

## RABBI AHARON ZIEGLER - PARSHAT EIKEV 5781

Since May 2009, when we made Aliyah, every morning upon arising I have a special good feeling, I feel something extraordinary. Besides the “Modeh Ani” for being alive, I feel good about being in a land that gets special attention from HaKadosh Baruch Hu. The Torah tells us this week, that Eretz Yisrael is a land that “**HaShem constantly watches, from the beginning of the year till the end of the year**” [11:12]. The pasuk is declaring that the eyes of a very Personal G-d is supervising every minute aspect and object in His most beloved piece of real estate with constant concern. Although we say in our prayers “*Meloh Chol HaAretz Kevodo*” [Yeshayahu 6:3] that the entire world is filled with His glory and under His ever-present surveillance, Moshe Rabbeinu goes out of his way to make it perfectly clear that there is something very special about Eretz Yisrael.

A grandson of the famous Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky, ZT”l, Rabbi Zvi Kaminetzky, related a true and remarkable story concerning his grandfather. R’ Yaakov, in his elderly years suffered an angina attack, and his doctors strongly recommended that he undergo an angiogram, a difficult and sometimes dangerous procedure for a man that age. At that time, Zvi was a talmid at the Ponovez Yeshiva in Bnei Bark. In addition to his own Tefillot on behalf of his grandfather, he immediately decided to approach his Rosh Yeshiva, HaRav Eliezer Menachem Shach with a request to make a Mi She’beirach for R’ Ya’akov.

Zvi knew that he had to present Rav Shach with his grandfather’s name, Yaakov, and the name of R’ Yaakov’s mother. That was not an easy task, for Zvi had no idea what her name was. At the time of the angina attack, R’ Yaakov was over 90 years old, and in excellent health. Zvi could not recall a time where he had occasion to mention his grandfather’s name in a Mi She’beirach for the ill. He felt embarrassed to approach Rav Shach without knowing R’ Yaakov’s mother’s name, so he inquired by many relatives and people who would know the name of R’ Yaakov’s mother. Finally, after many calls, a nephew of R’ Yaakov told Zvi that her name was Etká.

Armed with this information and an update of R’ Yaakov’s condition, he approached the home of Rav Shach.

The Rav invited Zvi into his sparsely furnished dining room and asked him to take a seat. The Rosh Yeshiva, sitting by a wooden table looked up from the Gemara he was learning and smiled towards Zvi. He knew the lineage of the family and asked how he was feeling and how his “zaida” was feeling.

Zvi turned white. “That is exactly why I came”, he stammered. Rav Shach turned serious as Zvi continued, “You see, my zaida is not feeling well and must undergo a medical procedure. I came to inform the.....”

Rav Shach jumped up from his chair and exclaimed: “We must immediately say a tefillah for Rav Yaakov ben Etká.” Zvi stood opened-mouthed and could not contain himself. “Rebbe, the last 12 hours I have been trying to find out my great grandmother’s name in

order to present it to the Rosh Yeshiva. Now I see that the Rosh Yeshiva knew her name. How is that?"

Rav Shach explained. "Years ago your grandfather visited Eretz Yisrael. After meeting him I asked him for his mother's name. I could not imagine a Jewish world without a healthy Rav Yaakov, and ***there is not a single day that goes by without my saying a special tefillah for his welfare [in the Beracha of Al HaTzaddikim]***"

Eretz Yisrael is dear to us as it is dear to HaShem. If His eyes are upon it 365 days a year 24 hours a day, we should certainly do no less. We could not imagine a world today without a stable and healthy Israel, so we must have it, like HaShem, in our hearts and minds constantly. Not only during a crisis when storm clouds are brewing, but even from "the beginning of the year through the end of the year" and even when the sun is shining down upon it. Our Berachot in Shemoneh Esrei, "VeLi'rushalayim Ir'cha Berachamim Tashuv" and "Ve'Te'chezena Eineinu Leshuv'cha LeTzion Berachamim", which we recite three times a day should be more meaningful to us now more than ever before.

Shabbat Shalom from Yerushalayim Ir HaKodesh  
Rabbi Aharon and Libby Ziegler