



Ohr Somayach Light Lines

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Light Insight

A Vegetarian World

“...G-d saw the earth, and behold it was corrupted, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.”

(Genesis 6:12)

If you're a vegetarian, you might be interested to know that at one time the whole world was vegetarian.

Until the Great Flood in the time of Noah, no one killed an animal to eat its flesh. It was only

when G-d gave a “new deal” to the sons of Noah that Man was permitted to kill animals for their meat.

Why should this be? The answer to this question is intimately tied to the reasons for the flood itself: “G-d saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.”

What started as private immorality and idolatry had degenerated into public licentiousness. The people of Noah's

generation practiced bestiality.

Seeing this breach in the fundamental division between Man and the other species, G-d brought the flood.

When Noah emerged from the ark to reestablish civilization, G-d permitted eating meat to prevent a reoccurrence of the bestiality which occurred before the flood: By permitting the consumption of animal flesh, Man necessarily saw himself as different than, and separate from, the animals. Never again would Man see himself as just another animal.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

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Giving people the benefit of the doubt

Besides being a mitzvah, judging favorably is simply a smart thing to do. I mean, how many times does it seem like the other guy is out of line, when really you're the one who's...

Out of Order

I was expecting an important business phone call one morning when I discovered that the phone lines in our house were dead. New in the area and not really knowing any of our neighbors, I drove a mile up the road to a pay phone, called the phone company repair service and reported the phone out of order. The technician who answered told me to hold on for a minute while he checked the line. He came back and said, “You have a phone off the hook.” Much relieved, I hurried home, checked all the phones in the house and didn't find anything wrong. So back up the road I went to the pay phone, talked to the same technician, told him there was

no phone off the hook, and was again told in stronger terms, “You *do* have a phone off the hook.”

Another trip home, another check of all the phones, once again up the road and this time I fairly screamed at the technician that all the phones were O.K. and I was expecting an important call and needed my phone in working condition immediately. He told me that he would put in a repair order but nobody could get there until the next day, and the only thing wrong was a phone off the hook. I was livid but what could I do.

On arriving home, I asked my wife if she had used the phone that day. She replied that she spoke to my son who said he wouldn't be able to come home for holiday dinner. When I asked what happened then, my wife rather sheepishly replied that she was so mad she said goodbye and slammed the phone down. I thought about this for a moment, picked up the phone she used, listened to the dead line, hit the side of the phone hard with my fist and — lo and behold — I got a dial tone. Proudly, I hung up the receiver and immediately the phone rang. I picked it up and when he spoke I recognized the voice. It was the repair technician and all he said was, “I told you there was a phone off the hook.” And he hung up.

LOVE of the LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and the Land of Israel

Shemer

This biblical city was built by Omri, King of Israel, on Mount Shomron which he purchased from Shemer and named after him (*Melachim I 16:24*). Although Omri “did evil in the eyes of G-d,” our Sages point out that his good deed in adding a city to the Land of Israel gained for him the distinction of being the first of the rulers of the Kingdom of Israel to be succeeded to the throne by both his son and grandson (*Sanhedrin 72b*).

Response Line

In Defense of Israel

Joel Davidson wrote:

One is allowed to harm or even kill an attacker in self-defense if necessary. However, isn't it also true that under no circumstances may one harm an innocent to protect himself (for example, if a man has a gun to your head and tells you to kill an innocent by-stander, you must allow yourself to be killed rather than kill the innocent)? This being the case, it seems problematic to engage in bombing raids and other military means, no matter how justified by self-defense, when there is a significant chance of harming innocents. I am referring to bombings where civilians may be harmed when the IDF goes after Hizbollah or other terrorists. I

Dear Joel,

Unfortunately, there are groups and nations who base their fighters and military equipment in civilian areas. This deters attacks from their enemies, and allows them to gain world-wide sympathy if a civilian does get hurt, especially a woman or child.

We see this today. Before West Bank Arabs shoot their automatic weapons at us, they send children and teenagers up ahead to stone us and to throw fire-bombs. The sympathy they gain if a child dies is worth more to them than the life of the child.

Similarly, the Arabs are using civilian homes as bases to fire their rifles at us. As of this writing, this is being done to attack places like Psagot and Jerusalem's Gilo neigh-

would appreciate any insight you could offer. Shalom.

borhood.

Israeli policy has always been to warn civilians prior to a strike. If Israel shells terrorists hiding in a residential area, warnings are delivered first by loud speaker, leaflets, radio, and by alerting the town authorities and giving them time to warn the residents so the residents may evacuate.

If there are civilians who, after the warning, choose to stay, then they knowingly become obstacles to our ability, and our right, to defend ourselves. In that sense they can be considered accomplices.

A parting thought: One of my teachers in Yeshiva told me that, although Golda Meir may not have been a particularly religious lady, she said one thing which rings particularly true of Torah ideology: She said: “We may be able to forgive the Arabs for killing our children; but we can not forgive them for making us kill their children.”