



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Yishuv Eretz Yisrael

Yom HaAtzma'ut celebrates Hakamat HaMedina, the Establishment of the State of Israel. Medinat Yisrael means many things and many topics for us to ponder.

One such topic is the mitzva of Yishuv Eretz Yisrael, the mitzva to live in Eretz Yisrael.

So let's do just that.

For those of us born in Israel and for those of us who have come on Aliya - whether that was fifty years ago, five years ago, last year, or even yesterday - we, Baruch HaShem, have the Z'CHUT to fulfill the mitzva of Yishuv Eretz Yisrael 24/7, that is all the time, every minute of every day.

For those not yet living in Israel, the pondering should be in the direction of "Why not?", and how can I work towards Aliya and a life for me and my family, in Eretz Yisrael.

In the link for Living the Halachic Process, this week, you can see an interesting (and important) question about the mitzva of Yishuv Eretz Yisrael. Simply put, does a person need KAVANA (conscious intent) in order to fulfill the mitzva.

You can check out the answer there, but read on for the point of this PTDT.

Is Mitzvat Yishuv Eretz Yisrael (MYEY) one of the 613 mitzvot in the Torah? Ramban says definitely yes. Rambam and the Chinuch do not number it among Taryag. But the Rambam, echoing the Gemara, says very clearly, that one should always live in Eretz Yisrael, in a city, the majority of whose inhabitants are idol worshipers, rather than live in a city outside Israel, even in a city the majority of whose inhabitants are Jewish.

So how come MYEY is not on the Rambam's list of Torah mitzvot?

Reasonable question. Not for here. Just know that there are answers.

Trying to keep this short, let me say the following:

MYEY, Torah law or otherwise? Applicable in all times or otherwise? Obligatory or otherwise (CHIYUVIT or KIYUMIT)? Let's save all of that for another time. For here and now, let's focus on another aspect - R'TZON HASHEM, What does G-d want of us and for us.

Just open a Chumash and read. The first conversation that HaShem had with Moshe Rabeinu was at the Burning Bush. There G-d made it clear to Moshe that His plan was to

go down to Mitzrayim and to bring the People up to a good and expansive Land, a Land flowing with milk and honey, the land of Canaan...

Shortly thereafter, G-d tells Moshe to tell the people of His plan - Take us out of Egypt, make a covenant with us at Sinai by giving us His Torah and Mitzvot, and bringing us to Eretz Yisrael.

There are many p'sukim in the Torah which reveal HaShem's Will to us.

Here's just one of them from Parshat Eikev, D'varim 8:1 - Every mitzva that I command you this day you shall keep to do, that you may live and multiply, and come and possess the land that HaShem swore to your forefathers.

G-d always wanted, wants, all will always want us to live a Torah Life in Eretz Yisrael.

We are the one's who continually messed up that Plan. From the Meraglim to the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash - first and second - through the generations to this very day, when some Jews say, We have everything we need for a full Jewish Life here in (fill in the blank).

Back to the point about KAVANA. Obviously, we cannot always have in mind that we are fulfilling MYEY. And whether or not KAVANA is required or not is not the point.

With all that said, we also know that when you do a mitzva with KAVANA it is a more solid fulfillment than when we don't.

How does this apply to MYEY?

Suggestion: Every once in a while (you decide how often and when), a person living in Israel should stop what he/she is doing, take a deep breath of Eretz Yisrael air, hold it, let it out and realize the tremendous privilege we have to live here, to do mitzvot here (especially but not only, Mitzvot HaT'luyot BaAretz), and think - or actually say - L'SHEIM MITZVAT YISHUV ERETZ YISRAEL.

So much more to say; IYH I'll have the opportunities to say more. **PTDT**