

# QUESTIONS and ANSWERS

Q&A



Shailos Uteshuvos with  
**RAV AZRIEL AUERBACH**



**RAV ZALMAN NECHEMIAH GOLDBERG**



**RAV YAAKOV HILLEL**

By Rabbi Daniel Travis based on divrei halacha heard from Rav Azriel Auerbach, Rav Zalman Nechemiah Goldberg and Rav Yaakov Hillel. To send questions, email Rabbi Travis at [dytravis613@gmail.com](mailto:dytravis613@gmail.com). The answers given here are the general rule, but each case is unique and must be referred to a posek.

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The following questions were transcribed from a phone interview of members of Agudas Kedushas Tzion with Rav Zalman Nechemiah Goldberg. Special thanks to R' Yoel Berman for his help preparing this article.

## Are Jews in Chutz La'aretz Obligated to Move to Eretz Yisroel? Part II

### QUESTION

How does the *mitzvah* of *yishuv Eretz Yisroel* apply even today, when the government is irreligious and is not run according to the Torah?

### RAV GOLDBERG

The fact that there is a non-religious government definitely has an impact on life here, but to know what will be either a good or a bad influence for any specific person, you would need to have more details - what that person would be doing here, etc. In general, though, it is better to be in Eretz Yisroel.

### QUESTION

Is there any problem living in America?

### RAV GOLDBERG

Let me share something with you. The *Chofetz Chaim* wrote several small *seforim*. In one of them, called *Nefutzos Yisroel*, he says that it is forbidden to live in America because people degenerate there. Why is this so? Because there is no *talmud Torah* and it is difficult to keep *Shabbos*. In his times, it was very difficult to keep *Shabbos*, because one who kept *Shabbos* would immediately be fired

from all his jobs. There were also no *talmudei Torah*, so how would a child be educated to keep *Shabbos* and observe the *mitzvos*?

The *Chofetz Chaim* ends off, though, by saying that he's not stating that anyone who lives in America is an *avaryan* (transgressor), for it explicitly states in the Torah, "*Vehefitzcha Hashem bechol ha'amim*," that Hashem will scatter the Jews among all the nations, so how can one say that I'm calling such a person an *avaryan*? The Torah wrote this; it's Hashem doing this. So the question is, if the *Chofetz Chaim* says that the Torah decreed that they will be scattered in all the lands, why at first does he say not to go live in America?

The answer is that there are two separate issues. There is a punishment for an individual, or for *Am Yisroel*, that they will live in a place where it will be very difficult to observe the *mitzvos* and they will need much *chizuk*. This is a punishment for a person, like one might be punished to be in a situation where he is forced to do *aveiros*. The truth, though, is that *mitzvos* must be observed everywhere. Considering where it would be easier to observe the *mitzvos*, the *Chofetz Chaim* probably understood that it would be easier in Eretz Yisroel, but in his time, it wasn't possible, for if everyone would have come then to Eretz Yisroel, there would not have been enough *parnassah*.

So today, in the vein of what the *Chofetz Chaim* says, it would surely be a great *mitzvah* to bring *Yidden* from the United States to Eretz Yisrael, but if by not bringing someone he would have a greater positive influence on others there, maybe that is more important. I don't know.

### QUESTION

There are those who claim that when the *Yidden* of France come to Eretz Yisroel, their children go off the *derech* and they go to irreligious schools.

### RAV GOLDBERG

That is a *taanah* (claim). It is definitely a grave matter that people come to Eretz Yisroel to go off the *derech*, but that's not what I'm talking about. What I'm saying is in general terms. I actually thought that those who come from France send their children to *cheder*, but I don't know if that is everyone. In Yerushalayim, I see many children who have come from France who go to *cheder*

here. These kinds of things need a thorough investigation. A haphazard glance is not enough.

### QUESTION

There are those who claim that one must be careful not to be involved with these matters of *yishuv Eretz Yisroel*, because we can see that there are those who have involved themselves with this whose children did not turn out to be *ehrlischer Yidden*.

### RAV GOLDBERG

You can also ask on the questioners - among those who involved themselves in other issues, their offspring did not necessarily emerge as anything special. In addition, in Lithuania and Germany, there were many devout *shomrei mitzvos* who nothing came out of, so not only in America was this true. To the contrary, America succeeded more than the other placed.

### QUESTION

So we don't have to consider that claim?

### RAV GOLDBERG

I don't know. If someone will prove it to you and you'll understand it logically, I'm not saying that you should go against your logic. But to say 100% what happened because of what, it's impossible to know. We can't know what exactly works and what the Heavenly ways are. It is worthwhile to consult with *gedolim* about each specific detail. In general, it is possible to say what is worthwhile, but it is impossible to know and calculate what exactly will cause which effect.

The truth is that the ones who renewed the Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisroel were *tzaddikim*, not like what the irreligious say that they were the ones who did it. The first *Yidden* who were here in Eretz Yisroel were the *talmidim* of the Vilna Gaon and the *talmidim* of the *Baal Shem Tov*. All of these Jews filled Eretz Yisroel - you probably know all of this history - and this is what, in truth, was the foundation of everything. If not for them, there would be nothing here, not the state nor anything else. When they came to Eretz Yisroel, the situation was extremely difficult. They came to Eretz Yisroel without *parnassah*. They made a *takanah* that before *Shabbos* candle lighting, every

woman would toss a coin in a *pushkah*, and then they would collect it for *yishuv Eretz Yisroel*. Without all this, there would be nothing to start from.

The fact that there are *chilonim* living here in Eretz Yisroel is primarily because those who came here were already irreligious. These *resha'im* who caused harm to *Am Yisroel* came from Poland. The first ones who started abandoning the Torah were the Germans. The Reform were there and they brought all this calamity upon *Klal Yisroel*. If you'll ask what good came out of them, you'll see that they also brought Hitler upon us.

All these years, we have lived among the non-Jews. Rav Yaakov Emden said that the greatest *neis* of *Am Yisroel* is that they were among non-Jews for so many years and still exist. That's really a wondrous miracle. In the end, we will see that the worst thing that *Am Yisroel* had was the Reform; they caused *Klal Yisroel* to fall from their high level.

### QUESTION

So we can continue to be involved with Eretz Yisroel without worry?

### RAV GOLDBERG

It's not that you are making Eretz Yisroel. Eretz Yisroel is what it is. America is what it is. Your decision is to build up Eretz Yisroel. We must do only what we can do here.

### QUESTION

We are involved with this and publish a circular about this.

### RAV GOLDBERG

I think that is a good thing. People hear that it's a *mitzvah*. In general, though, there is no argument about whether to do this - we are required to influence every person to perform *mitzvos*. May Hashem *benich* you to have all the best, and may you be *zoche* to bring *Moshiach*. *Amein*.

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