

# Sefer Vayoe! Moshe

## Introduction

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*The tragedies that have come upon the Jewish people in recent years*

Due to our many sins, in recent years we have suffered many extremely bitter tragedies, such as never before happened to the Jewish people in all of their history, and if Hashem had not left us any survivors we would have been wiped out like Sodom.<sup>1</sup> But Hashem in His mercy left us very few in number, not a few survivors out of many but a few out of a few, because He swore to our ancestors that their descendents would never become extinct, Heaven forbid.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, the full meaning of the verse, “And Hashem will make your plagues unfathomable”<sup>3</sup> has come true. Thoroughly unfathomable events have befallen us, “the wisdom of our wise men has been lost, and the understanding of our geniuses has been hidden.”<sup>4</sup>

We have waited for healing, but instead we found fear.<sup>5</sup> We have not yet come to the place of rest and the promised land.<sup>6</sup>

Our heart is broken into pieces within us, and we have nothing to with which to take comfort and encouragement. We can only look up to Heaven with pining of

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<sup>1</sup> Yishaya 1:9

<sup>2</sup> “And even so, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them nor despise them to destroy them, to annul my covenant with them, for I am Hashem their G-d. (Vayikra 26:44)

<sup>3</sup> Devarim 28:59

<sup>4</sup> Yishaya 29:14. The full verse is, “Therefore, I will continue to bring unfathomable events upon this people, thoroughly unfathomable, the wisdom of his wise men shall be lost, and the understanding of his geniuses shall be hidden.” The Rebbe’s connection of the posuk in Devarim with the posuk in Yishaya is based on the Gemara in Shabbos 138b, which says:

Rav said: The Torah will one day be forgotten from Israel, as the Torah says, “And Hashem will make your plagues unfathomable.” I would not know what “unfathomable” refers to, if not for the posuk in Yishaya, “Therefore I will continue to bring unfathomable events ...” So you see that unfathomable means the loss of Torah wisdom.”

<sup>5</sup> Yirmiyah 8:15. The full verse is, “Hope for peace, but there is no good; for a time of healing, but instead there is fear.”

<sup>6</sup> After the horrors of the Holocaust, we expected moshiach to come, but instead we found only more fear.

the eyes and sadness of the soul,<sup>7</sup> until Hashem looks down from Heaven,<sup>8</sup> sees our affliction and heals our broken and pained hearts with His great mercy.

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*Four proofs that our reaction to a tragedy must be to search our deeds for the causes of the tragedy: 1) Tanach; 2) the Talmud; 3) Rabbi Yosef Yabetz; 4) Rabbi Yaakov of Lissa.*

Now, throughout Jewish history, whenever any calamity befell the Jews, they probed their ways to discover what sin caused the calamity, so that they might take heed and return to Hashem. We find this approach in the Tanach<sup>9</sup> and in the Talmud.<sup>10</sup> And similarly, after the Spanish expulsion, the holy and pious Rabbi Yosef Yaabetz of Spain wrote the book *Ohr Hachaim* for this purpose: to investigate the sins that caused the tragedy and the expulsion at that time.<sup>11</sup> And my ancestor, the *Chavos Daas*<sup>12</sup> wrote in the introduction to his commentary on *Megillas Eichah*<sup>13</sup> that there is no point in relating tragedies and bitter events unless one also tells the cause of the tragedies, so that he can take care to avoid those causes in the future. He therefore explains the entire *Megillas Eichah* in this manner: he shows that every time *Eichah* mentions a tragedy that took place, it also notes the cause that brought it about, so that we should repent to Hashem wholeheartedly and never suffer again. That is the essence of what he says; see there for the details.

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*The violation of the Three Oaths was the cause of the recent tragedies*

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<sup>7</sup> Devarim 28:65

<sup>8</sup> Eichah 3:50

<sup>9</sup> "Certainly we are guilty because of our brother" (Bereishis 42:21); "because my G-d was not with me, these evils befell me" (Devarim 31:17); "Why was the land destroyed? Because they forsook My Torah" (Yirmiyah 9:11-12); "He who chastises nations, does He not thereby rebuke?" (Tehillim 94:10); "Let us search our ways and investigate and repent to Hashem" (Eichah 3:40).

<sup>10</sup> When Rav Huna's merchandise spoiled, the other sages told him to make an accounting of his actions (Berachos 5b); the Second Temple was destroyed because of causeless hatred (Yoma 9b); the city of Kfar Sechanya was destroyed because they did not mourn for Jerusalem (Gittin 57a).

<sup>11</sup> He points to the study of Greek philosophy as the sin that caused the expulsion.

<sup>12</sup> The Rebbe's mother, Chana, was the daughter of Rabbi Yoel Ashkenazi, after whom he was named. Rabbi Yoel Ashkenazi's wife was the daughter of Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Tumim, the Kalischer Rav. Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch's wife, Chaya, was the daughter of Rabbi Yaakov of Lissa (1760-1832), author of the *Chavos Daas* and *Nesivos Hamishpat*.

<sup>13</sup> *Palgei Mayim*, printed in 1815.

Today, in this generation, there is no need to search and look in hidden places for the sin that caused this tragedy, because it is revealed and explicit in the words of Chazal,<sup>14</sup> who told us explicitly and derived from verses<sup>15</sup> that the punishment for transgressing the oaths not to go up as a wall<sup>16</sup> and not to force the end of exile,<sup>17</sup> Heaven forbid, is that “I will permit your flesh like the gazelles and deer of the field.” And due to our many sins, this is what actually happened: the heretics and non-believers made all sorts of efforts<sup>18</sup> to transgress these oaths, to go up as a wall and to take for themselves a government and sovereignty<sup>19</sup> before the time, which is considered forcing the end. And they captured the hearts of most of the Jewish people in support of this defiled idea.<sup>20</sup>

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*Two responses to the those who might object that the Zionists did not achieve a state before the Holocaust, so how could the Holocaust have been the punishment for Zionism?*

- 1) Even merely planning to violate an oath is a punishable offense.*
- 2) The Zionists took actions leading to violating the oaths. (A third response will be given in Section 10.)*

The Mechilta on Parshas Yisro says:

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<sup>14</sup> Kesubos 111a

<sup>15</sup> Shir Hashirim 2:7 and 3:5: “I have imposed an oath upon you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or by the deer of the field, that you neither awaken nor arouse the love until it is desired.” This posuk occurs a third time in 8:4, in a slightly shortened form (without the reference to gazelles and deer).

<sup>16</sup> Not to immigrate to Eretz Yisroel in large numbers (Siman 10) in an effort to gain independence (Siman 79). Some held that the prohibition is only on conquering (Siman 16). But even they would agree that what happened in 1948 was forbidden, since it was a conquest against the will of the non-Jews living in the land (Siman 86).

<sup>17</sup> Not to make any effort to bring an end to the Jewish exile, such as a false messianic movement (Siman 24).

<sup>18</sup> Herzl’s book “The Jewish State” was published in 1896. The First Zionist Congress took place in 1897. Weizmann convinced the British to issue the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Jabotinsky and his Jewish Legion fought in the conquest of Palestine in 1917-1918. The Zionist movement brought 400,000 Jews to Palestine (50,000 of them illegally) during the Mandate period up to WWII. The Irgun and the Stern Gang began anti-British terrorism in 1936. The Haganah, founded in 1921, was developed into an underground army of 50,000 by 1936.

<sup>19</sup> The Biltmore Conference in May 1942 stated openly for the first time that the goal of Zionism was a Jewish commonwealth, not just settlement.

<sup>20</sup> In 1938–39 the Zionist movement had 1,040,540 members in 61 countries. The total world Jewish population at that time was about 16 million. Zionism was banned in Turkey and the USSR, which had well over 3 million Jews. These figures suggest that Zionism was very popular among Jews, although it is not clear how many supporters the movement had among those who were not officially members.

Why does the Torah say, “Do not take the name of Hashem your G-d in vain?”<sup>21</sup> Is it not written already, “Do not swear by My name falsely?”<sup>22</sup> The answer is that from this verse I would only know that one may not swear. How do we know that one may not even agree to swear? Therefore it states, “Do not take the name of Hashem your G-d in vain.” Before you agree to swear, I am to you a G-d. Once you agree to swear, I am to you a judge, as it states: “For Hashem will not acquit whoever takes His name in vain.”

The Mirkeves Hamishneh<sup>23</sup> comments that from this Mechilta it would seem that Hashem punishes a person even for planning to take a false oath, just as in the case of idolatry.<sup>24</sup> The sin of planning is only excluded<sup>25</sup> from the category of oath-related sins that obligate one to bring a sacrifice, but it is still considered the sin of a false oath. He quotes Rabbeinu Yonah as saying this as well. However, he concludes that since the Rambam omits this law, it must be that the Mechilta is merely finding a Scriptural hint to what is actually a Rabbinic prohibition. This matter still needs further study; this is not the place to write at length about it.<sup>26</sup>

But in the case of Zionism there was not only planning – in which case we would have the above doubt as to whether a person is punished for planning to violate an oath – but many vigorous actions were taken toward this project, with strategies and various means to bring about the transgression of these oaths. And it can be proven from the Rambam's Letter to Yemen that any action one takes towards that goal, even before the goal is reached, constitutes a violation of the oath. Writing in response to a certain messianic pretender, around whom a few followers had gathered, the Rambam strongly warned these followers that the movement posed a grave danger, because if the government found out it about it, there might be terrible consequences. He also warned them not to violate the oaths, and wrote that the reason for the oaths is "because Shlomo knew with his prophetic inspiration that the Jewish people would press to move before its proper time, and they would perish because of this and tragedies would befall them."<sup>27</sup> Thus the Rambam knew

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<sup>21</sup> Shemos 20:7

<sup>22</sup> Vayikra 19:12

<sup>23</sup> A commentary on the Mechilta by Rabbi Dovid Moshe Avraham Ashkenazi, early 1700s.

<sup>24</sup> In Kiddushin 39b the Gemara states that for all sins except for idolatry, Hashem does not punish a person for planning in his mind to commit the sin. If the Mechilta is saying that one can be punished for planning to take a false oath, by the same token one can be punished for planning to violate an oath that he has already taken.

<sup>25</sup> In Shevuos 26b. The Gemara there discusses both the case of planning to take a false oath, and the case of taking a false oath in one's mind, without pronouncing the words. Both are excluded from bringing an offering.

<sup>26</sup> See Siman 81 where the Rebbe writes that a conclusion drawn from one posek's omission cannot overrule an explicit statement by another posek.

<sup>27</sup> The Rebbe's proof is from the fact that the Rambam applied to oaths to a false messianic movement despite the fact that that particular movement had no hope of succeeding.

that the false messianic movement would get nothing for its effort but more trouble, and still he considered the effort to be a violation of the oaths. The reason for this is that the oath not to force the end forbids any actions toward forcing the end, so that any action taken, even if unsuccessful, is already considered a violation of the oath.

In any case, one cannot compare actions (even unsuccessful ones) to mere strategies, which the Mirkeves Hamishneh on the Mechilta holds are only prohibited Rabbinically. An action toward violating an oath is an actual violation of the oath, not just a plan.

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*Three responses to the argument that since only a few Zionists, mainly in Eretz Yisroel, violated the oaths, why did the entire Jewish people in Europe suffer?*

- 1) For an oath, the whole world is punished for the violation of an individual, and certainly for a large percentage;*
- 2) Even among those who did not help the Zionists, most did not protest;*
- 3) Punishment always begins with the righteous. (A fourth response will be given later, Section 8.)*

The Gemara in Shevuos 39a says: “For all other sins in the Torah, Hashem punishes only the sinner himself, but for an oath violation He punishes the sinner, his family and the entire world.” We see here the severity of the punishment for violating an oath: that the entire world can get punished on account of a single individual who violated an oath. All the more so in our case, where many actions were taken by countless people, to the point that in the last few years, almost the majority of the Jewish people assisted the Zionists in their efforts<sup>28</sup> in many ways leading to a violation of the oaths. And all this was done in public, before the eyes of all of Israel, and few are those who were fortunate enough to object with an

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He also quotes the Rambam's words "they would perish because of this" because this might show that the entire reason for the oath was because Shlomo knew that any efforts to violate it would fail. Thus it would seem that an attempted violation counts as a violation.

Regarding this last proof one could counter, however, that the Rambam meant that even if Zionism succeeds temporarily, eventually it will lead to a tragic end, and that is why the oath was given - to prohibit temporarily successful violations.

<sup>28</sup> This figure is possibly based on a combination of membership and contributors to mainstream Zionism and Mizrachi, as well as contributions to grassroots funds such as the JNF. See below, Section 8, where the Rebbe states that most of the Jewish people assisted in Zionism, and see footnote there.

appropriate protest.<sup>29</sup> That is why this tragedy has befallen us, the fulfillment of the explicit words of Chazal: the Jewish people became as ownerless as the gazelles and deer of the field, may Hashem spare us. “Punishment only comes to the world on account of the wicked, but it only begins with the righteous.”<sup>30</sup>

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*Response to the argument that there were other sins that caused the Holocaust: yes, there were others, but this sin is unique in that by itself it had the power to bring on such a punishment*

If this had been the only sin the Jewish people had committed, isn't the bitter punishment, which was actually fulfilled, clear and explicit in the words of Chazal? And similarly, the Bnei Ephraim<sup>31</sup> were righteous and holy, and only because of that sin of leaving exile before the proper time did they meet their fate on the way. And Chazal<sup>32</sup> say that this was because they violated the oath. This was despite the fact that they did not violate it intentionally, but due to a mere mistake in their calculations.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the uprising led by Ben Koziva took place in a generation full of prodigious Torah and holiness, yet they were punished with dreadful carnage, R”L, worse than that which took place at the destruction of the Temple. This is described in many places in the words of Chazal. For example, the Yerushalmi<sup>34</sup> says, “At that time the pride of Israel was cut down and will not return until the Son of Dovid comes.” The Midrash Rabbah on Shir Hashirim, on the verse “I have placed an oath upon you” (2:7), says that the reason Ben Koziva's generation was punished was because they violated the Oath. This will be

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29 See below, Sections 9 and 23, for more on concept that failure to protest brings punishment.

30 Bava Kama 60a

31 Part of the tribe of Ephraim left Egypt thirty years before the Exodus. They attempted to invade the Holy Land, but were killed by the Philistines. The Midrash (Shemos Rabbah 20:11) puts the number of Bnei Ephraim killed at 300,000. It also says that the reason why Hashem did not want to take the Jews out of Egypt through the land of the Philistines (Shemos 13:17) was so that they would not see the bones of their brothers from the tribe of Ephraim, which were still strewn on the ground.

32 Midrash Rabbah Shir Hashirim 2:7

33 They counted the 400 years from the Covenant Between the Parts (when Avraham was 70 years old) rather than from birth of Yitzchak (when Avraham was 100 years old). In Siman 25, the Rebbe quotes the Yefei Kol on the Midrash Shir Hashirim who wonders how they could have been punished so severely for an innocent mistake. The Yefei Kol answers that although according to their calculations the time had come, they should have waited for instructions from Heaven. Since they received no prophetic message from Hashem, they should have realized that the time had not come and their calculations were in error.

34 As quoted by the Rosh in Berachos 7:22. However, in our text of the Yerushalmi (Succah 23a), this statement is made regarding the massacre of the Jews of Egypt by Trajan.

explained more in the main body of this work.<sup>35</sup> But from this statement alone, one can get an idea of the disastrous results of violating the oath.

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*Response to those who claim we would need prophecy to explain the cause of a tragedy of the magnitude of the Holocaust*

The Gemara in Yevamos 78b says:

In Dovid's time there was a famine for three consecutive years. In the first year Dovid said to his people, "Perhaps there are idol worshippers among you?" For the Torah says, "Beware lest your hearts be misled, and you turn away and worship strange gods... and there will be no rain." They searched, but found no idol worshippers. In the second year, he said to them, "Perhaps there are immoral sinners among you?" For it says... They searched, but found no immoral sinners. In the third year he said to them, "Perhaps there are those among you who make public pledges to give charity but do not fulfill their pledges?" As it says... They searched, but found nothing... so Dovid consulted the Urim Vetumim, and received the following reply: "It is because of Shaul, and also because of his bloody house..."<sup>36</sup>

The Rif<sup>37</sup> on Ein Yaakov asks many questions on this Gemara, but his main question is: Why didn't Dovid consult the Urim Vetumim right away? Had he done so, the famine could have been cut short in the first year, just as it was ended after three years. Why did Dovid and the people spend three long years searching after the three sins mentioned, at a time when the nation was suffering from famine? If all that was lacking was the knowledge of which sin had to be corrected, why didn't Dovid consult the Urim Vetumim immediately?

The Maharsha resolves this question in the following way. Because Dovid thought that the sin had to do with idolatry, immorality or withholding charity – matters that are not the domain of the monarchy – he did not consult the Urim Vetumim. The established law is that "only a king can consult the Urim Vetumim"<sup>38</sup> and

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<sup>35</sup> In Siman 39 he discusses the dispute between the Tannaim as to whether Ben Koziva had the potential to be moshiach. In Siman 53 he discusses whether Chazal themselves killed Ben Koziva. In Siman 139 he explains that Chazal viewed his movement as extremely dangerous.

<sup>36</sup> Shmuel II 21:1

<sup>37</sup> Rabbi Yoshiahu Pinto of Morocco

<sup>38</sup> Yoma 71b

Dovid understood this to mean that the Urim Vetumim can be consulted only for matters relating to the monarchy.

But this still leaves us with a question: Dovid did not know with certainty that it was any one of these three sins that was the cause of the famine, since we see that in fact, none of them were found after three years of investigation. His reason for searching for these sins was not certain knowledge, only suspicion, as the word “perhaps” indicates. So why didn’t he also suspect that it might be something related to the monarchy, as it in fact was? For any matter of doubt one may consult the Urim Vetumim. Why was it necessary to suffer three years of famine instead of consulting the Urim Vetumim immediately? Why did he and the nation first have to attempt an unsuccessful search for these three sins?

The Rif writes at length about this, and the essence of his answer is that as long as there exists the possibility that it was one of these three sins which Scripture explicitly says can cause famine, one has to assume that is the case until proven otherwise. This is still difficult to understand and requires study.

In any case, we see here that whenever tragedy struck, even in the time when the Urim Vetumim existed, the Jewish people immediately drew conclusions based on what is stated explicitly in Scripture, without even consulting the Urim Vetumim. Now, we do not find such a severe, bitter, awesome and terrifying punishment in Scripture - “I will make your flesh permitted” i.e. truly ownerless “like the gazelles and the deer” – except for this sin of violating the end of exile and the oath, as stated in the verse, “I have imposed an oath upon you...” as Chazal explain it. And such a tragedy as the Holocaust has never happened to the Jews in all their history. In the Holocaust Jews were not killed as part of a forced conversion campaign, or for any other reason. Their blood was simply fair game, declared literally ownerless like gazelles and deer of the field.<sup>39</sup> No one can explain it. But that is the punishment of which Scripture warns for only one sin – the sin of violating the oaths. Thus Scripture testifies that violation of the oath is the cause - yet no one realizes it.

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<sup>39</sup> The idea that Jewish blood was ownerless during the Holocaust actually has two aspects: they were killed without any excuse or purpose, and they were disowned by all the countries of the world – no one wanted to take them in when it was still possible to escape from Europe. Thus it was clearly recognizable as the punishment described by Chazal for the oaths.



*Another response to the argument that if only a few Jews sinned in creating the state, why was the whole Jewish nation punished?*

One must study the Ramban on Parshas Ki Sisa, in his commentary on many of the verses relating to the sin of the Golden Calf.<sup>40</sup> He writes that although those who bowed and sacrificed to the calf were few, most of the people sinned in thought, and that is why Hashem's anger was aroused against them to destroy them, Heaven forbid. The Torah says, "And Hashem struck the people with a plague because they made the calf..."<sup>41</sup> The Ramban explains that these people were not those who bowed or sacrificed to it, but rather those who made it, that is, those who gathered around Aharon and brought him the gold. He also cites the Targum which renders "because they made the calf" as "because they served the calf."<sup>42</sup> So we see that Hashem's anger over the sin of the calf was not against the few who actually worshipped it by sacrificing or bowing, but against the many who helped build it, whether by joining the multitude that gathered against Aharon, or by giving the gold, and the like. These people who joined the movement thought that it was the will of Hashem that they should have a leader and spiritual guide to replace Moshe, who had failed to return on time, as the Ramban, Ibn Ezra, Baalei Tosafos<sup>43</sup> and other Rishonim<sup>44</sup> write at length.

The same was true of this bitter "calf" of creating a state before the coming of moshiach. The Zionists launched this defiled idea many years ago, and aggressive actions were taken in various ways to facilitate the violation of the Oaths. Due to our many sins, most<sup>45</sup> of the Jewish people, in all the various organizations they belonged to, became the means to assist in the project. Even among the most religious Jews, who fought hard against the Zionists' destruction of Torah, heresy and atheism, R"L, many still approved of the essence of the Zionist ideal - to free ourselves from exile and found a state before the coming of moshiach, which is the

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<sup>40</sup> On Shemos 32:7-8

<sup>41</sup> Shemos 32:35

<sup>42</sup> The Ramban explains the Targum to mean that they served it by hugging and kissing it. Although this is not the same as the Ramban's own explanation that they caused Aharon to make it, there is a common idea behind both: these people were punished not for actually making the calf, and not for worshipping it, but only for wanting it or approving of it.

<sup>43</sup> All three are on Shemos 32:1

<sup>44</sup> For example Rabbeinu Bachya on Shemos 32:4.

<sup>45</sup> Earlier (Section 5) the Rebbe wrote "almost the majority of the Jewish people assisted them in their efforts," and here he says "most of the Jewish people... became the means to assist in the project ". The difference is that here he is including the Agudah, as he continues, "Even among the most religious Jews, who fought hard against..." The Agudah did not assist deliberately in creating a state, but they became the means to assist. Their efforts for aliyah and their political pressure on the British to open the gates of Palestine was used by the Zionists to help them achieve a state.

poisonous root of the movement. This is because the evil inclination is powerful and blinds people's eyes to this truth. Most people did not think it through, and so they became accessories to the transgression in various ways - some by action and some by the spoken word – and were too blind to see that it might cost them their lives.<sup>46</sup> I do not wish to go on at length about this point and explain it in detail. But one who studies the matter can see the truth.

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*Another proof to the concept that the majority can be punished for not protesting against the transgression of a minority*

When Achan stole from the spoils of Yericho, Hashem was angry at the entire Jewish people for not protesting.<sup>47</sup> All the more so here where the plague spread to most of the Jewish people, unfortunately. Hashem does not punish people unjustly; rather it is this terrible sin of violating the Oaths that led to the punishment specified in Scripture.

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<sup>46</sup> According to the biography *Moshian Shel Yisroel* (v. 7, p. 129), the Rebbe was referring specifically to the spread of Zionist ideas throughout Polish Orthodoxy following the Agudah's Knessia Gedolah in 1937. That was the first time a Jewish state was discussed, although the Knessia eventually rejected Britain's proposal. The Rebbe saw it as no accident that Germany took its first step by annexing Austria a few months after the Knessia, and invaded Poland exactly two years after the Knessia.

It is noteworthy that some of the most respected gedolim at the Knessia, among them Rabbi Aharon Kotler and Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, made a statement closely resembling the thesis of *Vayoel Moshe*: "They opposed the proposal for a Jewish state, no matter what the borders would be and even if it would be religious, because it would be like a denial of the coming of moshiach." (*Hapardes*, year 11, issue 7, p. 8)

There were some within the Agudah who disagreed, but even they conceded that a state founded through war with the Arabs would be forbidden under the oaths. The Agudah leader Yaakov Rosenheim wrote in 1944, "The agreement of Agudah to the establishment of a state before the coming of moshiach... depends on two basic conditions, which are far from reality and possibility: 1) the state must be conducted in accordance with Torah and tradition; 2) there must be peace with the Arabs. The second condition is in order to fulfill the oath against going up as a wall (*Kesubos* 111a). This oath forbids us to take any military action or conquest of the land against the will of the Arabs and the governments of the world. I do not believe that under the current circumstances it is possible to have a state according to Torah law... I would consider the founding of a state to be a disaster and a misfortune." (*Mikatowitz Ad Hei B'Iyar*, p. 340)

<sup>47</sup> This can be inferred from *Yehoshua* 22:20 where, in protest against the two and a half tribes that built an altar, the other tribes said, "Did not Achan, son of Zerach, steal from the consecrated goods, yet the anger was aroused against the entire congregation of Israel? He was one man, yet he was not the only one who died for his sin." The tribes protested so vehemently against the unauthorized altar because they knew that their failure to protest in the case of Achan had led to tragedy then. See also *Metzudos Dovid* on *Yehoshua* 7:11. According to the Gemara in *Sanhedrin* 43b, the Jews were punished for Achan's sin because of the principle of co-responsibility – which, as the Rebbe will explain later (Section 23), is based on the obligation to rebuke wrongdoers.

*Another response to the question of how the Holocaust could be a punishment for Zionism when the Zionists did not achieve a state before the Holocaust (see Section 4): heresy is a sin even in thought, without any action*

And according to what I will write, with Hashem's help, in the body of this work,<sup>48</sup> it will be clear that the very idea of taking a Jewish state on our own before the coming of moshiach constitutes heresy and denial of the ways of Hashem, for only He is the one who puts us in exile and only He redeems us.<sup>49</sup> We have no other redeemer in the days of moshiach. When it comes to a sin of heresy or denial of Torah principles, R"L, it is certain that heretical thoughts are included as the sin itself, since heresy is a more severe sin than idolatry<sup>50</sup>, as the Gemara<sup>51</sup> and the Rambam<sup>52</sup> notably state. In any case, here it is worse because Jews have unfortunately taken many actions toward this goal.

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### *Other problems with Zionism besides the Three Oaths*

But there is much more to the evil of Zionism. These same groups that led Jews astray with this forbidden goal of establishing a state for themselves before the time, a state founded on denial of the Torah, also led Jews into outright atheism, such as never before existed in world history. Even the gentiles who worship idols believe in Hashem as the First Cause, but these wicked people deny Hashem's existence.<sup>53</sup> At first they attract Jewish hearts with something appealing to the eyes,

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<sup>48</sup> For example, Simanim 78-79.

<sup>49</sup> In other words, aside from the oath, there is something else wrong with making a state: the very idea constitutes heresy.

<sup>50</sup> So if one can be punished for thoughts or plans to worship an idol (Kiddushin 39b, quoted above in note 24), one can certainly be punished for a thought or plan to commit an act that is tantamount to heresy.

<sup>51</sup> Shabbos 116a: "If someone is running after a Jew to kill him, or a snake is coming to bite him, he may enter a house of idol worship, but he may not enter a house of heresy, for they (the heretics) deny knowingly, while they (the idolaters) deny out of ignorance." See Siman 105 where the Rebbe uses this as reason to forbid entering the Knesset building.

<sup>52</sup> Hilchos Eidus 11:10: "Informers, heretics and apostate Jews did not need to be listed by the Sages among those unfit to testify, because they only listed Jewish sinners, but these rebels and heretics are worse than gentile idolaters, for gentile idolaters are not saved or killed; good gentiles have a share in the World to Come, but Jewish heretics must be killed, not saved, and they have no share in the World to Come."

<sup>53</sup> The Israeli declaration of independence does not mention G-d, and begins with denial of the Exodus and the Divine origin of the Torah: "The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books." The compromise phrase "placing our trust in the Rock of Israel," arrived at after debate between atheists and Mizrachists, is discussed by the Rebbe in Siman

to be a nation in our own land like all the other nations, and then these Jews fall prey to the basic Zionist worldview that there is no justice and no judge, Heaven forbid, and that everything depends only on human strength and weapons.<sup>54</sup> There is no need to write at length about this, for the terrible revolution brought about by these groups is well-known. The Jewish communities of many countries were secularized,<sup>55</sup> and the influence of an unlimited supply of heresy has completely inundated many good Jewish homes. Due to them, literally several million Jews have fallen into the net of heresy, R"L.<sup>56</sup>

And those groups who joined them, claiming that the purpose of their participation was to improve and introduce the path of Torah among the heretics as well, became the intermediaries to draw in good Jews and involve them in this forbidden idea of establishing a state, thinking that there are at least some participants (members of the government) who could improve the situation and campaign for the Torah. Later they fall completely into the net of heresy, via the bridge built by the religious groups who participate in the Zionist government.

Now, certainly in this kind of heresy, thoughts are considered as the sin itself. Although a person may not realize it at first, what begins as a plan to join these groups eventually leads to stumbling into ideals that contain the roots of heresy, R"L. The actions that he takes further down the line have their roots in his original thoughts.

To sum it up, apart from the severe sin of violating the oath, the Zionists also sullied the Jewish people with the defilement of heresy and denial of Hashem, R"L. So it is not a surprise that Hashem's powerful anger was aroused, as the Torah warns in Parshas Nitzavim.<sup>57</sup> During the Holocaust, some very pious Jews were killed due to the sins of those who sinned and caused others to sin, and the anger of Hashem was terrifying. (This is aside from the fact that the Zionists themselves contributed to the tragedy with their criminal actions,<sup>58</sup> with the calculation that

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100. He notes there that all the nations except for the Communists make at least some formal mention of G-d's name.

<sup>54</sup> Compare the words of Rabbi Chaim Brisker zt"l, "The Zionists do not make Jews heretics in order to have a state, they want a state in order to make Jews into heretics!" (Mishkenos Haro'im p. 269)

<sup>55</sup> This may refer to European Jewry in the interwar period, or to Sephardic Jewry after their absorption by the Zionists in the 1950s.

<sup>56</sup> At the time Vayoel Moshe was written, there were just under two million Jews living in the Zionist state. So clearly the "several million" here cannot mean only the Jews in the state itself, but also Jews in other countries under the influence of Zionism.

<sup>57</sup> Devarim 29:19-27

<sup>58</sup> See the introduction to Al Hageulah V'al Hatemurah, p. 11: "But the Zionists do the opposite of the path of Yaakov Avinu: they provoke the nations in a terrible way, recklessly abandoning the blood of Jews. Did they not

this would make it easier for them to achieve their goal of statehood.<sup>59</sup> They hoped to build themselves up from the destruction of our people. I have written a little bit about this in the main body of this booklet.<sup>60</sup> But I have decided not to write at length on this subject, because it would require a separate book to explain everything with irrefutable proofs. In this booklet I have come only to explain the Torah view.)

~12~

*The establishment of the State of Israel should not in any way be construed as proof of the ratzon Hashem; Zionism's success was a test that came as a punishment to the Jews for letting the Zionists spread their message; two commentators who make a similar point are the Ibn Ezra and the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh*

And the surviving Jews, whom Hashem left alive to fulfill His oath that our people would never become extinct, were also faced with a severe and bitter punishment: the work of the Satan succeeded and the Zionists achieved a heretical state, in order to try the Jewish people with this powerful test.

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declare war against the terrible enemy in Germany? And then his voice was heard on the radio saying, 'The Jews declared war against me, therefore I will answer them.' And so he did, unfortunately: right afterwards, the frightful killings began. It is impossible to understand how they could be so cruel, knowing that a large percentage of the Jewish people were under his power, and they could do nothing about it – how could they be so cruel and abandon Jewish blood? And they did many other such things that caused the loss of Jewish lives, unfortunately. Some of them are brought in the book 'Min Hameitzar' written by my late friend Rabbi Michoel Dov, may he rest in peace.

<sup>59</sup> This accusation is based on the infamous letter by Nathan Schwalb, representative of the Jewish Agency in Switzerland, written in response to a request by the rescue committee of Slovakian Jewry for a sum of money to halt the transports to Auschwitz. The letter is quoted by Rabbi Michoel Ber Weissmandl from memory in Min Hameitzar. Later it appeared in Holocaust Victims Accuse, by Rabbi Moshe Schonfeld, p. 26:

"Since we have the opportunity of this courier, we are writing to the group that they must always remember that matter which is the most important, which is the main issue that must always be before our eyes. After all, the Allies will be victorious. After the victory, they will once again divide up the world between the nations as they did at the end of the first war. Then they opened the way for us for the first step and now, as the war ends, we must do everything so that Eretz Yisroel should become a Jewish state. Important steps have already been taken in this matter. As to the cry that comes from your country, we must be aware that all the nations of the Allies are spilling much blood and if we do not bring sacrifices, with what will we achieve the right to sit at the table when they make the distribution of nations and territories after the war? And so it would be foolish and impertinent on our side to ask the nations whose blood is being spilled for permission to send money into the land of their enemies in order to protect our own blood. Because only through blood will the land be ours. As to yourselves – members of the group – you will get out, and for this purpose we are providing you with funds by this courier."

<sup>60</sup> Siman 110

The reason the Jewish people was faced with such a test came can be better understood based on the commentary of the Ibn Ezra on Parshas Re'eh. The Torah says, "And the sign or the wonder that [the false prophet] promised will come true... Do not listen to the words of that prophet... for Hashem your G-d is testing you..."<sup>61</sup> The Ibn Ezra<sup>62</sup> comments that the reason why Hashem would subject the Jews to such a trial is because they failed to execute the false prophet immediately when he advocated idolatry. We see from this that the difficult trial that results from the success of such a prophecy – that his sign or wonder comes true – is a punishment to the Jewish people for allowing him to even say such prophecies. All the more so in our situation where the majority of the Jewish people not only tolerates but supports these groups; this of course gives power to the Samech Mem to work signs and wonders as a test for the Jewish people.

The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh on Parshas Yisro makes a similar point: "By means of the worshipper, something new is brought into existence, a god that did not exist previously."<sup>63</sup>

Similarly, Hashem allowed the Zionists to survive and grow in order to test the Jewish people. Unfortunately, however, the vast majority of Jews have not withstood this difficult trial. This is similar to the difficult trial of idolatry that existed at the time of the First Temple. We find that in the time of Gideon, there were only three hundred men among the Jewish people who had never bowed to the Baal,<sup>64</sup> and it was through them that a great salvation came to the Jews, as is written in Scripture.<sup>65</sup>

However, now, in our lowly generation just prior to the coming of moshiach, we have not yet fully comprehended that all the tragedies and misfortunes that have befallen us were caused by these wicked people. We have to repent to Hashem and flee from the Zionists and their supporters faster than one flees from a killer lion that is pursuing him. Whenever it is possible to save even one Jewish soul from

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<sup>61</sup> Devarim 13:3-4

<sup>62</sup> On Devarim 13:4

<sup>63</sup> On Shemos 20:3. The Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh is apparently bothered by the wording of the commandment, "You shall not have any other gods before Me" – is there then such a thing as another god? He answers that indeed there were no other gods originally, but the worshippers create them by sinning and giving the evil inclination the opportunity to test them by making their idols seem real. See Avodah Zarah 55a for a discussion of idols that seem to perform miracles, and see Siman 46.

<sup>64</sup> Shoftim 7:5-6 and Rashi on v. 5

<sup>65</sup> Shoftim 7:7 and 7:19-22

falling into their group, it is a very precious and priceless opportunity and a fulfillment of “extracting the precious from the vile.”<sup>66</sup>

~13~

*Those who learn the opposite of the true lesson from the Holocaust, and two precedents for them: the idol worshippers in the time of Yirmiyah and in the time of Avraham Avinu*

However, following the lead of heretics from time immemorial, they overturn the words of the living G-d and blame the Holocaust on those who listened to the voice of the holy Torah.<sup>67</sup> Scripture states (Yirmiyah 44:18) that the accursed women said, “Ever since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring libations to her, we have lost everything, and we have perished by the sword and by hunger.” They blamed all their misfortunes on the prophets of Hashem, who warned them not to worship idols. Yirmiyah cried out in reply that their sins had caused all the misfortunes, and thus, with the destruction of Jerusalem, the words of the prophets, spoken in truth and justice, were borne out.

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<sup>66</sup> A reference to the Gemara in Bava Metzia 85a: “Whoever teaches Torah to the son of an ignoramus, even if the Holy One, blessed is He, makes a harsh decree, He will annul it for his sake, as Scripture states (Yirmiyah 15:19), If you take the precious out of the vile, you will be as My mouth.”

<sup>67</sup> Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook in a 1933 sermon compared Hitler to a shofar made from the horn of an unclean animal, which can be used on Rosh Hashanah only if there are no kosher horns available. If the people of Israel do not seek redemption themselves, he said, “the enemies of Israel blow in our ears for redemption. They force us to hear the sound of the shofar, they warn and make noise and do not allow us to rest in exile. The horn of an unclean animal becomes the shofar of the Messiah.”

Rabbi Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal in Eim Habonim Smeicha (Kol Mevaser English edition, p. 100) says, “The purpose of the pains of exile and the harsh decrees that constantly befall us, from time immemorial, is to awaken us from the slumber of exile. It is the sound of our Beloved, the Holy One Blessed be He, knocking on the doors of our hearts to arouse us with the desire and yearning to return to our Holy Land, which we have disregarded for almost 2,000 years. We have settled for a small measure of tranquility dwelling among the nations, while denying the honor of Hashem, our nation, and our Holy Land. We have bartered Israel’s birthright for a pottage of lentils in the lands of the nations.”

The notion that the Holocaust came because Jews failed to hearken to the call of Zionism was repeated later by Rabbi Meir Kahane, in a New York Times ad where he warned that a second Holocaust would come in America unless Jews fled to Eretz Yisroel immediately. Rabbi Avigdor Miller responded to this on his tape R-57, quoting the same pesukim the Rebbe quotes here: “Hashem allowed six million to be destroyed because they refused to listen to that atheist Jabotinsky?!... Such an attitude is an echo of what the wicked Jews said to Yirmiyah the prophet. These Jews had survived the destruction of Jerusalem and, after the murder of Gedaliah, had fled to Egypt. Yirmiyah exhorted them to repent, but they replied: We will continue to burn incense to idols, as we and our forefathers did in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem, when we ate our fill of bread and were well and saw no evil. It is only since we stopped burning incense to idols that we lost everything, and died of the sword and famine (Yirmiyah 44:17-18). In our time as well, people learn the opposite of the intended lesson.”

And now, anyone with a modicum of intelligence can see the truth: that only the sin of those who led Jews astray with the defiled Zionist ideology and all the actions that were taken for this defiled ideology have unfortunately brought all the tragedies and misfortunes upon the Jewish people, as I will write in the body of this work.<sup>68</sup>

The Noam Elimelech in Igeres Hakodesh<sup>69</sup> writes that when Avraham Avinu came to Eretz Yisroel and there was a famine in the land, the local residents said, “This famine has befallen us because this heretic came to live among us.” So he went to Egypt to quiet down the matter, so that this idea should not become too widespread among them.<sup>70</sup> Regarding our present generation in particular, Chazal said, “Those who fear sin will be viewed with contempt.”<sup>71</sup> And they give many other descriptions of our time, which I have brought in the body of this work.<sup>72</sup> But we cannot write at length about the scale of the audacity and impudence of the Zionists in perpetuating these lies, R"L. Whoever believes in Hashem and His holy Torah knows the truth.

~14~

*Two sources saying that Zionism delays the redemption:*

- 1) *Midrash Yalkut*
- 2) *Sanhedrin 98a*

It is clear that this offensive ideology is what is delaying our redemption, as I have brought in the body of this work<sup>73</sup> from the Midrash in Yalkut Shimoni Parshas Bo, paragraph 191, on the verse, “And it will be to you for waiting” (Shemos 12:6):

Who saved you from Madai? Mordechai and Esther... Who saved you from Greece? The Chashmonaim... Who will save you from the fourth kingdom?

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<sup>68</sup> Simanim 110-111

<sup>69</sup> Printed at the end of Noam Elimelech.

<sup>70</sup> The Noam Elimelech deduces this from the fact that Avraham went to Egypt despite the fact that he had been commanded only to go to Eretz Yisroel. Chazal count his being forced to go to Egypt as one of the his ten trials, but who forced him? It must be that people were using the famine as a reason to reject Avraham’s monotheistic ideology.

<sup>71</sup> Sanhedrin 97a

<sup>72</sup> See end of Siman 169 for a discussion of the other descriptions of the generation prior to moshiach, and see Simanim 163-170 for an extensive discussion of the prediction that the Torah will be forgotten.

<sup>73</sup> Siman 43



Natruna, as the Torah says, “It will be to you for waiting.” “Do not eat of it raw” – do not request it undercooked.

The Zayis Raanan commentary, written by the author of the Magen Avraham, says that the word “natruna” means that we must be patient and wait. “Do not request it undercooked” means that we should not ask to eat it when it is only lightly singed by the fire, before it is fully roasted. We see from this that at the end of this final exile, we have no other merit by which to extricate ourselves besides the merit of waiting patiently, and not eating, Heaven forbid, or even deriving benefit<sup>74</sup> from a redemption such as this one that comes before its proper time.

Therefore, all those who join the Zionist enterprise and its government, and “eat” together with them from this abomination, established in violation of the warning “do not eat of it raw” – they are actually the ones delaying the redemption.

I have also quoted<sup>75</sup> the words of the Gemara in Sanhedrin 98a: “The son of Dovid will not come until the lowly kingdom departs from Israel.” Rashi explains: “Until Israel has no form of government, even an unimportant and weak one.”<sup>76</sup> So we see that before the coming of moshiach that lowly state will disappear, since his coming is impossible otherwise, and the state is delaying the true redemption. And a similar thing is explicit in the words of the Rambam in Igeres Teiman.<sup>77</sup> But we need Heavenly mercy so that that state should come to an end only through power from above, from Hashem, not through the nations, because if it happens through

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<sup>74</sup> The word "eating" here is borrowed from the metaphor of eating from an underdone korban pesach. In practical terms, eating would represent actually taking part in building the Zionist state, while "deriving benefit" would represent those who are not official pro-Zionist but take advantage of the state's funding or military protection.

<sup>75</sup> Siman 68

<sup>76</sup> The Gemara cites a verse in support of this: “He will cut the branches with pruning shears” (Yishaya 18:5). Rashi on Yishaya, as well as the Targum and the Radak, say that it means Hashem will cut down the non-Jewish nations. Accordingly, the Gemara would mean, “The son of Dovid will not come until the lowly non-Jewish kingdom is no longer in power over Israel.” But Rashi on the Gemara clearly interprets it to mean that the Jews will not have a kingdom. Possibly Rashi on Yishaya represents an alternative interpretation of the Gemara, or perhaps Rashi held that although this is the simple meaning of the verse, the Gemara could not have understood it that way, because if so the Gemara would be saying that before moshiach the Jews will be free from non-Jewish rule, which would contradict the principle that “there is no difference between this world and the days of moshiach except for the subjugation of the nations” (Shabbos 63a).

<sup>77</sup> “When the gentiles think that this people will never have their own government and state, and they will never be redeemed from their exile, and all the sages of the world say this unanimously, including the sorcerers and those who understand the powers, Hashem will annul their thoughts and their false logic, and then moshiach will be revealed. This is what Yishaya (44:25-26) said, ‘Who frustrates the signs of imposters, and diviners He makes mad; He turns the wise backwards, and makes their knowledge foolish. He fulfills the word of His servant, and the counsel of His messenger He completes; Who says of Jerusalem, “It shall be settled,” and of the cities of Judah, “They shall be built, and its ruins I will erect.”’ That is the correct belief that Jews should hold.”

the nations, Heaven forbid, it would obviously be a tremendous danger to the Jewish people. May Hashem have mercy on us and all of His people Israel.<sup>78</sup>

In any case, all those who derive benefit from and take pride in that state are taking pride in the delaying of moshiach's coming. Woe to that embarrassment and humiliation!<sup>79</sup>

~15~

*Why Zionism is so successful: the Satan fears the final redemption*

Because of its importance in delaying the final redemption, the evil inclination and the Samech Mem work very hard to lure the entire world to this faulty ideology. This is similar to the concept introduced by the Tosafos Yom Tov on Masechta Avos (5:5) on the Mishnah that lists the ten miracles that took place in the Temple. Among them is, "The Kohen Gadol never became defiled with *keri* on Yom Kippur." The Tosafos Yom Tov comments:

There are some who ask why this was considered a miracle. Why should he have become defiled, if they were preparing him for seven days for this purpose? He was pure for the whole day before Yom Kippur, and the elders made sure to keep him awake for the entire night? The answer is that the good inclination and the evil inclination fight with one another like two enemies, and when one side feels his imminent defeat, he summons emergency energy, seeing that his end is near. That is why it was very likely for the Kohen Gadol to become defiled on Yom Kippur night.

This is all the more true today, as we stand just before the redemption, and it is known that after the redemption the evil inclination and the Samech Mem will cease to exist; they will be completely defeated for the first time since the creation of the world.<sup>80</sup> And Tosafos states in Rosh Hashanah 16b, quoting the Yerushalmi, that after the great shofar of redemption is blown, the time will come for the Satan

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<sup>78</sup> When these words were written, it was hard to imagine how the state could come to a peaceful end. But today that possibility is just around the corner. By 2020, Arabs are predicted to outnumber Jews in Eretz Yisroel including the West Bank and Gaza Strip (report by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, end of 2015). If these territories are annexed to the state and the Arabs are granted citizenship, it will cease to be a Jewish state.

<sup>79</sup> The source for this expression is Bava Basra 75a. The context is that in the World to Come, each tzaddik will receive a canopy according to his level, and each one will be burning with jealousy and embarrassment when he sees the other's canopy. Here as well, when moshiach comes, those who were proud of the very thing that delayed his coming will be embarrassed.

<sup>80</sup> Succah 52a: "In the future the Holy One, blessed is He, will bring the evil inclination and slaughter it..."

to become swallowed up. Thus it is certain that he will try every possible way to fight the process of true redemption. It will take miracles upon miracles to be saved from him, much more than the miracle done for the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur when he did not become defiled. That is why the Samech Mem established the Zionist state with its heretical government: to prevent the redemption from coming to fruition. May Hashem have mercy quickly and hasten the time of our redemption.

~16~

*Waiting for the redemption is not an easy task*

The Midrash Rabbah Eichah (3:7) on the verse, “This I shall reply to my heart, therefore I will hope...” (3:21) says the following:

In the future when the final redemption arrives, the Holy One, blessed is He, will say to Israel, “My children! I am amazed at you - how were you able to wait for Me all those years?” And they will reply, “Master of the World, if not for Your Torah that You gave us, the nations would have destroyed us long ago.” Therefore it states: “This I shall reply to my heart.” The word “this” refers to Torah, as it says, “And this is the Torah.”<sup>81</sup> And similarly Dovid said, “If Your Torah had not been my pastime, I would have perished in my poverty.”<sup>82</sup> Therefore I will hope...

See the parable given by the Midrash.<sup>83</sup> We see from this that waiting patiently for the redemption is a great trial, to the point that at the time of the final redemption, Hashem will express His amazement at the ability of the Jewish people to withstand this test. Furthermore, the Midrash reveals to us that it will impossible to withstand this test without diligence in the study of Torah, and that it is only the absorption of the holy Torah that will protect and save us.

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<sup>81</sup> Devarim 4:44

<sup>82</sup> Tehillim 119:92

<sup>83</sup> A king married a woman and wrote her a document promising her many good things. Then he went off for a long time to a faraway land. The other women often taunted her, saying that the king would never return, and she would cry, but then she would take out the document, read it and take comfort. When the king finally returned, he was amazed that she had waited so many years, and she replied, “If not for the extravagant promises you wrote to me, my neighbors would have defeated me.” So too, the gentiles taunt the Jewish people, saying, “Your G-d has hidden His face from you and removed His presence from your midst, and He will never come back to you.” The Jews cry, but then they come into the synagogue and read in the Torah, “I will turn to you, and make you fruitful... I will place My tabernacle in your midst...and I will walk among you” (Vayikra 26:9-12) - and they take comfort.

*Heretics delay the redemption by destroying the Temple. In our time, this could mean either preventing it from being built, or destroying the Heavenly Temple built by the deeds of the tzaddikim*

The truth is that all types of heresy delay the redemption, as the Gemara says in Rosh Hashanah 17a:

Heretics... and apikorsim who denied the Torah and the resurrection of the dead... will go down to Gehinom and be punished there for generations and generations. Gehinom will be gone but they will remain, as it says, “And their form will outlast the netherworld” (Tehillim 49:15). And why is it so? Because they stretched out their hands against the Zevul, as the verse continues “from being a zevul to him.” And Zevul means the Temple, as it says, “I have surely built a house of Zevul for You” (Melachim I 8:13).

Rashi explains that “they stretched out their hands against the Zevul” means that they destroyed the Temple through their sins. This Gemara is quoted by the Rambam in his Laws of Repentance (3:6), except that he adds to the list “and those who deny the coming of the redeemer.”<sup>84</sup> Now, it is hard to understand why the Gemara says that they destroyed the Temple with their sins. First of all, we never find that the Temple was destroyed because of the sin of heresy – the First Temple was destroyed because of idolatry and the Second Temple because of baseless hatred.<sup>85</sup> We don’t find the sin of heresy mentioned as being the cause in any source. Furthermore, even if we assume that the sin of heresy existed then too, only the heretics at the time of the destruction would be at fault, but this statement was made in the time of the Talmudic sages, and is quoted in the Rambam, so clearly it applies to heretics in all generations. Besides, we cannot say that it only applied to the heretics of the Temple era, for what relevance would that have to us today? Whatever happened then has already passed, and the Third Temple will never be destroyed, as is well known. There is no need to fear that heretics will destroy the Third Temple, since the Gemara states in Megillah 17b, in explanation of the order of the blessings of the Shmoneh Esrei, that the heretics will be gone before that

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<sup>84</sup> Rambam Hilchos Teshuva 3:6: “And these are the one who have no share in the World to Come, but are cut off and perish and are punished for their great wickedness and sins forever and ever: the heretics and the apikorsim and those who deny the Torah and those who deny the resurrection of the dead and those who deny the coming of the redeemer...” Interestingly, the Rambam understands “those who deny the Torah etc.” as separate cases from the heretics and apikorsim.

<sup>85</sup> Yoma 9b

Temple is built. So how can the Gemara make a blanket statement that the reason for the severe punishment of heretics in all eras is because they lifted up their hands against the Temple? We haven't had our Temple for almost two thousand years, so how can the heretics be described as lifting up their hands against something that doesn't exist?

The answer must be based on what Chazal say, "Any generation that does not see the Temple rebuilt is considered as the generation that saw its destruction."<sup>86</sup> The heretics prevent the Temple from being rebuilt, and thus it is considered as if they have actually destroyed it; this is why they are described as "stretching out their hands against Zevul."

Alternatively, we could answer the question based on what the commentators<sup>87</sup> say that the Heavenly Temple is built through the efforts of the tzaddikim and their good deeds, and when the Heavenly Temple is completed, moshiach will come. But the wicked, through their actions, are causing destruction in the Heavenly Temple; they tear down what the righteous have built with their good deeds.

In this vein it is told that the holy Tzanzer Rav, the Divrei Chaim, once commented at his tish that the Heavenly Temple was complete, and was lacking only the curtain. Rabbi Yehoshua of Tomashov remarked, "We believe with complete faith that the Rebbe is able to make the curtain." The Divrei Chaim did not reply. However, on another occasion as he sat down to the tish, he began by remarking, "How do you know that I didn't make the curtain? It is only that a certain wicked man tore it up with his sins."

The Gemara in Chagigah 12b describes the seven levels of heaven, and says that the level called Zevul contains the heavenly Jerusalem, the Temple, and a finished mizbayach. If so, these wicked people effect a result that reaches high into the heavens, to the level called Zevul, where Jerusalem and the Temple are located. Due to their sins, destruction occurs; they stretch out their hands against Zevul, devastating it.

This disastrous power of the heretics is the reason why the Samech Mem is so intent on seducing the whole world to follow the path of those who destroy the Zevul, fooling people with the belief that they are saving lives – all this in order to

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<sup>86</sup> Yerushalmi Yoma 1:1; Midrash Tehillim 137:10

<sup>87</sup> Alshich, Yishaya 62:6; Arvei Nachal, Nitzavim

delay the redemption. Let the heavens be shocked at this. I will explain this at greater length in the body of this work.<sup>88</sup>

~18~

*The accomplishments of the wicked and the building of the Heavenly Temple are in an inverse relationship*

Rabbi Naftali of Ropshitz, in his Sefer Zera Kodesh (Parshas Ki Seitzei), on the verse, “When you build a new house...”<sup>89</sup> writes as follows:

This can be explained based on what the commentators say that when we say in our prayers, “build it soon, in our days, an eternal building,” the words can be translated “build it soon with our days.” Each day that a person serves Hashem properly, he builds Jerusalem and the Temple... Each Jew, by serving Hashem every day, builds it, until it is built completely, may it be soon. And similarly, I heard from our holy teacher Rabbi Elimelech that when his soul visited the spiritual realms he saw them carrying the vessels of the Temple, and they told him that these were the vessels that he, Rabbi Elimelech, had brought out of exile through his service of Hashem. On another occasion Rabbi Elimelech said, “There is a huge idolatrous temple that has just collapsed, and every day thousands of workers are rebuilding it, but I have a good guardian: when Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok of Lantzut<sup>90</sup> prays the afternoon Shmoneh Esrei, he tears down everything they build.” And I understood his holy words to mean that the reason prayer tears down the idolatrous temple is because it builds the wall of Jerusalem and the Temple, and to the extent that it builds the walls of Jerusalem, it tears down the idolatrous temple, for we have a principle that holiness and defilement are in an inverse relationship – when one rises, the other falls.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Siman 46 discusses the concept of miracles arranged by the Satan to fool people. Simanim 145-153 discuss the concept that sometimes great Torah leaders can make mistakes.

<sup>89</sup> Devarim 22:8

<sup>90</sup> Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchok Horowitz, a disciple of Rabbi Elimelech who later became known as the Chozeh of Lublin (1745-1815)

<sup>91</sup> Rashi on Bereishis 25:23

Accordingly, we see how the wicked have the power to destroy the Heavenly Temple: because it is in an inverse relationship with what they build through their powers of defilement.<sup>92</sup> May Hashem have mercy.

~19~

*Most people support Zionism out of ignorance*

It is clear to me that the primary reason why people mistakenly support Zionism is because they have not properly analyzed the halacha of the Three Oaths, and therefore do not accurately understand the severity of the dreadful prohibition of founding a government before the actual end of exile arrives. Due to this lack of knowledge, people did not overcome their desire to be like all the other nations - a nation with its own government – a clear violation of the Torah. After making this error, they found various excuses to join the Zionist government, despite the fact that they are thereby attaching themselves to heretics and deniers of the Torah who lead other Jews astray. They rationalize that the Zionists' actions are no worse than what was done in the days of Achav or Menashe. This argument opens the door for them to join such a government, Heaven forbid. But all this is part of the evil inclination's persuasion. Heresy is enticing, as will be explained in the body of this work.<sup>93</sup>

~20~

*Why the Three Oaths are not brought or explained at length in the poskim*

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<sup>92</sup> Earlier the Rebbe argued, based on the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah, that heretics delay the redemption because their sins destroy the Heavenly Temple. Now, based on Rabbi Elimelech, he is arguing that every step they take in building their state further destroys the Heavenly Temple and delays the redemption even more.

<sup>93</sup> The source for the expression "heresy is enticing" is the Gemara, Avodah Zarah 27b. The context is the story of Ben Dama, nephew of Rabbi Yishmoel, who was bitten by a snake. Yaakov of Kfar Sechaniah (an early Christian) offered to heal him, but Rabbi Yishmoel did not permit it. Ben Dama said he had a proof that it was allowed, but died before he could say it. The Gemara wishes to prove from this story that we do not allow a non-Jewish doctor to treat a Jewish patient, even if the patient would certainly die otherwise, because we fear that the doctor may kill him. The Gemara rejects the proof by saying, "Heresy is different, because it is enticing." In other words, Rabbi Yishmoel's fear here was not that the doctor would kill Ben Dama, but that he would successfully heal him and then people would be influenced by his heresy.

In several places in Vayoel Moshe, the Rebbe uses the expression "heresy is different, because it is enticing" to argue that we should be more strict with heresy than with idolatry. For example, in Siman 87 he says that if we would not join an idolatrous organization, certainly we should not join the Zionist government. In Maamar Yishuv Eretz Yisroel Siman 153 he says that if we shouldn't live in a city where there is idolatry, certainly we should not live in the Zionist state where there is heresy. In Maamar Yishuv Eretz Yisroel Siman 33 he says that although Chazal say one should live in Eretz Yisroel in a city that is mostly idol worshippers rather than elsewhere in the world in a city that is mostly Jewish, a city that is mostly heretics is worse. Here too, he means that the heretical Zionist state is indeed worse than the kingdoms of idol worshippers like Achav or Menashe.

The central idea of the Three Oaths prohibition is not covered in Jewish legal works in as much detail as other laws that apply to everyday life, and in every generation. It is similar to the laws of produce that must be left for the poor during the harvest, regarding which the Tur (Yoreh Deah 332) writes that he decided not to include them in his code since they do not apply nowadays in countries with a majority non-Jewish population. Although it was certainly possible that at some point in time there would be places where Jews own fields and most of the population is Jewish, as it is the case now in many places in Eretz Yisroel, since this situation did not exist in the Tur's time, he did not wish to write at length about these laws. The Tur goes a step further at the beginning of Yoreh Deah 331, regarding Terumos and Maasros, and says that since these laws do not apply outside Eretz Yisroel, he did not wish to write about them at length, even though in that case the laws certainly applied in Eretz Yisroel at the time of the Tur. For that is the general rule: the poskim found it necessary to discuss only laws that applied in their time and place.

This is similar to what the Chovos Halevavos writes in his introduction: a certain student asked his teacher a far-fetched question on the laws of divorce, and the sage responded with a lengthy rebuke. "You have not yet finished studying the important knowledge that a man must acquire and retain at all times - why are you bothering with this far-fetched question?" The Chovos Halevavos writes at length about this concept, see there.<sup>94</sup> It appears to me that this is the reason why the poskim made it their practice to discuss only the laws that applied in their time and place. For while the holy Torah is longer than the earth, people's minds are limited, and cannot grasp the level of complete knowledge needed even in the areas that are applicable at all times. The poskim therefore chose not to emphasize things that were not practically applicable in their times, in order not to fall short in the subjects that were necessary to know in that era.

Similarly, we find in Bava Metzia 114b that Rabba bar Avuha said to Eliyahu Hanavi: "I don't even know four orders of the Mishnah well, and you expect me to know all six?" Rashi explains that Rabba bar Avuha did not put time into studying Zeraim and Taharos, since they do not apply outside of Eretz Yisroel.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> The sage continued, "I swear that I have been studying what I need to know of the Torah for 35 years, and you know how hard I have worked at this study and how many books I have, yet I have never thought about the question you just raised."

<sup>95</sup> Although it would seem that Kodshim also applies only in Eretz Yisroel, Rashi explains that learning the laws of korbanos is considered like actually bringing them, and is therefore considered like practical law.



Furthermore, the Responsa Lechem Rav<sup>96</sup> says that in places where the government does not allow Jews to rule their own civil disputes, even great Torah scholars cannot display expertise in the Torah's monetary laws, as they do not study them for practical purposes.

The concept of the awakening of a movement to violate the Oaths is something that did not occur from the time of Ben Koziva until the Rambam's time, a period of about one thousand years. After that it did not surface until the time of Shabbesai Tzvi, and from the time of Shabbesai Tzvi until our time it did not emerge and become relevant. Consequently, many centuries have passed during which it never occurred to anyone to violate these oaths; due to practical considerations, it effectively became a non-issue. Because of this it was categorized among the halachos that are not applicable to the times, and the poskim throughout these generations saw no need to elaborate on the laws of the Three Oaths.<sup>97</sup>

However, one who carefully studies the words of those poskim, the Rishonim and the leading Acharonim, who do discuss these halachos, will find these ideas presented in a clear and unequivocal manner.

~21~

*The Three Oaths are halacha, not aggadah*

It is abundantly clear that these Oaths are practical and applicable laws, about which there is no disagreement. The simplest proof to this is that Rav Yehuda, who rules that even an individual is forbidden to go up to Eretz Yisroel, derives his law from these Oaths (Kesubos 110b). Rabbi Zeira there disagrees with Rav Yehuda on this point, and the Gemara labors to explain how Rabbi Zeira would interpret the Oaths. It is evident from this Gemara that Chazal had no option of saying that anyone can disagree with the very existence of these Oaths. Everyone acknowledges them; they are elementary and fundamental laws, bolstered by a

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<sup>96</sup> The exact source the Rebbe had in mind has not been found, but the same concept appears in Ohel Moed, v. 8, Tosefes Haohel, Paragraph 6

<sup>97</sup> This explains why the Tur and Shulchan Aruch do not talk about the oaths. However, the Rambam's Yad Hachazakah is all-inclusive, so his omission of the oaths must be explained. The Rebbe addresses this question starting in Siman 31. His eventual answer (Siman 80) is that the essence of the oaths is not the oaths themselves (the regular commandment not to violate an oath), but rather the fundamental Jewish belief that the redemption will take in the manner described in the Torah: preceded by teshuva, and led by moshiach. That belief is stated by the Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva 7:5 and Hilchos Melachim 11:1-4.

severe and bitter punishment, R”L – a punishment the likes of which we do not find for any other sin in the entire Torah.

Therefore I decided to write a sefer explaining this subject with all its details, as well as the practical ramifications of these oaths with regards to the State, our association with it, and all resulting implications, including voting in its elections<sup>98</sup> - all based on an honest look at the Torah.

~22~

### *The scope and purpose of Vayoel Moshe*

Actually, this subject is much broader than will be found in this sefer, for it is impossible to put every detail to paper, especially since I am burdened with difficulties and many demanding activities that go far beyond my abilities.<sup>99</sup> But

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98 Many gedolim disagreed with the Rebbe on the subject of voting, but it is noteworthy that even they agreed that from a strictly halachic standpoint, voting should be forbidden. Rabbi Reuven Grozovsky, head of Moetzes Gedolei Hatorah, classified the Agudah’s approach of joining the Knesset as "aveirah lishmah" - a sin done with good intentions.

Similarly, Rabbi Shneur Kotler said, “The Satmar Rav proves in Vayoel Moshe that opposition to Zionism and non-participation in the state is the position that the Talmud and all Jewish legal authorities once held. On the contrary, our Agudah approach is a novelty: that in today’s environment, we have to commit a sin with good intentions and salvage whatever we can, choose the lesser of two evils and so on.”

<sup>99</sup> In the biography The Rebbe, by Rabbi Dovid Meisels (pp. 305-306), the writing of Vayoel Moshe is described as follows:

This was the period when the Rebbe oversaw the critical growth of the Satmar mosdos. He acted as a father to orphans of the war, and fought battles against Zionist decrees. To the thousands of broken souls that lined up at the Rebbe’s door he offered spiritual and physical assistance. He was always busy raising money for countless tzedaka purposes. Besides all of the above, he spent time on his personal avodas Hashem. His preparation for davening and davening itself took up a large part of the daylight hours. It seemed that there wasn’t a minute of extra time in his twenty-four hour day. Yet he set aside time and locked himself in his room to write the sefer.

He usually worked on the sefer for many hours at a time during the night, or in the early morning before davening. His attendants were warned not to allow anyone in while he was working.

Those who peeked in as he was writing could see how agitated the Rebbe became. His face was aflame. He often paced the room like a wounded lion. And sometimes in the middle of writing he would break out in a pained cry, lamenting the plight of the Jewish people, the blindness of simple Jews, the spiritual and physical danger of following false leaders and the delay of the redemption it causes. The Rebbe’s table was piled high with dozens of sefarim. He would take a sefer out of the pile, look up what he needed, and continue writing.

with Hashem's mercy on me, this is the little bit that I have been able to accomplish from all the study I have put into this. I do not have the free time, nor the trouble-free mind, to arrange the material properly, so perhaps I have sometimes written at too much length and in a disorderly manner, and at other times I may have been too brief. Even with these deficiencies, I hope that people who study all that I have written will derive some benefit from my words.

And even if I merit of to save only one Jew from the confusion caused by this erroneous view, it would be worthwhile, for if we take all the problems of this generation and the many sins that are committed throughout the world and place them on one side of a scale, and the Zionist state on the other, the state would outweigh them all. It is the poisonous source of all defilement and damage that is taking place in the world. They are the ones who defile the entire world.

In the little that I have written, I have brought many reasons why it is a terrible sin to join the Zionists in their endeavors or vote in the elections. And there is even more material on this subject that cannot be written. But even if someone will dispute some of what I have written, if there remains even one of my arguments, that is enough to understand how serious this sin is. In any case, in my opinion, all of what I have written is undisputable, for I have not written anything of my own. I have only collected and compiled the words of Chazal and of the greatest Rishonim and Acharonim, adding a little explanation to their words. Sometimes I have attempted to add creative insight, as is normal when discussing Torah, but only what I felt was required to help explain the subject matter. But I have not written long drawn-out discourses; instead I have concentrated on those points that are important for a full understanding of the topic at hand.

~23~

*The mitzvah of protesting even when it may be that no one will heed the rebuke*

Chazal say in the Gemara Shabbos 55a:

It never happened that the Holy One, blessed is He, decreed something good and then reversed it, except on the following occasion... The Attribute of Justice said before the Holy One, blessed is He: Master of the World, why

are these different from those?<sup>100</sup> He said: These are completely righteous, and these are completely wicked. She said to Him: Master of the World, they could have protested but did not. He said to her: I know that even if they had protested, the sinners would not have listened to them. She said: Master of the World, You know that, but did they know that? [Hashem responded:] “From My Temple you shall begin...”<sup>101</sup> Rav Yosef taught: do not read My Temple, but My holy ones, meaning people who kept the entire Torah from alef to tav.

I have spoken about this in the past. Seemingly, there is a difficulty here: how can the Gemara say that they kept the entire Torah from alef to tav? Since they failed to protest against the sins of the generation, they did not fulfill the positive commandment “you shall surely rebuke”<sup>102</sup> so they are at least one mitzvah short of fulfilling the entire Torah.

Furthermore, the mitzvah to rebuke a sinner is, in a certain sense, more crucial than all the others. In Parshas Tavo on the verse, “Cursed be he who does not uphold the words of this Torah”<sup>103</sup> the Ramban quotes the Yerushalmi<sup>104</sup> which says that this posuk refers to the obligation to promote the Torah among those who violate it. “Even if one is completely righteous,” writes the Ramban, “if he could have promoted the Torah among the wicked who violate it, but he did not, he is cursed.”

And in Sotah 37b it states that thousands of covenants<sup>105</sup> were made on the blessings and curses due to the principle of “arvus”: accountability of each Jew for his fellow. The reason each Jew is held responsible for every other is because he should have protested when the other Jew committed a misdeed.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> The context is the time of the destruction of the First Temple. “Hashem said to him (the angel Gavriel): pass through the city of Jerusalem and make a mark on the foreheads of the men who groan and cry out over all the sins that are committed in it” (Yechezkel 9:4) – a mark indicating that they should be spared by the angels of destruction.

<sup>101</sup> Yechezkel 9:6. The entire posuk reads, “Elders, young men, girls, children and women you shall kill, but to every man who has the mark you shall not come near, and from My Temple you shall begin; and they began with the elders who were before the Temple.” The Gemara understands that the decree was changed to include the righteous in the middle of this posuk, with the words “from My Temple you shall begin.”

<sup>102</sup> Vayikra 19:17

<sup>103</sup> Devarim 27:26

<sup>104</sup> Sotah 31a

<sup>105</sup> The exact number is 17,758,855,200 – 48 for each mitzvah, times 613 mitzvos, times 603,550 because each Jew was held responsible for every other.

<sup>106</sup> The Rebbe uses the words “limchos” (to protest) and “lehochiach” (to rebuke) interchangeably throughout this section, underscoring the fact that he is not discussing protest in the sense in which it is usually used today, in the context of public demonstrations by hundreds of people holding signs. He is discussing the obligation to speak

In any case, this mitzvah of rebuking is no less important than any other mitzvah, so how can the Gemara say that the righteous people of Jerusalem fulfilled the entire Torah from alef to tav?

I answered that in Erechin 16b there are different opinions as to how far a person must go in his attempt to rebuke a sinner. Rav says that one must continue to rebuke until the sinner attacks him physically; at that point one would be free of the obligation to rebuke him further. Shmuel says he need only rebuke until the sinner curses him, while Rabbi Yochanan says that even if the sinner gets angry at him his obligation to rebuke is cancelled. The same dispute is found between the three Tannaim Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua and Ben Azai. The Rambam (Deos 6:7) rules in accordance with Rav that one must rebuke until physically attacked. The Smag, on the other hand, invoking the general principle that in a dispute between Rav and Rabbi Yochanan the halacha follows Rabbi Yochanan, rules that the obligation is in effect only until the sinner is angered by the rebuke. The Hagahos Maimunios quotes the Smag, but then brings a proof to the Rambam from the Midrash Tanchuma on Parshas Tazria, which tells the same story as the Gemara in Shabbos, with one crucial detail added:

The Attribute of Justice said: What is the difference between these and those? ...Still, they should have degraded themselves and accepted beatings from the other Jews, just as the prophets used to suffer. Yirmiyah and Yishaya suffered many abuses from the Jews, as it says, "I gave my back to the beaters..."<sup>107</sup> Immediately, the Holy One, blessed is He changed His orders and said to the angels of destruction...

We see here that their fault was that they were not willing to suffer beatings as the earlier prophets had done. Apparently they did indeed rebuke those who sinned, but not to the point where they were beaten. For if they did not rebuke them at all, the Attribute of Justice would have leveled a much stronger accusation against them. If the only criticism was that they were not willing to suffer beatings, the implication is that the question of whether they properly fulfilled the mitzvah of rebuke is dependent on the above mentioned dispute. According to Ben Azai and Rabbi Yochanan, whom the Smag follows, they fulfilled the mitzvah of rebuke despite the fact that they did not continue to extent of suffering beatings.

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directly to a fellow Jew who is committing a sin and convince him of the folly of his ways. This derives from the unity of the Jewish people, and the sense of love and responsibility we must feel for every Jew.

<sup>107</sup> Yishaya 50:6

Now, it is known<sup>108</sup> that when Hashem's attributes of mercy and kindness prevail in the world, we can rely on the lenient opinion. Therefore, the Gemara says that before the Attribute of Justice began to hold sway, the righteous were considered as having fulfilled the entire Torah from alef to tav, in accordance with the opinion of Ben Azai and Rabbi Yochanan, since in truth, all opinions are "the words of the living G-d" as is the case with all disputes among the Tannaim and Amoraim. But after the Attribute of Justice began to hold sway, the Heavenly court followed the stricter opinion, that one must continue to rebuke until he gets beaten, which is also the way the Rambam rules. It was according to this standard that the righteous people of Jerusalem did not fulfill their obligation. That is why they were punished for not fully protesting against the sinners. We can see from the above to what extent the obligation to protest is incumbent upon us.

~24~

*How far Avraham Avinu went in rebuking his generation*

In Moreh Nevuchim 3:29, the Rambam describes the experience of Avraham Avinu among his contemporaries: "There is no doubt in my mind that when he disputed the strongly held opinions of his time, the misguided masses cursed him, degraded him and humiliated him. But he suffered through it all for the sake of Hashem, and so it is only right to do for His honor." Now, it might seem puzzling: once we are made aware that Avraham Avinu suffered all these tribulations for Hashem's sake, we understand that it was his legal obligation to do so. Why did the Rambam have to add the words "and so it is only right to do for His honor"? Could we then entertain the possibility that Avraham Avinu did something wrong, Heaven forbid? The answer is that it might have been possible to think that Avraham Avinu went beyond his basic halachic obligation, as per the rule that a pious individual is permitted to risk his life to keep the mitzvos even in cases where it is not obligatory to do so.<sup>109</sup> Therefore the Rambam stresses that what Avraham Avinu did as far as rebuking his generation was done out of halachic obligation – he was not just acting piously. If so, everyone is obligated to do the same. When it comes to the honor of Hashem and His holy Torah, one cannot take into consideration what people will say about him.

~25~

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<sup>108</sup> See Kedushas Levi, Likutim who says that in this world, because we need the attribute of kindness, the halacha follows Beis Hillel, but in the days of moshiach the halacha will follow the stricter Beis Shamai.

<sup>109</sup> The Kesef Mishneh on Rambam Yesodei Hatorah 5:4 says that even the Rambam would agree to this in the case of a pious individual.

*When people will certainly not listen, it is better to keep silent*<sup>110</sup>

At first glance, the story quoted above from Shabbos 55a would seem to contradict the statement of the Gemara in Yevamos 65b: “Just as it is a mitzvah to say something that will be heeded, so too it is a mitzvah not to say something that will go unheeded. Rabbi Abba says: In fact, it is forbidden to rebuke in that case, as Scripture says, ‘Do not rebuke a scorner...’”<sup>111</sup> Rabbeinu Bachya, in his introduction to Sefer Shemos, says that there are three groups of people whom we are commanded not to rebuke: scorners, fools and wicked people. He cites verses from Scripture in support of each.<sup>112</sup>

Tosafos in Shabbos<sup>113</sup> resolves this by saying that as long as there is any slight possibility that people might heed the rebuke, we must rebuke them. As the Gemara says there in Shabbos, because the righteous people of Jerusalem did not know whether the sinners would listen to them, they should have rebuked them. It is only when one knows for certain that he will be ignored that he should not rebuke.

~26~

*Two ways to know in advance that the sinners will not accept his rebuke:*

- 1) Past experience*
- 2) A case where the sinners are leading others astray*

But how is it possible for a human being to know the future, and to determine whether a sinner will heed his rebuke or not? We must answer that we use past experience of the person ignoring rebuke to make this determination. Just as we

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<sup>110</sup> The following paragraphs (Sections 25-27) lead to an alternative solution to the question of why the righteous of Jerusalem were considered to have fulfilled the entire Torah. The first solution was that they did indeed rebuke the people, but they followed the opinion that one need not do so to the point of suffering physical attacks. The second solution will be that they knew that the majority of the people would not listen, but were uncertain about the minority, and they held that a doubtful concern does not override a definite one.

<sup>111</sup> Mishlei 9:8

<sup>112</sup> For scorners, he cites Mishlei 9:8: “Do not rebuke a scorner...” For fools, he cites Mishlei 23:9: “Do not speak in the ears of a fool.” For wicked people, he cites Mishlei 9:7: “He who chastises a scorner or rebukes a wicked man for his fault buys himself only embarrassment.”

<sup>113</sup> Shabbos 55a s.v. V’af al gav.

consider status quo a legal certainty when it comes to giving someone the death penalty by stoning or burning,<sup>114</sup> we can certainly rely on it in this situation.

Alternatively, we could answer based on what the holy Alshich teaches us in his commentary on Mishlei 1:10, “If sinners entice you, do not yield...”<sup>115</sup> The Alshich asks: Why does Scripture have to warn a person not to be enticed to shed innocent blood? He answers that the warning is not to agree to join the one plotting to commit murder for any purpose, even for positive acts unrelated to his wickedness. And lest you say that denying yourself the opportunity to join him in good things prevents you from fulfilling the mitzvah of having a positive effect on the wicked and convincing him to repent – Scripture therefore says that if a person is so audacious and shameless as to incite you to spill blood with him and similar sins, he will surely not have enough shame to listen to your rebuke and repent from his wicked ways. Therefore do not agree to accompany him.” Thus according to the Alshich, whoever is so audacious as to openly incite others to join him in sinning will certainly not accept the rebuke of others.<sup>116</sup>

~27~

*When it comes to the public, we must always rebuke, even if most of the people certainly won't listen*

But if so, why did the Attribute of Justice accuse the righteous Jews of not rebuking the people on the chance that they might listen? Hadn't the prophets Yirmiyah and Yechezkel already been sent by Hashem to rebuke them, without success? These sinners had already established a pattern of not heeding rebuke, and it therefore should have been considered a certainty that they would not listen.

The answer is that we can only look at past experience when dealing with an individual, or a group in which we are familiar with every single member of the group and we know that they have a history of not listening to rebuke. Only in that case would it be forbidden to rebuke them. But this won't apply when it comes to the entire Jewish people, or the majority, or even a large part of the Jewish people, in which case it is impossible to know with certainty that there are not among them

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<sup>114</sup> Kiddushin 80a. The Gemara illustrates this with the anecdote of a mother who came to town holding a baby boy. There were no witnesses to confirm that the boy was actually born from her, yet when he grew up and married her, the court executed them by stoning.

<sup>115</sup> The next posuk continues: “If they say: come with us, let us lie in wait for blood, let us hide out for the innocent for no reason.”

<sup>116</sup> Accordingly, if someone incites others to sin, we should not rebuke him because we can assume that he will not listen.



some sincere people who would listen. Words of rebuke might resonate with some of them and make an impression on their hearts to inspire them to change for the better. Therefore the Gemara says that those righteous Jews did not know whether people would listen to them – in other words, they were not familiar with the inner qualities of all Jewish souls, and perhaps there were a few people for whom the rebuke would be effective.

The righteous Jews, on the other hand, may have felt that since the majority of the people had a history of not listening to rebuke, it was thus forbidden to rebuke them, without considering the minority who might listen. This was especially so in view of the fact that even regarding the minority it was doubtful whether they would listen, while the majority would certainly not listen, and it was forbidden to rebuke the majority. They therefore applied the rule that “a doubtful concern does not override a definite one.” This may depend on the dispute in Yoma 84b as to whether we follow the majority in matters of life and death.<sup>117</sup> See there, as the Gemara can be understood in many ways.<sup>118</sup>

Therefore, as long as Hashem’s Attribute of Mercy prevailed in the world, the righteous could be excused for their behavior, and thus they were considered to have “fulfilled the entire Torah from alef to tav.” But when the Attribute of Justice began to prevail, the accusation was mounted against them: “Did they know for certain that their rebuke would not be effective for some of the people?”

In any case, we see that they were punished severely, R”L, despite the fact that they were completely righteous and fulfilled the entire Torah from alef to tav, except for the sin of not protesting against their contemporaries to the point of receiving blows. And even when Hashem’s mercy prevailed, they were excused only because Hashem knew that the people would not have listened to them. Those who were righteous were righteous even without the rebuke, and among those who were sunken in sin, there were none who would have heeded the rebuke. Ultimately, the

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<sup>117</sup> The Gemara there seems to present only one opinion, that of Shmuel, who holds that we may violate Shabbos to save a life even if there is only a small chance that the life can be saved. See however the Ran, who says that the Rambam ruled against Shmuel because he inferred from the Gemara that others disagree.

<sup>118</sup> Just as Shmuel holds that we may violate Shabbos based on a small possibility of saving a life, despite the fact that otherwise we would be simply violating Shabbos for no reason, so too here one may give rebuke to the public because of the small possibility of the existence of a few individuals for whom the rebuke will be effective, despite the fact that for the majority, it is detrimental (because of the rule “it is a mitzvah not to say something that will go unheeded”). The counter argument would be that whereas in Shmuel’s case the act of Shabbos violation is either a mitzvah or a sin, in our case the rebuke is simultaneously a mitzvah (for the possible minority) and a sin (for the majority). Or, perhaps saving someone from sin is not equivalent to saving a life. See Minchas Chinuch on Mitzvas Aseh 239, quoted by the Rebbe in Shailos Utshuvos Divrei Yoel 59, who does, in fact, equate the two, and even says that one who fails to rebuke a sinner transgresses “do not stand by while your neighbor bleeds”.

accusation was that as humans they were not privy to this information, and since they were in doubt about it, they had an obligation to protest.

The prohibition against rebuking those who do not accept rebuke does not apply when one speaks to the general public, and explicitly states that he means to direct the rebuke only at those who will accept it – if such people exist. I will soon prove this from the Sefer Mayan Ganim.<sup>119</sup>

~28~

*In our time as well, there are some who are ready to listen*

In the situation we face today, most of the world has become caught up in the net set up by the Zionist heretics, who lead the public into sin, R”L, and for them nothing will help – even a proof clearer than the midday sun. They will not heed or listen, and on the contrary it will make them worse.<sup>120</sup> But on the other hand, it is doubtless true that there are still some sincere Jews left, people who listen to rebuke, whose hearts can accept the truth, and who can benefit from clear, enlightening words. Although they may be few in number, I have already written that even one Jew is very important and precious, worthy of and deserving to be enlightened with the truth.<sup>121</sup> Experience has shown that there are among the Jewish people sincere individuals who have the capabilities to understand these matters properly. Therefore it is a tremendous obligation upon us to publicize the truth before the eyes of all. There will be some hearts within the walls of the Torah study halls,<sup>122</sup> as well as in the streets, that will benefit from this.

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<sup>119</sup> A commentary on Rabbi Yosef Yabetz’s anti-philosophical work Ohr Hachaim by Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech, author of Bnei Yisaschar. See below, Section 35.

<sup>120</sup> Sanhedrin 38b. The Gemara there quotes the Mishnah in Avos (2:14): "Be diligent in Torah study, and know what to answer to a heretic." Rabbi Yochanan said, "This was only said regarding a gentile heretic, but to a Jewish heretic one should not reply, for he will only become worse." Rashi explains that a "gentile heretic" means a gentile who tries to bring proofs from the words of the Torah in support of the Jewish heretics. Since he is not learned in Torah and does not have his arguments thought out, he will recognize the truth when he hears your reply. But a Jewish heretic is someone who has learned Torah and has nevertheless perverted its principles. No matter what Torah arguments you give him, he will not accept them. And on the contrary, whatever you tell him will cause him to become worse. Since he uses his Torah knowledge to bolster his position, the more knowledge he has, the worse he will become.

<sup>121</sup> It is related that when Vayael Moshe was published, Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky came to the Rebbe and said, "The Rebbe wrote that it would be worth writing the sefer even to change the mind of one Jew. Well, I’ve come to tell the Rebbe that he was yotzei already with me."

<sup>122</sup> Rabbi Moshe Chaim Ephraim Bloch once said to the Rebbe, "The Rebbe should have brought more historical facts in the sefer, about how the Zionists prevented the rescue of Jews during the Holocaust, their corrupt leadership and so on." The Rebbe replied, "Facts are good for simple Jews, but in our case you can’t convince simple Jews that Zionism is wrong—it’s like talking to the wall! The only people you can talk to are bnei Torah, and

This is especially true since we are dealing with a subject that is relevant to all the fundamentals of Jewish belief and the fulfillment of the entire Torah. In general, all acts committed against the holy Torah contradict Jewish belief, and this is all the more true of the Zionist state, which is intrinsically against the holy Torah, and is based on breathtaking heresy, R”L. There is no doubt that it is wholly against our belief in Hashem and His holy Torah. These two beliefs – the belief in the state, and the belief in the holy Torah – cannot coexist in one person, for they are diametric opposites, and it is impossible for them to share one crown.<sup>123</sup> This will become clear in the body of this booklet. Even those who lack this understanding and do not at first realize this fundamental contradiction will eventually come to the point where their belief in the Torah is weakened. This is what the Akeidah writes in Parshas Vaeschanan<sup>124</sup> regarding those who serve Hashem in conjunction with idols: eventually they abandon Hashem entirely and remain only with the idols – see his lengthy piece on this. This is the eventual end of all those who attempt to straddle both sides of the fence.

~29~

*Any prophet who encourages sin cannot be a true prophet, no matter how many stunning feats he is able to perform*

Yirmiyah (14:13) said:

I said, “Woe, Hashem G-d, the prophets say to them, ‘You will see no sword, and hunger will not befall you; I will give you true peace in this place.’” And Hashem said to me, “The prophets prophesy falsely in My name. I did not send them and I did not command them. They are

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for them you have to write Torah proofs, which is what I have done. And I see that it has accomplished much more than I had expected. I thought it would change the minds of a few people, but now I’ve been receiving letter after letter from bnei Torah saying that the sefer lit up their eyes. (Vayoel Moshe Emes, pp. 33-34)

<sup>123</sup> This expression is borrowed from the story about the sun and the moon (Chullin 60b). The sun and the moon were originally equal in size, but the moon argued, “Two kings cannot use one crown.” Accordingly, the Rebbe means that one’s belief in the Torah and belief in Zionism cannot be equal. If someone claims to believe in both, inevitably one must be weaker than the other, for to the extent that one believes in Torah, he cannot believe in Zionism, and vice versa.

<sup>124</sup> Shaar 89, commenting on the first two of the Ten Commandments. The Akeidah writes that belief in Hashem cannot go together with idol worship, and he uses this to explain Yehoshua’s warning to the people (Yehoshua 24:14-19), “You will not be able to serve Hashem, for He is a holy G-d. He is a jealous G-d: He will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. When you forsake Hashem and serve strange gods, then He will turn and do you evil, and destroy you, after He has done you good.”

prophesying falsehood and sorcery for you.” Therefore, this is what Hashem says about the prophets... and the people to whom they prophesy will be...

Obviously, we cannot simply understand that Yirmiyah Hanavi told Hashem what the false prophets were foretelling as a proof or an argument [that perhaps Hashem really would allow the Jews to stay peacefully in Jerusalem], for certainly he knew that there was no truth to them. Rather, as the Radak and other commentators explain, this was a prayer and a defense of the Jewish people. This is also how the Targum Yonasan renders it: Yirmiyah said, “Accept my prayer, Hashem...” His defense was that since the false prophets were intentionally misleading them, it was not their fault and they should not be punished. What should they do if they cannot distinguish between a true prophecy and a false one? His intent was to save them from the punishment of which Hashem had just warned in the previous verse.

Accordingly, we must ask: what was Hashem’s answer, that they were false prophets? Didn’t Yirmiyah already know that? He was only trying to defend the Jewish people. Seemingly, in Hashem’s answer there is no reply indicating why this was not a valid defense of the Jewish people’s error. However, the Radak explains at length that the false prophets had the ability to tell the future, and they had been correct in their predictions in a number of cases. That was how they succeeded in fooling the Jews to the point where they did not fear Yirmiyah’s warnings of the severe punishments to come. The false prophets lulled the people by telling them that they foresaw with their prophecy that there would be no war or hunger, and they condoned the people’s sins. This was Hashem’s response to Yirmiyah’s defense. Although the false prophets misled the people, they should have been able to distinguish between a true prophet and a false one: a true prophet exhorts the people to follow the Torah of Moshe, whereas the false prophets encourage idolatry, which is a violation of the Torah. Even though many of the false prophets’ predictions had come true, the people were expected to attribute that to sorcery and not prophecy, simply because those prophets were encouraging them to violate the Torah. They were similar to prophets of idolatry, whom the Torah commands us to execute even if they perform signs and wonders. The Torah has already revealed to us the reason why the signs and wonders of the false prophets and sorcerers come true: “For Hashem your G-d is testing you.” This is the basic idea of what the Radak says; see there at length.

We see here that whatever emanates from those who attempt to eradicate Torah ideals, R”L, is clearly not from Hashem. Rather, Hashem has allowed them to exist and succeed in order to test the Jewish people. That is why the Jews at the time of Yirmiyah, at the time of the destruction of the First Temple, were punished so

severely and bitterly. The false prophets had the ability to foretell the future accurately<sup>125</sup> and there was no way to objectively prove them false. However, the people should have realized that since their words encouraged the abandonment of Torah, there was no way their prophecy could have come from Hashem. Even Yirmiyah Hanavi's prayer in their defense – that they were misled by the false prophets – did not help, for they should have had no doubts about the matter.

This is all the more true with the establishment of the Zionist state, which has led and continues to lead millions of Jews astray, R"l. It is clear that whoever believes in Hashem should have no doubt that the Zionists are the source of the accursed defilement of heresy and denial of the Torah, R"l. Woe to us that such a thing has taken place in our days! How can we be silent and watch as the fundamentals of Judaism and the foundations of the entire Torah are destroyed before our eyes?

~30~

*Another reason why we must speak out now: so that the true Torah should not be forgotten*

Especially if all the Orthodox Jews who are still here in our generation keep silent and refrain from speaking the truth, and hold back their hands from writing the truth for fear of the people, then this path of truth will be forgotten, Heaven forbid, from the generation. All the outcries of the holy and great rabbis of the previous generations regarding the danger of the Zionists who destroy the world would be all but forgotten. If from this point forward we keep our words hidden and not revealed to the world, then the truth about the fundamentals of Judaism would be forgotten, Heaven forbid. Then, even if Hashem helps and there comes yet a time when the Zionist storm calms down, who will rule on the law, once the true path has been forgotten and no one pays heed? Who will understand the relevant parts of the Torah, to re-establish the yoke of the Torah? The silence of this entire generation will certainly be considered as outright consent, and it will never occur to anyone how deeply the world has sunken into this colossal lie that destroys the entire Torah. Therefore, we have a powerful obligation to cry out, openly before the entire Jewish people, against the deep defilement that has spread so profoundly in our generation.

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<sup>125</sup> Herzl made several famous predictions that came true. For example, after the first Zionist Congress in 1897, he wrote that the Zionist state would arise in fifty years. More generally, the analogy is that the Zionists planned a Jewish state and carried out their plans, seemingly against all odds. People who, for lack of understanding of the Torah and history, might be convinced by this "success" should at least realize that since Zionism led millions of Jews astray, it cannot be a positive thing.

There will be many people for whom nothing will help to change their minds at this time. But we still have hope: not all times are the same, and there will yet come a time when some Jewish hearts will be opened and their eyes made to see, and the reverberating voices of the previous generations, who strove for truth and authentic belief, will reach their ears. On the other hand, if those voices are silenced now among all the Jewish communities, Heaven forbid, all hope will be lost. And I have already quoted the Rambam who says that an individual is obligated to suffer whatever abuse may come from his contemporaries for the sake of the honor of Hashem and His holy Torah, as Avraham Avinu did.

~31~

*Another reason to protest: only righteous people who protest can save the others with their merit*

In Yirmiyah 5:1 we find another reason to protest:

Wander in the streets of Jerusalem and see now and know, and search in her town squares: if you find a man, if there is anyone who acts justly, seeks faithfulness – then I will forgive her.

The commentators wonder: we find that there were many righteous and holy people at that time,<sup>126</sup> so how can Yirmiyah say that there were none?<sup>127</sup> The Radak quotes his father's answer to this question: Yirmiyah was told specifically to look "in the streets and town squares." The pious men who lived then in Jerusalem were hiding in their houses and could not show their faces in the squares and streets due to fear of the wicked. An almost identical answer is given by the holy Shelah<sup>128</sup>: the reason why it specifies "streets and town squares" is because if the righteous had not been afraid of the people and had been willing to proclaim the truth in the streets and town squares, they would have been worthy of protecting them.

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<sup>126</sup> The Radak proves this from the verse, "They left the carcasses of your servants as food for the birds of the sky, the flesh of your pious ones for the animals of the earth" (Tehillim 79:2).

<sup>127</sup> The punishments that befell the city, as described at the end of the previous chapter of Yirmiyah, seem to show that there were no righteous people and therefore Jerusalem was not forgiven.

<sup>128</sup> Masechta Taanis Perek Torah Ohr

The same point is made by Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra in Parshas Vayeira, on the posuk, “And Hashem said: If I find in Sodom fifty righteous men in the midst of the city, then I will forgive the entire place for their sake.” The Ibn Ezra comments:

The reason why He said “in the midst of the city” is because the righteous had to be people who feared Hashem in public before the masses. Similarly, “Wander in the streets of Jerusalem...”

We see that the Ibn Ezra also understood the posuk “wander in the streets of Jerusalem” to mean that in order to save Jerusalem, the righteous were required to make themselves known publicly in the streets and town squares. He explains that this is also what Avraham Avinu was praying for when he said, “Perhaps there are fifty righteous men in the midst of the city.” They had to be publicly G-d-fearing and not afraid of the masses.

According to the Ibn Ezra, once Avraham received the answer from Hashem that such publicly righteous men did not exist in Sodom, why didn't he begin to pray for Hashem to save the city for the sake of righteous men of a lesser caliber, those who were afraid to proclaim the truth in the midst of the city? Perhaps even such righteous people would have the power to protect the city! It must be that this Avraham knew for certain: that righteous people who did not speak out would be unable to protect the city, and that it would be futile to pray for that.

~32~

*If in Sodom the righteous should have spoken out, all the more so in our time*

It is clear that publicizing the fear of Hashem in the midst of Sodom would have been a feat of awesome proportions. It is well-known that the Sodomites persecuted whoever attempted to veer towards the path of righteousness, as in the story of the young maiden who was killed for offering some bread to a poor man,<sup>129</sup> and from the Torah's description of the townspeople surrounding Lot's house because he had taken in the angels and fulfilled the mitzvah of welcoming guests. The people of Sodom had a clear and consistent history of not heeding rebuke. Even so, Avraham asked Hashem to save the city only for the sake of those righteous men who did not fear the populace.

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<sup>129</sup> Sanhedrin 109b

*The obligation to rebuke sinners does not mean that one should join them or live among them*

However, the Rambam writes in his Laws of Good Character Traits (6:1) that if one finds himself in a country whose population does not follow the upright path, he should leave,<sup>130</sup> even if that would mean fleeing to live in caves, thickets or deserts. And in the Gemara Avodah Zarah 18b, Chazal apply the opening pesukim of Tehillim to Avraham Avinu:

“Fortunate is the man who did not walk in the counsel of the wicked” – this refers to Avraham, who did not walk in the counsel of the Generation of the Dispersal. “And in the way of sinners he did not stand” – he did not stand together with the people of Sodom, because the people of Sodom were sinners...

It is hard to understand why Chazal are heaping praise upon Avraham for merely not following the path and counsel of completely wicked sinners such as these. Is that the most they could say about Avraham? Avraham was the best of all mankind - not only better than completely wicked people like these, but even better than the righteous of his time. The Torah even frowns on Lot for living with the Sodomites, as Rashi says on Parshas Lech Lecha (Bereishis 13:13). So why would this behavior of Avraham be so praiseworthy?

We must say that Chazal meant that Avraham did not even join them with the noble intention of exhorting them to improve their ways. The reason why this would have been a mistake is that when a righteous man stands among wicked people like these, it is harmful for the world, because people come to follow the wicked.<sup>131</sup>

The Maharsha resolves the question differently. He says that Avraham did not join the people of Sodom even when it would have made sense to do so. During the war of the Sodomites against the four kings, although Avraham wanted to save Lot, he did not join with Sodom. It was because Avraham didn't help them at first that they lost the war, and Avraham had to chase the four kings on his own in order to

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<sup>130</sup> If the people do not allow him to remain alone and follow the proper path

<sup>131</sup> Seeing the righteous together with the wicked, people assume that the righteous approve of or tolerate their actions to a certain extent.



save Lot. In another place,<sup>132</sup> I have written at length to explain why Chazal praise Avraham for not joining the Generation of the Dispersal, but here is not the place for that discussion.

In any case, it is certain that one must flee from joining the wicked in order that one should not learn from their actions. At the same time, one should not refrain from promulgating the path of fear of Hashem even in the midst of the city, in its streets and squares.

~34~

*Another reason to protest: Moshe Rabbeinu would have brought down the tablets only for the sake of those who were protesting against the golden calf*

In Parshas Ki Sisa, as Moshe descended from Mount Sinai, Yehoshua said to him, “The sound of battle is in the camp.” Moshe replied that it was not the sound of battle, but the sound of idol worship. The Chasam Sofer comments:

Yehoshua also recognized that it was the sound of idol worship. But he reasoned that the righteous Jews would never keep silent in the face of such a sinful act, and he assumed that they were waging a righteous battle in the camp. Moshe had also made this assumption when he had first been informed by Hashem that the people had made a golden calf, and that is why he brought the tablets down instead of leaving them atop the mountain, or breaking them there. He reasoned that there must be some righteous Jews among them who fought against the worshippers of the calf. But when he reached Yehoshua and heard the sounds, he realized that there were no sounds of war, only the sounds of idolatry. At that point he could have broken the tablets, but he further wanted to demonstrate that a judge should not rule based on circumstantial evidence, so he waited until he saw the calf they made.

So we see that Moshe Rabbeinu’s compelling logic dictated that if such an abomination had been committed, it would be an impossibility that everyone remained silent. At minimum, there must have been a battle waged against the evil. All the more so with this terrible abomination that we face in the form of the Zionist state, which violates the severe oaths that Hashem has placed upon us, and furthermore leads the innocent astray and inculcates heresy and denial of the Torah

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<sup>132</sup> Divrei Yoel, Parshas Noach, p. 185

throughout the world. Moreover our true redemption is delayed. Certainly we must fight this false ideal with self-sacrifice, until Hashem looks down from heaven and has mercy on us, and brings us out of this bitter and brief<sup>133</sup> exile. Then the eyes of the Jewish people will be enlightened to see the truth and return to Hashem and His holy Torah.

~35~

*Precedent for the idea of publishing a book to refute the heretics' arguments, accompanied by a disclaimer that the book is not for the heretics themselves*

I saw fit to copy here the words of the holy Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech, author of Bnei Yisaschar,<sup>134</sup> in the introduction to his work Mayan Ganim,<sup>135</sup> where he writes with fiery zeal against those Jews who attempt to destroy the foundations of the Torah.<sup>136</sup> He concludes with the following words:

Know, dear reader, that with these words I do not intend to enter into a debate with the wicked heretics, and to convince them to concede the truth and repent to Hashem. For the wise King Solomon has already said, "The fool does not desire understanding..."<sup>137</sup> And regarding the Mishnah, "Know what to answer a heretic," Rabbi Yochanan said, "This was only said regarding a gentile heretic, but to a Jewish heretic one should not answer, because all the more so, he will surely become even worse."<sup>138</sup> The meaning of the expression "all the more so" here is as follows: Heaven forbid to answer a Jewish heretic, since his true wish is only to reveal the irreligious thoughts of his heart, to free himself of the burden of Torah and service of Hashem. This being so, even if you give him heaps of answers, he will do his utmost to continue in sin and refute your answers. Each time, he will strengthen his irreligious convictions even more, as you expand your discussion with him into various debates. This is what Rashi means in his commentary on Sanhedrin...<sup>139</sup> If you answer him, he will apply himself to

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<sup>133</sup> The expression "bitter and brief" (or hasty) comes from Chavakuk 1:6: "I will arouse the Kasdim, the bitter and hasty nation." Perhaps the Rebbe calls the exile brief as a prayer that it should indeed be brief.

<sup>134</sup> Rabbi Tzvi Elimelech Shapiro of Dinov (1783-1841)

<sup>135</sup> Mayan Ganim is a commentary on Ohr Hachaim, the work against Greek philosophy by Rabbi Yosef Yaabetz, quoted by the Rebbe near the beginning of this Hakdamah.

<sup>136</sup> The Maskilim, who flourished in the Bnei Yisaschar's later years.

<sup>137</sup> Mishlei 18:2: "The fool does not desire understanding, only to reveal the thoughts of his heart."

<sup>138</sup> Sanhedrin 38b

<sup>139</sup> Rashi writes: "All the more so, he will become worse - because he knows the Torah, yet denies it, and therefore he will study it carefully and you will not be able to give him an answer that is acceptable to him."

be able to respond to your words with false answers, using fancy language, mockery and the like. Therefore, far be it from me, as my father's child, to transgress the words of Chazal. My intent with these words is not to debate with the wicked and show them the truth. I know well that if they read my words of truth, they will only get worse, responding with fancy language and mockery. That is how they always are. "The lips of heresy drip with melted honeycombs."<sup>140</sup> Rather, my entire intent with these words is to save the unfortunate souls among the Jews, and to save the innocent children by warning them to stay away from the tents of these wicked men who have thrown off the yoke of the words of Chazal from their necks and spoken falsely even against the commandments of Hashem that are written explicitly in the written Torah. They are worse than the Karaites, whom the Jewish people has already successfully ostracized to the point that they have become their own people, like the other nations. These people are from the Erev Rav and the Amalekites who mixed into the Jewish people. My Jewish brethren, keep away from the tents of these wicked men! Do not join them in any way.

See how he writes there at length with holy, fiery words. I have copied only a portion of his discourse because there is much we can learn from his words that is relevant to our present era. The wicked of our generation are thousands of times worse than the wicked of his generation, so one can only imagine how far we must stay from them.

Furthermore, he wrote explicitly that he was not addressing the heretics, to whom Chazal forbade us to respond. Clearly, he held that this disclaimer was sufficient to avoid transgressing the words of Chazal. And so I say as well: I am not writing at all to any of those groups whom Chazal forbade us to rebuke, only to the few people who seek to know the truth, and are merely confused by the influence of the majority of the world, together with all the pro-Zionist parties. From among them, it is still possible to save precious souls. Many leaders are under the influence of honor or money, or the fear of their congregations, and therefore cannot recognize the truth. The truth is invisible to them, for as the Torah says, the bribe blinds the eyes of the wise. Chazal expound at length in Masechta Kesubos 105 about how even a bribe of mere words can blind the eye to the truth. How much the more so a bribe of significant proportions! A blind man cannot even see the sun at noon, so how can these people be expected to see the truth? But despite all this, there are

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<sup>140</sup> Mishlei 5:3

still some sincere Jews who are not so deeply affected by bribery and can recognize the truth.

Now, I know that the archers will shoot endless arrows and catapult stones at everything I have written, for that has always been the way of the Zionists, especially their religious followers. They pour out insults, humiliation, degradation, curses, menacing threats, lies and fabrications on anyone who is not aligned with their opinions or does not follow their lead. They write almost limitlessly with specious arguments explaining the Torah in opposition to the true halacha. There is no end to the empty words they are capable of producing. But blessed is Hashem, who has inspired me not to be intimidated by their words, and to ignore them like the pure nothingness that they are. I pray to Hashem, who helps and supports, to enlighten the eyes of those who hope to Him so that they might see the truth. May Hashem give us the privilege of sanctifying His name, until we merit the complete redemption, when the entire earth will be filled with the knowledge of Hashem, soon in our days, amen.

~36~

*Precedent for the idea of refuting a few fallacious arguments and allowing readers to use this foundation to see the falsehood in the rest of them*

We see in the Radak's long commentary on Tehillim<sup>141</sup> that in many chapters he devotes lengthy pieces to refute the arguments of the Christians, who had attempted to use the verses of Tehillim as proofs to the Nazarene, R"L. Similarly, the Rambam in Igeres Teiman refutes an argument that someone made validating Mohammed using the Torah. Although the Christians wrote many long books, full of twisted proofs from the Tanach, the Radak does not quote them all, for it is impossible to deal with all of their endless falsifications and imaginary proofs. Still, he took the trouble to explain several chapters so that there should not be any room to err, Heaven forbid, and think these verses supported the Christian view. Those seeking the truth could realize on their own why the other arguments, not cited by the Radak, were also fallacious. Truth testifies to itself.

In our times, the religious groups who follow or join the Zionists do the same as the Christians: they bring proofs from the holy Torah to the Zionist view under

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<sup>141</sup> The Radak's commentary on Tehillim was heavily censored in some printings to remove the anti-Christian arguments. Nevertheless, the full version was also published many times, the most recent (before Vayael Moshe) of which was Yisroel Brickenstein's Tel Aviv 1946 edition, which is likely the one the Rebbe had before him. Its title page reads "Sefer Tehillim with the long commentary of Rabbeinu David Kimchi."

various disguises. In this manner they fool unsuspecting Jews, just as the Sadducees, Christians, Sabbateans and all the enemies of the Torah did in centuries past. Today's heretics are actually worse, because they dress up their heresy in the cloak of Jerusalem: in the name of loving Eretz Yisroel<sup>142</sup> and saving Jewish lives.<sup>143</sup> The falsifications and forgeries are never-ending, all for the sake of deceiving people.

In this booklet, I have occasionally digressed to counter many mistaken notions that have spread in the world and misled people, and whoever has a modicum of intelligence will recognize the truth. However, it is impossible to deal directly with all their words of vanity, lies, fabrications and forgeries by quoting them all, for there is no end to the empty words they come up with. Their disguises and false interpretations know no bounds, but whoever considers the Toras Hashem carefully can see that all their words amount to nothing and are total rubbish.

~37~

*The intensity of Zionist efforts to persuade*

And now, in the period immediately preceding the coming of moshiach, before the final sorting,<sup>144</sup> the Sitra Achra has intensified its power through the work of these propagandists among the religious followers of Zionism to a level unprecedented in any of the missionary movements throughout history, from creation to this day. All the smooth-tongued talk of the primeval snake with Adam and of all the deceivers from every heretical sect in history, with all their various disguises - do not compare even remotely with the smooth-tongued talk of today's deceivers, whose tactics penetrate deep into the minds and hearts of every single Jew. This is

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<sup>142</sup> A reference to the common Zionist argument that since the Ramban lists conquering and living in Eretz Yisroel as a positive commandment, he must not have considered the Three Oaths legally binding. The Rebbe responds to this in Maamar Yishuv Eretz Yisroel. He demonstrates that the Ramban meant conquest only in ancient times, but today, those who live in Eretz Yisroel fulfill an optional mitzvah; there is no obligation to go, and certainly conquest is forbidden. Furthermore, he shows that most Rishonim disagreed with the Ramban's entire premise.

<sup>143</sup> This argument is especially prevalent today, with many Orthodox Jews declaring that they are not Zionists but support the state anyhow because they see no other way of protecting the Jews who live there. What is striking is that these same people often travel to Eretz Yisroel and send their children to study there. If they truly considered the state a sin that is committed in order to save lives, they would not take advantage of the transgression. The truth is that even if the state protects Jews on a small scale, it endangers them on a frightful scale. Those who understand that the state is not really protecting Jews cannot be called hypocrites when they visit the Holy Land.

<sup>144</sup> A reference to Yechezkel 20:35-36: "And I will bring you to the wilderness of the nations, and I will judge you there, face to face. As I judged your ancestors in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, said Hashem G-d. And I will make you pass under the staff, and I will bring you into to the covenant. And I will sift out from you those who rebel or sin against Me. From the land where they live I will extract them, but they will not come to the Land of Israel, and you shall know that I am Hashem."

how it is just before the Sitra Achra loses its power over the Jewish people, as I have quoted earlier from the Tosafos Yom Tov.<sup>145</sup> We need Hashem's great mercy to evade them.

May Hashem shower His infinite mercy upon us, and gladden us speedily corresponding to the extent that He afflicted us. May we be privileged to come closer to Him with holiness and purity, and to see soon the salvation and joy of all of Israel, soon in our days, amen.

~38~

*Two reasons for the title: 1) Moshe Rabbeinu imposed the Three Oaths; 2) the name of the author and his ancestor*

I have called this booklet by the name "Vayoel Moshe" for two reasons. Firstly, Chazal say in the Sifri on Devarim,<sup>146</sup> and in many places in the Midrashim,<sup>147</sup> as well as in the Gemara Nedarim 65a, that the word "vayoel" means "he imposed an oath," as Scripture states, "Shaul imposed an oath on the people."<sup>148</sup> Since this booklet's purpose is to explain the oath that Hashem imposed on the Jewish people, the name Vayoel Moshe is undoubtedly appropriate. Although this oath is not found in Moshe's prophecy but in Shir Hashirim, the Midrash Rabbah, Parshas Yisro 28,<sup>149</sup> says that at Mount Sinai the Jews received the entire Torah, including everything that the prophets would later reveal.<sup>150</sup> This is why Moshe said to the Jews, "Not with you alone do I make this covenant, but with those who are here with us today as well as those who are not here with us today."<sup>151</sup> And this is especially true of Shir Hashirim, regarding which the Alshich quotes an explicit statement of Chazal that it is from Sinai.<sup>152</sup> And everything given at Sinai was given through Moshe Rabbeinu. So Vayoel Moshe – "Moshe imposed an oath" – is

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<sup>145</sup> On Avos 5:5, quoted above in Section 15

<sup>146</sup> 1:5 and 3:24

<sup>147</sup> Midrash Rabbah Shemos 1:33, Tanchuma Shemos 12

<sup>148</sup> Shmuel I 14:24

<sup>149</sup> Midrash Rabbah Shemos 28:6: All the prophecies that the prophets later spoke, they received from Mount Sinai... as it says (Malachi 1:1), "The burden of the word of Hashem to Israel in the hand of Malachi." It does not say "in the days of Malachi" but "in the hand of Malachi," to indicate that the prophecy was already in his hand from Mount Sinai, only he was not granted permission to speak it until that time. And similarly, Yishaya (48:16) says, "From the time that it existed, I was there" - on the day when the Torah was given at Sinai, I was there and I received this prophecy. Only "now G-d sent me" - but until now I did not have permission to speak my prophecy. Not only the prophets, but even the Sages who arose in every generation - each received his teachings from Sinai.

<sup>150</sup> See Siman 34, where the Rebbe uses this Midrash to answer the question of when and where the Jewish people accepted the Three Oaths.

<sup>151</sup> Devarim 29:14

<sup>152</sup> Alshich on Shir Hashirim 1:1, quoting Shir Hashirim Rabbah 1:2

a fitting description for this oath, which he imposed on Israel, just as the word “Vayoel” is used in the posuk, “Shaul imposed an oath on the people.”

Furthermore, on the posuk Vayoel Moshe - “Moshe swore to live with the man”<sup>153</sup> – Chazal explain that Yisro imposed an oath on Moshe not to return to Egypt without his permission.<sup>154</sup> In actuality this was an oath not to end exile before the proper time. If Yisro imposed the oath merely because he wanted to make sure Moshe would keep his word to stay with him, this would raise the obvious question: Didn’t Yisro recognize that Moshe Rabbeinu was a holy man? The Midrash Rabbah<sup>155</sup> says that Yisro saw a blessing come upon the water due to Moshe, as well as other miracles. The Pirkei Derabbi Eliezer Chapter 40 says:

Moshe’s staff was created during the twilight period at the end of the last day of creation, and was given to Adam, the first man, in the Garden of Eden... It was handed down [to the Patriarchs, who] brought it to Egypt... Yisro took it from Egypt and planted it in the garden near his house, and from then on, no one could come close to it. When Moshe came to Yisro’s house, he entered the garden, saw the staff, read the signs that were inscribed on it, stretched out his hand and took it. Yisro saw this and declared, “This man will one day redeem Israel from Egypt.” And therefore he gave his daughter Tziporah to him for a wife...

Thus Yisro saw that Moshe would be the redeemer of Israel, and recognized that he was certainly a man of upstanding character who would not dare to speak falsehood or renege on a promise. Why then did Yisro have to impose an oath on him? Wasn’t his commitment sufficient? The answer is that Yisro knew that Moshe would eventually have to return to Egypt and redeem the Jewish people, and thus the redemption depended on him. Both Yisro and Moshe were afraid that, due to Moshe’s overpowering love for the Jewish people, and seeing the affliction and suffering of his people under the yoke of exile, Moshe might feel compelled to go to Egypt early. That was why a binding oath was necessary.

Similarly, we find that Avraham Avinu had to take action to prevent Dovid, son of Yishai from coming before his time, as Chazal derived<sup>156</sup> from the verse, “And Avram chased them away.”<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Shemos 2:21

<sup>154</sup> Midrash Rabbah Shemos 1:33

<sup>155</sup> Midrash Rabbah Shemos 1:32

<sup>156</sup> Pirkei Derabbi Eliezer 28

<sup>157</sup> Bereishis 15:11

Therefore, both Moshe and Yisro decided to bind themselves with this oath, for certainly Moshe would not transgress an oath and come to force the end. Thus this oath of Yisro was similar to the oaths that Hashem imposed on the Jewish people in exile.

And Moshe's oath had its effect: years later, when Hashem sent him to redeem the Jewish people, he had to go first to Midyan to annul his oath in Yisro's presence, as the Gemara says in Nedarim 65a.

One might ask: if Moshe was so eager to go and redeem the Jews, why did he initially refuse when Hashem commanded him to do so? But it is well known that his intent then was also for the benefit of the Jewish people, for he saw that the set time they were supposed to spend in exile had not yet elapsed, and they would have to complete it in other exiles. Therefore he wanted the redemption to be delayed, so that it would be a complete redemption with no other exile following it. But that was not to be; the Torah says "they could not wait"<sup>158</sup> any longer, which, according to the well-known explanation of the Arizal, means that they could not retain their purity if they remained in exile any longer.<sup>159</sup>

Alternatively, my ancestor, the Yismach Moshe, on Parshas Shmini, says that Moshe's reason for refusing was so that the redemption should take place by the hand of Hashem Himself.

In any case, the oath of exile was actually given by Moshe, so it is appropriate to say "Vayoel Moshe" – Moshe imposed an oath – with regards to the oath of exile.

The Targum on Shir Hashirim, on the verse "I have imposed an oath on you, daughters of Jerusalem," writes that the oaths of Shir Hashirim were actually given by Moshe and applied to the exile of Moshe's time. The Targum begins: "After this, Moshe was told through prophecy..."

Now, the Targum writes this on the first two oaths, which he holds applied to the Jews who wandered for forty years in the desert with Moshe. However, on the last oath he writes, "The king moshiach will say..." The messianic king will impose on us an oath not to fight and attempt to escape from exile until it is Hashem's will to redeem us. If so, it would seem that the last oath – the one that is relevant to our

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<sup>158</sup> Shemos 12:39

<sup>159</sup> Siddur Arizal, Hagadah Shel Pesach, Matza Zu



time – will come from moshiach, not from Moshe. But according to what we find in the holy Zohar<sup>160</sup> and in many other Midrashim<sup>161</sup> that Moshe Rabbeinu himself will be moshiach, this oath too is included in the words “Vayoel Moshe.”

(Although the concept that Moshe will be moshiach seems to contradict statements that appear in many other places that Dovid will be moshiach,<sup>162</sup> the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh in Parshas Vayechi on the verse “he ties his donkey to the vine”<sup>163</sup> reconciles this by saying that moshiach will have some of each of the souls of Dovid and Moshe.)

But setting all this aside, I have already shown above that the oaths were revealed at Sinai, and everything revealed at Sinai came through Moshe Rabbeinu, so it is definitely appropriate to say “Vayoel Moshe.”

The second reason why I chose this name is because it combines my lowly name with the name of holy name of my ancestor, the Yismach Moshe, whose entire life was devoted to waiting for the redemption. He used to say that the reason why he was more devoted to this than others was because while everyone else had only heard of the Destruction of the Temple, he had seen it with his own eyes, for his soul had lived in that generation. Seeing is a more powerful experience than just hearing, and he remembered everything that had happened then as if it was still before his eyes. No doubt he is standing in prayer now as well, as he promised to do, begging for mercy for the Jewish people and for Hashem’s holy name. The violation of the oaths is what is holding back the redemption and bringing on tragedies, Heaven forbid. May the merit of my ancestor, together with all righteous and holy individuals, protect us and save us from this tragedy.

May Hashem have mercy on his people Israel in all places where they live, and may He say enough to our troubles. May we not have any more sadness, and may our prayers be close to Hashem our G-d day and night. May He incline our hearts to Him, to walk in all His ways and to repent to Him in joy, without any suffering. May the pride of the holy Torah and the Jewish people be soon uplifted, and may Hashem also have mercy on me among the Jewish people, as poor and lowly as I am, for my heart is broken within me and I await only mercy from Heaven. May the merit of my holy ancestors protect me, bringing me redemption and mercy, and may I yet merit to repent completely and to serve Hashem with gladness of heart,

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<sup>160</sup> Zohar Bamidbar 246b, Raya Mehemna Teitzei 280a, Tikunei Zohar 111b

<sup>161</sup> Midrash Rabbah Devarim 9:9

<sup>162</sup> Dovid or at least a descendent of Dovid; see Yechezkel 37:24, Hoshea 3:5

<sup>163</sup> Bereishis 49:11

as is His will, until we are privileged to see quickly the redemption and joy of all of Israel, soon in our days, amen.