

Vayikra 5774

BS"D Parashat Vayikra 5774

The Prophet Yeshayahu says (55:8-9):

אֲנִי אֶחָד וְאֵין שֵׁנִי אֵין כְּעֵצ וְאֵין בָּרְזֶק
אֵין כְּחֶמֶץ וְאֵין עָפָר אֵין כְּמַיִם וְאֵין רוּחַ אֵין כְּאֵשׁ

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord.

"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."

The thoughts of man, even those of the greatest talmid chacham, cannot fathom the thoughts of the Creator, for even many of the Torah laws run counter to human logic. For example, if a parent's 9-year old breaks the neighbor's window, it is logical to think that the parent is financially responsible. However, when one's cat breaks the neighbor's flowerpot, it is accepted that the owner is not financially culpable. In fact, according to Torah law, just the opposite is true: a parent is not financially responsible for a child's actions but is responsible for damage caused by his material possessions.

Another example deals with a Kohen who fathered a child by a woman whom he is prohibited to marry. The child is a chalal (devoid of any Kohanic sanctity), but the father who transgressed remains a valid Kohen. And there are many more examples.

King David knew the Most Gifted Talmidei Chachamim were the

Best Fighters

The Mishna in Kidushin 76a states:

קוֹהֵן ...וְהָיָה לוֹ לְבַחֵן אֶת הַיְּהוּדִית וְלִפְתּוֹחַ אֶת הַיְּהוּדִית וְלִפְתּוֹחַ אֶת הַיְּהוּדִית
וְלִפְתּוֹחַ אֶת הַיְּהוּדִית וְלִפְתּוֹחַ אֶת הַיְּהוּדִית ,וְלִפְתּוֹחַ אֶת הַיְּהוּדִית וְלִפְתּוֹחַ
אֶת הַיְּהוּדִית .וְלִפְתּוֹחַ אֶת הַיְּהוּדִית וְלִפְתּוֹחַ אֶת הַיְּהוּדִית

A Kohen who wishes to marry must investigate the genealogy of the woman of his choice in order to establish that she is halachically valid to marry a Kohen. However, if she is the daughter of a Kohen who served in the Temple (whose genealogy was already confirmed) or the daughter of a member of the Sanhedrin or the daughter of a soldier in King David's army, he need not investigate the woman's genealogy.

The Gemara explains that King David drafted into his army only the most genealogically and spiritually suitable. David's logic was that, in war, Hashem weighs the relative merits of the litigants. Therefore, it is essential that our side be overwhelmingly more righteous than the enemy.

How different are our thoughts from those of the great King David. Today's yeshiva world might be prepared to accept the idea that those who are not learners be drafted, but certainly not the outstanding learners. In contrast, David and his advisors saw the Torah truth to be just the opposite – they knew that the best fighters would be the most gifted talmidei chachamim, bringing with them Torah and mitzvot as the efficient weapons for victory.

Serving in Tzahal as a Light unto the Jewish Nation

In my 22 years of serving in an anti-aircraft unit of the Air Force and later as a paramedic in civil defense, I witnessed

the influence that a single religious soldier can have on a unit. For example, the religious soldier organizes minyanim. The general atmosphere is much improved with a more serious attitude concerning why we are here and far fewer obscenities uttered. During my service, my tefilin were in use overtime, and Shabbat became a time for serious discussion about many areas of life and a time where the non-observant soldiers and officers got a taste of Torah – which for some was the first time in their lives they had heard the chachma of Torah.

We Carry the Destiny of Am Israel on our Shoulders

There is a large group of rabbis and lay people who define themselves as religious Zionist Chareidim. Many learn Torah not less than the non-Zionist Chareidi, and all are as scrupulous in keeping mitzvot as the most meticulous Chareidi. They serve in the army, with many serving as officers and some even reaching the highest ranks. These people can be found in all areas of hi tech, commerce, academia, free professions and arts, etc. I humbly feel that I am part of this group of religious Zionist Chareidi people.

The divide between the two groups of Chareidim is wide and growing wider.

The non-Zionist Chareidi camp has brought with it the ways of the galut. After 2000 years of incredible suffering in the galut, HaShem opened the gates to Eretz Yisrael. Life in the Holy Land as an independent nation requires that we leave behind the accumulated psychological baggage of the galut, where the goy did the “dirty work”. Here, in Eretz Yisrael, if we expect to remain an independent nation, we must make a mind change – all of us – and carry our destiny on our shoulders. Chareidim must take part in all areas of life and the non-observant must draw closer to Torah and mitzvot, if indeed we strive to draw our thoughts and our ways closer to the

Creator's.

There is no third way. For a nation that "hachafetz chaim" – desires to live – we have no choice.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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