

שבת בשבת



Parshat Chayei Sarah No 1649: 25 Cheshvan 5777 (November 26, 2016)

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Avraham's Eternal Purchase

Rabbi Ira Ebbin

Rabbi Ira Ebbin serves as the Rabbi of Congregation Ohav Sholom in Merrick, NY

When Avraham purchases the Meorat Hamachpeilah for a permanent resting place for his wife Sarah, he was buying more than just burial plots for his immediate family. With this purchase, not only does Avraham establish a sight that would be considered sacred to the Jewish people for eternity, but he also sets the framework for the status of future land purchases in the land of Israel.

Avraham's deal is one of three places that the Tanach describes a Jewish purchase of the land of Israel. The other two are Yaakov's purchase of Shechem for 100 kesitas, and Dovid's purchase of the Temple Mount for 50 pieces of Silver. In each case, the buyer insists that the land be paid for in full, rather than receiving it as a gift or taking it by force.



The symbolic status of these three locations remained significant throughout the Tanach. Dovid establishes his first palace in Chevron, and it is there that Avshalom begins his rebellion to take the throne. Shechem, which was to become the burial place of Yosef and Yehoshua, is the chosen destination for Rechavam, Shlomo's son and successor, to declare himself as the new King. The Temple Mount and its surrounding area, was where young Shlomo was coronated as the true heir to the throne by the Gichon valley just outside Har Habayit, and it is from this same mountain that tradition believes, that Eliyahu will descend to announce the arrival of the Moshiah.

Why do these three locations hold such unique prominence in Jewish History and specifically with Kings? Why do these three locations hold such a special place in our hearts, perhaps more than other sites in all of the land of Israel? And why are each of these spots arguably the most contested by our enemies?

Perhaps it is because they were acquired via a financial purchase.

The Torah instructs us "You shall possess the land, and you shall settle it" (Bamidbar

33:53). The Rambam points to this verse as the source of the Mitzvah of conquering the land of Israel. The Mitzvah is of such importance, that the Halacha states that one is permitted to violate the Rabbinic Laws of Shabbat in order to take possession of the land (Orach Chaim 206:11). While the most natural means of conquering the land is by use of military force, one can fulfill this Mitzvah just the same with a monetary purchase of the land. In fact, I'd like to propose, buying the land would actually be the preferred mode of conquest, as it is the fulfillment of the Messianic dream outlined in the second chapter of the book of Yeshayahu "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift sword against nation and they will no longer study warfare."

By insisting on procuring the land through money, Avraham, Yaakov and Dovid all lay the groundwork for the ultimate settling of the Holy Land. It was through their foresight, that the torch of land purchase was passed to more recent heroes such as Rothschild, Montefiore, and other supporters of Keren Kayemeth Le'Yisrael. It is they who remind us that although we are currently forced to defend our land through military means, we pray for the time that G-d will spread a canopy of peace upon our beloved homeland, and we can all settle the entire land without war.

May we see it soon in our days.

Upcoming Event



RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS OF AMERICA-MIZRACHI
Invites you to a special presentation

The Contemporary Significance of the State of Israel: Reshit Zemichat Geulatenu?



Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter
Senior Scholar, Yeshiva University's Center
for the Jewish Future
University Professor of Jewish History and
Jewish Thought, Yeshiva University

Congregation Rinat Israel
389 W. Englewood Ave, Teaneck, NJ

Tuesday, December 13th
7:30 pm

Introducing the New RZA-Aryeh Fellowship!

The RZA-Aryeh Fellowship is a new initiative of the RZA-Mizrachi to strengthen the mission of Religious Zionism. Fifty college and graduate school students from around the country have been invited to spend their winter-break in Israel where they will be studying Torah and attending intensive seminars devoted to Religious Zionism education. Upon their return the Aryeh Fellows will focus on their year-long Manhigut (leadership) projects designed to bring the message of Religious Zionism back to communities across America. We are excited to profile a different "Aryeh Fellow" each week.

Meet Shimon Niren



My name is Shimon Niren, and I am very excited for this year's RZA Fellowship! After graduating high school in 2013 from the Rav Teitz Masivta Academy (RTMA), I had the unforgettable experience of learning in Israel for almost two full years. The things that I learned and saw there were truly amazing. The people I met, foods that I tasted, mountains that I climbed and, and taxi rides that I took, simply can not be duplicated anywhere else. In those two years, I built a foundation which I feel keeps me going to this very day. Since I've returned to the USA, I've been studying both Accounting and Architecture at Yeshiva University, and in my free time I help run various events for NCSY, AIPAC, and YU's Hospitality Management Club. I look forward to a successful year for the RZA and all of this year's affiliates.

Join us for Yom Yerushalyaim!

A large crowd of people gathered at night, with many Israeli flags flying. The scene is illuminated by city lights. Overlaid on the image is text and logos.

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over Yom Yerushalayim
MAY 22-25, 2017

Dear RZA-Mizrachi Friends,

We very much look forward to having you take part in our Mizrachi World Movement's "This Year in Jerusalem" Mega-Mission over Yom Yerushalayim. Our aim is to bring thousands of people (including rabbinic and community leaders) from hundreds of communities from across the global Jewish community to learn, experience and celebrate together at this momentous time in Jewish history.

Please see below a personal invitation from Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, one of the global leaders of the mission, inviting you to join him on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

More details about the program can be found at the following link - www.mizrachi.org/YY50 - including the draft schedule, highlights, pricing options and booking procedure.

Please note the following:

1. There are 10 hotel options, with a price range depending on hotel choice. Each hotel package includes breakfast, lunch and dinner (excluding Wed evening). The hotel packages also include the entire 4 day program at discounted rates.
2. There is also an option for people who are not staying in hotels - if they have their own accommodation - to join for the 4 day program, at a cost of \$630 per person. It does not include hotel, breakfast and dinner, but does include transport from central meeting points to and from all the venues, lunch each day, and participation in the full program.
3. For those shuls/communities/groups who wish to bring missions and want to extend their trip either before or after our 4 day mission, that can also be arranged by contacting us at YY50@mizrachi.org, and we - together with our partners - will put together a tailor-made package for your group.

Looking forward to celebrating together – in Jerusalem – on this historic occasion.

With excitement and anticipation,

Rabbi Gideon Shloush
Mizrachi – Religious Zionists of America

Rav Doron Perez
Mizrachi World Movement



POINT OF VIEW

The “Regulation Law” is neither Unjust nor Robbery

By Rabbi Yisrael Rozen, Dean of the ZometInstitute

“And the field was handed over... to Avraham”[Bereishit 23:20].

The Regulation Law

The "Regulation Law" which passed preliminary reading in the Knesset (to legalize the settlement of Amona, among other places) was greeted with cries of "shame," and accused of such crimes as **expulsion, evil, and robbery**. The loudest of them all was that very righteous man Benny Begin, who holds an impressive record in preventing any attempt to support the settlers of Yehuda and the Shomron by enacting laws to legalize their possession of the land. At the same time, he strongly defends the right of the Bedouins to get legal permission to keep the lands which they robbed. (I am not overly surprised to read reports that his son Avinadav is a permanent figure in the demonstrations against the IDF at Bilin.) Begin the father claimed in an interview on Reshet Bet on the radio that **"the purpose of the Regulatory Law is to allow robbery through legal means."** After his statement, there is no longer any need for the moralistic cries of the political left, which wraps itself in the cloaks of the Supreme Court with such claims as: "No law anywhere in the world will give approval for the robbery of private lands." (As quoted in the press.)

Is this a matter of simple law, or is it rather politics at its worst?

Regulating the Market

The issue of **"regulation of the market"** is a concept of Israeli law (and perhaps in other legal systems) which has been copied from the Hebrew law, **as a Jewish legal principle that is contrary to the laws of the evil city of Sodom**. This ancient rule, which can be traced back to the time when the city was overturned by a Divine act, rules that if in all innocence somebody purchases property which was stolen or robbed and has been brought to court to return it – he will be required to compensate the rightful owner for the value of the property but he will not be required to return the land itself after he invested time and energy in developing it. (This is a brief summary. As with all laws, there are many details and regulations which are beyond the scope of this article.) This principle was adopted as part of the "Law of Land Rights" in Israel (5729-1969). Section 10 of the law reads as follows: "Innocent purchase – If one purchased the rights to regulated land for full payment, based on the formal land records, he will maintain the rights to the land even if the records were in error."

This law is similar to another Jewish law which appears in the Choshen Mishpat, "in a similar way one (who is by strict law justified) is not allowed to abide by the rules of Sodom." There is also a rule in Jewish law of a "stolen beam" which was used in the construction of a building. The one who used the beam is not forced to destroy the building in order to return the beam itself, but instead is required to pay for it. This is in the same spirit as an entire set of "decrees by Yehoshua Bin Nun," most of which require owners of land to take legal action beyond the strict limits of the law, because **"this was the condition that Yehoshua made in giving them the land"** [Bava Kama 30a]. See also an article by Rabbi Yaacov Ariel, "A Settlement Built on Stolen Property" (Techumin, volume 32).

The Supreme Court: "At the Place of Justice there is..." [Kohellet 3:16].

The storm about Amona is a stark example of the futility of the verse, **"He looked for justice but found oppression"** [Yeshayahu 5:7]. I will explain my harsh words, including the missing word in the above subheading which quotes a verse from Kohellet. It is possible to accept with some difficulty the words of the State Attorney when he threatens that the Regulatory Law will be rejected by the International Criminal Court in the Hague, based on "international law" that forbids taking possession of land in captured areas. We can even believe his second threat, one that is more sharply focused: **"He made a law and it will not be changed** (by the Supreme Court?)" [Tehillim 148:6].

Today, my anger is directed towards "the place of justice" – the Supreme Court. Everybody is convinced that the law will not meet with their approval! **Does something that is acceptable and good and just in the Israel Property Law become robbery, injustice, exploitation, and "evil"** (that is the word missing in the subheading...) **when it is enforced in the area of Yehuda and the Shomron**, like hundreds of other Israeli laws? If the "rules to support a repentant" are to be given a status in Israel equal to the "law of respect for man and his freedom," who has appointed the Supreme Court in Jerusalem to take the seat of the ICC in the Hague? Is it the task of the Supreme Court to decide what is constitutional in Israel, or to warn the Prime Minister how difficult it might be to cope with the rulings of the Hague or to struggle against the lame-duck President in the United States?

According to the traditions of our sages, Adam was buried in the Machpeilah Cave, and that is why Avraham wanted to buy it. I have not found any answer in the sources to the following question: What would have happened **if Efron had refused to sell the cave, even for all the wealth in the world?** I will appreciate receiving an answer to this question from my readers...

As Shabbat Approaches

The Relationship of Avraham and Sarah

By Esti Rosenberg, Head of the Midrasha for Women, Migdal Oz

“And Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to weep for her” [Bereishit 23:2].

This week’s Torah portion begins with the death of Sarah, but it hides many details while revealing very few facts. We are told where she died and how old she was, but we are not told how close Sarah’s death was to the date of the Binding of Yitzchak. And we are told where Avraham was when it happened but only through a hint in the verse. “And Avraham came” – and the Midrash asks, from where did he come?

What can these few hints and images tell us about the family life of Avraham and Sarah during the time after the Binding? How they react as a family in their attempt to descend from Mount Moriah and apply the power of the Binding in everyday life?

The commentators can be separated into two groups in their answers to these questions.

Rashi quotes the Midrash. “Avraham came – from Be’er Sheva, where he went after the Binding, since Sarah died in response to hearing about the events.” This is also the approach taken by Chizkuni and the Natziv. The Ramban, on the other hand, disagrees with Rashi. He feels that Avraham and Sarah continued living together after the Binding, “and Sarah did not die at that time, for Avraham did not live in Be’er Sheva while Sarah lived in Chevron... In my opinion, Avraham had one tent and Sarah had another one, and Avraham ‘came’ to Sarah’s tent in order to eulogize her.” The RADAK also agrees with this approach: “He came from the outside, because he was not home when she died.” Abarbanel accepts this approach too.

The two different explanations of the fact that Avraham “came” imply two different pictures of the end of the events of the Binding.

In discussing the words of Rashi and the Midrash, Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsh comments as follows:

“When he returned home from the Binding, Avraham didn’t find his wife... The promise of a reward given to the Patriarchs does not apply at all to joy and good that they encounter during their lives.”

Avraham and Yitzchak left Sarah behind when they went to Mount Moriah, and from that point the home is no longer what it was before. Evidently Yitzchak did not return with Avraham to eulogize Sarah and weep for her. Avraham buried her by himself, without having any opportunity to take his leave. This is yet another harsh and difficult test that Avraham experienced.

The picture painted by the Ramban shows much greater harmony, allowing for a return to a calm and full life. Avraham and Sarah moved together to Chevron, grew old together, and died in peace, each one in their separate tents.

Rabbi Hirsh also analyzes this possibility:

“After experiencing such a close encounter with G-d... people like Yitzchak and Avraham might be expected to become so filled with self-importance and with the exalted events that they would no longer show any interest in regular life and people... One might expect that

such an approach to G-d would lead to arrogance... But Avraham and Yitzchak return to their people and to their regular lives.”

The return to normal life in the house of Avraham and Sarah after the events of the Binding shows a remarkable ability to climb to a great precipice and then to descend, to continue a normal life – to die and to eulogize, and to continue to love.

There you have it: two commentaries and two descriptions. This can be viewed both as a challenge and as a Divine promise.

A PARSHA INSIGHT

Long Ropes

By Rabbi Asaf Harnoy, Post-Graduate Beit Midrash for Torah and Leadership,
Jerusalem

Only two weekly Torah portions have the word “life” in their names: Chayei Sarah (Sarah’s Life), and Vayechi (And he Lived). It is interesting to note the somewhat strange fact that both of these Torah portions involve matters pertaining to **death**. This week’s portion, Chayei Sarah, begins with Sarah’s death and her burial in the Machpelah Cave, and Vayechi describes the death of Yaacov and the preparations for it.

Why then do the names of these two portions, which involve issues of death, include the concept of “life?”

Beware of the Pit

Lev Tolstoy, one of the greatest philosophers of the nineteenth century, illustrated the human life experience with a story. He told about a man walking in a desolate desert who fell into a deep and dark pit, which had at the bottom animals of prey that wanted to tear him to pieces. As he fell, the man managed to grab hold of a weed growing out of a crevice in the wall, and this was his only hope to stay alive. However, his hands became weak, and he felt that he would soon fall. At that moment he saw two mice, one white and the other black, who were chewing at the roots of the plant. And then it started to rain, and he was able to lick up some of the drops of water that fell onto the plant.

Tolstoy writes that this is an apt parable of the life of a man in this world. The dangerous animals at the bottom of the pit represent death. The white and dark mice are day and night, and all the pleasures of the world are nothing more than water drops on a weed that will be uprooted very soon.

What is the Solution?

Tolstoy does not give any solution to his dilemma. He leaves his reader with harsh thoughts and a feeling of despair with respect to the meaning of life in general.

However, it would seem that the question we asked in the beginning of this article can lead to a true and valid approach to the question of the meaning of life.

The Righteous People who Live On

The Talmud teaches us that righteous people are considered to be alive even after they have died, and that evil people are called dead even while they are still alive. We have been told explicitly that our Patriarch Yaacov did not die (Ta’anit 5), even though he was embalmed and eulogized.

The difference between the righteous person who is called “alive” and the evil one who is called “dead” is the same as the difference between a person who is constantly involved in doing things for others and for the Creator and a person who is involved only in his own personal self and in his physical needs.

Righteous people, who are called the living, perform deeds that are good for the world, they **justify** the fact that they were born (“*lehatzdik*,” from the same root as the word “*tzadik*,” a righteous person). They are therefore considered to be alive.

Happiness in the Market

Another famous story, which appears in the Talmud (Taanit 22), is about Rav Beroka, who went into the market together with Eliyahu the Prophet. Eliyahu pointed out that two people in the market have a place waiting for them in the world to come. Rav Beroka asked them what they do, and they said that they are happy, **and that they bring joy to any sad people that they encounter.**

These future residents of the world to come were not involved in buying things in the market, and they did not remain at rest in their homes or even study in a Beit Midrash. They were simple people who filled their lives with activity for the good of others. In this way they had the merit of **being linked from this world to the world to come by long ropes.**

Make your Own Ropes

There is a good reason why these two specific Torah portions, which involve the deaths of great people of our nation, are given names that include the concept of life. This fact is very significant, and it can teach us that life and death do not depend merely on a timer, and that **the measure of life is a broader concept than the physical time spent on this earth.**

A person who spends his or her life in the world and fills it with Torah, mitzvot, and good deeds, is a person who has fashioned long ropes by which he can pull himself up and free himself from Tolstoy’s dark pit. Such a person is a righteous “tzadik,” and he or she is called “alive” – both during and after his or her physical life. This corresponds to both Sarah and Yaacov, who filled their lives with the service of G-d and with good and righteous deeds. Therefore it is appropriate that the Torah portions which tell us about their death have a name which includes the word “life.”

WHEN THE CHILDREN OPEN THEIR HEARTS

I Can’t Hear You

By Meirav Maggeni, Author of Content and Stories in Chemed, the Religious School System

My name is Shira. I am a regular girl who likes to play and have a good time, to spend my time watching programs on my computer, and I don’t like studying very much. I have three naughty brothers. All in all, my life was quite normal and even a bit boring.

All this was before Daphna, a new girl, came into my class.

Daphna is deaf. She almost cannot hear at all, and because of that her speech is very unclear. Daphna is accompanied by an aide named Tamar, who translates whatever the teacher says into sign language for her. Sign language is a universal language that deaf people all over the world know.

At recess, Daphna is quiet and smiles a lot. I noticed that her smile has a forlorn look.

At first, we were excited to have Daphna join us, and we tried to welcome her into our crowd and bring her into our games. But since she was so different, it was not always easy. As time went on, we began to pay less attention to her, and her smile became even sadder than before.

And then one morning my teacher, Yamima, said to me, “Shira, please come see me after class.” I’m sure you can imagine that from that moment on I could barely concentrate on the lesson. What could Yamima want from me? Finally, after an eternity, the class was over.

Yamima went straight to the point. She started talking about Daphna and how she had almost

no friends, that she was having trouble in her studies, and that she was lonely. And then she said, "I think you can help her. All you have to do is to be her friend."

I felt pride that Yamima had picked me for this task. I said, "Okay, I'll see what I can do." But it wasn't at all easy. How could I be a friend of somebody who I really didn't like very much? It was no fun to try to get close to somebody who didn't speak clearly and who practically couldn't hear anything. But in the end an inner voice told me that I must make my best effort. I had to make sure that I would succeed in helping Daphna.

That same day, I wrote a letter to Daphna. "Dear Daphna, I want to be your friend. Can we do that?" I drew some flowers and hearts on the paper, and I put it on her desk. Daphna read my letter and wrote me back one word, in huge letters: "Thanks!"

Wonderful, I thought, we are off to a good start. I asked Yamima to let me change my seat, to be next to Daphna. But what should I do next? And then I had an idea – I would write down anything that I wanted to say to her! I took out a notebook and I asked her, "What do you think we can do together?"

Daphna wrote to me, "I love to draw." She opened her bag and took out a notebook with her drawings in it. I was truly surprised, and I wrote to her, "You are a great artist! Can you teach me too?" Daphna was very happy, and she nodded her head. It is because of Daphna that I discovered my talent in drawing. Daphna was an excellent teacher.

It was not always easy to be Daphna's friend. There were times when it took a great effort just to keep playing with her, but on the other hand I wanted her to be happy. And she always had trouble with the fact that she was different.

As time went on, I became accustomed to being with her, and I really began to have a good time. We "talked" by writing notes in our notebooks, with a pencil. I learned all about Daphna's family and her hobbies. We used that notebook to study together for tests, and that is how we told each other all sorts of things. I loved writing a joke in the notebook, because Daphna responded with rolling laughter and was very happy. I often ended up laughing so hard that I had tears in my own eyes.

One day, Daphna wrote me, "It's time for me to teach you sign language. It will be much better if we can talk in sign language and not write all the time. I promise you."

Well, it really was fun to learn this language. When my friends in class saw how much I liked being with Daphna and especially how much I liked sign language, they asked to learn it too. Daphna was a wonderful teacher for them too. After a few months, Daphna had become an important part of our class and she had many other friends. But she always says (in sign language of course) that she likes me best.

Do you remember what I asked at first, how it was possible to be friends with somebody that you don't care for? By now, I love Daphna so much that I can't imagine how this year would have been without her. In the end, I think I understand how this change came about.

And now a question for the readers: Can you understand why I came to love Daphna so much?

HOLY AND SECULAR

A Price that is Too High

By Rabbi Amichai Gordin, Yeshivat Har Etzion

Here is a nice explanation by members of Bnei Akiva in Israel about the significance of "**Chodesh Irgun**" – a month of enhanced activity during which the members are encouraged to increase their work within and for the movement. The Rebbe of Lubavitch used as his slogan for Chassidut in our generation the word "*Ufaratzta*" – And you shall burst forth [Bereishit 28:14]. The basic message here is in the context of spreading the word and gaining strength. One should not accept the current level of activity but always strive for greater development and reaching new horizons. However, the root "*lifrotz*" also has a

connotation of gaining freedom, overcoming obstacles and even going beyond this by breaking down walls and existing frameworks.

“*Ufaratzta!*” – This is an expression of our belief in the ability of each and every one of the members of the movement to “break out.” It is up to us to break out of the imaginary boundaries which hold us back...

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Anybody who keeps track of the broad range of Bnei Akiva activities cannot remain indifferent. The movement rushes forward in many different fields. Examples are a daily “Daf Yomi” Talmud lesson with Rabbi Matania Yadid, on through discussion groups on the topic of the anniversary of Yitzchak Rabin’s assassination, and volunteer work in all the different areas which can be imagined. It is all exciting and very impressive.

I can only add praise for the specific theme of this year’s activities. Every movement which wants to continue living must certainly encourage initiatives, advances, and development. The main enemy of any successful social activity is to stand in place. Bnei Akiva must never be allowed to become a satiated movement that is involved only in maintaining its status. “*Kadima* - Go forward, Bnei Akiva, continue to rise” – From the hymn of the movement (written by Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Neriya).

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However:

It is vital that this strong yearning to advance must never become totally unrestrained and without any bounds. See what Rav J.B. Soloveitchik wrote about the prohibition of eating from the Tree of Knowledge:

“After Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden, his imagination began to soar and to yearn for unlimited existence which would have nothing else than constant advance, a reach for infinity, progress, and a glorious trek to victory. And then he encountered Divine morality, which often brought him to contrasting challenges. It was necessary for him to block further development and to retreat, to ignore the power of his imagination which made him what he was, to pause even though his instinct demanded that he push on, and to give up on what his imagination was about to achieve...” [“Man and His Home,” Torat Harav Organization, page 31].

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Rav Soloveitchik explains that the prohibition of eating from the Tree of Knowledge is what changed Adam from a natural and plain person and made him human. The very fact that he placed limits on his activity in spite of his yearning and desires are what made him into a creature with human values:

“The command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge encompasses within it a denunciation of a person who goes on a pursuit of something which is beyond his horizon... Man must conquer his innate desire to push out to infinite regions and to areas without any boundaries...” [page 32].

The need to branch out and to grow cannot be without limit. It must be accompanied by boundaries and limits. “*Ufaratzta!*” But not at any cost, not without limits.

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In my opinion, one example of “progress” that goes beyond the proper limits is the phenomenon of mixed branches for religious and nonreligious members. It is not easy to speak out against an initiative which is based to a large degree on a desire for unity and mutual love. It is really difficult to find fault with an emotional idea of helping opposites to come closer together. It is hard, but I have no choice.

Today there are branches of Bnei Akiva where some of the counsellors do not believe that the Torah was given by G-d. There are branches today where discussions cannot be based

on Divine commandments but only on human moral traits. The value of Shabbat in such branches must be explained as being based on socialistic and social ideals. The counsellors (both religious and nonreligious) treat every subject in this way, only from the humanistic point of view. The members are allowed to speak only about human values but not Divine values. They can certainly never bring up Divine mitzvot.

Bnei Akiva is not a neutral movement. Bnei Akiva is a movement that has ideals. One of its most basic values – and quite possibly the main one – is the assumption that we received the Torah from heaven and not from the earth, and that we are required to abide by its commands because it is G-d's will. Any branch where this basic assumption does not exist cannot really call itself "Bnei Akiva."

I have no objection in principle to the idea of mixed religious/nonreligious branches. It is reasonable that in mixed towns and settlements there will be mixed branches. But I do object to giving such places the seal of approval of Bnei Akiva. It is certainly legitimate to have youth movements based on general universalistic principles, including both humanitarianism and Jewish tradition, without accepting the yoke of the mitzvot. However, the label Bnei Akiva is not suitable for these activities. Bnei Akiva has in principle accepted a total obligation to Torah and the mitzvot.

Unity is very important. However, we cannot "give away" our basic values, not even for as important a value as unity and togetherness. We will achieve unity in other ways, not by surrendering our most basic value – that the Torah is Divine.

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I must end by reiterating the obvious, that goes without saying. I very much admire Bnei Akiva as a movement. It has made great achievements in almost every realm. My only aim in this article is to make a small comment on the sidelines of the great light that the movement disseminates.

Go forward, Bnei Akiva!

For reactions and comments: benkodesh@gmail.com



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