



Dedicated by

Tzvi and Chana Morantz

In honor of their

50th wedding anniversary

And in honor of their children

Rabbi **Menachem Mendel** and

Shoshana Scheiner and family

Boruch and Rochel Ahava

Waldman and family



On youth *aliyah* and peace in the Middle East Stories

B”H, 25 Teves 5729.

To the students of the Youth Village—Be’er Yaakov, in our Holy Land, may it be rebuilt, may you live and be well,
Greetings and blessings,

I was pleased to receive regards from your teacher, the educator and principal, Mr. Chaim Yitzchok Glaser, and I was particularly pleased to hear about your progress in learning and behavior. This is the task of every single Jewish adult, and all the more so of the youth and those who are even younger—to go from strength to strength, not only in the size and development of your bodies but also, and primarily, growth and elevation in your spiritual lives.

Mr. Glaser submitted your following questions:

[What is] my opinion 1) regarding the *aliya* of American youth to Eretz Yisroel, 2) regarding the anticipated peace with [Eretz Yisroel’s] Arab neighbors.

Regarding the first question, my opinion is as follows—but first a preface:

A person’s lifetime is split generally into two periods: the first, when the person is primarily a passive recipient, and the second, in which the hope is that, at least primarily, the person will be a *mashpia* and influence the lives of those around him—his family and his surroundings in the broadest sense of the word, affecting them in the right way.

It is self-understood that first of all, a person is expected to be an influence to strengthen that which is good; to establish it and expand it, and to eradicate the evil. This is like repaying a debt, for the person was given the power and wisdom to determine what is good and the will to affect it. This is what he received from those around him during the first period of his life. Therefore, first of all, it is incumbent upon him to be grateful and repay his debt by having a positive effect on everything he can influence, including influencing others to follow this way along with him, and after him as well.

This is similar to someone who wishes to give tzedakah to someone whom he is not obligated to—it is a great thing to do, but repaying a debt comes before giving tzedakah.

It is also obvious that if, in addition to repaying the debt, the creditor needs help, to the extent that his life is in danger, then in repaying the debt, the debtor is also considered to be giving life to the creditor and his family.

My opinion, in answer to your question, is based on the above.



Regarding youth, who have untapped energy, and who have yet to enter real life and become an influence on their fellows and surroundings, the priority must be given to the using of all their resources for the benefit of the place where they were born and were given their capabilities. All of this would apply when everything is as it should be, even if their fellows don’t need their help much, and they only have to establish and expand [the existing good]. All the more so [does it apply] when their fellows are in a bad situation and their foundation is weak; then it is clear that it is absolutely necessary [to influence them for the good]. Only then, after they have repaid their debt, can they consider affecting people somewhere else or in a different country.

From this a practical *halacha* can be inferred: Youth in every city, when they are close to reaching adulthood, must first use their capabilities in the countries where they are. This is especially true in our countries where sadly, the spiritual state, the moral state, and the connection to the values of Judaism are not strong and well-established. Anyone who can have an influence on this, is literally saving lives and saving souls from tasting [that which is forbidden]. Only after the youth have repaid their debt to the places where they were raised and educated, should they consider what to do for Jews living elsewhere.

It is clear that the above is not contradicted by the fact that sometimes, and perhaps often, youth have to visit a different area or place. In our case, they have to be in Eretz Yisroel for some time, to ready themselves to have a more powerful and successful effect on the surroundings and the country in which they must first put in work to repay their moral and spiritual debts, as mentioned above.

It is also clear that it can often happen that [people of] the place itself may choose to send one of the youth to a different country, in our case to Eretz Yisroel, to work there for some time or even to stay there. In that case, that is part of effecting the greater good of the place the person was educated and raised in.

In summary, my opinion is that youth must use their capabilities and their opportunities first of all in their hometowns; to use them to expand that which is good—more precisely, to spread Judaism and its values among the youth, many of whom always need to be influenced and educated in this, not just once a year or from time to time. The chances of success in this [form of] education are greater when the educator is a native of the country of the students that need guidance and influence, and [the educator] knows their character because he was raised and educated among them. None of this would apply to an educator who is sent from a different country.

I certainly don't have to emphasize that my opinion on this is in regard to the general issue, which was raised in the question. However, with regards to specific individuals, their unique circumstances personally, of their family, their health, their livelihood and so on, must be taken into account.

I could go on at length about the above problem, but I hope that these lines, few in comparison to the importance of the matter, will be enough to clarify my opinion.

Regarding your second question, about peace:

True peace can only exist if it is based upon the goodwill of both sides. I don't see a reason that the Arab neighbors of our Holy Land would want to create true peace, which would include on their end the complete surrender of many territories that were recently conquered [by the Jewish people], all the more so territories that were conquered 20 years ago, as well as the acknowledgement that the Jewish nation in Eretz Yisroel has every right to live there without being dependent on anyone else, etc. On the other hand, the situation of belligerence and war has all the benefits for the Arabs. What's more, it gives them the ability to ask for help from numerous powers outside the region. By stirring up competition between one power and the other as to who is more important to a certain Arab country's rulers, they can increase the aid and grants they receive. None of this would apply if the tensions in the region dissipate, and everything is taken care of and life goes back to normal.

In addition—and perhaps this is another crucial point—many of the powers outside the region, especially the larger ones, seem to be interested in there being tension in the region, and that it be split up between many nations and armies and kingdoms, for this situation opens the door for them to be influential, or even that one or the other of the powers should exert rule over the region, by helping one of the sides in the region. On the other hand, if peace were to reign among the nations in the region, and if they worked together, that would decrease the possibility of rule by a foreign power, and its influence would be weakened.

Having said all this, it is obvious that not a single Israeli man or woman should despair of peace, for the very existence of the Jewish People through the generations, including their existence now in our Holy Land, is entirely higher than what is natural. According to all the economic and political schools of thought, such a small and impoverished nation cannot survive; especially not when they have to face a situation like the one they are in now—at the center of a clash of interests between enormous governments—and not when they find themselves on the crossroads of several continents and the strongest blocs in the international arena.

Amazingly, throughout all of history, as far back as ancient times, the territory of Eretz Yisroel was the site of agitation and conflict among all the nations and governments who ruled the globe in their eras: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, Rome and so on. [Eretz Yisroel] did not enjoy peace and quiet except for a few years here and there and for short periods of time during which the Yidden were faithful to Hashem and followed in His ways, the way of Torah and *mitzvos*—such as in the days of Dovid and Shlomo, etc.

Since Eretz Yisroel is “the land upon which Hashem your G-d's eyes are upon from the beginning of the year until the end of the year,” it is certain that the “Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps,” and just as until now, so too in the future He will guard the Jewish People from every sorrow and trouble. The more that the **foundation** of the survival of the Jewish people—**one** nation in the Land—is established, meaning a daily lifestyle in accordance with Torah's teachings, the **one** Torah for us all, given by the one **G-d**, the more the security of our Holy Land will increase, until the guarantee will be fulfilled that “You shall dwell securely in your land and I will grant peace upon the land and you shall lie down and there shall be none that terrify you.”

In this too, the youth have a special task, for they are unafraid of the truth the way it is; they do not seek compromises, they are full of strength, and they aren't ashamed of scoffers and by what others might say, etc. [The youth] have the responsibility to be the pioneers who go before the Jewish people wherever they are—in Eretz Yisroel and also in Chutz Laaretz—to follow in Hashem's way as Hashem has taught us in His Torah, to walk confidently in that path.

May you have success and go from strength to strength in the way of Torah, the Torah of life, and the mitzvos, about which it is said, “And you shall live by them.”¹ **T**

1. *Igros Kodesh* vol. 26, letter number 9638.