

THE CHAPTER ON PEACE. [1](#)

R. Jehoshua b. Levi said: Great is peace, for it is as the leaven to dough. If the Holy One had not given peace to the world, sword and beast would devour up the whole world, as it is written [Lev. xxvi. 6]: "And I will give peace in the land."

It is written [Eccl. i. 4]: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh, but the earth endureth for ever." King Solomon meant to say thus: Although one generation passes away and another one comes, one kingdom disappears and another one appears; and although evil decrees one after another are enacted against Israel, still they endure forever. The Lord does not abandon them, and they are never abandoned. They are never annihilated, neither do they decrease, as it is written [Mal. iii. 6]: "For I the Lord have not changed: and ye sons of Jacob, ye have not ceased to be" (*i.e.*, as I

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have never changed and will never change, so ye sons of Jacob have never ceased and will never cease to be). But [Deut. iv. 4]: "Ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive, every one of you, this day." R. Jehoshua said: Great is peace, for at the time Israel arose and said [Exod. xxiv. 7]: "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do and obey," the Holy One was pleased to give unto them His Torah and blessed them with peace, as it is written [Ps. xxix. 11]: "The Lord will bless his people with peace." Hezekiah said: Great is peace, for at every commandment in the Torah it is written "if," as, for instance, Exod. xxiii. 4, "If thou meet," etc., which means, *if* such a thing occurs to you, you must do the commandment; but concerning peace, it is different, there it is written [Ps. xxxiv. 15]: "Seek peace, and pursue it," which means, seek peace at the place where you are, and if you do not find it, seek it in other places. Great is peace: about all the journeys of Israel it is written, "And *they* removed . . . and . . . encamped," which means they removed in strife and encamped in strife, but when they came to Sinai there was no more strife, and *they* encamped in peace, as it is written [Exod. xix. 2]: "And Israel encamped opposite the Mount" (*i.e.*, all Israel were united). The Holy One, blessed be He, then said: "Because Israel hates discord and loves peace, and all are united, this is a favorable time that I should give them my Torah." Adoniah the son of David was killed because he was quarrelsome, and it is permitted to support the accusation of a quarrelsome man, as Nathan the prophet did when Bath-Sheba accused Adoniah [I Kings, i. 14]: "I myself will come in after thee, and confirm thy words." And Rabbi said: All manner of lying is prohibited, except it be to make peace between one and his neighbor. Bar Kappara said: Great is Peace, as among the angels there is no animosity, no jealousy, no hatred, no commanding, no quarrelling, because the Holy One, blessed be He, has made peace among them,

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as it is written [Job, xxv. 2]: "Dominion and dread are with him: he maketh peace in his high places." "Dominion" is the angel Michael and "Dread" is Gabriel, one of whom is of fire and the other one of water, and still they do not oppose each other, for the Holy One, blessed be He, has made peace between them.

R. Jehoshua said: Great is peace, in that the covenant of the priests was made with peace, as it is written [Numb. xxv. 12]: "I give unto him my covenant of peace." The name of the Holy One, blessed be He, is also "peace" (Shalom), as it is written [Judges, vi. 24]: "And called it Adonay-shalom." R. Jose the Galilean said: The name of the Messiah is also "peace" (Shalom), as it is written [Is. ix. 5]: "The prince of peace." Said R. Jehoshua: Israel is also called "peace," as it is written [Zech. viii. 12]: "For the seed shall be undisturbed, the vine shall give its fruit," which is to be interpreted thus: "The vine will give its fruit to the seed of peace" (Israel). R. Jose the Galilean said: When the Messiah shall come to Israel, he will begin with peace, as it is written [Is. lii. 7]: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings, that publisheth peace, that announceth tidings of happiness, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth." He also said: Great is peace, because even wars are waged for the sake of peace, as it is written [Deut. xx. 10]: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to make war against it, then summon it with the word of peace." R. Jehoshua said: In the future the Holy One, blessed be He, will uphold the righteous with peace, as it is written [Is. xxvi. 3]: "The confiding mind wilt thou keep in perfect peace; because he trusteth in thee." Again he said: Great is peace, because it accompanies the living as well as the dead--the living, as it is written [Exod. iv. 18]: "And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace"; the dead, as it is written [Gen. xv. 15]: "But thou shalt come to thy fathers in peace,"

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[paragraph continues] R. Jehoshua of Sachnin said in the name of R. Levi: Great is peace, in that all the benedictions and prayers conclude with "peace." The reading of Shema we conclude with "peace," "and spread the tent of thy peace"; the blessing of the priests concludes with peace, "and give thee peace"; and the eighteen benedictions conclude: "Blessed be thou, master of peace."

Said R. Jehoshua b. Levi: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, You have caused me to destroy my house and to exile my children, now pray for peace and I will forgive you, as it is written [Ps. cxxii. 6]: "Pray ye for the peace of Jerusalem." Therefore he who loves peace, runs after peace, offers peace, and answers peace, the Holy One, blessed be He, will make him inherit the life of this world and the life of the world to come, as it is written [Ps. xxxvii. 11]: "But the meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight themselves because of the abundance of peace."

END OF TRACT DERECH ERETZ--RABBA AND ZUTA.

Footnotes

[30:1](#) This chapter is considered a separate treatise. See Zunz and other bibliographers.

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