

לזכות החיילים בצבאות ה'
שמעון בן חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתו ל"ג בעומר
שיינא בת חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתה י"ב אייר
אליהו שמואל בן חי' מושקא
לרגל יום הולדתו ה' סיון

מנחם מענדל בן חי' מושקא
אסתר גני' רחל בת חי' מושקא
שיחי

יה"ר שיגדלו חי'לים בצבא כ"ק אדמו"ר
מתוך שמחה, בריאות והרחבה

Let's Talk About Eretz Yisroel

THROUGH THE LENS
OF THE REBBE'S TORAH

PART 8 Land is Vital

COMPILED BY:
RABBI MENDEL MISHOLOVIN

WRITTEN BY:
RABBI LEVI GREENBERG (TX)

When Dovid Hamelech was fleeing the wrath of Shaul Hamelech, he was told one Shabbos that the Pelishtim had attacked the border town of Ke'ilah to steal grain from their granaries. Dovid Hamelech asked Hashem through the Urim Vetumim whether he should go out to battle to save Ke'ilah, and was told he would be victorious. (Shmuel 1 23:1-5)


The Gemara in Eruvin (45a) teaches that although under regular circumstances, Shabbos is violated only to save life and not to protect financial assets, Ke'ilah was different since it was on the border the territory of Yehudah shared with the land of the Pelishtim. Had Dovid Hamelech not defended Ke'ilah from the Pelishtim who were only coming for grain, it would have posed a grave danger to the entire region in the future. The Pelishtim could have gained a foothold in the land and used it as a launching pad for future invasion. Dovid Hamelech did not inquire through the Urim Vetumim whether he was allowed to desecrate Shabbos to go to war in Ke'ilah, because this was a clear halacha he knew from the Beis Din of Shmuel Hanavi. He asked only whether or not he would be victorious.

Rav Yosef Bar Minyumei taught in the name of Rav Nachman that the city of Neherda'a in Bavel, located on the Euphrates River bordering the predominantly Jewish section of the Persian Empire, was considered a "border city" that would warrant the desecration of Shabbos against any invaders since many Jewish towns and villages lay beyond it.

All of the above is the background for the din in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim, Siman 329:

נְכָרִים שֶׁצָרוּ עַל עִירוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל, אִם בָּאוּ עַל עֶסְקֵי מָמוֹן - אִין מְחַלְלִין עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת. וְאִם בָּאוּ עַל עֶסְקֵי נַפְשׁוֹת, וְאֶפְלוּ בָּאוּ סִתָּם וַיֵּשׁ לְחוּשׁ שְׂמֵא בָּאוּ עַל עֶסְקֵי נַפְשׁוֹת, וְאֶפְלוּ עֲדִין לֹא בָּאוּ אֶלָּא מִמְשֻׁמְשִׁים לְבֹא - יוֹצְאִים עֲלֵיהֶם בְּכָל זֶן וּמְחַלְלִין עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת. וּבְעִיר הַסְּמוּכָה לְסָפֵר, אֶפְלוּ אִינֵן רוֹצִים לְבֹא אֶלָּא עַל עֶסְקֵי תְבוּן וְקֵשׁ - מְחַלְלִין עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, שְׂמֵא יִלְכְּדוּ הָעִיר וּמִשָּׁם תֵּהָא הָאֶרֶץ נוֹחָה לְכַבֵּשׁ לְפָנֵיהֶם:

When non-Jews take up arms against Jewish towns: If they come [to attack the towns] for financial gain, Shabbos may not be desecrated because of them. If they come to kill, and even if they come with no expressed intent, but there is concern that perhaps they come to kill, one should confront them while armed and desecrate the Shabbos because of them. [Indeed, these steps may be taken] not only when their arrival is imminent, but even if they are merely threatening to come.



In a town that is near the border, even if they only seek to come for matters concerning hay and straw, Shabbos may be desecrated because of them, lest they capture the town, and from there, the [entire] land will be easier for them to conquer.

This halacha provides the parameters for wartime Shabbos observance, defining what is considered *pikuach nefesh* and warrants doing acts ordinarily forbidden on Shabbos. Even if there is no immediate threat to life on this Shabbos, surrendering strategic territory to an enemy is considered *pikuach nefesh* because it may make it easier for enemies to attack in the future.

Territory holds incalculable strategic military value. Consider this recent painful illustration of this fact. When Iran launched hundreds of ballistic missiles against Israel on two separate occasions it did no substantial damage on the ground. However, several thousand terrorists in gliders, pickup trucks, and motorcycles were able to unleash the most horrifying attack against Jews since the Holocaust. Iran with all of its modern-day sophistication does not share a border with Israel, hence its nefarious attacks can be more easily managed. The terrorists in Gaza, on the other hand, are next door.

As illustrated in the background of this halacha, this is unrelated to the sanctity of Eretz Yisroel. *Wherever* Jews live, whether it is in Eretz Yisroel, in Nahardaa in Bavel, or anywhere else in the world, this halacha obligates us to defend every inch of land that could allow non-Jews, even if they are not enemies, to gain a foothold in Jewish territory and jeopardize our security. This law is based exclusively on concerns of *pikuach nefesh*.

The Whole Land is a Border

In the case of Eretz Yisroel, every single inch of land liberated during the miraculous Six-Day War is considered a “border town.” The borders of Eretz Yisroel before the Six-Day War were universally and objectively

considered “indefensible.” Before the miracles of the Six-Day War, every inch of the land was considered a border, since the “official borders” could not be defended according to rational military calculations. Once Hashem gifted us the divine gift of defensible borders, every inch of those liberated territories is integral to the defense of Israel’s millions of inhabitants. Giving up any of the territory is a grievous risk of *pikuach nefesh*.

When the proposals to trade “land for peace” became a matter of public debate, some argued that *pikuach nefesh* considerations demanded that Israel give up territory to secure a peace treaty, as this would ultimately save lives. However, many of the supporters of the “deal” insisted that giving up the liberated territories of Yerushalayim, including the Kosel Hamaaravi, was unacceptable. This approach was flawed for multiple reasons.

Firstly, halacha forbids giving up “border territory” for any reason. Even just the possibility of outsiders coming and plundering the granaries of a border town obligates us to wage war—an act which endangers Jewish life (!)—on Shabbos. Clearly halacha does not consider giving away such land to be a method of enhancing security.

On the other hand, if there were even the remotest possibility that trading “land for peace” would indeed secure a lasting peace deal with the neighboring Arab nations and therefore save many lives—there would be no difference between the dunes of the Sinai Desert, Tel Aviv or the Kosel Hamaaravi. The Arab nations demand the entire city of Yerushalayim, and if giving it to them would prevent bloodshed, there is no justification for keeping it. Considering certain territories off-limits to such negotiations is intellectually inconsistent.

Most importantly, the neighboring Arab nations’ “peace” offers were transparently false. They demanded the liberated territories be given to them, and threatened to wage war a fifth time to take them by force if their demands were not met! Considering the other



ISRAEL'S BORDERS BEFORE THE SIX-DAY WAR, KNOWN AS THE 1949 ARMISTICE LINE (OR THE GREEN LINE), WERE OBJECTIVELY INDEFENSIBLE. TO ISRAEL'S EAST, JORDAN CONTROLLED THE WEST BANK, AND AT THE NARROWEST POINT, BARELY NINE MILES SEPARATED THE JORDANIAN FORCES FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA. THIS MEANT THAT IN A WAR, JORDAN COULD CUT ISRAEL IN HALF IN LESS THAN HALF AN HOUR. TO THE NORTH, THE SYRIANS REGULARLY BOMBED CIVILIAN TOWNS AND VILLAGES FROM THE GOLAN HEIGHTS, MAKING LIFE UNBEARABLE. IN THE SOUTH, THE VAST SINAI DESERT PROVIDED AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR EGYPT TO ATTACK ISRAEL AND DISRUPT ALL SHIPPING COMING TO AND FROM THE PORT OF EILAT.

side as a genuine peace partner is a blatant lie. Until the era of Moshiach, when we will merit to the realization of the prophecy “the wolf will lie with the lamb” and all the nations of the world will live in peace with the Jewish people, approaching the gravest security questions of millions in Eretz Yisroel with wishful thinking that our mortal enemies truly want peace is entirely unjustified.

There are others who argue that political and economic concerns are also valid *pikuach nefesh* considerations,

since international isolation or trade wars can have a devastating effect on the economy, cause starvation, etc. Consider this fact: giving away land definitely endangers the inhabitants of Eretz Yisroel and is an irreversible act. The diplomatic and economic climates, however, are unpredictable and can change drastically. Hence these considerations pale in comparison to the military concerns of giving liberated territories to the enemy.

In summation, the “land for peace” issue in Eretz Yisroel exceeds all the criteria listed in the halacha in Siman 329 to make it a question of *pikuach nefesh*. The halacha describes a scenario where (1) non-Jews plan on approaching the border town, but we are unsure whether they will come, (2) they are only demanding insignificant “hay and straw” and will probably leave once they receive it, and (3) even if they want to conquer the border town, there is no certainty they will succeed. In this scenario of multiple uncertainties, halacha obligates us to wage war to stop them from potentially placing the rest of the Yidden in the region in a state of *pikuach nefesh*.

Certainly, when (1) our enemies openly threaten to attack, as they have done multiple times in the past, and continue to with terrorist attacks, and (2) they are demanding territories that would make the rest of Eretz Yisroel indefensible to future attacks according to all objective considerations (not “hay and straw”), and (3) our enemies would certainly succeed in obtaining them since the territories would be handed over to them—halacha unequivocally forbids considering such a reckless plan, even discussing it, exclusively on the grounds of *pikuach nefesh*. **T**

NEXT MONTH:

What must be done in the liberated territories to enhance the security of Eretz Yisroel?

Primary Sources: *Sichos Kodesh* 5740 vol. 1, p. 252; *Ibid.* vol. 2, p. 351; *Ibid.* vol. 4, p. 1139; *Letters to Mr. Peter Kalms* 3rd Light of Chanukah and 13 Shevat 5741; *Daas Torah* chapter 6.