACH

The name, *Mashiach*, (the Messiah) is derived from the Hebrew word, מָשִׁיחַ, the annointed one – *Hashem's* annointed King. Who is *Mashiach*? What is *Mashiach*? The Rambam tells us that the belief in the coming of the *Mashiach* is one of the Thirteen Principles of our faith.² What actually does the belief in the coming of the *Mashiach* involve? Rav Tzvi Yehuda took the time to clarify this complex matter, and to explain that **Mashiach is not only the ideal Jewish King, but a developmental process which evolves over time.**

During the generations of *Galut*, *Mashiach* became a misunderstood concept. Partly due to the infiltration of Christian doctrines into our collective subconscious, *Mashiach* was envisioned by many people as a religious superhero, who would arrive on the scene in a flash of miracles and wonders, and whisk all of the Jews off to Israel. Although this romantic image has prophetic sources, it entered the realm of mystical fantasy during the years of misery and exile away from our Land. Helpless to improve our *Galut* existence, and to actualize our dreams of returning to Zion, this idealistic vision of *Mashiach* seemed to be the only way we could be redeemed from the harsh realities of the ghetto. When centuries passed in waiting and

1. Based on, *Sichot of HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, Chapters of the Mashiach, Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim, Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.
2. Thirteen Principles of the Rambam, Principle 12.

disappointment, a philosophy of passivity arose. We were to pray and wait, and the *Mashiach* would do all of the work when he came. The redemption was viewed as something that would occur all at once, and be complete from the start, and not as an unfolding process that grew to completion with time.³

When the Zionists began to show initiative and take matters into their own hands to bring the exile to an end, proponents of this passive, we-can't-do-anything school of thought, rose up in protest. We were to wait until *Mashiach* arrived, and he would bring us to Israel.⁴ Passionate arguments and theories opposing Zionism rested on this point of view. More often than not, the *Mishna Torah* of the Rambam was quoted in support of this view, yet the very same Rambam wrote the following in his famous Letter of Forced Conversion:

“However, those who seduce themselves and say that they will stay in their places until the Messianic king comes to the lands of the West, and then they will depart and go forth to Jerusalem – I don't know how the decree of destruction will be stayed from them. Rather, they are transgressors, and they cause others to sin...”⁵

3. See Chapter Nine, in this book, in the section, Gedolim Can Err.
4. *Shivat Zion*, Part 2, Pg.41. Rabbi Eliahu Griedotz, a close student of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, writes: “Due to our great iniquity, many err in thinking that they will be sitting enjoying themselves at home when, suddenly, the gates of mercy will open, and miracles shall occur upon heaven and earth, actualizing all of the prophecies, and they shall then be invited to come forth from their dwellings. The truth of the matter is not so.”
5. Rambam's Letter of Forced Conversion continues: “For there is no set time for the coming of the *Mashiach* on which to depend, saying that he is close or far. The obligation of the commandments is not dependent on the coming of the *Mashiach*. Rather, we are to busy ourselves with Torah and precepts, and to strive to fulfill everything we can...However, if a man will stay in a place where he sees the Torah is waning, and where the Jewish people will be lost with the passage of time, and where he cannot stand by his faith, and say, ‘I will stay here until *Mashiach* comes, and survive where I am – this is nothing

Which Jewish community in the Diaspora doesn't face the potential danger which the Rambam describes in his letter, that with the passage of time, both Torah, the religion, and Jewish life will be threatened? One has to search far and wide for a thriving Jewish community outside the Land of Israel whose roots go back more than one hundred and fifty years. Where are the once great religious centers of Russia, of Europe, of North Africa, or Spain? Sometimes, it was the Jews who were annihilated. In other places, like Russia, the religion was destroyed. In many places, both the Jews and Judaism were wiped out.

Today, throughout America, many of the once prominent Jewish communities are slums. Buildings which once housed synagogues have been converted to churches. Assimilation in America is more than sixty percent. In Europe and South America, it is even higher. In spite of a few, isolated Torah communities, the Torah in all of these countries is waning. In contrast to this, **the study and observance of Torah in Israel is on the increase, and assimilation hardly exists.**

Today, thank G-d, *Hashem* has given us a Jewish State in Israel. He has given us a powerful army to defend ourselves. He has given us beautiful places to live, and a rapidly developing society, in our uniquely holy Land. **We have Jerusalem back in our hands, and the Kotel, and the Temple Mount. Today, the greatest concentration of Torah and Talmidei Chachamim in the world is in Israel. The miraculous rebirth of the land, and the equally miraculous rebirth of Soviet Jewry and the Aliyah from Russia, are the fulfillment of the words of our prophets and Sages.⁶ All of these incredible realities are aspects of Mashiach, and of Israel's salvation. Rav Tzvi Yehuda**

but an evil heart and a great loss, and a sickness of reasoning and spirit. This is my opinion, and *Hashem* knows the truth."

6. Ezekiel, 36:8, See, Chapters 11, Section 2; and Chapter Twelve, Section 13, in this book.

emphasized they are things which are already happening now. To explain how this was possible, he led us on an in-depth study of the Rambam, the *Laws of Kings and Their Wars*.

2. THE RETURN OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL

The Rambam, in the *Law of Kings and Their Wars*, Chapter Eleven, writes:

“In the future, the Messianic king will arise and bring back the Kingdom of David, restoring it to its original sovereignty.”⁷

“The Mashiach’s premier assignment,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, “Is to restore our sovereignty over Eretz Yisrael.”

And yet, in our time, Jewish sovereignty has already been restored over *Eretz Yisrael*! The Rambam writes that the *Mashiach* will do this. How are we to understand this?

“The Jerusalem Talmud teaches that the *Geula* comes about, *Little by little*,”⁸ the *Rosh Yeshiva* said. “First of all, we have to believe with absolute *Emunah* in the coming of the *Mashiach*, and then to understand that this redemption unfolds in stages. A major step in this process is the establishment of *Malchut* in Israel. What is the meaning of *Malchut*? Rule – Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael*. Until our time, it was not clear how this process would occur. Now, thank G-d, it is progressing and crystallizing before our eyes, and we no longer need explanations on how it will happen.”

7. *Laws of Kings and Their Wars*, 11:1.

8. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, 1:1.

3. THE REVEALED END

“The period called the days of the *Mashiach* is a concrete, practical phenomenon, which includes returning the Kingdom of Israel to its former sovereignty; emancipation from foreign rule; and the shattering of the gentile yoke from around us. Truly, the days of the *Mashiach* encompass a great number of stages, as our Sages revealed in the expression, *Two thousand years of Mashiach*.⁹ This is also implied in the expression, *The years of the Mashiach*.¹⁰ The first days of *Mashiach* see the blessing return to the nation and to the Land, in place of the curse of *Galut*. *Hashem's* anger is appeased with the nation and with the Land. *And I will bring you to your Land*.¹¹ *And the children will return to their borders*.¹²

“*Hashem's* appeasement with the Land began with the foundation of Petach Tikvah and the early *moshavin*. The revelation of the Exile's end began to appear, as our Sages teach, *There is nothing more revealing of the End of the Exile than this, as it says: But you O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they will soon be coming*.⁶ Rashi explains, **When Eretz Yisrael gives forth her fruits abundantly, the End of the Exile is near, and there is no surer sign of the Final End than this**.¹³ This is clearly

9. Sanhedrin 97A.B: “*Tanna DeVe Eliahu – There are 6000 years to the life of this world; 2000 years of Void; 2000 years of Torah; 2000 years of Mashiach.*”
10. At the end of the morning prayer, *Ubah L'Zion*.
11. Ezekiel, 36:24.
12. Jeremiah, 31:16.
13. Sanhedrin 98A.

evident today. We see the blessing on the Land and on her fruits – grapes, bananas, oranges...each day we hear news of greater agricultural success. It is true that these are all real, physical matters, but one must accustom oneself to see all of this as *Hashem's* doing. Likewise, we have witnessed a great immigration of our people to Israel, as in the verse, *They soon will be coming*.⁶ This is the concrete side of Israel's restoration, which develops and progresses throughout the, *Two thousand years of Mashiach*.⁹

“The restoration unfolds every day. The Master of the Universe is not idle, G-d forbid. **Today, we are in the middle of the path, in spite of all the complications, which will all be worked out. We are in a stage of sovereign, military, agricultural, Statehood. This is the Statehood of the days of the Mashiach, which begins with revealed events, and concludes with hidden matters, like the revival of the dead.**¹⁴ There is no contradiction between these two facets of *Geula*, the revealed and the secret. For what are we dealing with? With the revealed aspect of a unique nation. With the Statehood of *Am Yisrael*. The State of Israel is a normal State which must withstand all sorts of trials, and with this, it is a State where prophets roam.”

The impact of these words, which grounded the days of *Mashiach* in our times, in the waves of immigration to Israel, in the rebirth of

14. *Yad Ramah*. Sanhedrin 90A, “And the matter of the World To Come is the time a few years after the Messianic era. And the meaning of *Olam Haba* is the resurrection of the body and soul to stand judgment in the way it existed before death.”

Israeli agriculture, and in the soldiers and tanks of the Israel Defense Forces, as opposed to some far away mystical vision – this very real outlook on *Geula*, coming from the lips of our *Rosh Yeshiva*, was a profound and amazing discovery.

“In the life of the Israeli nation, the revealed and the secret go hand-in-hand,” he said. “The redemption doesn’t only evolve through obvious miracles. We also experience the quiet miracles of a desert land yielding bushels of fruit, of cities built on swamps, of a people reborn in their ancient Land. All of this is a stage of *Mashiach*”.

The Rambam states that the *Mashiach* restores the dynasty of David. During the class, a student said that in our time, the Kingdom isn’t from the House of David. How are we to understand this?

“The permanent and final dynasty can only be from the House of David,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered. “However, a preceding phase of a temporary Kingdom can legitimately come from any of the tribes, like the Kingship of Saul. This is what the Rambam writes: ‘If a prophet appoints a King from any other tribe of Israel, and that King follows the path of Torah and *mitzvot*, and fights the wars of *Hashem*, he is considered a King, and all of the precepts of the monarchy apply to him, even though the monarchy was primarily given to David...the Kings of the House of David will stand forever, as it says: *Your throne will be established forever*. However, if a King arises from the other tribes of Israel, the monarchy will eventually cease from his house.’”¹⁵

15. Rambam, Laws of Kings, 1:8-9.

“We must remember that both the permanent and temporary monarchies come from *Hashem*. A temporary Kingdom can come from any tribe. For instance, the Hashmonites (who were Kohanim) were very important, yet they were only a temporary monarchy.¹⁶ Subsequent Hashmonite generations forgot the temporary nature of the Kingdom and continued to rule, and this brought their downfall and corruption. Also, our *Malchut* today is temporary, yet the eternal Kingship of the House of David will evolve from it.”

4. THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

“The Rambam determines that:

‘In the future, the Messianic King will arise and return the Kingdom of David, restoring it to its original sovereignty; and he will build the Temple, and gather the scattered of Israel; and all of the statutes will be revived in his days to their previous state...’¹⁷

“**First, sovereignty is returned to the Land.** Other stages follow after this. How long will each of these stages last? It is not specified.”

What was clear, however, Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught, was that the stage of the ingathering of the exiles was happening in our time.

A student commented that some people claim that the time has arrived to build the Temple. Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered with his usual straightforwardness.

16. Rambam, Laws of Hanukah, 3:1.

“When people approach me with this proposition, I say: What you claim doesn’t come from an abundance of Torah knowledge on your part, but from the paucity of it. The building of the Temple is not a commandment for the individual, but for the *Tzibur*, for *Clal Yisrael*.¹⁷ **Just as there is a precept to build the Temple, there is a sequence to its fulfillment.** The *Gemara* says, *Israel was commanded with three precepts when they entered the Land: to appoint a King; to annihilate the seed of Amalek; and to build Hashem’s chosen house.*¹⁸ And the *Gemara* continues, *And how do I know which comes first? You have to say to raise up a King. And how do I know whether to build the Temple first, or to annihilate the seed of Amalek? You have to say first annihilate the seed of Amalek.*¹⁸ The *Gemara* is speaking of the initial entry into the Land and of the construction of the First Temple, but the Rambam decides that this is generally true. ‘Israel was commanded with three precepts upon entering the Land...the King’s appointment precedes the war with Amalek, and the annihilation of Amalek precedes the building of the Temple.’¹⁹ This is a clear order, not a haphazard arrangement. The meaning of erasing Amalek, and just who this is among the nations of the world, has not been clarified, but it is clear that the establishment of sovereignty, that is to say, national rule, precedes building the Temple, though it is not specified by how many years. Perhaps generations need to transpire before the Kingdom of Israel will be solidified. I advise all of those people who are burning to

17. *Sefer HaMitzvot* of Rabenu Saadia Gaon, Precepts Incumbent Upon the Congregation, Number 51: To build the Temple.
18. Sanhedrin 20B.
19. Rambam, Laws of Kings. 1:1-2.

rebuild the Temple not to extinguish themselves! First, we have to solidify the Kingdom of Israel.”

Is the current running of the State of Israel considered like the Kingdom of Israel, a student asked?

“**Malchut is thought of as any Jewish leadership which governs the nation with the consent of the people, as long as it is not implicitly opposed to the Torah.**²⁰ This type of leadership enjoys certain qualifications of *Malchut*. However, it will take the passage of time before it will reach its destined perfection.”

5. GATHERING THE SCATTERED OF ISRAEL

The Rambam implies that the building of the Temple will precede the ingathering of the exiles. But in *Ezekiel*,¹¹ the ingathering starts the process of redemption, preceding the subsequent stages of purification, repentance, and a return to Torah and *Kedusha*. How are we to understand this apparent contradiction?

20. “In a time when there isn’t a King, since the laws of the kingdom also include the matters which pertain to the general situation of the nation, the authority of the laws return to the general nation, and especially, since it seems that every Judge who rose in Israel possessed the legal status of a king, concerning several laws of the kingdom, especially in matters affecting the management of the *Clal*, everyone who leads the nation comes under the laws of the kingdom, which encompass the general needs of the nation...In the matter of the laws of the kingdom, which affect the management of the *Clal*, certainly, certified Judges, and general leaders stand in place of the king.” *Mishpat Kohen*, Pg.337. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaKohen Kook. “And in every place, the laws of the kingdom apply in all times, and in every generation, the leader of that generation, the heads of the lands...have the power of enforcement.” *Meiri*, Sanhedrin, 52B. “When there isn’t a king in Israel, the Judge takes on two powers, the power of the Judge, and the power of the king.” *Drashot HaRan*, 11.

“The meaning of the Rambam is that **ALL** of the scattered of Israel will be gathered. This is the grand finale of the ingathering, including the ten lost tribes, from wherever they are, as he says, **מִקְבֵּץ נִדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**, ‘Gather the scattered of Israel,’⁷ where, **נִדְחֵי**, also has the meaning of lost.”

“In reference to this, it is interesting to note the Rambam’s *Letter of Yemen*, where he writes: ‘And after they will be redeemed in *Eretz HaTzvi*, and all of *Yisrael* will be gathered to Jerusalem, and to the other areas of Israel, then the news of this happening will spread to the East and West, until it will come to the land of Yemen, and to those who are residing in India.’”

We learn from the varying descriptions of the *Geula* in the *Rambam*, and the Book of Ezekiel, that the gathering of the exiles happens in gradual stages, and not all at once.^{20A}

6. MILCHEMET MITZVAH – COMPULSORY WAR

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that our ideal State came with the establishment of the Kingdom of David. However, he stressed that in the meantime, we could have another viable stage of *Malchut*. Most significantly, today we were our own rulers, and the Land of Israel was under our control.²¹

The second thing we were commanded upon entering the Land, after the establishment of Jewish rule, is the war against Amalek.¹⁹

20A: See also, Isaiah, 56:8. *The Lord G-d who gathers the outcasts of Israel says, Yet I will gather others to him, beside those of him who are already gathered.*

21. Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael*. Chapter One.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that Amalek is the absolute cosmic antithesis to Israel.

“For now, we don’t know who this nation is. However, we still must wage war with the gentile nations who oppose us. Although war isn’t a desirable or pleasant thing, it is forced upon us by the realities of establishing a State, as the Rambam recognizes in the title he chose (for this chapter of the *Mishna Torah*), *The Laws of Kings and Their Wars*. The Rambam writes:

“The first war a King must wage is a *Milchemet mitzvah*, מלחמת מצוה. What is a *Milchemet mitzvah*? The war against the seven nations, and the war against Amalek, and a war fought to save Israel from an enemy who oppresses them.”²²

A student asked if the wars we had fought since the founding of the State had the status of *Milchemet mitzvah*.”

“What a question!” Rav Kook answered. “They are *Milchemet mitzvah* twice over. First, they accord with the RambaN’s teaching that we are commanded to conquer the Land of Israel,²³ and this is the accepted *Halacha*.²⁴ From this *Gaon* of Israel, comes the determination that the conquest of the Land is a *Milchemet mitzvah*. The Ramban writes that this is a positive command of the Torah, that all of this Land, with all of the borders which *Hashem* promised to our forefathers, be under our rule, and that it not be abandoned to other nations.²³ A land

22. Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, 5:1.

23. Ramban, Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Mitzvah 4.

24. *Pitchei Tshuva, Even HaEzer*, 75, Sub-section 6.

under the dominion and sovereignty of a people – this is a state. **The Torah commands us to have a State, and if there is a need for conquest and war to fulfill this, then we are compelled to do so. This is one of the 613 precepts of the Torah.**”

“Secondly, the wars we have fought follow the definition of a Torah-commanded war, as the RambaM states: ‘To save Israel from an enemy.’²² Even if we didn’t have any special political difficulties with our enemies over *Eretz Yisrael*, we are obligated to defend Jews from oppression, even if it occurs outside of the Land. This is a war of defense. The Israel Defense Force doesn’t capriciously wage war with nations, but fights to protect our people.”

Before the *Rosh Yeshiva* could continue discussing the next section of the Rambam, a student commented that in a certain pamphlet, a *Talmid Chacham* wrote that our wars were not in the category of *Milchemet mitzvah*, and that our government institutions, the Knesset and Cabinet, do not have the authority of *Malchut*. Therefore, this Torah scholar said, one should relate to the Arabs who war against us with understanding – the way one relates to our own non-believers; like kidnapped children who don’t understand the value of Torah. In the same way, our enemies don’t understand our greatness and our attachment to the Land.

“These are pernicious, disturbing, and shocking ideas,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, “These are deadly poisons. If these words were translated into Arabic and sent to the Arabs, they would be as joyful as if they had discovered great booty. How can one say that we do not have a *Milchemet mitzvah* here?! I can’t understand! There is a simple definition of a compulsory war – the conquest of Israel and her defense. This situation doesn’t exist today? And on the matter of the Knesset and Israeli

government not having legal authority, these are meaningless words which crumble in the light of the holy words of my father and teacher, HaRav, ל"ג, which are explained in *Mishpat Kohen*. The laws of *Malchut* which apply to the general affairs of the nation, apply to any national form of leadership.²⁰ The comparison in that pamphlet, between Jewish non-believers and gentiles who come to kill us, is shocking. The gentiles do not see us as a weak and despoiled nation, but as one of the strong and respected nations in the world, which arose in a miraculous fashion and lives under the compulsion of war. The Ramban defines our situation precisely, and there is nothing in his teaching which involves persuading our enemies, or winning their understanding of the righteousness of our cause. **When they come to attack us, we have to persuade them with tanks! Where is the wisdom in looking kindly on murderers who come to kill us? May the Guardian of Israel protect us and rescue us from the dissemination of these injurious ideas!**"²⁵

7. THE THREE OATHS²⁶

Among the arguments some people put forth to prove that the *mitzvah* of living in Israel doesn't apply in our time is the *Aggadic* material regarding the, שלוש שבועות, *Three Oaths*, which the Almighty made Israel swear on its way into exile.²⁷ Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained

25. For an in-depth *Halachic* study defining the Israel Defense Forces and their wars as *Milchemet Mitzvot*, see *Amud HaYamani*, Chapter 16, Section 25–30, by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli.
26. For a detailed treatise on the Three Oaths, see the booklet, *The Three Oaths*, HaRav Shlomo Aviner, Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim.
27. Ketubot 111A.

the fallacy of this argument. Once, I personally went to question him about this matter. I asked whether our being in Israel wasn't in opposition to these Oaths, as some *Talmidei Chachamim* maintained. He told me to stop speaking nonsense, and suggested we learn the *Gemara* instead. He asked me to bring him the tractate *Ketubot* from the bookcase. I returned with an old Vilna *Shas*, which opened to the exact page. He carefully explained the meaning of *שְׁלֵא יֵעָלֶה כְּחוֹמָה*, *Not to go up like a wall*, one of the oaths. The wall had been broken down by the Balfour Proclamation, he said, on the part of the gentile nations themselves.²⁸ **We hadn't returned to Israel against the will of the nations of the world, for they had granted us permission, in the Balfour Proclamation, in the League of Nations, and in the United Nations, before the establishment of the State.**

“The argument of the *Shavuot* (Oaths) is a matter without any substance,” he said. “The first oath is, *Not to rebel against the nations of the world. There was no rebellion or revolution in our coming back to Israel. We came here with permission.*²⁹ Two generations ago, the British received a mandate to temporarily rule here, on our behalf. The nations of the world agreed that this Land belongs to us, and they decided that another nation would temporarily assist us. The British were here through our rightful claim to the Land, but afterwards, they forgot this, and wanted to rule here instead. There

28. See the letter of the *Ohr Somayach*, printed in *HaTekufah HaGedolah*, Pg.175. See Ch. 9, Pg. 235 of this book.

29. “And in the matter of rebelling against the nations of the world, when we were forced to remove British rule from here, this wasn't a rebellion against them, since they weren't legally ruling in our Land. Rather they were a temporary mandate established to prepare the way for Israeli rule in our Land, in accordance with the decision of the League of Nations...and when they fulfilled their mission, the time came for them to depart from here.” *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 2, 115. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaKohen Kook.

wasn't a rebellion against them. They were not ruling here legally! They distorted their mission to temporarily rule in our stead."

"The second oath is, *Not to hasten the End*. We don't hasten the End – the End hastens us! *The Master of the House is insistent*.³⁰ First of all, the *Gemara* does not say, not to hasten the End, but, rather, *Not to push the End away*. Rashi explains, *By your sins*.²⁷ And only as a secondary understanding, Rashi adds that we are not to make exaggerated petitions over the End. We are not supposed to be 'nudniks' and clamor, 'Redeem us! Redeem us! Redeem us!' without end. The meaning here is that we are not to hasten the End of the exile through spiritual means. It is not talking about building the Land of Israel."

"The third oath is, *Not to go up to Israel like a wall*. This is a figurative expression. What is a wall? The *Iron barrier which separates Israel from their Father in heaven*.³¹ This is the situation of *Galut*, and anything which prevents the immigration to Israel. **The wall is gentile rule over the Land**. Who raised it up? The Master of the Universe. Therefore, *The mouth which forbade is the mouth which makes it permitted*.³² **Today, there isn't a wall**. The Balfour Proclamation isn't a coincidental thing, but the work of the Causer of Causes, of the Master of the World. **Hashem raised up the wall of gentile rule over our Land, and Hashem broke it down**. This situation is

30. Avot, 2:20.

31. According to Pesachim 85B; Sotah 38B.

32. Mishna, Ketubot 16A.

similar to a man who takes an oath that he will not enter a house. When the house collapses, he doesn't need to disavow the oath."³³

8. ALL OF HER INHABITANTS

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that the Rambam's elucidation of the *Shmitta* year, and *Yovel*, clarifies the concept of *Mashiach* as a developmental process which unfolds over a period of time, and not something which happens all at once. The Rambam writes that in the time of *Mashiach*, "The *Shmitta* year and *Yovel* (Jubilee Year) will be observed like all of the precepts stated in the Torah."³⁴ The *Shmitta*, or Sabbatical year, comes every seven years, and demands that the Land of Israel lie fallow. The *Shmitta* year is connected to the Jubilee year, which comes in a fifty year cycle,³⁴ as it is written, *And you shall count for yourselves seven Sabbatical years, seven times seven years.*³⁵ In this fiftieth year, there is a special law, *And you shall proclaim liberty in the Land to all of its inhabitants.*³⁶ This law applies, *In a time when all of the Land's inhabitants are on her.*³⁷

Today, we have not reached the true time of *Shmitta* and of *Yovel*, which will come into force only with the complete return of the nation to Israel. We see for ourselves that the return of all of the Jewish people to Israel is a process which happens over time, and not all at once. The influence of Western culture and its emphasis on the NOW

33. *Yoreh Deah*, 216:6, beginning. "There are those who say..."

34. Rambam, *Laws of Shmitta and Yovel*, 10:9.

35. *Leviticus*, 25:8.

36. *Ibid*, 25:10.

37. *Since the time when the tribe of Reuven, and the tribe of Gad, and the half-tribe of Menashe were exiled, Jubilee Years were nullified, as it says: "And you shall proclaim freedom in the Land to all of her inhabitants." – In a time when all of her inhabitants reside there.* Erchin 32B.

has affected our way of thinking. Calls for “*Mashiach Now!*” or “*Peace Now!*” have become common. The focus is on the immediate. Gratification is demanded NOW! These expressions, similar to a child who wants everything now, are in contrast to the deeper wisdom which understands that the world unfolds in stages: Two thousand years of *Tohu*, two thousand years of Torah, and two thousand years of *Mashiach*.⁹ Our observance of *Shmitta* and *Yovel* today are preparations for what will be. Rambam’s description of the time when, “*Shmitta* and *Yovel* will be observed with all the precepts stated in the Torah,” is a definition of the completeness of the process, which comes with the Messianic King.³⁸

9. THE INGATHERING OF THE EXILES

The Rambam writes: “And anyone who does not believe in the *Mashiach*, or who does not anticipate his coming, not only denies all of the prophets, he denies the validity of the Torah and Moshe Rabenu.”⁷

“Anticipating the *Mashiach*’s coming is more than believing in him,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “We say after praying, *I believe with complete Emunah in the coming of the Mashiach, and even though he may delay, nevertheless, I anticipate every day that he will come.*² Also in the *Gemara, Shabbat*, it is written, *At the hour when a man faces his heavenly judgment, they say to him...did you yearn for the salvation?*³⁹ Yearning for the

38. The Rambam, in his Commentary to the Mishna, Sanhedrin 1:1, describes a gradual resolidification of the nation before the *Mashiach* comes: “And I am of the opinion that the Sanhedrin shall return before the coming of the *Mashiach* as well, and this will be one of the signs, as it says, *And I shall return your Judges to their original status* (Isaiah, 1:26”) See the Rav Kapach edition of the Rambam’s Commentary.

39. Shabbat 31A.

salvation of Israel is complete *Emunah*.⁴⁰ Therefore the Rambam can say, 'Everyone who doesn't believe in him (with complete *Emunah*), or someone who doesn't anticipate his coming, he not only denies all of the prophets, but also the Torah and Moshe, our teacher, since the Torah gives witness to him, as it says, *When all of these things will come upon you (all of the tribulations of Galut), Then the Lord your G-d will turn your captivity and have compassion upon you, and return and gather you from the nations.*'"⁴¹

"The ingathering of the exiles is a foundation of the redemption, and, as the Rambam makes clear, an actual stage in the days of Mashiach. The revelation of the redemption comes through the ingathering of the exiles, and not through miracles."

How then was this yearning for the salvation of Israel, and for the *Mashiach*, to be expressed? Through an active connection to the ingathering of the exiles. The *Aliyah* of the Jewish people to Israel, on the part of each individual, and on the part of the *Clal*, is a demonstration of our belief in the prophets, the Torah, and in the words of Moshe Rabenu.

Our generation has witnessed the ingathering of the Jewish people from all over the world. From Europe and Yemen, by foot and by air, Israel's scattered began to come home. What excitement there was in the Yeshiva when waves of Russian Jews began filling our shores and our study halls. Rav Tzvi Yehuda said this was a special stage of, *Your children shall return to their borders*.¹¹ This gathering was the nation's

40. See, *Olat Riyah*, Part One, 279. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.

41. Deut. 30:1-3.

beginning to appear in all of its wholeness. The Kremlin thought it was the superpower of the world, the *Rosh Yeshiva* said, but, *The hand of the Lord was against them to destroy them...*⁴² The *Mashiach's* coming, the Rambam states, is revealed in the verse, *If thy outcasts should be at the upmost parts of heaven...the Lord thy G-d will bring thee into the Land.*⁴³ "These matters are explained in the Torah. They include all of the things which were spoken by all of the prophets."⁷ Therefore, the Rambam states that someone who denies the coming of the *Mashiach*, denies the Torah. Rav Tzvi Yehuda added that someone who denies the ingathering of the exiles, which is an integral part of *Mashiach*, is treading on dangerous ground. This revelation of prophecy, he said, is a simple, obvious, discernible fact.

42. Ibid. 2:15.

43. Ibid. 30:4.

Summary

TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF MASHIACH

Part One

1. *Mashiach* is not only the ideal Jewish King, but a developmental process which evolves over time.
2. During the generations of *Galut*, *Mashiach* became a misunderstood concept. The redemption was viewed as something that would occur all at once, and not as an unfolding process that grew to completion with time.
3. The Statehood of Israel, the unification of Jerusalem, the miraculous productivity of the Land, and equally miraculous rebirth of Soviet Jewry and Aliyah from Russia, are all aspects of *Mashiach*.
4. We have to believe with absolute *Emunah* in the coming of the *Mashiach*, and to understand that this redemption unfolds in stages.
5. The period called the “Days of *Mashiach*” is a concrete, practical phenomenon which includes the establishment of Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael* and emancipation from foreign rule – events which are taking place in our time.
6. Our *Geula* doesn't only evolve through obvious miracles. We also experience the quiet miracles of a desert land yielding bushels of fruit, of cities built on swamps, of a people reborn in their ancient land. All of these are stages of *Mashiach*.
7. The permanent and final monarchy can only come from the House of David, but the preceding phase of a temporary kingdom can legitimately come from any of the tribes, as with the Kingdom of Saul.

8. The commandment to build the Temple is a commandment for *Clal Yisrael*, and not for the individual, and there is a sequence to its fulfillment.
9. The present State of Israel possesses certain aspects of *Malchut*. With time, it will develop and reach its destined perfection.
10. The wars which Israel has fought since the founding of the State have the status of *Milchemet Mitzvah* as defined by both the Rambam and the Ramban.
11. The oath not to go up against the nations like a wall in returning to Israel was nullified by the nations of the world when they granted the Jewish people permission to return to *Eretz Yisrael*.
12. The Rambam rules that the *Shmitta* and *Yovel* years will one day be observed like all other precepts in the Torah. This occurs when all of the Jewish people are living in Israel, indicating that the perfection of our nation does not happen all at once, but rather evolves and progresses with time.
13. The revelation of Israel's redemption comes through the ingathering of the exiles, and not through miracles. This aspect of *Mashiach* is a simple, obvious, discernible reality, which we are experiencing today.
14. The yearning for salvation, and for the coming of the *Mashiach*, which every Jew must feel, takes concrete expression by the Aliyah of the individual and of the nation to Israel.

Chapter Twelve

TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF MASHIACH¹

Part Two

1. KING DAVID – THE FIRST MASHIACH

Rav Tzvi Yehuda continued his discussion of, *The Laws of Kings and Their Wars*, by presenting us with an overview of the kings of Israel. He emphasized that the Kingship of *Mashiach* unfolds in gradual stages. Many “sparks” of *Mashiach* appear before the revelation of *Mashiach’s* full light.

“The Rambam doesn’t only rely on verses from *Devarim*, in his discussion of *Mashiach*. He also brings verses from the portion of Bilaam which relate to the *Mashiach*. The words of the Sages are well known on the verse, *There hasn’t arisen another prophet in Israel like Moshe.*² *In Israel, such a prophet hasn’t arisen. but there arose one among the nations. And who is this? Bilaam.*³ There is a vision of the End of Days in the story of Bilaam.⁴ A vision of Israel’s redemption. The Rambam states, ‘Mention is also made in the portion of Bilaam, a prophecy of two prophets: one is the first *Mashiach*, David, who saved Israel from its oppressors; and the other is the final *Mashiach*, who will sprout from David’s

1. Based on, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, Chapters of the Mashiach.
2. Deut. 34:10.
3. Sifre, there.
4. Numbers, 24:14.

offspring, and who will bring salvation to Israel. There, he says, *I see it, and not now*. This is David. *I behold it, but it is not near*. This is the king *Mashiach*.⁵

Here, once again, we were to see the gradual revelation of *Mashiach*, beginning with his first appearance in King David, who encompassed all of *Clal Yisrael*, to the final future appearance of his offspring. This all-encompassing vision, which sees the developmental process in all things; from the developing days of creation; to the unfolding of world history; to the redemption of Israel, is characteristic of *Torat Eretz Yisrael*. Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed that truth was to be found in seeing Israel and Torah in all of their wholeness, and not by fragmenting them into isolated pieces. While the Torah of *Galut* focuses on the individual, and on *Four cubits of Halacha*,⁶ the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* focuses on the *Clal*.⁷ While the Torah of the *Galut* focuses on the here and now, the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* connects the here and now with the panorama of generations.⁸ The Torah of *Eretz Yisrael* focuses not only on the King, *Mashiach*, but also on the historical process of development and redemption, which encompasses many stages, including *Mashiach's* first appearance in the person of King David, the many "sparks" of *Mashiach* which appear throughout the ages, the ingathering of the exiles; the establishment of Jewish sovereignty and statehood in Israel, all of which lead to his quintessential appearance as King *Mashiach*. This is the understanding of the Rambam, who, through his identification with the *Clal*, personifies the Torah of *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained what the Rambam meant when he wrote that David is a revelation of *Mashiach*:

5. Rambam, Laws of Kings, Chapter 11:1.
6. Berachot 8A.
7. *Orot HaTorah*, Chapter 13:3. HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook.
8. *Ibid*, Chapter 13:2.

“*The climax of the phenomenon of the Mashiach is the appearance of King David. He includes and encompasses all of the levels of Clal Yisrael. He is Clal Yisrael’s most perfect expression. Like King David, whose being is the universal embodiment of the nation, the Mashiach, the son of David, is a unique national personality in his great identification with all of the nation of Israel.*”

2. AND DESTROY ALL THE CHILDREN OF SETH

Rav Tzvi Yehuda went over these chapters of *Mashiach* with us in all of their fullness to enable us to see the panoramic stages of, *Two thousand years of Mashiach*.⁹ The Rambam’s *Mishna Torah* lay open on the table in front of him, but the *Rosh Yeshiva* hardly needed to glance at it. He knew all of the *Halachot* by heart.

“The Rambam explains, ‘*There shall come a star out of Yaacov, – this is David. And a scepter shall rise out of Israel – this is the Messianic king.*’⁵ The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* explains the meaning of, *A scepter*, as a segment.¹⁰ **A segment of Israel will awaken and arise, and precisely in this manner, the redemption will appear.**”

“The Rambam continues, ‘*And shall smite the corners of Moav – this is David, as it says, He smote Moav and measured them with a line. And destroy all the children of Seth – this is the Messianic king.*’⁵ The meaning of *All the children of Seth*¹¹ is all of the nations.¹² All the children

9. Sanhedrin 97A.

10. *Ohr HaChaim* on Numbers, 24:17.

11. Numbers, 24:17.

12. “All the children of Seth – this is all of the nations, for all of them came from Seth, the son of Adam.” Rashi, there.

of Seth are shattered and stunned. Today, in our time, the gentiles are afraid of us. The Russians and the Americans are also apprehensive about our great power, *May fear and terror befall them.*¹³ They don't want to mention *Hashem's* Name (in reference to Israel), so they say they are afraid of our army, from this wonderous army of ours. This is expressed in the Gemara, **לא נִקְרָא לַאֲשֵׁרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, צָבָאִים אֱלֹא עַל שֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל**, *For Hashem is named the Lord of Hosts after the hosts (armies) of Israel alone.*¹⁴ **The army of Israel is the army of Hashem.**¹⁵

The army of Israel, *Tzahal*, **צָבָא הַגְּנָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל**, is also the army of the *Mashiach*, whose wars are fought in stages, from the battles of King David to the wars of Israel today.

The Rambam continues, “*And destroy all the children of Seth, – this is the Messianic King, as it is said, His rule will stretch from sea to sea. And Edom shall be his possession, – this is David, as it says, And Edom shall be David's servant. And Seir will be his possession, – this is the Messianic King, as it says, And saviors will ascend Mt. Zion to judge Esav's mountain.*”¹⁵

The Rambam concludes his introduction to the *Mashiach* by quoting the verse regarding the cities of refuge, *And if the Lord your G-d enlarge your borders...and then you shall add three cities more...*¹⁶ The Rambam remarks that we haven't yet fulfilled this promise, and infers that *Mashiach* will achieve this.¹⁷ This, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said,

13. Exodus, 15:16.

14. Shavuot 35B.

15. Samuel One, 17:26. See also, *Orot*, Israel and its Revival, 8: “The Lord of Hosts is the Lord, G-d of Israel, and the armies of Israel are the armies of *Hashem*.”

16. Deut. 19:8–9.

17. Rambam, Laws of Kings. 11:2.

was the wholeness of *Eretz Yisrael*, with all of its borders, discreetly expressed by the Rambam. The Sages are also quite clear on this point: ***There are three lands in Eretz Yisrael: Yehuda, Galilee, and the Other Side of the Jordan.***¹⁸ All three of these areas are a part of a single *Kedusha*, which is revealed in gradations. The land of Yehuda, the territory of the Temple, is the repository for the most exalted level of *Kedusha*. The Galillee, and the land on the Other Side of the Jordan possess comparatively less. But all three areas are a part of the same intrinsic *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael*.

3. BAR KOCHVA

When this new way of looking at *Mashiach* was clear to us, as a continuing process which unfolded with time, Rav Tzvi Yehuda led us on a two-thousand year survey of the Messianic King. The concept of *Mashiach*, his personality, and the determination of who he was, were complicated matters. Once again, Rav Tzvi Yehuda based his remarks on the Rambam.

The *Laws of Kings* continues, “**And don’t think that the Messianic King must work signs or wonders, create new things in the world, bring the dead to life, or perform other such things.** This isn’t the case, since, behold, Rabbi Akiva, one of the great scholars of the Mishna, was King Bar Kochva’s swordbearer. And he was wont to say that Bar Kochva was the King *Mashiach*, and he, and all the Sages of his generation, considered that he (Bar Kochva) was the King *Mashiach* until he was killed because of the sins. Because he was killed, they realized he wasn’t, and the Sages hadn’t demanded from him signs, nor wonders. The main matter is that the Torah, its statutes, and laws are eternal. And they are not to be added to nor diminished.”¹⁹

18. Shvi’it, 9:2.

19. Rambam, Laws of Kings, 11:3.

Did Rabbi Akiva err in his assessment of Bar Kochva? Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized the language of the Rambam, who always strove for precision in his words. He didn't write that Rabbi Akiva made a mistake. He says that Rabbi Akiva "considered" that Bar Kochva was the *Mashiach*. Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that a Divine messenger like Rabbi Akiva doesn't make mistakes. "Considered" is a gentler expression. "Rabbi Akiva saw an aspect of *Mashiach* in Bar Kochva, a spark of *Mashiach* in him," Rav Kook said.

4. A SPARK OF MASHIACH

Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that **Bar Kochva's valor against the Romans was a revelation of Messianic sparks.** He illustrated this with the expression, *Moshe, you speak well*, which the *Gemara* employs in reference to a statement of a *Talmid Chacham*.²⁰ The *Gemara* is telling us that a spark of Moshe Rabenu exists in every Torah scholar. Every aspect of Torah is a revelation of Moshe's soul.²¹ Likewise, there also exist different revelations of King David's soul, and different aspects of *Mashiach*. The *Gemara*, for instance, brings different names for the *Mashiach*. *The school of Rabbi Shilo says: His name is Shilo...The school of Rabbi Yannai says: His name is Yanon...The school of Rabbi Chanina says: His name is Chanina.*²² Rav Tzvi Yehuda added that the *Gaon*, Rabbi Shalom Shachna wrote in the margin of his *Gemara*: I say his name is Shachna, as it says, *Inquire after His Shekhina*.²³ The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* writes that the *Mashiach's* name is Chaim.²⁴ These statements, Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, were not exaggerations; they were the recognition of exceptional statures. **Souls which embodied the largeness of Clal Yisrael, like the Arizal,²⁵ the Baal**

20. Shabbat 101B.

21. *Tikuney Zohar*, 69.

22. Sanhedrin 98B.

23. Responsa, the *Rama*, 25.

24. *Ohr HaChaim* on Deut. 15:7.

Shem Tov, and the Gaon of Vilna,²⁶ were all recognized to possess a Messianic spark.

5. MASHIACH – GREAT IN TORAH

The Rambam writes: “And if a King arises from the House of David, who is learned in Torah and observant of the commandments like his forefather, David, in both the Written and Oral Law, and he compels all of Israel to follow in its ways, and to reinforce its breaches, and if he fights the wars of G-d, behold, he may be considered to be the *Mashiach*. And if he does all of this and is successful, and triumphs over all the nations which surround him, and restores the Temple to its place, and gathers the dispersed of Israel, then he is definitely the *Mashiach*.²⁷”

Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed that a fundamental condition of the Mashiach’s character is his being articulate in Torah, and observant of the precepts, like his forefather David. In this regard, King Hezekiah, in his Torah greatness, was suited to be the *Mashiach*. However, the realization of this potential was thwarted because of another aspect of his character.²⁸

6. KING HEZEKIAH

King Hezekiah, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, was a complete *Tzaddik* in comparison to his father, King Achaz, who was wicked in the extreme. Achaz was one of the destroyers of Torah in Israel. He established a totally secular state, and outlawed the Torah and Yeshivot.²⁹ Rav Tzvi

25. *Kol HaTor*, 1:9; 2:48.

26. *Ibid.* 1:4. 1:23.

27. Rambam, *Laws of Kings*, 11:4. Uncensored version.

28. *Sanhedrin* 94A.

29. *Sanhedrin* 103B.

Yehuda compared the spiritual climate of Achaz's reign to the situation in Russia in our time. Yet Torah didn't cease from Israel. Isaiah and the prophets maintained a devotion to Torah throughout their encounters with Achaz. A great many young people held on to the Torah. *Behold I and the children whom the Lord gives me are the signs and portents in Israel, from the Lord of Hosts who dwells in Mount Zion.*³⁰ Rashi explains that the children referred to are the students of Torah.³¹ Isaiah exhorts them to follow the Torah, and not to stray after the gentile culture around them, *Which has not profit in it.*³²

In contrast to his father, Hezekiah was the epitome of a *Tzaddik*. He strengthened Yeshivot,³³ and to demonstrate his opposition to his father's rule, Hezekiah *Dragged the bones of his father on a stretcher of ropes.*³⁴ He achieved the apex of righteousness until *Hashem* wanted to make him the *Mashiach*.²⁷ On the merit of his stature in Torah, he was a candidate to be the *Mashiach*, but it did not transpire. Why, Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked? Because of a shortcoming in King Hezekiah's character.

7. MASHIACH AND CLAL YISRAEL

“The soul and the power of the *Mashiach* will be more colossal than all of the *Gedolei Yisrael* who ever were, or who ever will be. *And there shall come forth a rod out of*

30. Isaiah, 8:18.

31. Rashi, there.

32. Isaiah, 8:20.

33. Sanhedrin 94B.

34. Berachot 10B. “Because of his wickedness, he shamed him, and didn't show him honor in burying him, to bring him forth on a bed of gold and silver.” Rashi.

*the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.*³⁵ Also, *He shall be exalted and extolled.*³⁶ In *Midrash Tanchuma*, we learn that he will be greater than Moshe Rabenu.³⁷ However, the Rambam, because of his majestic esteem for Moshe Rabenu, may his memory be for a blessing, permitted himself to 'change' the view of the *Midrash* somewhat and to write that the *Mashiach* will be close to the greatness of Moshe Rabenu³⁸ in the abundance of Divine Presence and *Ruach HaKodesh* upon him. We call him, *Mashiach*, *our righteous one*. This appellation, *Mashiach*, (the anointed) is also an expression for the priesthood in the book of *Vayikrah*.³⁹ And it is also an expression of kingship, as in, *הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ* *the Messianic King*.⁵ **The Mashiach is completely bonded with Clal Yisrael. He is entirely enjoined to all facets of Clal Yisrael, beyond his individual self. He is forbidden to have any trace of private, self-concern.** Regarding a King, the Torah warns, *That he not lift up his heart.*⁴⁰ Pride is a Torah transgression which applies to every Jew.⁴¹ But there is an additional, unique stringency which applies to the King.⁴²

35. Isaiah, 11:1–2.

36. Ibid, 52:13.

37. *Midrash Tanchuma*, Torah Portion, *Toldot*, 14.

38. Rambam, *Laws of Repentance*, 9:2. And, the Letter of Yemen, published by Mosad HaRav Kook, Pg.178.

39. Leviticus, 4:3; 4:5; 4:16; 6:15.

40. Deut. 17:20.

41. Sotah 4B. SM"G, Negative Precepts 64. SM"K, 22.

42. "...He was commanded that his heart be modest and low within him, as is written, *My heart is lowered down within me*. And that he not behave with an arrogant heart in Israel, as it is written, *Not to raise his heart above his brothers*,

8. PETTINESS

“In the time of Hezekiah, Sancheriv, King of Ashur, arose over Yehuda and lay seige to Jerusalem. *And it came to pass when King Hezekiah heard it, he rent his clothè.*⁴³ *And Hezekiah prayed to the Lord.*⁴⁴ And a miracle occurred (which destroyed Sancheriv’s army).⁴⁵ Afterwards, it is told that *Hezekiah fell mortally ill.*⁴⁶ At that time, Merodak Baladan, the son of Baladan, King of Bavel, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah.⁴⁷ He was very happy to receive these letters. *And Hezekiah, the King, was glad for them, and he showed them the house of his treasures, the silver and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointments, and all the house of his armor, and all that was in his treasures.*⁴⁸ An accusation was levied against Hezekiah for boasting. *There was nothing in his house, or in all of his dominion which Hezekiah did not show them.*⁴⁹ Therefore, the prophet Isaiah came and told him, *Hear the word of the Lord of Hosts: behold days are coming that all that is in thy house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store*

and to be gracious and merciful to the small and great, to act out of their interests and benefits, and to show the most insignificant man honor. And when he speaks to all of the nation, to speak with mildness...to always behave with added humility...and to suffer their toil, and their burden, and their complaints, and their wrath as a tutor nurtures his student. The holy writings call him a shepherd....” Rambam, Laws of Kings, 2:6.

43. Isaiah, 37:1.

44. Ibid, ibid, 15.

45. *Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of Ashur, a hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.* Ibid, 37:36.

46. Ibid, 38:1.

47. Ibid, 39:1.

48. Ibid, ibid, 2.

49. Ibid, ibid, 4.

*until this day, shall be carried off to Bavel. Nothing shall be left, says the Lord.*⁵⁰ Furthermore, a personal punishment was added: *And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shall beget, they shall be taken away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the King of Bavel.*⁵¹

“Hezekiah was a great *Tzaddik*, but he didn’t totally nullify his concern for himself. We find another clear example of this in Chronicles: *Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sancheriv, King of Ashur.*⁵² Because of this incident, Hezekiah was accused of receiving great favor from *Hashem*, without acting graciously in return. *But Hezekiah did not pay back according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud; therefore wrath came upon him, and upon Yehuda, and upon Jerusalem.*⁵³ Pride is forbidden by the Torah, and it isn’t befitting a *Tzaddik*, and less so, a King. Indeed, some time later, *Hezekiah did humble himself*, a bit, and *The wrath of the Lord didn’t fall on them.*⁵⁴ But after this, three verses describe his great wealth.⁵⁵ The Torah specifies about a King: *And silver and gold, he should not abundantly increase for himself.*⁵⁶ This brought more blame upon Hezekiah. All of this is connected to, *For his heart was proud*. The *Mashiach* has to nullify his individual self completely, and be a great, exalted ruler.”

50. Ibid, ibid, 5-6.

51. Ibid, ibid, 7.

52. Chronicles, Part Two, 32:22.

53. Ibid, ibid, 25-26.

54. Ibid, ibid, 26.

55. Ibid, ibid, 27-29.

56. Deut. 17:17.

“Likewise, tractates *Berachot* and *Pesachim* relate: *King Hezekiah did six things. On three, he was praised, and on three the Rabbis disagreed.*⁵⁷ One of the matters which was not praiseworthy was shifting the upper waters of Gichon. This is not the river Gichon which is mentioned in *Bereshit*.⁵⁸ This is the underground spring in Jerusalem, near the Mount of Olives and Shiloach.⁵⁹ Why did Hezekiah do this? These are public waters belonging to all of the nation. However, he thought that foreign nations would come to beseige Jerusalem, and he wanted to prevent them from seizing the water.⁶⁰ Seemingly, Hezekiah acted correctly. The nation was involved in a compulsory war, which demanded sacrifice and the use of all available strategies. If so, why is this considered a sin on his part? In *Chronicles*, after the three verses describing his wealth, the question becomes clear. *This same Hezekiah also stopped up the upper waterway of Gichon and brought it straight down to the City of David.*⁶¹ He directed all of the water to himself in a personal egoistical fashion. (The King’s palace was loacted in the City of David). This is not proper behavior for the *Mashiach*. The verse then returns to the problems he had with the foreign ambassadors. *Howbeit in the matter of the ambassadors of the princes of Bavel, who were sent to him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, G-d left him.*⁶² Hashem appeared angry with

57. *Berachot* 10B. *Pesachim* 56A.

58. *Genesis*, 2:13.

59. Rashi, *Berachot* 10B.

60. “And why? So the kings of Ashur wouldn’t come and find water to drink...”
Rashi there.

61. *Chronicles*, Part 2, 32:30. And see, Radak and Malbim, there.

62. *Ibid*, *ibid*, 31.

him because he didn't stand up to the tests which came upon him from heaven, *To try him, to know what was in his heart.*⁶² Hezekiah was not suitable to be *Mashiach* because of the self-concern in his heart. Truly, his strengthening of Torah and Yeshivot, and his opposition to his father were deeds of great righteousness.⁶³ For these things, *Hashem* wanted to make him *Mashiach*, but in spite of his great stature, an egoistical blemish prevented its realization."

"Hezekiah was foiled by his ego. The *Mashiach* has to be on the highest plane of selflessness, as we find in King David, whose personality encompassed all of the Israeli nation, to the point of his total self-nullification,⁶³ as he says, *I am a worm, and not a man.*"⁶⁴

Self-nullification doesn't lead to emptiness, Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, but to a total identification with Clal Yisrael.

9. GEULA WITHOUT TSHUVA

These sparks of *Mashiach*, which appeared in different phases of our history, are steps in the revelation of *Mashiach*. The Rambam continues: "If he didn't succeed in these things, or was killed, he surely is not the one promised by Torah, and he is like all of the other proper and complete Kings of Davidic dynasty who died. G-d caused him to rise only to test the multitude, as it is said, *And some of the*

63. "In the soul of David, we don't find any private life reserved for himself...only the central continuation of the general life of the *Clal*, which brings truth to Yaacov and splendor to Israel." The Essays of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Vol.1, Pg.38, *Attachment to the Lord*, Chapter 3.

64. Tehillim, 22:7. See, Chulin 89A.

wise men will stumble, to try them, to clarify, and to refine until the Time of the End, because the appointed time has not yet come."⁶⁵

"The appointed time of the *Mashiach* is still on the way," Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

In our century, this matter has been a cause of great debate. With the ingathering of exiles to Israel, speculation arose whether this was the beginning of *Geula*, and the awaited time of the *Mashiach*. This unparalleled phenomenon certainly looked like *Geula*, but its appearance in the garb of secular Zionism triggered a fierce skepticism and protest throughout many Orthodox communities. *Geula*, it was claimed, could not come about through people who were empty of Torah. Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained that this same debate had been recorded long ago in the *Gemara*.

"At the end of tractate Sanhedrin, it is decided that our Geula is not dependent on Tshuva (a mass movement of repentance and a return to the Torah). *Rabbi Eliezer says: If Israel repents, they will be redeemed, and if not, they won't be redeemed.*⁶⁶ Rabbi Yehoshua leaps up and disagrees with him. Won't be redeemed? This is impossible! The *Galut* has an end! He brings many verses as proof, and ends with a verse from *Daniel* which shows that there is a set time for the redemption. *Rabbi Eliezer was silent*, the *Gemara* concludes.⁶⁷ There is a set time when we will be redeemed. The matter doesn't depend on *Tshuva*. In the argument between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua, the *Halacha* is according to Rabbi

65. Rambam, Laws of Kings, 11:4. Old printings contain the censored version. See the edition of Mosad HaRav Kook for the original.

66. Sanhedrin 97B.

67. Ibid. "Rabbi Eliczar was silent and accepted this." *Yad Rama*.

Yehoshua.⁶⁸ The Rambam's statement regarding **the appointed time to come**, supports this view, indicating that the *Geula* is not dependent upon *Tshuva*, but will come in its own due time, whether there is a returning to Torah or not."

Although Rabbi Yehoshua maintained that *Geula* would be achieved only through *Hashem's* raising up a gentile king whose decrees would be as harsh as Haman's,⁶⁶ these words appear at the beginning of Rabbi Yehoshua's opinion. When he repeats them a second time, this condition doesn't appear. "The final version decides the matter," Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

Many sources affirming that our *Geula* is not dependent on repentance appear in the book, *Hakdamot and Shaarim*, by the *Gaon*, Rabbi Shlomo Elyoshev. Rav Tzvi Yehuda described him as an incredible genius of Kabbala. In the introduction to his book he writes: "I myself know that I don't possess Torah, nor fear of *Hashem*, nor wisdom, nor understanding, nor knowledge, nor counsel, and I am a disgraced and worthless man...Only *Hashem* granted me the strength to compile and write all of this, for *Hashem* uses everyone as His messengers...and I am merely like a pen." In the book, he illuminates the differences between *בְּרִית אָבוֹת*, the *Covenant of the Fathers*, and *זְכוּת אָבוֹת*, the *Merit of the Fathers*.

The Covenant of the Fathers (Brit Avot) is the covenant which Hashem made with Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov, promising them that their offspring would be an eternally chosen people whom He would care for in a manner which transcended the natural evolution of mankind. This chosenness was to be manifested in Hashem's gifts of a

68. *Seder Tannaim and Amoraim*, 16. See, the book, *Kritot Yomot Olam* Part One.4. And, Rashi. Zevachim 66B. And *Kesef Mishna*, Laws of Witnesses, 11:10.

special Land, and a special Law, which were to be eternally bonded to the destiny and life of the Israelite nation. **The Merit of the Fathers (Zchut Avot) is the special Divine Providence and blessing which comes to the Jewish people through the great righteousness of their forefathers.** Gentile religions deny these foundations of Jewish faith. They claim that G-d has abandoned Israel, whose chosenness has expired. Both Christianity and Islam proclaim that they are the elected kingdoms today. An understanding of the eternal covenant between *Hashem* and Israel⁶⁹ exposes the absolute falsehood of these doctrines. The eternal *Brit* between Israel and *Hashem* ensures us that our redemption is guaranteed, without any prerequisites, or conditions, or *Tshuva* on our part.

Rav Elyosiv writes, “Indeed, the future hope of all the beloved of Israel – the final realization of the days of the *Mashiach*, and life in the World to Come – behold, they are dependent only on the *Brit Avot*, and not on the Merit of the Fathers. This is the Covenant of the Patriarchs and Israel. **This Brit will never be undone.**” Rabenu Tam concurs,⁷⁰ saying that the Merit of the Fathers has ended, but the Covenant of the Fathers has not.⁷¹

The Covenant of the Forefathers is more exalted than their Merit.⁷² The Ramban writes this at the end of the *Book of Redemption*, and explains that the *Geula* does not depend on repentance.⁷³ He demonstrates this with a verse which appears in the curses in *Torat Kohanim*: *And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor will I abhor them, to destroy*

69. Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael*, Chapter 11.

70. Shabbat 55A. Tosefot, beginning. “And Shmuel...”

71. *Leshem Shvo V'Achlama, Hakdamot V'Sha'arim, Shar 6:9.*

72. The Letters of HaRav Avraham Yitzhal HaKohen Kook, Part 2, 186–187.

73. *Shar HaGeula, Shar 2.* And. Ramban on the Torah, at the end of Portion, *Ha'azinu*. And the Writings of the Ramban, Part One, 324.

them utterly, and to break My covenant with them, for I am the Lord their G-d.⁷⁴ **The Covenant with Israel is not broken even for the sin of idol worship**, Rav Elyoshiv states. He bases this on a description of cleaving to idolatry, even unto death, which appears in the book of Leviticus: *And cast your carcasses on the carcasses of your idols.*⁷⁵ Even in this situation, the Covenant holds firm. Rav Elyoshiv writes, “The secret of the Covenant of the Fathers and Israel...it is impossible that it change. On this it was said, *The son of David will come only in a generation which is totally worthy, or in a generation which is totally sinful.*⁷⁶ And, on this, the Gaon of Vilna states,⁷⁷ ‘Without doubt, in the second manner.’⁷¹ Rav Elyoshiv explains that the Gaon of Vilna and the *Gemara* do not interpret the expression, *totally sinful*, to mean that all of the people are evil, because this cannot be. Rather, he says, a majority of sins is termed sinful.⁷¹ And, the *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* writes, “Even if Israel will be total sinners, G-d forbid (the end of the Exile will come.)”⁷⁸

On the argument between Rabbi Eliczer and Rabbi Yehoshua in the *Gemara*, Rav Elyoshiv emphasizes that Rabbi Eliezer even admitted to Rabbi Yehoshua that the future redemption isn't dependent on repentance and good deeds at all.⁷¹ Rav Tzvi Yehuda pointed to the parallel expression in the Jerusalem Talmud which was even sharper: *Rabbi Eliezer withdrew.*⁷⁹ He didn't just admit. He withdrew. He dropped out of the argument and surrendered.

74. Leviticus, 26:44.

75. Ibid, ibid, 30.

76. Sanhedrin 98A.

77. The Gaon of Vilna, on *Tikuney Zohar*, 69:126.

78. *Ohr HaChaim*, Leviticus, 25:28.

79. Jerusalem Talmud, Taanit, 1:1. *Rabbi Eliezer withdrew and accepted the view of Rabbi Yehoshua that the redemption would come even without repentance at the time of the Exile's end.* See, *Korbon HaEda*, loc. cit.

To support this analysis, Rav Elyoshiv quotes the book of Ezekiel, saying, “It is almost positively stated there that the ultimate redemption is not dependent upon repentance and good deeds, and is nevertheless certain to come.”⁷¹

Rav Tzvi Yehuda opened the *Tanach* to examine the pertinent verses. He said that the prophet Ezekiel describes the dreadful and tragic desecration of *Hashem*, which is inherent in the Galut.⁸⁰

“The gentiles recognize the existence of a world order which situates the nation of *Hashem* in the Land of *Hashem*. If the nation of *Hashem* departs from the Chosen land, this is an abnormality which desecrates *Hashem's* holy Name. Therefore, the Lord sanctifies His Name by gathering the exiles to Israel.⁸¹ First, we come home to *Eretz Yisrael*, to health, without any mention of *Tshuva*. Then comes the first cleansing treatment: *And I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean....*⁸² Then, comes the second phase of the treatment: *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you.*⁸³ Seemingly, this is *Tshuva*, but the keeping of precepts isn't mentioned. This only comes afterwards, as it says: *And cause you to follow My statutes, and you shall keep My commandments.*⁸⁴ I don't know why the *Gaon*, Rabbi Elyoshiv, writes that it is, ‘Almost positively stated,’ in Ezekiel that the final redemption is not dependent on repentance and good deeds. It is written there precisely!”

80. Ezekiel, 36:20.

81. Ibid, ibid, 23–24.

82. Ibid, ibid, 25.

83. Ibid, ibid, 26.

84. Ibid, ibid, 27.

The fact that there is a secular Zionist movement, or a secular Jewish government in Israel, in no way contradicts the assertion that our redemption is happening now, for the beginning stages of redemption are not dependent on Torah observance, but on *Hashem's* desire to end the desecration of His Name which the Diaspora causes.⁸⁵

10. CHRISTIANITY

The next chapter we covered in the Rambam's *Laws of Kings and Their Wars* had been censored from his writings throughout the years of Exile, in fear of antagonizing the gentiles. The Rambam writes that Yeshua of Nazareth, who imagined that he was the *Mashiach*, is referred to in Daniel's prophecy, as it says, *The renegades among your people will exult themselves to fulfill the vision, but they shall stumble.*⁸⁶ The Rambam continues:

“Can there be a greater stumbling block than this one? All of the prophets spoke of the *Mashiach* as the redeemer of Israel, and as its savior, who would gather their dispersed, and strengthen their observance of commandments, and this one caused the annihilation of Israel by the sword, and caused their remnants to be scattered and scorned. He caused the Torah to be altered, and brought the majority of the world to err, and to serve a god other than the Lord. However, the intent of the Creator of the World is not within the power of man to understand, for our ways are not His ways, and our thoughts are not His thoughts, and all of the deeds of Yeshua of Nazareth, and of the Ishmaelite who arose after him, are only to prepare the way for the Messianic King, and for the healing of the entire world, to serve G-d together, as it says, *For then I will convert the peoples to a pure*

85. For a comprehensive analysis of this point, see, *Ayelet HaShachar, Shivat Zion HaShlishit*, by Rav Yaacov Filber.

86. Daniel, 11:14.

language, that they may all call upon the Name of the Lord, to serve Him with one consent. How will this happen? The entire world has already become filled with talk of *Mashiach*, of the Torah, and of the commandments, and these matters have spread to distant islands and to many nations of uncircumcised hearts. They debate these matters of precepts and Torah. Some say that these precepts were true, but they have already been canceled in our time and weren't intended to be applicable forever. And others say that there are hidden matters in these things (the Torah and precepts), which can't be understood simply as stated; but that the Messiah has already come and revealed their hidden meanings. **Yet when the Messianic King will truly arise and be successful and uplifted and exalted, they will all immediately return and realize that their ancestral heritage is falsehood and that their prophets and ancestors caused them to err.**⁸⁵

Rav Tzvi Yehuda added that elsewhere, the Rambam calls this same Ishmaelite, the *Meshuga*.⁸⁷ He was, of course, speaking about Mohammed. Rav Tzvi Yehuda said he was a savage, a crazy fool, but that he didn't practice idol worship, the great sin of the other one from Nazereth.⁸⁸

In the *Gemara*, there's a criticism of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Prachiah for, *Thrusting the Nazerethite away with both hands*.⁸⁹ Yet, in the *Laws of Kings and Their Wars*, the Rambam says that it was all a Divine plan. Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that these two explanations did not contradict one another.

“One has to understand things in their entirety, and not in pieces. It is explained in tractate *Sotah* that this

87. Rambam, Letter of Yemem, Mosad HaRav Kook, Publishers. Pg.121.

88. Sanhedrin 43A. The uncensored edition of the Talmud. And see, The Laws of Idol Worship, 9:4, in the uncensored version of the Rambam.

89. Sotah 47A.

Nazerethite was a student of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Prachia, one of the great Sages and leaders of the Great Assembly during the Hashmonite rule. The early Hashmonites were towering personalities, and the holiday of Chanuka was established to remember their triumph, as the Rambam describes at length.⁹⁰ Afterward, when they prolonged their monarchy over generations, they faltered. (Permanent monarchy is reserved exclusively for the tribe of Yehuda, and the Hashmonites were Kohanim.) Tension resulted between the Hashmonites and the *Talmidei Chachamim* over this usurpation of the monarchy from the House of David. In this situation of spiritual decline, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Prachia couldn't remain in Jerusalem, and he was forced to leave. He journeyed to Alexandria, which was close by, and took this same student, Yeshua of Nazereth, with him. They stopped for lodging on the way, and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Prachia praised the lady innkeeper for honoring Torah scholars in the appropriate fashion. He was a great man, and a *Tzaddik*, and said in all pureness, 'How pleasant this innkeeper is.'⁹¹ This same student jumped up and exclaimed, 'But her eyes aren't pretty.' When Rabbi Yehoshua ben Prachia heard this, he exclaimed, 'Evil person! You are preoccupied with this! (Looking at women.) And he drove him away in the most severe manner. This is the intention of our Sages when they said, *He thrust the Nazerethite away with his two hands*, as opposed to pushing him away with the left, and bringing him close with the right.'⁸⁹ The pushing away with two hands belongs to the Divine plan. **It is a Divine**

90. Rambam, Laws of Chanuka, 3:1.

91. "In her deeds." Rashi, Sotah 47A.

clarification that he was not the Mashiach – without the slightest doubt.”

The Rambam states that the time will come when the gentiles will all return in repentance and realize that their ancestral heritage is falsehood. Rav Tzvi Yehuda suggested that this time is not far away.

“All of the kingdoms of darkness which are destined to disappear in the future are already afraid of this inevitability, and now stand quaking in their last throes of life. The *Gemara, Sanhedrin*, tells that a certain Christian asked Rabbi Abahu, *When will the Mashiach come?* The Rabbi answered him, *When the shame of these people will be uncovered.*⁹² The people he refers to are the followers of the Nazarethite. **When the flag of the State of Israel was raised, all of the Vatican’s doctrines of the outcast, miserable Jew collapsed.** We returned to our Land, and it became clear that the *Eternal One of Israel will not lie.*”⁹³

11. FREEDOM FROM GENTILE RULE

The Rambam’s dissertation on the *Mashiach* continues in Chapter Twelve of the *Laws of Kings and Their Wars*. He writes: “Don’t presume that in the Messianic age, the nature of the world will be transformed, or that there will be innovations to the work of Creation. Rather, the world will continue in its normal way. And what is said in *Isaiah: The wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat*, these words are metaphorical, and a parable. Its meaning is that Israel will dwell in security with the wicked gentiles who are figuratively likened to a wolf and a leopard, as it says, *A wolf*

92. Sanhedrin 99A.

93. Samuel, Part One. 15:29.

from the wilderness shall spoil them, and a leopard shall stalk their cities. They will all return to a true faith and will no longer steal or destroy. Rather, they will eat permitted food, peacefully with Israel, as it says. *The Lion will eat straw with the ox.* Similarly, all other prophecies of this nature about the *Mashiach* are metaphors. And in the time of the *Mashiach*, everyone will know what these metaphors referred to, and what allusions they contained. **Our Sages said: there is no difference between our times and the Messianic era, except concerning the subjugation to the gentile kingdoms.**”⁹⁴

“This means that in the Messianic era, Israel will be liberated from gentile rule,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

“To a certain extent, we have already been liberated from their rule. We have successfully conquered large portions of *Eretz Yisrael*. This, to a certain degree, nullifies the rule of the gentiles. Yet it isn’t enough for us to be situated in our Land to be freed from *Galut*. That is, first we have to be here, in our normal place – but as long as we are subjugated by foreign powers, we are still, to a certain degree, in *Galut*.⁹⁵ Even though *Eretz Yisrael* is our natural place, its unique blessing to us is wholly actualized only when we are capable of receiving it, when we are the sovereign rulers of the Land. On the other hand, **when we are living in a foreign land, even if we are not subjugated, but live as free men – this is absolute Galut.**”⁹⁶

94. Rambam, Laws of Kings, 12:1–2.

95. This appeared in a newspaper interview with Rav Kook. *Maariv, Erev Pesach*, 5723.

96. “This (*Galut*) is not the place that is compatible with them (Israel.) for the place that is suited to them, according to the order of existence, is to be in *Eretz Yisrael*, under their own rule, and not to be subjugated to anyone else.” Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael*, Chapter One.

Although this stage of redemption had not reached completion, the *Rosh Yeshiva* said that with time, and with *Hashem's* help, we will perfect our liberation completely.

“*Baruch Hashem*, in our time, we have a certain degree of rule over our Land, and our hold on it is strong. In this, we have achieved an important degree of *Geula*. This situation is more than the *Atchalta D'Geula* (the beginnings of redemption). This is already a sizable antithesis of *Galut*.”

“Our Sages tell us, *There is no difference between our times and the Messianic Era, except concerning the subjugation to the gentile kingdoms.*⁹⁸ We have eradicated foreign rule over the Land in our hands, and in this regard, we are a part of the Messianic Era. Obviously, we have not yet reached the perfection of complete *Geula*. The full meaning of *Geula* will appear when the majority of our millions of Jews dwell in the Land.”

“In its overall meaning to *Clal Yisrael*, the ingathering of the exiles, the building of *Eretz Yisrael*, and the establishment of the State of Israel, have substantially erased the blemish of *Galut*. The *Geula* is confronting the *Galut* and overcoming it. We have already reached a degree of redemption, though it is not complete. The imperfection of *Galut* cannot be nullified by fighting directly against it. **Galut resembles a shadow which can only be erased with light.** The more we establish the light of *Geula* here, with a mighty *Kedusha*, with spiritual

98. Berachot 34B.

greatness, and with political, and material strength – the blemish of the *Galut* will vanish outside the Land.”

12. WARS

The Rambam continues: “The simple interpretation of the words of our prophets suggests that in the beginning of the Messianic era, the war of Gog and Magog will occur. Before this war, a prophet will arise to make Israel upright and to prepare their hearts, as it says, *Behold, I am sending you Elijah....*⁹⁹ He will not come to declare the pure – impure; nor to declare the impure – pure. He will not challenge people believed to be of proper lineage, nor will he validate the lineage of those believed to be blemished. Rather, he will establish peace in the world, as it says, *He will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.*”⁹⁴

The Rambam says that war is a part of the Messianic era. How do all of the wars of Israel fit into the process of redemption?

“Every war is a stage in the redemption of Israel,”¹⁰⁰ Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “The *Geula* appears in stages of war after war. All of the wars we have experienced have been a part of the process of redemption, whether they occurred before, or after the establishment of the State; whether they were before or after the conquest of Jerusalem. The Yom Kippur War was an added, exceptional stage.¹⁰¹ It was painfully and horribly shocking. The greater an enterprise is, the more complicated it is, the more difficult it is to achieve. **The greater the trial, the greater the santification of Hashem.**

99. Malachi, 3:23.

100. Megilla 17B. *Was are also the beginning of the redemption.*

101. See, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part Two, 170.

We are in the middle of the journey, only in the middle. We are still in the beginning of *Geula*. Though we attain great and mighty advances, we must recall that the redemption of Israel comes a little at a time.¹⁰² The Almighty, who, *Doesn't slumber and doesn't sleep*,¹⁰³ arranges the history of the world. *Hashem* is not lazy, G-d forbid. He causes the salvation to appear, and brings redemption to completion, step by step. We must accustom ourselves to gaze on these matters with perfect *Emunah*, and to trust in the *Geula* of Israel, and in its inexorable unfolding."

13. CALCULATIONS OF THE END

The Rambam writes: "There are some Sages who say that Elijah's coming will precede the coming of the *Mashiach*. All of these matters, and the conjectures stemming from them won't be known until they happen, for these matters are hidden in the prophets' words. Even the Sages have no tradition in these matters, rather they rely on their interpretation of the verses. And so they have disagreements in these matters. Nonetheless, the order in which these things will occur, and their precise detail, are not fundamental principles of our faith. A person should not occupy himself with the *Aggadot* of these matters, and not dwell on the *Midrashim* which were spoken on these and similar things, nor make essential things of them, for preoccupation with them doesn't bring one to the fear, or to the love of G-d."⁹⁴

Rav Tzvi Yehuda⁷ clarified this teaching of the Rambam by explaining the distinction between learning *Aggadah*, and preoccupying oneself with *Aggadic* material specific to the *Mashiach*.

102. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, 1:1.

103. Tehillim, 121:3-4.

“Certainly, one has to learn *Aggadah*. *Aggadah* includes great treasures of *Emunah*,¹⁰⁴ and teaches the fear of Heaven. The intention here is *Aggadic* literature pertaining to *Mashiach*.”

“One must seek clarification on these matters in the framework of the Torah and the Prophets. ‘Therefore,’ the Rambam writes, ‘One should not try to determine the time of the End. Our Sages declared, *May the bones (the life) depart from the reckoners of the End*. Rather, one should await and believe in the general principle as we have explained.’”⁹⁴

“In the *Gemara*, there are words of reservation and even rebuke over efforts to determine the exact time of *Mashiach’s* coming. *May the bones depart from the reckoners of the End*.¹⁰⁵ This is a curse. Thus, the Rambam advises not to calculate the End. **We believe in, and hope for the overall fulfillment of these things; we don’t fixate on the details.** For if the details don’t come to pass, people’s *Emunah* can be shaken, G-d forbid.”

However, the recognition that we had already reached the beginnings of *Geula* did not contradict the warnings of the *Gemara*.

“The *Gemara* is speaking about people who set precise times. **Certainly we are aware that the *Geula* is unfolding now, but our knowledge does not come from predicting times.** To busy oneself with specifications of the End, with days, months, and years – we don’t have

104. *Even Shlema*, 8:26, the Gaon of Vilna.

105. Sanhedrin 97B.

permission. But in a general sense, these periods in which we are living are the developing stages of the time of *Geula*.”

“The rejection of predictions concerning the End is intended for those matters which are hidden. *The hidden things belong to the Lord, our G-d.*¹⁰⁶ The facets of *Geula* which we are experiencing are not hidden at all. They are straightforwardly described by the *Gemara*. The revealed End comes when *Eretz Yisrael* abundantly gives forth her fruits.¹⁰⁷ And we see with our own eyes that our agricultural production is booming.”¹⁰⁸

“The *Gemara* speaks of, *Tzaddikim who don't believe.*¹⁰⁹ There were people at the time of the Second Temple, who remembered the grandeur of the First Temple and complained about the situation in their time. Today also, among certain groups, there is an absence of *Emunah* in *Hashem's* Providence over the events of our times. There are those who say that what is happening now is the work of the Satan. Personally, I am unacquainted with the Satan. I don't have any business with him at all. Our Sages say that, *One is to shoot arrows at the Satan.*¹¹⁰ We believe that everything which is happening now is from *Hashem*. The *Gemara* tells us

106. Deut. 29:28.

107. Sanhedrin 98A.

108. See, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part Two, 158.

109. *Who scorned the day of small things? Who caused the table of the Tzaddikim to be disgraced in the Time to Come? The smallminded among them who didn't have faith in the Almighty.* Sotah 48B. “Smallminded – small in *Emunah*.” Rashi, there.110.

110. Kiddushin 81A.

that if there exists an agricultural situation like we find in *Eretz Yisrael* today – this is the revealed End.¹⁰⁷ We are not Karaites who don't believe in the Oral Law, nor do we deny this *Gemara*."

"It is possible to propose new understandings, or to present the didactics of a *Gemara* in a different fashion, but in the *Gemara*, there are simple, straightforward matters. How is it possible to introduce another philosophy into this *Gemara*? Nothing here is secret or hidden, as it says, "There isn't a more revealed End than this."¹⁰⁷ Before this statement, the entire page speaks about endings of the *Galut*. At the conclusion is a very stern warning against precise calculations of the End, and even a curse. The End is secret and hidden. When people see that predictions regarding the End don't come to pass, their *Emunah* becomes confused.¹¹¹ After this warning in the *Gemara*, Rabbi Abba's words are recorded – there is one End which is revealed and certain, with no need for clarifications or reckonings. This is when one sees the trees in *Eretz Yisrael* graciously yielding their fruit. Rashi explains that, "When the Land of Israel gives forth her fruits in abundance – the End is near, and there is no more revealed sign of the End of the Exile than this."¹⁰⁷

At this point in the discussion, a student commented that Rabbi Abba's words were in the realm of *Aggadah*, not *Halacha*, and that *Halacha* isn't decided on *Aggadic* material.¹¹²

111. *Because they will say: since the time for the end has come, and it hasn't arrived – it isn't going to come.* Sanhedrin 98A.

112. Jerusalem Talmud, Peah, 2:4.

“If something is not *Halacha* – we need not consider it?” Rav Kook asked. “There are people who claim that we need only be concerned with *Halachic* matters. These are *Apikorsim* who keep precepts. Of course, in *Halachic* decisions, one does not mix in *Aggadic* material. However, *Aggadah* is a treasure of *Emunah*, *Mussar*, and *Kedusha*. The same Torah is revealed through both *Halacha*, and *Aggadah*. The outlook which negates *Aggadah* is a situation of, *They that handle the Torah, knew Me not.*”¹¹³

14. SEEING THE DIVINE

Time and again, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would exhort us to simply open our eyes and see what *Hashem* is doing. The Land of Israel is miraculously fertile after two-thousand years of desolation. Jerusalem is being rebuilt: apartment houses, hotels, and new neighborhoods are sprouting up on every hillside. We have a reborn Hebrew language, and a Jewish government, and an army which the whole world respects and fears. We have an Israeli airline, scientific advancements on par with any nation, an ingathering of exiles from scattered corners of the globe, and, above all, more Torah learning than any other place in the world. One need only look with open eyes to see that our *Geula* is happening now.

“We must accustom ourselves, now and for all time, to this straightforward vision.” Rav Kook said. “We must accustom ourselves to the understanding that the world has a Master.”

“The prophet Isaiah lived in one of Israel’s healthiest eras. He proclaimed that the Babylonian exile was a

113. Jeremiah, 2:8.

matter of only one generation, seventy years.¹¹⁴ Jeremiah¹¹⁵ and other prophets¹¹⁶ shared this insight. Indeed, the kingdom of Bavel collapsed, and the kingdom of Persia rose in its place, and Koresh decreed his proclamation,¹¹⁷ which was not unlike the Balfour Proclamation in our time. The recovery from the terrible destruction began, and with it, came the awakening of prophecy. In the very same period, Haggai, Zacharia, and Malachi prophesized.¹¹⁸ Our Sages tell us that Malachi was Ezra.¹¹⁸ Israel did not return to the full glory of her past, yet even so, prophecy flourished on a miniature scale.¹¹⁹ Similarly, the Temple was not on the exalted level of Solomon's Temple. From all over the Land, people came to see it, but in the eyes of the elders who still remembered the magnificence of Solomon's Temple, the Second Temple seemed to be an affront. They would weep¹²⁰ and express reservation. 'This is the Temple?!' The prophets scolded them for this attitude, saying, *For who has despised the day of small things?*¹²¹ The *Gemara* answers, *The smallminded among them who didn't have faith in the Almighty.*¹²² You are disbelievers, the prophet told them. Ezra called the exiles to come back to Israel, and many didn't listen. In our days also, there were *Tzaddikim* and *Talmidei Chachamim* who criticized the Almighty (for the way He was returning the Jewish people to Zion)."

114. Isaiah, 23:15, and 17.

115. Jeremiah, 25:11,12, and 29:10.

116. Daniel, 9:2, and 24. Zachariah, 1:12.

117. Ezra, 1:1-4.

118. Megilla 15A.

119. Yoma 9B.

120. Ezra, 3:12.

121. Zachariah, 4:10.

122. Sotah 48B.

15. KORESH, MY ANOINTED

Just as there are Torah scholars who take issue today with the way *Hashem* is returning His children to Zion, so too in Ezra's time, Torah scholars criticized the works of the Lord. The Almighty does what He pleases, when He pleases, in the manner He pleases, and He does not need our approval. Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized this by pointing to Koresh, the gentile king responsible for returning the exiled Jews to Zion. The prophecy of Isaiah contains an interesting verse: כֹּה אָמַר ה', *Thus says the Lord to His anointed, to Koresh.*¹²³

“What a horror!” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “Koresh is called the *Mashiach*.”¹²⁴

However, the intention, Rav Kook explained, is that Koresh was a spark of *Mashiach*. All of Koresh's valor and success came from *Hashem's* help, as it says, *to Koresh, whose right hand I have held, that I may subdue nations before him, and loose the loins of kings.*¹²³ Here, the Almighty reveals that everything comes from Him, *For Yaakov, My servant's sake, and for Israel, My chosen.*¹²⁵ *Hashem* is the source of everything. *I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no G-d beside Me. I girded thee, though thou hast not known Me, that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west that there is none beside Me. I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil.*¹²⁶ Everything in the world, Rav Tzvi Yehuda stressed, in heaven, and in all of the earth, is from *Hashem*, as it says, *I, the Lord, do all of these things.*¹²⁶

In the era of the Second Temple, the Almighty used a gentile king

123. Isaiah. 45:1.

124. See. Megilla 12A.

125. Isaiah. 45:4.

126. Ibid, ibid. 6-7.

to return His exiled children to Zion. *I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will make straight his ways. He shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives....*¹²⁷ There were people who didn't agree with this way of restoring things. They thought the *Geula* should come in a holier way, and that the Temple be built in a more suitable manner. However, the Lord has many *Shlichim*, and He does what He wants. King Herod, a gentile, usurped the throne of Israel by force, murdered all of the Rabbis, save Rabbi Baba ben Buta, whom he only blinded,¹²⁸ and yet *Hashem* allowed him to reconstruct the Second Temple and to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.

“Today also, *Hashem* is causing tremendous upheavals in the world, and toppling rulers from their thrones, as in the time of Koresh.¹⁹ *Hashem* overthrew the Turks, who ruled in the Land, and replaced them with others who recognized our right to this Land. Is all of this happenstance? Nature's wanton anarchy? No. This is *Hashem's* hidden hand. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, *Hear, O deaf; and look, O blind, that you may see. Who is blind but My servant, or deaf as the messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?*¹³⁰ *Talmidei Chachamim*, who are called servants of *Hashem*, they are the ones who are blind. It agonizes. Even Torah scholars, who are called *Hashem's* messengers and angels of the Lord¹³¹ – it is they who are deaf. *Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he hears not.*”¹³² There are so many things

127. Ibid, ibid, 13.

128. Baba Batra 3B-4A.

129. Sec, Isaiah, 14:9.

130. Isaiah, 42:18-19.

131. Nedarim 20B.

132. Isaiah, 42:20.

to see and to hear. **Be quiet, pensive, and listen. Then you will see the Almighty, who disguises Himself in the events which unfold in the world.**"

"The Lord is the Creator of the World, and the Creator of nations and kingdoms, and there is nothing besides Him. He brings about all of the great upheavals, as it says in *Daniel: He brings down kingships, and raises them up.*¹³³ There is no mysticism in seeing *Hashem's* guiding hand in the events of our time. This is all clear, visual proof of the Divine. Our Holy Land, which was in a paralyzing slumber, is showing her powers. She began to awaken during all of the wars which erupted these last fifty years, and which ended the Turkish rule in the Land. Thank G-d, the Land is in our hands now. Even the Temple Mount is under our control."

16. AS WATER COVERS THE SEA

The Rambam concludes, "During the era of the Messianic King, once his Kingdom has been solidified, and all of Israel has been gathered around him, everyone's line of descent will be established through his word and through the prophetic insight resting on him, as it says, *He shall sit as a refiner and purifier.* First, he will purify the family of Levi, saying, This one is a Kohen, and this one is a Levi. All of those not included will be delegated as Israelites, as it says, *The governor said to them... (they shall not partake of the holy things) until a Kohen arises with the Urim and Tumim.* From this, you learn that through the spirit of prophecy, lineage will be established and announced. The lineage of Israelites will be made public according to their tribes, proclaiming that this one belongs to this tribe, and that

133. Daniel, 2:21.

one to that tribe. But he will not say of a person whose lineage is considered tainted that he is a bastard or a descendant of slaves. For the law is that once a tainted lineage has become lost in a family, it is not brought to light."¹³⁴

“The Sages didn’t yearn for the time of Mashiach in order to rule over all of the world, nor to dominate the gentiles, nor to be exalted over them, and not to eat and to drink and to be merry; but so that they would be free for the Torah and the pursuit of its wisdom, without pressures, or distractions, so that they might merit life in the World to Come, as we explained in the Laws of Repentance.”¹³⁴

“In this era, there will be no famine nor war, no jealousy nor competition, for good will be in abundance, and luxuries will be as common as dust. And the entire world will be occupied only with the knowledge of G-d. Thus, Israel will have great Sages and knowers of hidden things, attaining a knowledge of the Creator as great as man is able, as it says,¹³⁵ *The world will be filled with a knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea.*”

What is the meaning of the expression, *As the waters cover the sea*, Rav Tzvi Yehuda asked. Are water and seas two separate things? The meaning, he explained, is that just as the waters covering the sea, and the sea, are truly one and the same, so too the world and the knowledge of *Hashem* in the world will be one and the same – absolutely united.

17. FILLED WITH PRECEPTS

Before we concluded our study of these chapters in the Rambam, Ravi Tzvi Yehuda mentioned a *Gemara* which expresses a similar

134. Rambam, Laws of Kings, 12:3–5.

135. Isaiah, 11:9.

concept of unity: *Even the empty ones among you will be filled with precepts like a pomegranate.*¹³⁶ This is a strange contradiction. How can the empty be full? More precisely, how are we to understand that a person empty of precepts, can at the same time be filled with them?

Rav Tzvi Yehuda invited us to meditate on this *Gemara*. The pomegranate is filled with seeds. Other fruits also have seeds, in different quantities and sizes. The olive, for example, has only one seed. In apples, there are several small seeds. Most fruits have one, or a few seeds, and the rest is fruit. But the pomegranate is all seeds. Where is the fruit? The pomegranate is the seeds themselves. There is no separation between the fruit and the seed. This is a special phenomenon. Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, whereby the filling, and the thing which is filled, are one and the same – not like the case of a bottle of water, where the bottle and the water are two separate things. In the pomegranate, the filling is the filled.

A similar situation exists with the *empty ones* of Israel. Not only are the empty ones filled; they themselves are the filling – like the pomegranate, which is a metaphor of ultimate fullness. The empty ones are full of *mitzvot*. They themselves are the *mitzvot*!

18. ISRAEL AND TORAH ARE ONE

“When dealing with, *This people I have formed for Myself,*¹³⁷ we are dealing with a unique Divine creation. In its essential being, Israel and the Torah are one. Though this may not be apparent in those outwardly empty of precepts, this is a superficial matter. In their inner essence, Israel and the Torah are one.¹³⁸ This

136. Berachot 57A.

137. Isaiah, 43:21.

138. Zohar, Leviticus, 73A.

essence requires clarification, education, and nurturing in order to actualize its potential, but **at the core of every Jew is Torah.**”

“The precepts do not originate from the commandments, but from, *Hear O Israel, the Lord is our G-d, the Lord is One.*¹³⁹ Why was the section of the *Shema* placed before, *And if you will hearken...?* The Mishna responds, *So that a man first accept the yoke of Heaven upon himself, and then accept upon himself the yoke of the commandments.*¹⁴⁰ The *mitzvot* stem from the original premise of, *This people have I formed for Myself.*¹³⁷ The proper orientation is from the general to the specific. Therefore, with those seemingly empty of Torah, the original healthy state of *Kedusha* continues to exist within them, even if shortcomings can be observed on the outside. As long as they are bonded with *Clal Yisrael*, and with *Eretz Yisrael*,¹⁴¹ even though there are impediments which obstruct the actual *Kedusha* from appearing, they are still bonded with the *mitzvot* by their holy essence. Obviously, education is needed to bring this potential to the surface, but as long as they have not broken off from *Clal Yisrael* (like the Christians,¹⁴² G-d forbid), inside them, in their most essential being, are *mitzvot* not yet actualized, but ready in potential.”¹⁴³

139. Deut. 6:4.

140. Mishna, Berachot, 2:2.

141. See, *Olot Riyah*, Part One, Pg. 374, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook: “One who is more connected to the love of the Land of Israel, and who exerts himself more in settling the Holy Land, he is blessed first, and is closer to perfection.”

142. See, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, Number 3, 8:27.

143. *Chazon Ish, Yoreh Deah*, 139, Sub-sections 16 and 28. Also, *Yoreh Deah*, 2:20. And see, Letters of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, Part 2, 555. And, Responsa, HaRav Yitzhak HaLevi Herzog, *Orach Chaim*, 49.

Summary

TWO THOUSAND YEARS OF MASHIACH

Part Two

1. *Mashiach* is revealed in gradual stages, from his first appearance in the person of King David, who encompassed all of *Clal Yisrael*, to his final appearance as King *Mashiach*.
2. The Israel Defense Forces is also the army of the *Mashiach*, whose wars are fought in stages, from the battles of King David to the wars of Israel today.
3. The lands of Yehuda, the Galilee, and the Other Side of the Jordan, are all a part of the same intrinsic *Kedusha* of *Eretz Yisrael*.
4. Rabbi Akiva saw an aspect of *Mashiach* in Bar Kochva. Other sparks of *Mashiach* appear throughout history in personalities who embody the spirit of *Clal Yisrael*.
5. The *Mashiach* must be great in Torah. He must nullify his personal self completely in his attachment to *Clal Yisrael*. Because of his dedication to Torah, King Hezekiah was a candidate for *Mashiach*, but it didn't come to pass because of his private self-concern.
6. Self-nullification doesn't lead to emptiness, but to a total identification with *Clal Yisrael*.
7. The *Geula* is not dependent upon *Tshuva*, and it will come whether the nation returns to Torah observance or not.
8. The *Brit Avot* is an eternal covenant between *Hashem* and the Jewish people which guarantees our redemption without any prerequisites, conditions, or *Tshuva* on our part.

9. The Rambam explains that the role of Christianity and Islam in the world is to familiarize their adherents to the concept of *Mashiach*. When the true Messianic King will arise, they will all immediately repent and realize that their heritage is falsehood, and that their prophets caused them to err.
10. When the flag of Israel was raised, the Vatican's doctrines of the outcast, miserable Jew collapsed. We returned to our Land, and it became clear that *Hashem* had not abandoned His nation.
11. Our Sages say that there is no difference between our times and the Messianic era, excepting that in the Messianic era, Israel will be freed from gentile rule. This is happening now.
12. The *Geula* appears in stages of war after war. All of the wars which we have experienced in our time are a part of the redemption of Israel.
13. While we believe in the *Mashiach's* coming, we don't fixate on the details of the precise time of his coming. For, if the details don't come to pass, a person's faith can be shaken. Our realization that the *Geula* is happening now does not come from secret reckonings, but from seeing the words of our Sages being actualized in front of our eyes.
14. People who say that we need to be concerned only with *Halachic* matters, and not with *Aggadah*, are *Apikorsim* who keep precepts.
15. The *Gemara* speaks of, *Tzaddikim who don't believe*, in reference to Torah scholars who found fault with the Second Temple, and with the way *Hashem* was returning the exiles to Zion.
16. The Almighty does what He pleases, when He pleases, and in the manner He pleases; and He doesn't need our approval. For instance, in the era of the Second Temple, the Almighty used a gentile king, Koresh, to return the Jewish people to Zion.

17. Israel and Torah are one. At the core of every Jew is Torah. Education is needed to awaken this inner treasure, but as long as a Jew has not severed his connection to *Clal Yisrael*, he is filled with potential *mitzvot*.

Chapter Thirteen

SOVEREIGNTY IN OUR LAND

1. YOM HAATZMAUT

On Israel Independence Day, just two weeks before the outbreak of the Six-Day War, Rav Tzvi Yehuda stood up in the study hall of the Yeshiva and gave an unforgettable speech. Several weeks later, after all of the miraculous events which brought Jerusalem, and the biblical lands of Judea and Samaria back into our hands, students remembered with wonder all of the prophetic words Rav Tzvi Yehuda had spoken.

At that time, few people in Israel thought about enlarging the borders of the country. The small Israeli population was hard pressed to defend what we had. It was a time of ardent rebuilding, and a majority of Israeli residents were happy with the portion of the Land we controlled. Yet Rav Tzvi Yehuda sensed it was time for the nation to move forward with the next phase of *Geula*. On this memorable night at the Yeshiva, he said we were coming to a great blessing, and to the realization of the word of *Hashem* which rests upon us.¹

He began his speech to the crowded assembly by recalling the night, in November, nineteen years before, when the United Nations voted to partition the Palestine of the British Mandate into a truncated Jewish State.² The *Rosh Yeshiva* recalled how the gentile nations of

1. Deuteronomy, 28:10.
2. See, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda, Medinat Yisrael*, Number 34, Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim.

the world were negotiating in New York on the allocation of Palestine between the Arabs and the Jews. Radios all over Israel were tuned to the broadcast. Suddenly, Rav Kook said, the announcement came....

The *Rosh Yeshiva* paused in his speech. His emotion filled the hall. That night, nineteen years before, when the announcement had come over the radio, a spontaneous joy had swept over the country. Jewish men, women, and children rushed out of their homes to dance in the streets. Yet Rav Tzvi Yehuda had had a different reaction, stemming from his deep connection to Torah, and to *Eretz Yisrael*. As he recounted the United Nations' decision, his voice echoed with pain:

"The connection to the Holy Sanctuary," he began. "The connection to the *Kedusha*, and to the life, and to the soul...."

He couldn't finish the sentence. The memory overwhelmed him. He wept as he stood before the students and guests of the Yeshiva, who had come to celebrate Israel's Independence Day. The connection to Jerusalem, and to our Holy Land – the connection to our life, and to our *Kedusha*, and to our soul, had been severed by the decision in New York to partition our Land. *Eretz Yisrael*, the inheritance of our forefathers, which *Hashem* had granted to us for all time, had been cut into pieces. Portions of our country had been placed in foreign hands. In that hour, when the nation's multitudes were celebrating on the streets of the country, Rav Tzvi Yehuda sat alone in his father's old room in Jerusalem. Even now, nineteen years later, the pain of the memory showed on his face.

"I couldn't leave the house," he said. "How bereaved I was. I couldn't go out to all that was happening in those hours on Jaffe Street, and throughout the streets of Jerusalem. I couldn't take part in all of the rejoicing."

"I sat alone. Distressed. It weighed so heavily on me. In those first hours, I couldn't come to terms with what

had happened – the word of *Hashem* had been realized – *They have divided My Land!*³ With all of my effort and strength; with all of my soul, and my spirit, and will, it was impossible for me to go outside.”

“How could it be that I didn’t go out?” he rhetorically asked.

“**THEY DIVIDED MY LAND!**” he shouted. Then forcefully, with a fierce love for Torah and the honor of G-d, he cried, “**AND WHERE IS OUR HEVRON?! DO WE FORGET THIS?! AND WHERE IS OUR SHECHEM?! DO WE FORGET ABOUT THIS?! AND WHERE IS OUR JERICHO?! DO WE FORGET THIS TOO?! AND WHERE IS OUR OTHER-SIDE OF THE JORDAN?! WHERE IS EACH BLOCK OF EARTH?! EACH PART AND PARCEL, AND FOUR CUBITS OF HASHEM’S LAND?!**”

“**IS IT IN OUR HANDS TO RELINQUISH ANY MILLIMETER OF THIS?!**” he shouted, and answered, “**G-D FORBID!**”

Everyone in the Yeshiva was silent. We had gathered to celebrate our independence, but Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted us to know, and to feel, that our triumph was yet incomplete.

“And so I couldn’t go out to the street,” Rav Kook repeated. “I couldn’t in this situation, when I was so

3. Yoel, 4:2.

utterly wounded, when I was so cut to pieces. *THEY DIVIDED MY LAND!*"

"They divided the Land of *Hashem!*" he said.
"Because of political considerations!"

"I could not go out, and dance, and be merry, the way we dance and are so joyous today. That was the way it was that night, during those hours."

Three weeks after this remarkable *Yom Haatzmaut* speech, the *Rosh Yeshiva's* yearnings came true. Jerusalem, and Hevron, and Shechem, and Jericho, miraculously fell into our hands.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda's anguish over the United Nations' partitioning of *Eretz Yisrael* was shared by Rabbi Yaacov Moshe Harlop, a student and friend of Rav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook. A day after the U.N. announcement, he came to visit Rav Tzvi Yehuda in Rav Kook's old house on Jaffa Street. They sat in the same small room the Rav had used as his study, and huddled together, distraught over what had occurred. Then, finding encouragement in each other, they said, *This is the Lord's doing. It is wonderful in our eyes.*⁴ Only then, Rav Tzvi Yehuda told us, had he found the strength to go out to the nation.

"I didn't go out to dance in the streets, because I felt that I, like the Land of Israel, had been cut into pieces, and wounded in my heart. But afterward, with faith in *Hashem*, I knew that we would overcome the difficulties. I began to go outside each year to dance on *Yom Haatzmaut* – out of the recognition of G-d's providence, which is active in all of the events of our time."

4. Tehillim, 118:23.

2. THE JOY OF A MITZVAH

Over the years, the celebration of *Yom Haatzmaut* at the Yeshiva became a national event. The Chief Rabbis of Israel, government leaders, well-known Torah scholars, and war heroes, were invited to speak after the Yeshiva's festive *seudah* and evening prayer. Israeli flags, and blue-and-white banners, adorned the walls and windows of the Yeshiva. Outside of the building, young people from all over the country gathered in the street for the traditional midnight march to the Kotel, which started at Mercaz HaRav.

Each year, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would speak on a different aspect of the day, and its meaning to our nation. Frequently, he stressed that it had been the great willingness of the people and soldiers of Israel to sacrifice their lives for *Hashem*, for the nation, and for the Land, which had led to the miracles which the Almighty had performed.⁵

On other occasions, the *Rosh Yeshiva* clarified the *Halachic* necessity for reciting *Hallel* and special prayers for the day. The expression of thanksgiving, he said, over the miracles which had led to our freedom, redemption, and life in our Land, is something the *Gemara* clearly prescribes.⁶ On the matter of saying a blessing before the *Hallel*, Rav Tzvi Yehuda followed the decisions of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. He stressed the honor which their position deserved, and emphasized the importance of having one, authoritative *Halachic* voice to unify all of *Clal Yisrael*. He said that the Mercaz

5. Berachot 20A: *What was different about the first generations that miracles were performed for them, and miracles don't occur on our behalf?...They were willing to sacrifice their lives to sanctify Hashem, and we are not willing to.*
6. Pesachim 117A. Megilla 14A. And see, Responsa of the *Chatam Sofer*, *Orach Chaim*, 208, beginning, "Nevertheless..." For a detailed study of the subject, see, *Hilchot Yom Haatzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim*, HaRav Nachum Rackover.

HaRav Yeshiva was not a private *shtibel*, where we could act as we wished, but the Yeshiva which represented *Clal Yisrael*. So too, **the Chief Rabbinate represents the whole nation, not just isolated groups, and the unity it strives for is a great sanctification of Hashem.**⁷

Rav Tzvi Yehuda's love for the honor of G-d caused him to mourn the tragedy, "which borders on a desecration of *Hashem*," that not all of our nation celebrated Israel's Independence Day, nor recognized the miracles which the Almighty had performed for us in leading us back to rule in our Land.

"On earlier occasions, in the early years of the State, when our celebration at the Yeshiva was not such an established event, I used to go out and wander about the streets of Jerusalem, for one, two, three hours, with the joyous nation, with the multitudes of young men and women. I saw this as a *mitzvah*, and an obligation: *Let Israel rejoice in its Maker; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.*⁸ To my sadness, each time, I was filled with regret by something which borders on a *Chillul Hashem* – the elders, the *Gedolei Torah*, they didn't appear. Where were they on the streets of Jerusalem? Each year, how I longed and yearned to see them."²

"Our joy on this day is the joy of a *mitzvah*," he said. "We have merited to sanctify *Hashem's* Name in the Land. We have merited to fulfill the Torah commandment of dwelling in Israel, as taught by the Ramban, through his own example of Aliyah to live in Israel, and through his *Halachic* ruling that dwelling in

7. See, Note 7, Chapter Two, *Clal Yisrael*, of this book.

8. Tehillim. 149:2.

Israel is a positive commandment of the Torah – that this Land be in our hands, in a national sense, and not in the hands of any other nation.”⁹

This was the true meaning of our celebration – the celebration and joy of the *mitzvah* which *Hashem* had led us to fulfill.

The recognition that Medinat Yisrael is a precept of the Torah is not always understood. A superficial perspective sees shortcomings in the State of Israel, and an absence of Torah ideals. The level of Torah observance, Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained, is just one aspect of the overall precept of establishing Jewish sovereignty in the Land. Problems and shortcomings are sure to be corrected with time. **The important thing to realize is that the institution of Jewish statehood, in its enabling the Jewish people to settle in Israel, is Kadosh. Out of the Kedusha of the mitzvah comes the Kedusha of the State.**

“It is true that there are shortcomings, and matters which have to be changed. We don’t hide our eyes from the things which need to be improved. This is not to be questioned. Rather, we expect, that as the years pass, the problems will be solved.”

Rav Kook reminded us of one of the Rambam’s principles of *Emunah*, regarding the *Mashiach*: “Even though his coming is delayed, even with all this, I will wait for him.”¹⁰

“We have *Emunah*, even with all of the problems that his coming involves,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda explained. “For

9. Ramban, Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Command 4.

10. Rambam, Thirteen Principles of Faith.

there is no doubt that the problems shall all be healed, in the perpetual process of perfecting the souls of our nation.”

“The intrinsic value of the State is not dependent on the number of observant Jews who live here. Of course, our aspiration is that all of our people will embrace the Torah and the mitzvot. However, the Statehood of Israel is Kadosh, whatever religious level it has.”¹¹

“There are religious Jews who express a type of criticism, and say: ‘If the State and its lifestyle were run according to our way and spirit, we would accept it. Until then, we abstain from it.’ They talk as if the State does not belong to them.”

“The State belongs to all of us,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “It belongs to all of *Clal Yisrael*, and to every individual in it. **Anyone who refuses to recognize the State of Israel does not recognize the return of the Divine Presence to Zion.**”¹²

The *Rosh Yeshiva* said that we had to be patient. The process of Israel’s redemption came slowly, in gradual stages,¹³ and it would reach perfection with time.

“Patience,” he said, “is not surrender. True patience,

11. See, *Em Habanim Simaicha*, Rabbi Yissachar Shlomo Teichtel, Ch. 72: “Every activity done in the cities of Judea is enhanced with a *Kedusha* and Divine spirituality because every (secular) action in Israel is a *mitzvah* like all other *mitzvot* in the Torah.”
12. *Shemona Esrei* prayer.
13. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, 1:1.

the patience of *Kedusha*, is united to the call for perfection. There is no contradiction between the drive for perfection, in all of its force, and patience, which understands that perfection is achieved in gradual stages, from year to passing year.”

“*Yom Haatzmaut* is the celebration of the existence of our State. This State, which was proclaimed in the Tel Aviv Museum, has its share of problems, and, certainly, there are matters which demand correction. However, it must be remembered that our Statehood does not start from the proclamation in the Tel Aviv Museum. Rather, it evolves from the holy words of the Ramban that we are commanded by the Torah to possess and dwell in this Land.”

“I heard from Rabbi Aryeh Leib, the son of the *Chofetz Chaim*, that when his father heard about the settlements which had been founded in *Eretz Yisrael*; in Rehovot, Rishon L’Zion, and Gedera, he said in Yiddish, ‘Behold, the thing (*Geula*) has already begun.’ The *Chofetz Chaim* was a *Gaon* and holy man, and, along with this, he was alert and awake to every matter. He knew the spiritual level of a portion of the settlers in the new villages. Yet nonetheless, he recognized that the new settlement in *Eretz Yisrael* belonged to the process of redemption.”

3. THE SANCTITY OF THE STATE

“From this beginning, we reached a great step toward completion with the establishment of the State of Israel. **The State is another important stage in the return of the Shekhina to Zion.** Among the Olim who came back to

Israel in the days of Ezra and Nechemiah, there were, *Singing men and singing women*,¹⁴ Rashi explains: ‘Since they would joyfully come up from Babylon to *Eretz Yisrael*, they needed men and women singers who would accompany them in all of their joy.’¹⁵ **We too must increase our feelings of happiness on Yom Haatzmaut, over the return of the Divine Presence to Zion, which is manifest in the renewed Israeli State.** The foundation of everything must be to increase our joy over this recognition.”

Even though there are aspects of the State of Israel which are not yet in line with the Torah, every Jew should have a fundamental feeling of joy with its establishment. Only out of this positive orientation, Rav Tzvi Yehuda said, can we overcome the problems we face.

“One must look at these matters in an encompassing perspective. *The Lord's Torah is perfect; it restores the soul.*¹⁶ When the Torah is perfect and whole, then it restores the soul.¹⁷ We are dealing with a fundamental, all-encompassing matter – Statehood. **The Statehood of Israel is totally Kadosh, without any blemish at all.** It is the Divine, exalted revelation of, *Who returns His Divine Presence to Zion.*¹² All the other concerns are details. Whether large or small, the difficulties and problems have absolutely no power to blemish the intrinsic *Kedusha* of the State.”

14. Ezra, 2:65.

15. Rashi, there.

16. Tehillim, 19:8.

17. *Yalkut Midrash Tehillim*, there.

4. FROM THE SECULAR TO THE SACRED¹⁸

Rabbi Kook taught that *Hashem* is restoring the nation of Israel to its Land. In contrast to the voices which sought to find fault with the Zionist State and its secular character, Rav Tzvi Yehuda guided us to see the events of our time with an enlightened understanding of our history.

“Secularism doesn’t lessen the essential Kedusha of the State,”¹⁹ he said. “In the *Gemara*, our Sages explain that all of the material used in building the Temple became sanctified **only after** it was set into place. ***We build with the secular, and sanctify afterward.***²⁰ Why is this? *Because the Torah was not given to the Ministering Angels.*²¹ Rashi explains that when they were constructing the Temple, they would buy all of the building materials with non-holy currency; or they would take all of the building requirements on credit, and, **after the construction was finished, they made everything Kadosh.**²⁰ This was enacted because our Sages realized that during the construction, workers would sit in the shade of the building to rest from the sun, and thus (improperly) benefit from something which had been dedicated exclusively to the use of the Sanctuary.”

“The Temple was built in this fashion, and this is the

18. *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, 28th of Iyar, 5727.

19. Chatam Sofer, Responsa, Vol. 6:190, *Hashmatot*. Rabbi Moshe Sopher: “And Eliyahu the prophet ran before Achav who transgressed the entire Torah (to honor him), and even so, it is incumbent to grant him (Ahav) exceptional respect, for this is a *mitzvah* which transcends rational comprehension (to honor even an unrighteous leader of Israel) and one who transgresses this is considered a sinner, like a person who doesn’t wear Tefillin.”

20. Meilah 14A and 14B.

way the redemption of Israel develops, in stages, little by little.¹³ Just as the stones used in building the Temple were not sanctified, so too, the building of *Eretz Yisrael* is accomplished by **every segment** of the nation of Israel; by the righteous, and by the less righteous. We build with the non-holy, even though this causes complications and problems, and, קמעא קמעא little by little,¹³ all of the various problems will vanish, and the sanctification of *Hashem* will appear in more and more light.”

5. TSHUVA AND THE SETTLEMENT OF ISRAEL

Rav Tzvi Yehuda said that it is precisely the ingathering of the exiles, the settlement of the Land, and the establishment of the State, which will bring an awakening of repentance throughout the general nation.²¹

“Abba, HaRav, ל”צז, explains that at the time of national rebirth in the Land, an awakening of penitence will arise, and a spiritual revolution will appear, in the face of the crises which will occur: ‘We are aware that there will be a spiritual revolution in *Eretz Yisrael*, and throughout the Jewish people, at the beginning of our national rebirth. The material comfort that portions of the nation will achieve, causing them to believe that they have already reached their ultimate goal, will languish the soul, and days will come that lack all delight. The aspiration for an exalted and holy idealism will kindle, and from this, an exalted spirit will descend and take

21. Ezeziel, 36:24–28. *Orot HaTshuva*, Ch. 17, Section 1: “The revival of the nation is the foundation of the great edifice of *Tshuvah*.”

root, until a storm will come and overturn everything in its wake, and then we will see clearly that the richness of Israel lies in that which is eternally *Kadosh*; in the light of *Hashem* and His Torah, and in the longing for the spiritual light, which is the ultimate valor, triumphing over all of the worlds, and over all of their powers.”²²

“Already, we are beginning to see the signs of this spiritual upheaval.” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “Many serious young people are searching. They are taking an interest in the Torah, and are coming closer to *Emunah*.”

22. *Orot, Orot HaYechiya*, 44.

Summary

SOVEREIGNTY IN OUR LAND

1. The Chief Rabbinate of Israel represents the whole nation, not just isolated groups, and the unity it symbolizes is a great sanctification of *Hashem*.
2. The failure of Torah leaders to recognize the miracles which *Hashem* is performing in returning the Jewish nation to Israel borders on a *Chillul Hashem*.
3. The joy and celebration of Israel's Independence Day is the joy of fulfilling the Torah commandment of establishing Jewish sovereignty over *Eretz Yisrael*.
4. From the *Kedusha* of the *mitzvah* of settling the Land of Israel comes the *Kedusha* of the State of Israel, which is *Hashem's* vehicle for the re-establishment of His nation in His Land. The *Kedusha* of the State is not dependent on the level of Torah observance in Israel, which will surely be perfected with time.
5. Patience is not surrender, but the mature recognition that perfection is achieved in gradual stages.
6. The State of Israel is another stage in the return of *Hashem's Shekhina* to Zion.
7. The Temple was built with non-holy material, and sanctified only after the building was complete. This is the way the redemption of Israel develops, in stages, from the secular to the holy.
8. It is the ingathering of the exiles, and the settling of *Eretz Yisrael* which will bring the great repentance of the general nation. The beginnings of this repentance can already be seen in the return of many of our young people to Torah.

Chapter Fourteen

SHILO

1. JUDEA AND SAMARIA

Rabbi Moshe Charlop writes that the most important issue facing *Am Yisrael* in any generation is the issue which the nations of the world most vehemently oppose. Certainly, in the last thirty years, the settlement of Judea and Samaria has been the focus of world opposition to Israel. Jewish sovereignty over this portion of *Eretz Yisrael* has been a constant media headline, perhaps more than any other international issue.

Ironically, the beginnings of this world uproar emanated from a small room in the Geula section of Jerusalem. The ideological foundations of the settlement movement in Israel, and the practical decisions to go out and settle Judea and Samaria, were a natural continuation of the teachings of Rav Tzvi Yehuda. The dozens of Torah communities which began to appear on the hills of Judea and Samaria grew out of his insistence that the settlement of Hevron and Shechem was, like the settlement of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, a straightforward commandment of the Torah.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda not only taught this to his students; he himself led the way. The first Jewish settlements in Judea established after the Six-Day War; Kfar Etzion, Hevron, and Kiriath Arba, were founded by young rabbis from the *Mercaz HaRav* Yeshiva. For Rav Tzvi Yehuda, the settlement of Israel was a natural complement to Torah, just as Joshua's conquest of *Eretz Yisrael* was a continuation of the Torah which Moshe Rabenu taught in the wilderness. Often, Rav Tzvi Yehuda emphasized the special relationship which exists in the Hebrew language between the words: Torah and settlement. The words Yeshiva and *Yishuv* (settlement) share the same root, יָשַׁב. Leaving

the Yeshiva to settle the Land of Israel is not a matter of *Bitul Torah*, but Torah itself – in fulfillment of the Torah commandment to settle the Land of Israel.¹ True to his words, with the establishment of each new *Yishuv*, a Yeshiva was founded as the center of community life; in Gush Etzion, Hevron, Kiriath Arba, Elon Moreh, Beit-El, Shilo, Kedumin, to name just a few.

After the Yom Kippur War, the government of Israel had not moved forward to build settlements in Samaria, the heartland of Israel. Rav Tzvi Yehuda's policy was to always advance in line with the nation, and not to advocate directions which lacked broad-based support. Sometimes this meant taking the first step forward in order to point out the way. **Leaving the Yeshiva to drive out to the mountains of the Shomron to be with his students as they erected the first tents of a new community in Israel was a teaching as integral to Torah as a class in Gemara or Halacha.**² It was a national teaching, intended to educate the whole nation of Israel. And, because of the attention it drew, the settlement of Judea and Samaria was a lecture delivered to the world, announcing that the Jewish people had come home to Israel, to all of our Land, as the Almighty had promised to Avraham, to Yitzhak, and to Yaacov. **Each new settlement in Israel is a witness to the eternal chosenness of Am Yisrael, to the truth of Torah, and to the word of Hashem and His prophets: *And the desolate Land shall be tilled, instead of the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they shall say, 'This land which was blighted is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste, and blighted, and ruined cities are fortified, and inhabited.'* Then the nations that are left round about you shall know that I the Lord have rebuilt the ruined places, and have replanted that which was blighted: I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it.**³

1. Ramban, Supplement to the *Sefer HaMitzvot* of the Rambam, Positive Command #4.
2. See, Note 11, in Chapter 13, Sovereignty in our Land, of this book.
3. Ezekiel, 36:34–36.

The settlement of Judea and Samaria followed the personal example which Rav Tzvi Yehuda had set during the first attempt to settle the Shomron. After repeated discussions with government leaders had failed to move matters forward, the eighty-four-year-old *Rosh Yeshiva* left Jerusalem to lead a group of young Torah scholars to the desolate fields of Hawara, three kilometers south of Shechem. With crowds of students busily working around him, putting up tents, fences, and an Israeli flag, Rav Tzvi Yehuda took hold of a shovel and planted a young tree.⁴

When soldiers arrived with orders to evict the settlers from the site, Rav Tzvi Yehuda spoke with them, reasoning with them to desist. But orders were orders, and the young people were rounded up into army buses. No one who was there that day can forget Rav Tzvi Yehuda's reaction. He informed the soldiers he was not moving. He stood alone on the rocky terrain, defying the soldiers to evict him. Few of the soldiers had ever encountered a rabbi like this – a small, white-bearded man in his eighties, filled with the strength and spirit of the Land he stood on. Not one soldier dared to raise a hand to touch this holy man.

Certainly, Rav Tzvi Yehuda did not enjoy confrontations with soldiers. On the contrary, he always ordered his students never to resist, either forcefully, or passively, a command from an Israeli soldier. To Rav Tzvi Yehuda, our government and army are *Kadosh*. They are *Hashem's* agents in bringing us back to our Land. It is forbidden to harm them, or resist them at all.

4. Leviticus, 19:23, "*And when you shall come into the Land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food....*" See, also, *Vayikra Rabbah*, 25:3 – On the question, how can a person cleave to *Hashem*, the Midrash answers: *Just as He initially busied Himself with planting trees, as it says, 'And the Lord G-d planted a garden eastward in Eden,' so too, when you enter Eretz Yisrael, first busy yourselves with the planting of trees, as it says, And when you shall come into the Land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food....*

“In truth,” he said, “The soldiers act out of purity, in their faithfulness to the army and their country, according to their understanding.”⁵

At nightfall, the eighty-four-year-old Rabbi still stood alone in the field. The evicted settlers watched from the buses. Arik Sharon, who had joined the young settlers that day, in support of their efforts, finally helped to persuade Rav Tzvi Yehuda to drive back to Jerusalem in his car. Without a show of resistance, the *Rosh Yeshiva* let a high-ranking army commander personally escort him out from the field. That first attempt failed, but the determined stance of Rabbi Kook had a profound impact on the nation. After a few more attempts to settle the area, the government granted permission, and settlements were established all over Judea and the Samaria.

Rav Tzvi Yehuda always emphasized that settlement is to be achieved with the support of the government, and not by adopting a course of action against it. Sometimes vehement persuasion is called for, and an active campaign to point out the proper way. While it is proper to protest against details of government policy when the situation demands; it is forbidden to be opposed to the government of Israel itself. **Our relationship to the government of Israel is always to be founded on its positive role in fulfilling the Torah commandment to establish Jewish sovereignty over our Land.**¹ Accordingly, Rav Tzvi Yehuda always sought to strengthen the government, and its leaders – in his speeches, in his letters, and in his personal meetings with the highest Israeli officials.

A letter he wrote to President Yitzhak Navon is typical of his correspondences: “With majestic honor to our exalted President, Mister Yitzhak Navon, *Shlita*: In accord with the Torah commandment, And you shall

5. See, the Israeli Journal, *Nekuda*, #50, Pg.16-17.

bless a *Nasi* of your nation,⁶ and from the true joy of my heart over the sanctification of *Hashem* which the opportunity presents, I extend my overflowing blessing from the source of its expression in the Torah, and its Source, that you find every success, both personally, and for all of *Clal Yisrael*, spiritually and practically, with the help of G-d.”⁷

Similarly, to the then United Nations representative, Chaim Herzog, on his defense of Israel’s right to the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hevron, Rav Tzvi Yehuda wrote: “With all of the prayers of my heart and my soul, I express to your honor, the praises of thanks and esteem which are due you from all the House of Israel, for your splendid, honorable, and exalted performance....”⁸

Rav Tzvi Yehuda taught us to see an aspect of the Kingdom of Israel, *The Judge who will be in your times*,⁹ in *Medinat Yisrael*.¹⁰

“Just as he who curses the Israeli army is like one who curses the, *Armies of the Living G-d*,¹¹ someone who curses the Kingdom of Israel, curses the Kingdom of G-d. The honor due the Kingdom cannot be set aside.”¹²

The honor due to the government leaders of Israel is learned from the example of Eliahu, the prophet. In his generation, the King of Israel, Ahav, was thoroughly wicked. Eliahu campaigned against the

6. According to Exodus, 22:27.

7. Letter, 23 *Iyar*, 5738.

8. Ibid, 14 *Marcheshvan*, 5733.

9. Deut, 17:9.

10. See Note 35, in Chapter 7 of this book.

11. Samuel, Part One, 17:26.

12. Kiddushin 32B. And see, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part 2, Pg.238.

King's wanton transgressions, yet even while delivering fierce rebuke against him, he treated him with honor.¹³ From this, our Sages determined the obligation, incumbent upon everyone, to act accordingly toward the leaders of our nation in every age.¹⁴

However, the honor he extended to the government, and to its ministers, did not prevent Rav Tzvi Yehuda from delivering harsh criticism when the hour demanded, against any officeholder or political party in need of enlightenment. This was especially true in regards to the settlement of Israel, a Torah commandment which is as binding on the government, as on every individual Jew.¹⁵

“Any Jewish government which limits Jewish residence to restricted boundaries in the Land of Israel, G-d forbid, as was done in the Czarist state of Russia in its time...not in accordance with the commandment of the Creator of the World...necessitates great clarification of its real value and rights.”¹⁶

In response to someone who wrote that the settlement of Kedum was illegal, Rav Tzvi Yehuda responded:

“In line with the holy words of my father, and

13. Kings, Part One, 18:46. On the verse, *And a spirit of strength from the Lord was with Eliahu, and he girded his loins and ran before Ahav until coming to Jezreel*, Rashi writes: “He became invested with strength to run before the chariot on foot, so that Ahav would not go alone, for he showed honor to royalty.”
14. See Note 19, in Chapter 13, Sovereignty in our Land, in this book.
15. “The principal side of the precept is the national conquest, establishing the national sovereignty of *Clal Yisrael* over this holy territory; and within this general, national precept is the individual precept, which falls on every Jew, to reside and dwell in the Land.” From a speech by Rav Tzvi Yehuda, *Yom Haatzmaut*, 19 Years of Statchood, *L'Netivot Yisrael*, Part Two, Pg.158.
16. Letter, 28 Shevat, 5738.

teacher, HaRav, ל"צ, regarding the 'illegal' Jewish *Aliyah* to Israel in the days of British rule in the Land – he said it was not the *Aliyah* to Israel which was illegal; rather the prevention of *Aliyah* was the absolutely illegal act – so too, today, it is not the settlement of Israel which is illegal; its prevention is, for we are commanded and obligated to settle the full breath and width of our Land.”¹⁷

When the government sent soldiers against Jews in Judea and Samaria, he said:

“This government...though it can send and compel some of our brothers, our dear soldiers, who weep and rebel over this, to overcome and defeat us – they cannot uproot the belief in our hearts, nor our healthy Israeli conscience.... We will strengthen, magnify, increase, and fortify the might of our faithful Israeli spirit, and the actions which arise from it, throughout the whole of our Land.”¹⁸

On the question of withdrawal from Israeli held territory in *Eretz Yisrael*, Rav Tzvi Yehuda was equally clear. When the Begin government was proceeding with the Camp David Agreement to surrender the Sinai to Egypt, Rav Kook wrote:

“All of our generations protest...against the treachery of the present government....”¹⁹

17. Letter, 13 Kislev, 5736.

18. The article, The Topic of Settlement, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda Kook.

19. Letter, 16 Shevat, 5739.

The question was asked – if the government decided to surrender Land, would that negate the *mitzvah* of settling that area? Rav Tzvi Yehuda answered with a definite no. Any government policy in regard to the settlement of *Eretz Yisrael* which went against the Torah and *Halacha* were null and void. Government decisions could not uproot each Jew's connection to every inch of *Eretz Yisrael*.²⁰

“All types of ‘Agreements’ concerning sections of Israel, the Land of our life, are null and void like the dust of the earth, and less substantive than this, like the law of every *Shaliach* who alters his assignment – it has no substance and does not exist.”²¹

“Any coercion to transgress this command (that *Eretz Yisrael* be under our sovereignty), whether on the part of the Israeli government, or on the part of a gentile government, obligates us to rise up against it with all of our life and souls...and all ‘decisions’ which come to steal away parts of this Land...are null and void.”²²

From his sick bed, two months before his death, Rav Tzvi Yehuda wrote to the thousands of people who had moved to Yamit from all over Israel, many of whom were his students, encouraging them to protest the withdrawal from Sinai:

“To the upholders of Yamit, with honor to all of our dear ones who are struggling to guard the wholeness of the Land of our life, the inheritance of our forefathers,

20. See the pamphlet, *Eretz Tzvi*, Pg. 8. Edited by HaRav Haim Steiner, and HaRav Isar Klonski.

21. Letter, 18 Kislev, 5739.

22. Letter, 11 Sivan, 5734.

the *Kedusha* of all Israel, I am with you in all of your actions to strengthen the wholeness of *Eretz Yisrael* to all of her wide borders."²³

2. SHILO²⁴

Periodically, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would visit the new communities in Judea and Samaria; and he was especially pleased to be on hand for the founding of a new settlement in Israel. When ground was broken for the renewed Jewish settlement in Shilo, he joined the large crowd of people who traveled out to the Shomron to the site of the first capital of Israel, the home of the *Mishkan* for three-hundred-and-sixty-nine years.

On a stark biblical hillside, under an Israeli flag, and a cloudy winter sky, a table had been set up for the guests of honor. Rav Tzvi Yehuda was flanked by Rabbis Eliezar Waldman and Dov Lior, former students who had founded the Hesder Yeshiva in Kiriath Arba. *Rabenu's* black overcoat collar was flapped up around his neck, in protection from the chilling wind. In spite of his eighty-eight years, and failing health, he had undertaken the hour drive from Jerusalem to celebrate this event. The prophet Shmuel had first heard the voice of *Hashem* on these hills. Eli, the High Priest, had officiated here. The Children of Israel had journeyed here for the Festivals, three times a year, to bring sacrifices and worship before the Ark of the Lord.²⁵ It was only natural that Rabbi Kook and his students would be here to carry our history forward. Today's class was public, relocated from the *Rosh Yeshiva's* small apartment in Jerusalem to the mountains of *Eretz Yisrael*.

23. Letter, 16 Tevet, 5742.

24. Based on, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, Beit-El, Shilo; Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim, Edited by HaRav Shlomo Aviner.

25. See, Samuel, Part One. Chapters 1-3.

“*Baruch haba b'Shem Hashem*” he said. First of all, he wanted to make clear that this gathering on a mountain in Samaria, and our coming to Shilo, was for the sake of Heaven, in the performance of a Torah commandment, and in the fulfillment of prophecy. The settlement of the Land of Israel is not a capricious adventure, nor the arrogance of extremist settlers, but a completely holy act. Rav Kook said that we were all blessed by the Name of G-d, which is called upon us: *And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the Name of the Lord...*²⁶

What is the meaning of the Name of the Lord? The *Gemara* infers that the Name of the Lord is the Torah.²⁷ The Torah is Israel's inner essence. Torah and Israel are one.²⁸ The Name of the Lord is expressed in this world by the nation of Israel. *And let them make Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell among them.*²⁹ **This gathering of Rabbis, and Torah scholars on the ancient hills of Shilo was a manifestation of Hashem in the world, a revelation of the return of the Divine Presence to Zion.** Rav Tzvi Yehuda wanted to make this point clear. Our settlement of Shilo was more than a gathering of pioneers on a deserted mountainside. The renewed settlement of Jews in the first capital of Israel was a religious act, and a profound *Kiddush Hashem*.

This is a theme which Rav Kook repeated, that *Hashem* is not to be found in abstract theory and leaps of imagination, but in His concrete revelation on earth, through His nation, *Am Yisrael*. His Name, **the manifestation of the Divine in the world, is contained in the day-to-day life of the nation of Israel.**³⁰

26. Deut. 28:10.

27. Berachot 21A.

28. Zohar, Vayikra, 73.

29. Exodus, 25:8.

30. The prayer before performing a precept. *L'Shem Yichud*.

3. THE PEOPLE I HAVE FORMED FOR MYSELF

“*Hashem’s Name is called upon us by virtue of our Divine creation. This people have I formed for Myself; they shall relate My praise.*”³¹ The Almighty, the Creator of the Universe, *Who formed man in His likeness,*³² created us for Himself – a special creation. This Divine creation is irrevocable. *The Eternal One of Israel will not lie, nor change His mind, for He is not a man that He should change His mind.*³³ **We are a special Divine creation,** as in the holy words of our teacher, Rav Yehuda HaLevi, that Israel is a fifth species: mineral, vegetable, animal, man, and above them, Israel.”³⁴

4. HOLY SETTLERS OF THE LAND

“The unique character of our nation is the *Kedusha* of the *Clal*, the sanctity of the entire nation.”³⁵ Three times a day, we say in our prayers, *And holy ones praise You daily, Selah.*³⁶ **All of us are holy.** We are a type of human formed in *Kedusha*. **And out of this unique foundation of *Kedusha*, we are workers of the Land, and the restorers of Shilo and other settlements, and we bring our children back to their borders.** Our *Kedusha* doesn’t stem from the sanctity of this individual or that. Rather, the sanctity of each individual flows from, and is revealed through,

31. Isaiah, 43:21.

32. Engagement Blessing. See also, Genesis, 1:27.

33. Samuel, Part One, 15:29.

34. *Kuzari*, 1:27, and 41.

35. Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael*, Chapter 11. See also, Chapter Two, *Clal Yisrael*, in this book.

36. *Shemona Esrei*.

the *Kedusha* of the community of *Clal Yisrael*, the *Kedusha* of the G-d of Israel, and of this eternally living, triumphing nation.”

5. RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

The teaching of Isaiah, *This people I have formed for Myself, they shall declare My praise*,³¹ is vital to understanding the revelation of *Hashem* in the world, and to understanding the true nature of the Jewish people. Our praises of *Hashem* are not confined to the individual expressions of our prayers, nor to our songs of thanksgiving. Rather, **the continuing existence and survival of Am Yisrael, the nation which Hashem formed for Himself – this in itself declares the praises of G-d.** The nation of Israel, in all of its facets, is the revelation of *Hashem* in the world. Our return to the Land of Israel in fulfillment of Divine prophecy; our rebuilding of Shilo, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Hevron; our rise to Statehood and sovereignty over our Land; our military might; and agricultural achievement in making the desert bloom; all of these reveal that the living G-d of Israel still reigns supreme in the world. **These are His songs and His praises.** And conversely, when we fall from our honored place and mission, our existence among the gentiles causes *Hashem's* disgrace, as it says, *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.*³⁷ For in the *Galut*, praise is not fitting, as the Jews who were exiled to Babylon moaned, *How can we sing the Lord's song on a foreign soil?*³⁸

“Israel declares the praises of *Hashem*, throughout all generations, to the end of time,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said.

37. Ezekiel. 36:20.

38. Tehillim. 137:4. And see, Megilla 14A, which explains that *Hallel* is not said on Purim because the miracle happened outside the Land of Israel, and the Jews remained subjugated to the gentiles.

“Today, we are returning to rebirth, returning to the Land of the living, as in the vision of Ezekiel, *Can these bones live?*³⁹ *The valley was full of bones.*⁴⁰ Through the power of prophecy, through the power of Hashem’s Presence, the bones rise to resurrection. *Therefore prophesy and say to them, Thus says the Lord G-d; Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the Land of Israel.*”⁴¹

“The Gaon of Vilna, the Rabbi of all Israel in the previous generations, describes this situation in a dramatic, scorching light. He says: ‘Since the Temple was destroyed, our spirit and our crown departed, and only we remained, the body without the soul. And exile to outside the Land is a grave. Worms surround us there, and we do not have the power to save ourselves. They, the idol worshippers, it is they who devour our flesh. In every place there were great societies and Yeshivot, until the body decayed, and the bones scattered, again and again. Yet, always, some bones still existed, the *Talmidi Chachamim* of the Israelite nation, the pillars of the body – until even these bones rotted, and there only remained a rancid waste which disintegrated into dust – our life turned into dust.’”⁴²

“**In the Galut, we are in a graveyard,**” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “Our *Kedusha* is in the impurity of gentile lands. Worms and maggots devour us. For two thousand

39. Ezekiel, 37:3.

40. Ibid, ibid, 1.

41. Ibid, ibid, 12.

42. *Likutei HaGra*, at the end of *Safra D’Tzniuta*.

years, we have been in a place of maggots and worms. They surround and encompass us there. The persecutions and pogroms of the gentiles, the gentile cultures, and their spiritual worlds, are the maggots and worms which feast on our flesh and gnaw away at our spirit and *Kedusha*. This is the reality of *Galut*. **There is absolutely no compatibility between impurity and Kedusha.** There is no point of contact between them. Only an incisive opposition, a drastic opposition, the one separated from the other by a cosmological order. Thus, over thousands of years, the maggots and worms ate away at us. According to the holy, sensitive, living words of the Gaon of Vilna, the flesh is easiest to consume. But when the worms reach the bones, the *Talmidei Chachamim*, our source of spiritual power, the staunchest and most solid block which connects us to the eternity of Israel – when the gnawing continues, and the absurdity (of *Galut*) and its evil reaches, G-d Forbid, our bones – then there is an extreme threat to our survival – an awful and horrifying situation.”

“The Gaon of Vilna concludes: ‘And we are now rising to a resurrection of the dead. Waking up. Rising from the dust. And an exalted spirit will rest upon us.’⁴² The end of the *Galut* is revealed. *The Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.* The *Geula* is compelled to appear.⁴³ The dead return to life. And even the evil doers, who are called dead in their lifetime,⁴⁴ come to return in repentance.”⁴⁵

43. *The dead which Ezekiel saw...this was a metaphor.* Sanhedrin 92B. “A metaphor – it hinted to them that the *Galut* was like a dead man who returns to life. Likewise, Israel will return from the *Galut*.” Rashi, there.

44. According to Berachot 18B.

45. See, Responsa of the *Maharashdam, Orach Chaim*, 17.

“Any intelligent person, who looks with open eyes on what has happened to us in recent generations, will understand this as the work of *Hashem* who, *Names generations from the beginning*.⁴⁶ In the past generation, the impurity of the gentiles, and their greatest evil was seen (the Holocaust), and now, the time of the Exile’s end has arrived. The atmosphere of the world is compelled to purify and cleanse itself from this contamination of devastating impurity.”

“The eternity of Israel advances onward and appears with splendor, with valor, with *Kedusha* and purity, and with *Hashem’s* magnifying and glorifying Torah.⁴⁷ *Baruch Hashem*, our revival can be seen in all corners of the Land. More and more people are returning to Torah and to spiritual health, even if there are still Jews in our midst who are called ‘not religious.’”

6. THE LAND OF OUR LIFE

“Our true health is here, in this air. These skies, these hills comprise the Land of our life. Both physically and spiritually. In every mountain and valley in our Land; here in the Shomron; in the Golan; and in the Bashan, our living thrives. ‘The air of Your Land is the life of our souls.’⁴⁸ And we must remember that souls are joined to the body. Our Holy Land gives life to our body and to our soul; to our material life, and to our culture.”

46. Isaiah, 41:4.

47. Isaiah, 42:21.

48. HaRav Yehuda HaLcvi, Poems.

7. THE RESTING PLACE – THIS IS SHILO

“To the extent that we prove that we deserve the blessing, *The Lord grants strength to His people*,⁴⁹ we shall return from the cemetery of the *Galut*, and from the gnawing of the maggots and worms which surround us. We reach the time of national rebirth, the revival of the Land, and of the spirit. The perfection of the nation of Israel, in its physical body, and in its observance of Torah and *mitzvot*, develops, and steadily reaches completion. Not in one day, but little by little,⁵⁰ our days advance and are renewed like the days of old.”

“One of these wonders is the renewal of our early days on the soil of Shilo. Blessed is the One who gives us life, and sustains us, and who has brought us to this day. We have reached our place of rest, as the *Gemara* says, *To the resting place, and to the place of inheritance. To the resting place – this is Shilo. The inheritance – this is Jerusalem*.⁵¹ Out of the death throes and suffering of *Galut*, we arrive here, slowly, slowly, to our comfort and rest. In our resting place here, we are in the Land of our life, of all the nation of Israel – the land of our past life, our future life, and our life today. And we must look at our present life in the light of our future, our eternal guiding light.”

49. Tehillim, 29:11. Also, *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda*, #17, Pg.15: “This strength appears in every fashion: in the strength of Torah, the strength of spirit, the strength of *Hashem*’s Presence among His people, in the strength of *Kedusha*, and also in bodily strength, in physical prowess and sport. Physical strength, and the power to stand against the haters of Israel – all of these flow from the true, Heavenly, eternal strength. The Lord grants strength to His people, and through this, we survive forever.” And see, *Orot*, *Orot HaTechiyu*, 34.
50. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot 1:1.
51. Zevachim 119A.

“Sometimes there are difficulties in an individual’s life. Sometimes the Children of Israel are, *Confounded in the land*.⁵² Not only on the way out from Egypt, but in *Eretz Yisrael*. However, *The air of Israel gives wisdom*.⁵³ It gives life and health to the body, and to the spirit. Our air is not impure and contaminated like the air in the lands of the gentile nations. It is clean and pure, *As if it were the very heaven for clearness*.⁵⁴ From the heavenly source of Torah, the Written and Oral Law, strength and counsel become clearer for us and more filled with light. *There’s no strength but Torah*.⁵⁵ *And there’s no counsel but Torah*.”⁵⁶

“From the Tabernacle of Shilo, *The Tent where He made His dwelling among men*,⁵⁷ the Lord will bless His people with peace, true peace, peace on Israel, on the restored settlement here in Shilo, and on all of our multiplying lands of possession and inheritance, throughout the full borders of the Land of our life. May we be blessed to see the arrival of the many more millions of our captives in Exile, and the millions of Jews in Russia. We return to Shilo, to our place of rest; we return to our inheritance; and we return to the One who restores His Divine Presence to Zion,⁵⁸ in our days soon.”

52. Exodus, 14:3.

53. Baba Batra 158A.

54. Exodus, 24:10.

55. *Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, 2.

56. *Ibid*, 8.

57. *Tchillim*, 78:60.

58. *Shemona Esrei*. See, also, Note 4, cited above, on the settlement of Israel as cleavage to *Hashem*.

Summary

SHILO

1. Rav Moshe Charlop writes that the most important issue facing *Am Yisrael* in any generation is the issue which the nations of the world most vehemently oppose. In our generation, this issue is Israel's settlement of Judea and Samaria.
2. Leaving the Yeshiva to settle the Land of Israel is not *Bitul Torah*, but the fulfillment of Torah and a great *Kiddush Hashem*.
3. The government and army of Israel are *Kadosh*. They are *Hashem's* agents in bringing us back to our Land.
4. Every Jew is obligated to honor the leaders of Israel, who represent an aspect of, *The Judge who will be in your times*.
5. No one has any right whatsoever, whether gentiles or Jews, to prevent the Jewish people from settling all of *Eretz Yisrael*.
6. The revelation of *Hashem* in the world is embodied in the day-to-day life of the nation of Israel.
7. The unique character of *Am Yisrael* is the *Kedusha* of the *Clal*. Every Jew in the nation is holy.
8. The situation of the Diaspora is a *Chillul Hashem*, and its opposite, the ingathering of Jews to Israel, is a *Kiddush Hashem*.
9. The Gaon of Vilna compares the Diaspora to a grave. Even *Talmidei Chachamim* are threatened. Only the return of the nation to Israel can save the Jewish people from perishing.

Chapter Fifteen

JERUSALEM

1. YOM YERUSHALAYIM

Yom Yerushalayim, the day Jerusalem was liberated from enemy hands during the Six-Day War, was a special day for Rav Tzvi Yehuda. Along with the joy of our victory, he taught us to appreciate the sanctity of the day which had brought us back to our holy city. He taught us to see in the military miracles of the Six-Day War, another revelation of the Divine Providence which was re-establishing our nation in our Land.

Each year, when he spoke at the Yeshiva on *Yom Yerushalayim*, he would recall how his father, HaRav, ז"ל, had made *Aliyah* to Israel on this very same day, the twenty-eighth day of *Iyar*. So important was this date to his father, it was engraved on his tombstone on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the Temple Mount.¹

Cabinet ministers, members of the Knesset, the President, or Prime Minister, were invariably present at the Yeshiva's celebration. They sat at the table of honor with the Chief Rabbis of Israel, and other *Talmidei Chachamim*, but when Rav Tzvi Yehuda stood up to speak at the end of the evening, an incomparable silence spread through the hall, and to the street outside, where thousands of young people from all over the country would gather to hear the broadcast of his speech.

1. Rav Kook's grave on the Mount of Olives escaped the widespread acts of Arab desecration during the Jordanian occupation of the city.

Around midnight, Rav Tzvi Yehuda would leave the Yeshiva to lead the crowds on a joyous march to the *Kotel*. Surrounded by a sea of waving blue-and-white flags, he would join hands with his students, and walk the long way along Jaffe Street to the walls of the Old City. In the final years of his life, when illness made the long walk impossible, singing and dancing crowds would surround the car which drove him to the *Kotel*. It is difficult to describe the feeling of spontaneous joy which everyone shared as we made our way toward the Old City. It was a feeling of being a part of a great historic mission, a feeling of oneness with the nation, and with all generations – the feeling that we were the representatives of Jews the world over, filled with the highest of joys – the joy of Jerusalem.²

2. TO YOUR HOLY HABITATION³

Rav Tzvi Yehuda often explained that the redemption of Israel unfolded in stages. Just as *Hashem* had created the world in seven days, with ten Divine commands, and not all at once,⁴ so too the redemption of the nation of Israel appeared gradually, a little at a time.⁵

Thus, from the fifth day of *Iyar*, with the establishment of the Israeli State, to the twenty-eighth of *Iyar*, with the liberation of Jerusalem, the most sanctified place in *Eretz Yisrael*,⁶ the nation of Israel advanced forward on the road to redemption.

“The Almighty leads us with kindness,” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said,

2. Tchillim, 137:6.
3. Based on *Sichot HaRav Tzvi Yehuda. The 28th Day of Iyar. 5733*, Edited By HaRav Shlomo Aviner, Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim.
4. Avot, 5:1.
5. Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot, 1:1.
6. Mishna, Kelim, 1:8.

quoting the verse, *Thou in Thy kindness has led forth this people whom Thou has redeemed.*⁷

This gradual process, which took the Jewish people from the Balfour Proclamation, to the Independence of the State, and then to its miraculous settlement, development, and growth, all came to pass through *Hashem's* kindness, which reaches its greatest expression in our re-establishment in our Land.

“The Almighty led our way to triumph this day,” the *Rosh Yeshiva* declared.

This recognition was the basis for all of the joy, thanksgiving, and prayers of the day, he said. It is the Almighty, who, *Aids Israel with valor,*⁸ who instilled courage and bravery in the leaders of the Jewish people to have them proclaim that the State of Israel was born. The Almighty had planted valor in the hearts of the soldiers of Israel to sacrifice their lives, to sanctify His Name, and to sanctify His Land. It was *Hashem*, Rav Tzvi Yehuda declared, who had given us the spirit to overcome all of our enemies. This readiness for martyrdom, this selfless bravery for *Hashem*, for His nation, and for His Land, was the source of all of the miracles and wonders that we had witnessed.⁹

In the Six-Day War, *Hashem* brought us to an even greater height. *You have guided them with Your might to Your holy dwelling place.*⁷ With the liberation of Jerusalem, we reached, *Your holy dwelling place*, the Temple Mount, and the site of the Sanctuary.

“All of the nation’s innermost strengths are

7. Exodus, 15:13.

8. Morning Blessings.

9. Berachot 20A.

concentrated in Jerusalem, the site of the monarchy, the cradle of prophecy, the place of the Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stones.” Rav Tzvi Yehuda said. “Jerusalem enjoys a more exalted sanctity from all the rest of the Land of Israel, not only in a quantitative sense, but in the sense that her higher sanctity **is derived from all the rest of the Land of Israel. The ingathering of our exiles to all parts of the Land, and the increase in settlement throughout all of the Land’s borders, find expression in the exalted Kedusha of Jerusalem.**”

“We have come home through a Divine command. And the pinnacle of our homecoming is in our return to Jerusalem. All of the rulers of the world cannot alter this Divine, historic fact. *The counsel of the Lord endures forever.*”¹⁰

3. WE SHALL NOT BUDGE FROM HERE!

“It is impossible to forget that day,”¹¹ he recalled. “Already, for several days, the situation in the city was tense. Many of the Yeshiva’s students had enlisted in the war. On the second day of the week, the twenty-sixth of *Iyar*, a student approached me as I was walking to the morning prayer at the Yeshiva. He told me that the war had begun, and that the Arab Legion was boasting that it would conquer all of Jerusalem. Rumors reached me about battles on the outskirts of the city. A friend phoned me and related in the name of HaRav Shlomo Goren, the Israel Defense Force’s Chief Rabbi, that

10. Tchillim, 33:1i.

11. The 28th day of *Iyar*, 5727.

Tzahal units were advancing and getting closer to the Old City of Jerusalem. This was nerve-trembling news. Each hour, expectation quickened. One of the students who had enlisted, raced back to the Yeshiva during an hour break and announced that tomorrow, with the Almighty's help, our paratroopers would reach the *Kotel*! All of us were filled with hope and trembling. On the fourth day of the week, an officer knocked on the door of my house. He had come with a message from HaRav Goren. 'The Rav is invited by the Chief Rabbi of the army to come to the *Kotel*,' he announced. 'An armored car is waiting downstairs.'"

"HaRav David Cohen, the *Nazir*, ל"צ, joined us on the way. He too had been invited by his son-in-law, HaRav Goren. The army car progressed slowly amidst the joyous crowds who were thronging the streets of the city – thousands of singing and dancing people. Many of them had tears of joy in their eyes over the liberation of Jerusalem."

"On the way, the officer told me that the moment the paratroopers had reached the perimeter of the *Kotel*, a soldier, who was a student at our Yeshiva, climbed to the top row of stones on the Wall and unfurled the Israeli flag over the heights of the *Kotel*. His commander promised him a reward for his deed, and asked him to state his request. 'The greatest honor for me,' he answered, 'is that you send an army rabbi to bring our teacher here, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen Kook, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of *Mercaz HaRav*.'"

"The officer also told us that HaRav Goren had been among the first to reach the *Kotel*, in the face of fire

from Arab snipers, who had continued to shoot from their places of hiding. He clutched a Torah scroll in one hand, and a shofar in the other. Fighters, who had survived furious battles, cried like children when they heard the shofar blast of the Chief Rabbi. They admired his courage of heart, and his self-sacrifice, to remain all of the time at the head of the battle with the paratroopers who had burst through from the Mount of Olives to the *Kotel*.”

“Many of our boys were wounded in the charge. To my question, through which gate of the Old City had they reached the *Kotel*, the familiar voice of a soldier from our Yeshiva said, ‘*Baruch Hashem*, all of the gates are open.’ Another student, a rabbi in the army, rushed up to me at the *Kotel* and told me that he had received permission from army command to hold *Mincha* prayer at the Wall. It was the first national prayer at the *Kotel* after a nineteen-hundred-year separation! A prayer which was utter cleavage to *Hashem*. Every eye was filled with tears. Soldiers prostrated themselves on the ground in front of the *Kotel*. Others wedged their fingers between the stones of the Wall. Everyone chanted the *Tehillim*, *A Song of Ascent: When the Lord brought back the exiles of Zion, we were like those who dream*.”¹²

“Before we left the liberated city, I was interviewed by radio and television reporters from Israel and from outside the Land. They wanted to know my opinion on what had transpired.”

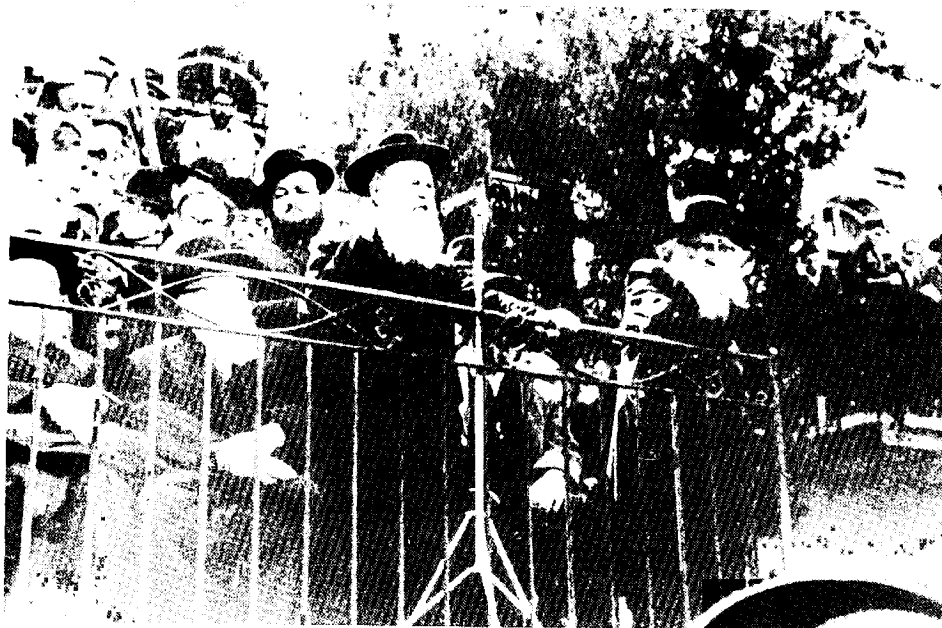
12. Tehillim, 126:1.

“Behold, I said. We announce to all of Israel, and to all of the world, that by a Divine command, we have returned to our home, to our holy city. From this day forth, we shall never budge from here! We have come home!”

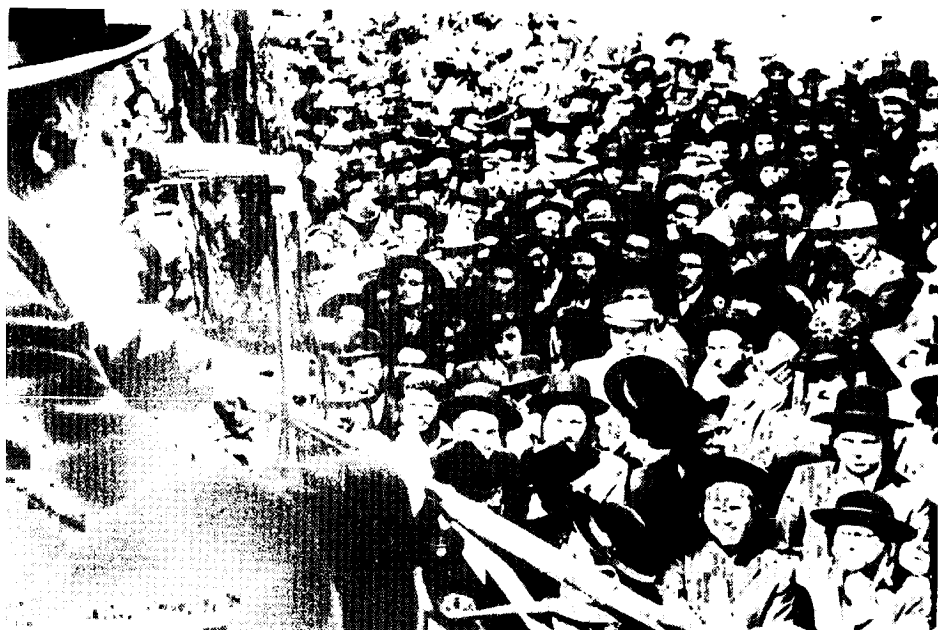
Summary

JERUSALEM

1. The military miracles of the Six-Day War are another revelation of the Divine Providence which is re-establishing us in our Land.
2. The readiness of the people of Israel to sacrifice their lives for *Hashem*, for His nation, and for His Land, is the source of the miracles we witnessed.
3. Jerusalem's exalted *Kedusha* is derived from the *Kedusha* of all the Land of Israel.
4. The liberation of Jerusalem in the Six-Day War is another step in our redemption, which unfolds in a gradual, developmental process.
5. The Jewish people have returned home to Israel in accord with a Divine command. All of the rulers of the world cannot alter this Divine, historic fact.



HaRav Tzvi Yehuda demonstrating against the spread of Christian missionaries. Standing on the balcony to his left is HaRav Arye Levine, a close friend and frequent visitor to his home. Weiss





With the *Nazir*, HaRav David Cohen, and paratroopers who were students in the Yeshiva, immediately after the liberation of the Kotel during the Six Day War.



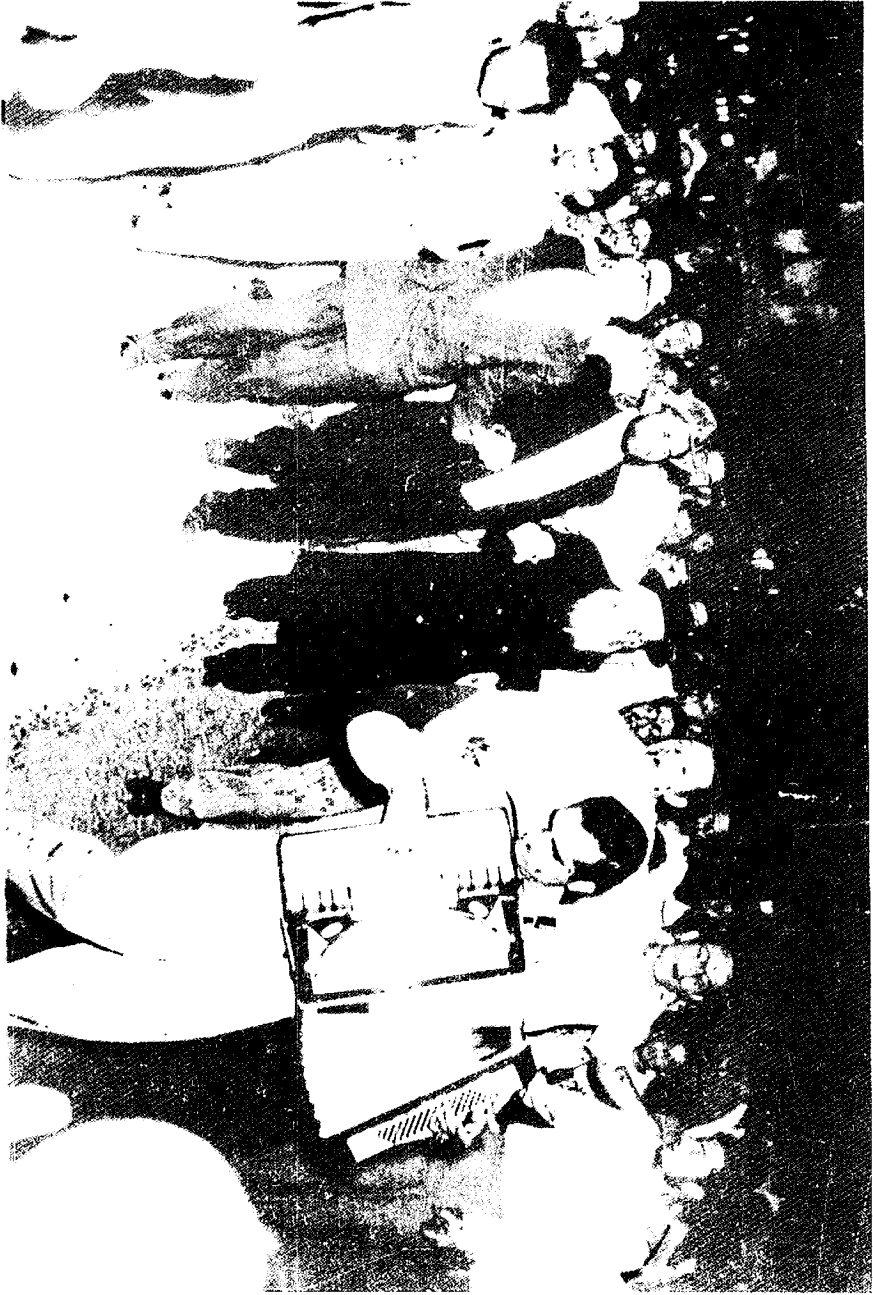
Leading Israeli soldiers in the first national *Mincha* prayer at the Kotel after a nearly 2000 year absence.



An Independence Day celebration at the Yeshiva after the Yom Kippur War with HaRav Avraham Elkanah Kahana Shapira, Chief Rabbi of Israel, and present Rosh Yeshiva of *Mercav HaRav*, and General Moshe Dayan.



Celebrating Jerusalem Day at the Kotel with Army Chief of Staff Mordechai Gur.



Independence Day in Jerusalem



The Independence-Day march to the Kotel



With Ariel Sharon during the first attempt to settle Elon Moreh in the Shomron.

Shia Segal



The dedication of the new settlement of Shilo.

Asher Korlich



The tenth year anniversary of Jewish settlement in Hevron. HaRav Tzvi Yehuda is flanked by HaRav Moshe Levinger and Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

Zoom 77

למען דעת !!

א

כל הארץ הזאת היא שלנו. בהחלט. של כולנו. ואינה ניתנת להימסר מסנה לאחרים. ירושה היא לנו מאבותינו (עבודה זרה י"ג) כדבר ד', אשר ממשלתו בכל דור ודור. לאברהם אבינו. לזרעך הארץ הזאת" (בראשית י"ב י"ז). לזרעך עד שולם" (בראשית י"ב ע"ז). "בארץ לך אתונה" (בראשית י"ב י"ז) "לזרעך הארץ הזאת." (בראשית ע"ז י"ח). ולזרעך כל הארץ" (בראשית י"ז ת). ליצחק אבינו. ולזרעך כל הארצות" (בראשית כ"ג ד'). ליעקב אבינו. הארץ לך ולזרעך" (בראשית כ"ח י"ט) הארץ לך ולזרעך" (בראשית ל"ה י"ב). "לבני ישראל נתתי לכם מורשה" (שמות ד' ח'). לזרעם וחלו לעולם" (שמות ל"ב י"ג)

לפיכך אחת ולתמיד הדברים ברורים ומוחלטים. כי אין כאן שום שטחים ערביים ואדמות ערביות. אלא אדמות ישראל. נחלות אבותינו הנצחיות. אשר אחרים באו ונבנו עליהם. שלא ברשותנו ונוכחותנו. ואנחנו מעולם לא עזבנו ולא נתקנו את נחלות אבותינו. תמיד תמיד המשכנו כל קשרי תודעתנו איתן וכל תקפה של מחאתנו הנמרצת כלפי ההחזקה האכזרית והמלאכותית שלהם בהן. כן מצווים אנחנו בשחררנו אותן. וכן לא נעזוב אותן ולא ניתן סוף. וכן ידועים הדברים גם בספרות הערבית שבעל-פה. על שיבתו בארצות-הים אל ארצנו וחלת-אבותינו. וגם בספר הקוראן שלהם. ומאשרים הדברים גם בדברי הבריתאים אשר כסיוס מלחמת שנת התע"ד. וכן היחה הדעת של לוד ג'רני. הנמצאת בידי.

כי כל הארץ הזאת, כל נל נמא נבלותיה והנניי. שייכה לשלמון עם ישראל

ב

בחזרנו בזמננו, בסקודה האלדית. כי בא מועד" (תהלים קכ י"ז) ונתגלה דקץ, וטהרין צת. ספר הנוזיה"ב. אורהיים וישרא כ"ה כ"ה ישועות מלכו יודת-דעה סי ס"ו אל ארץ אבותינו ארץ היינו וקדשנו זאת. לא לקחנו מאת הערבים אשר ישבו בתוכם. בשממותיה. שום שלטון ממשלתי שלא היה לחם בה.

אלא חזנו אל ארצנו זאת בהתמסרות השלמון הא' שלט עליו זמני. ובהתבטח החלפת אומות העולם. אשר סונדך הארץ הסנה הימה בידם. ואשר הודיעו ברת-עלחם התרבותית את הדאנת הכדת בצדקת שייכת שלמנונו בארצנו זאת. יודיעו וסכידים בה. - בעובדה הזאת האמיתית שלא לקחנו מאתם שום שלטון מסלתי. - גם השבים בני הארץ בהודעתם בזאת במסגרת הכתוב

הנמצא בידי.

גם הלא ידוע לכל. כי לא נרשנו אומם שהתישבותם פה בארצנו זאת חלת אבותינו. ארץ נבואתנו נביאנו וסליכותנו סליכו. ומסגב מקדשנו. והשפעתנו הכללאנושית. אלא שחם בעצמם. אם מחוך פחותה והתנהלות או מחוך המצאות תכניות פוליטיות של ניהול דברים מסולפים ועשיית מחנה פליטים למרות עיני העולם הטוב והרעוק. ברוח ועזבו כמה ממקומות ישוביהם כאו. ואנחנו חסידים ומסכידים לבנה ולהבנות בספלאות נוראות אלהים. מסקדשנו אל ישראל והחן סנו והשפעות לשם. כרך אלהים. כעבודת קדשם לבין עמם וארצם. וזרנונו ארבותם האבות. בצדק וכאישנו. לנשמות מרומם וכאמת והזרת שכיטו שכזתם אמת.

ודי צבאות עימנו ומעגב לם אלדה יעקב. גלא נסוג ממך ותדים ובעמך נקרא. ד' אלהים צבאות האר פיד ונאענה. (תהלים ס"ו א)

צבי יהודה הכהן קוק

ירושלים עיקותי

In response to international condemnation of the settlement of Judea and Shomron, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda wrote a proclamation which unequivocally championed the Jewish nation's right to all of *Eretz Yisrael*. Students made it into a street poster which they hung all over Israel.



The Rosh Yeshiva

Photograph by Moshe Kaplan



Yisrael Goldberg

GLOSSARY

- Achronim:** a more recent arbitrator of Talmudic law, within the last 500 years
- Admore:** a title of respect for a leader of a Torah community
- Aggadah:** the philosophical, ethical, and historic exposition of the Talmud and holy writings
- Ahavah:** love
- Aliyah:** emigration to Israel
- Am HaKodesh:** the holy nation; the nation of Israel
- Am Yisrael:** the nation of Israel
- Amora:** a Talmudic sage who explains the teachings of the earlier sages
- Apikorsim:** heretics
- Aron HaKodesh:** the ark where a Torah is kept
- Atchalta D'Geula:** the beginning of redemption
- Avinu:** our father
- Avodat Hashem:** the service of G-d
- Baal Tshuva:** penitent, a person who returns to religious practice
- Bavel:** Babylon
- Beit Din:** Jewish court
- Beit HaMikdash:** the Temple
- Beit HaMidrash:** study hall
- Benonim:** average people, neither overly righteous, nor wicked
- Bittul Torah:** neglect of Torah study
- Brit:** covenant (circumcision)
- Brit Avot:** Covenant of the Patriarchs
- Chazal:** the sages and early rabbis
- Chillul Hashem:** desecration of G-d's Name
- Chutz L'Aretz:** the diaspora (lit. outside of the Land)
- Clal Yisrael:** the entire physical and spiritual community of Israel, past, present, and future. The *Clal* has a life and soul of its own, which is much greater than the sum of the individuals who make up the nation.

Derech Eretz: moral living (lit. the way of the land)
Elul: a Jewish month
Emunah: frequently translated as faith or belief, *Emunah* is the profound understanding of the relationship between G-d, Torah, and the nation of Israel
Eretz HaKodesh: the Holy Land; Israel
Eretz Yisrael: the land of Israel
Galut: the diaspora or exile
Gaon: a genius in Torah scholarship
Gemara: the Talmud
Geula: redemption
Gadol: an outstanding giant in Torah
Halacha: Jewish law
Hashem: G-d (lit. the Name)
Hasidim: righteous people; also used to identify the community of Jews which adheres to the Hasidic movement
Heter HaMechirah: the legal formula which allows Jews to sell land in Israel to gentiles
Iggeret: letter
Kadosh: holy
Kodesh Kodoshim: Holy of Holies; the site in the Temple where the Ark and Tablets were housed
Kashrut: religious dietary laws
Kiddush: blessing over wine sanctifying the Sabbath
Kiddush Hashem: sanctification of G-d
Kleipah: a Kabbalistic concept regarding the impurity which surrounds a pure essence, often associated with sin (lit. husk or shell)
Kohen: a descendant of Aharon, chosen by family lineage to serve in the Temple
Kohen Gadol: the head of the Kohanim
Korbon Tamid: daily offering or sacrifice
Kosher: proper; meeting religious dietary standards
Lamdanut: Torah scholarship
Lashon Hara: speaking badly about other Jews or about the Land of

Israel (lit. evil language)
Malchut: rule, kingdom; most often associated with G-d's Kingdom
and with the Kingdom of Israel
Medinat Yisrael: the State of Israel
Midot: moral attributes
Midrashim: expository tales and commentaries in the Talmud and holy
writings
Milchemet mitzvah: compulsory war
Miserut Nefesh: self-sacrifice, martyrdom
Mishkan: Tabernacle
Mitzvah: commandment
Mashiach: the Messiah
Mussar: ethics, ethical conduct
Nasi: President of the Sanhedrin
Pekuach nefesh: the saving of Jewish life
Pilpul: Talmudic dialectics
Poskim: authorities of Jewish law
Prat: individual
Rabenu or Rabeinnu: our teacher
Rashaim: evil doers
Rav: rabbi or teacher
Rishonim: early commentators on the Talmud
Rosh Yeshiva: the head of a Yeshiva
Ruach HaKodesh: Divine inspiration
Seudah: meal
Sefer Torah: a Torah scroll
Segula: Israel's specialness, its Divine blessing, often translated as a
unique treasure
Shacharit: morning prayers
Shaliach, (pl. Shlichim): messenger, agent
Shas: the Talmud
Shekhina: the Divine Presence in the world
Shema: central prayer proclaiming the unity of G-d
Shemona Esrei: the "Eighteen Blessings"; central prayer recited three

times a day

Shidduch: a blind date

Shir HaShirim: "Song of Songs," written by King Shlomo

Shlita: blessing for a long and healthy life

Shmittah: the sabbatical year during which agricultural work is not allowed on the land in Israel

Shtetl: a small Jewish village

Siddur: prayer book

Sitra Achra: a Kabbalistic concept of evil, seen as the "other side" of the forces of good

Smichah: rabbinic ordination

Talmid Chacham: Torah scholar

Tehillim: Psalms

Tohu: void

Tosefot: commentators of the Gemara

Tshuva: repentance

Tzaddik: a righteous person, often used to describe a person of outstanding piety, Torah scholarship, and good deeds

Tzahal: Israel Defense Force

Tzibur: congregation, public

Yishuv: settlement

Yom Haazmaut: Israel Independence Day

Yom Tov: Jewish holiday

Yovel: Jubilee year

Zchute: merit

Zchute Avot: merit of the Patriarchs

INDEX

- Adler, Rabbi Natan, 238
Ahavah, 23, 57–93
Aggadah, 12–15
Agudat Yisrael, 245, 246, 248
Akiva, Rabbi, 82, 84, 168, 301–2
Aliyah, 7, 35; parents and, 122–3; 126–8, 163–5, 221–2, 235, 293
Alkali, Rabbi Yehuda Chai, 268
Am HaBanim Smaicha, 268
Am Yisrael, 12, 17–24, 27–46, 47–54, 105–6; connection to *Eretz Yisrael*, 100–120, 124, 162, 209–13, 228, 264, 266–67, 333, 362
Arabs, 194–200, 287–88
Arizal, Rabbi Yitzhak Luria, 84–5, 303
Avnei Nezer, Rabbi Avraham Bornstein, 233, 235–6
Avraham Avinu, 7, 32, 33, 65–6, 68–76, 111, 159
- Baal Shem Tov, 303
Babylonian Talmud, 215
Balfour Proclamation, 175, 234, 246–7, 248, 289, 290, 327, 371
Bar Kochva, 301–02
Bar-Ilan, Rabbi Meir, 239
Begin, Menachem, 357
Beit HaMikdash, see Temple
Belz, Rebbe of, 251
Bilaam, 69–70, 297
Brisk, Rabbi Chaim of, 238, 239, 240, 242
- Calculation of months, 210–213
Chief Rabbinate, 342
Chillul Hashem, see Desecration of G-d's Name
Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagen HaCohen, 59, 81, 83, 170, 213; and Zionism, 237–38, 239

Christianity, 312, 315–318, 333
Clal Yisrael, 17, 21, 27–46, 47–54, 98, 99, 264–66; and King David, 298–99; 309, 33, 342, 361
 Cohen, HaRav David, the *Nazir*, 36, 373

 David, King, 33, 168; the House of, 281; as *Mashiach*, 297–300
 Desecration of G-d, 41; exile and, 146–48, 151, 314, 342, 362–65;
 Yeshiva deferments, 178–79; *Talmidei Chachamin* and, 81
 Diaspora, 117–18; see also Exile

 Elijah, 321, 322, 355–56
 Emden, Rabbi Yaacov, 268
Emunah, 3–26, 28, 44, 150, 343
 Engel, Rabbi Yosef, 248
 Enlistment of Yeshiva students, 176–180
Eretz Yisrael, 30, 97–133, 213–14, 348; acquired through suffering, 192–194; centrality to Torah, 209–213; connection to Am Yisrael, 100–120, 124, 162, 209–13, 218–223, 228, 264, 266–67, 333, 362; departure from, 116, 120–22; *Kedusha* of, 100–1, 107, 116–120, 126; land expels, 223; *Mitzvah* of, 112–15, 122–23, 155–204, 206–213, 224–227; our right to, 198–200; redemption and, 266–67, 320, 324–25, 348–49; and secrets of Torah, 254–55; spiritual dangers in, 224–227; Torah of, 123–24, 213–14
 Exile (*Galut*), 35, 36, 139, 140, 157–58, 162, 163, 167, 174–75, 266, 267, 271–2; *Mashiach* and, 276; and *Eretz Yisrael*, 278; desecration of G-d's Name and, 147–48, 151, 314, 362–65

 Friedman, Rabbi David of Karlin, 238, 239
 Frank, Rabbi Tzvi Pesach, 226

Galut, see Exile
 Gaon, of Vilna, see Vilna Gaon
Gedolei Yisrael; and Zionism, 233–57

Geula, see Redemption
 Goren, HaRav Shlomo, 372, 373
 Gur, Rebbe of, 243
 Guttmacher, Rabbi Eliahu, 230, 234

Halacha, 12–15
 HaLevi, HaRav Yehuda, 10, 116, 145, 361
 Harlop, HaRav Yaacov Moshe, 340, 351
 Herod, 329
 Herzl, Theodore, 127, 240
 Hezekiah, King, 226; and Mashiach, 303–09
Heter HaMechirah 227
 Holocaust, 259–294, 365
 Hosiatin, Admore of, 242

Ingathering of the exiles, 98, 99, 129, 146–48, 151, 222, 237, 284–85, 292–94, 310, 348, 371
 Israel, the nation of, 141, 145, 300, 332; see also *Am Yisrael*
 Israel Defense Forces, 166, 173, 281, 287, 353, 355, 372–75

Jeremiah, 186–89
 Jerusalem, 366, 369–76
 Jerusalem Talmud, 214–15
 Job, 262
 Joshua, 168, 171, 196, 351
 Judea and Samaria, 337, 351–67

Kahana, Rabbi Avraham Dov of Kovna, 245, 246
 Kalisher, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh, 230, 234
Kedusha, 11–12, 70; and State of Israel, 343–48, 361, 363, 364, 371
Kiddush Hashem, see Sanctification of G-d's Name
 Klotzkin, Rabbi Eliahu, 225
Kodesh Kodoshim, 10–12
 Kook, HaRav Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Kook, 3, 38, 42, 61, 139,

157, 236, and Zionism, 245–48, 252–53; the Holocaust, 271–72; 357, 369

Kook, HaRav Natan Raanan, 244, 251

Kook, HaRav Tzvi Yehuda HaCohen, 38–9; his *Ahavah*, 57–60; style of teaching, 99; 135–38, 205–6

Kotel, 373–74

Kotzk, Rebbe of, 5

Kuzari, 9–12, 35, 104, 106, 110, 120, 164, 216, 254

Lot, 74–76

Lubavitch, Rabbi Shlomo Bear, 238

Maharal, of Prague, 5, 104, 106, 254

Mahari Enzel 10

Maharil Diskin 260

Malchut 278, 282, 284, 285, 287, 288

Medinat Yisrael, see State of Israel

Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva, 4, 12, 38, 53, 136, 155, 341

Merit of the Fathers, 311–13

Meizel, Rabbi Eliahu Chaim from Lodz, 243

Mesillat Yesharim, 12, 36–37, 70, 157, 165

Milchemet mitzvah, 23, 167–76, 285–88

Milchemet rishut, 172–76

Minorities; in *Eretz Yisrael*, 194–200, 287–88

Miserut Nefesh; of Moshe Rabenu for *Am Yisrael*, 40–2, 76–7; and *Eretz Yisrael*, 183–184; miracles and, 191–2

Mizrachi movement, 234

Mohliiver, Rabbi Shmuel, 223, 234, 239

Mohammed, 315, 316

Montefiore, Moses, 234

Moshe Rabenu, 33, 41, 76–7, 109, 158, 163, 167, 170, 292, 293, 297, 302, 305, 351

Mashiach, 35, 168, 237, 241, 250, 270, 275–336; Zionism and, 276; *Clal Yisrael* and, 304–5; war and, 321–22; *Aggadah* and, 322–26

Netziv, of Volozhin, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, 236, 269
 Noah, 7

Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh, 49, 209, 299, 302, 313
 Ohr Somayach, Rabbi Meir Simcha HaCohen of Dvinsk; and Zionism,
 233, 234–5, 239, 268
 Orot, 254–55
 Ostrovitz, Admore Meir Yechiel of, 108–9, 242–43

Pekuach Nefesh; and war, 182–85
 Prachya, Rabbi Yehoshua ben; and Yeshua of Nazareth, 316–17
 Prayer, 35
 Prophecy, 98, 120–21, 187, 196, 213, 215–17, 294, 297, 330, 363, 372

Rambam, 19, 23, 35, 112, 113, 157, 172, 196, 197; *Mitzvah* of living in
 Israel, 206–213; 215, 250; *Mashiach*, 278–331; 343, 345
 Ramban, 23, 76, 112, 149, 164, 166, 169, 173, 184, 201, 206, 286, 288,
 342
 Redemption (*Geula*), 34–36, 98, 135–153, 222, 250, 251, 270, 271; and
Eretz Yisrael, 98–9, 128–9, 138–151, 266–67, 320, 324–25, 348–49;
 and *Mashiach*, 278, 293, 298, 309–315; and war, 321–22; 345, 348,
 364, 366, 370
 Repentance, 36; and *Mashiach*, 284–85, 309–315; 364
 Revival of the dead, 280, 362–65
 Rinnes, Rabbi Yitzhak, 239

Sadducees, 39–40
 Salanter, Rabbi Yisrael, 241
 Sanctification of G-d's Name, 27, 31, 37, 42–44, 81, 88, 146–48, 151,
 156, 179, 192, 201, 342, 360, 362, 371
 Sanctuary (Tabernacle, *Mishkan*,) 171
 Sanhedrin, 172, 179, 372
 Saul, King, 64–5, 281
 Second Day of Yom Tov, 217–18

Sefer HaChinuch, 191
 Settlement, 176; of Judea and Samaria, 185–86; 351–68, 186–89, 200–201, 348
 Shapiro, HaRav Avraham Elkanah Kahana, 233
 Sharon, Arik, 354
Shekhina (Divine Presence,) 125–26
 Shilo, 359, 360, 361, 366, 367
Shmitta, 291–92
 Sodom, 71–76
 Sofer, Chatam, 13–15
 Spies, 7, 143, 164, 249
 State of Israel, 104, 107, 114, 139, 140, 145, 156, 165–69, 192; and *Mashiach*, 280, 284, 286, 287; 318, 320, 343–48, 353, 354–56; settlement and, 356–59; 362, 370, 371

Talmid Chacham, 81, 91
 Temple, 63, 216, 282–84, 303, 324, 327, 328–29, 347–48, 363, 371
 Territorial concessions, 180–89
 Three Oaths, 235, 288–91
 Torah, 16, 19–24, 33; and *Am Yisrael*, 46–54; 57, 104, 144, 173, 176, 209, 303, 332–33; and *Eretz Yisrael*, 123–26, 298; and Zionism, 230
Tshuva, see Repentance

 Unity, 30, 64, 71
 Ushishkin, Menachem, 244

 Vilna, Gaon of (HaGra, Rabbi Eliahu ben Shlomo Zalman,) 9–13, 35, 47, 88, 101, 109, 215, 269–70, 303, 313, 363–65
 Vilna, Rabbi Shlomo HaCohen of, 240
 Vital, Rabbi Chaim, 84–85

 War, see also *Milchemet mitzvah*; 167, 169–74; and *Pekuach Nefesh*, 182–85; and valor, 189–91; and *Mashiach*, 321–322
 Wasserman, Rabbi Elchanan, 241

Yaacov Avinu, 32, 100–101

Yamit, 358

Yom Haazmaut, 337–350

Yosef, 109

Yovel, 291–92

Zalman, Rebbe Schneur of Liadi, 30

Zionism, 42, 144, 230; *Gedolei Yisrael* and, 233–257; 310, 315

Zionist Shekel, 241–42