

Acharei Mot-Kedoshim and Yom Ha'atz'maut 5778

BS"D Parashat Acharei Mot-Kedoshim and Yom Ha'atz'maut 5778

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

A Story of Deceit

Three penniless, unscrupulous Chassidim wanted to be with their rebbe in Lublin for Rosh Hashana, so they devised a plan to raise money for the journey.

They would go to one of the Jewish villages in the area. On arrival one of the three would pose as a great scholar while the other two would announce his presence in the town, inviting anyone in need to come and ask for his blessings.

Yankel was chosen to pose as the tzadik. He was to sit in the synagogue and wait for the simple, believing "clients". And indeed, they came in search of help for their miseries.

The first was an elderly woman seeking a suitable chatan for her daughter. The "rebbe" blessed the daughter, and the woman placed several kopecks on the table. And so it went, with the money piling up to the glee of the three Chassidim. Soon they realized that this ruse could not last for very long, so they decided to escape town immediately after Shabbat. On Shabbat afternoon, a man came with desperation in his voice. He explained that his son was dying, and the doctors said that only a miracle could save him. "You, saintly rabbi, are the miracle that HaShem has sent to save my son. Please come now to my home", pleaded the man. The three had little choice and followed the man home.

They saw that the boy was at the end of his life. The father and two Chassidim left the room, leaving the “rebbe” alone with the boy.

Ten minutes later the “rebbe” exited the room, saying to the father that HaShem would save the boy, and the three departed.

Right after nightfall the three gathered all the money and left the town as quickly as their feet could carry them.

While walking in their hometown six months later, they saw the boy’s father approaching. They began running to escape his anger and the physical beating they thought awaited them.

The father caught up and immediately pounced on the “rebbe” with embraces and kisses, thanking him for saving his son. When the father left, his surprised companions asked Yankel what he did in the room with the boy?

Yankel the rebbe took a deep breath and said, “I laid down and began beating the floor in desperation. I pleaded with HaShem, ‘Father in Heaven I am an outcast, a low life, every sin possible is in my life. But one thing I pray to you. Don’t let me be guilty of destroying this man’s pure and holy belief in You and in Your rabbis. Save the boy!’

Pleading with the Almighty

The souls of the generation of 70 years ago came before the holy throne and entreated the Almighty. “We are the worst generation in Jewish history. How can we face our forefathers when six million of our generation were murdered by the sons of Aisav in the most monstrous ways? The suffering of our generation is more overwhelming than the suffering at the destruction of the holy Temples and the exiles of our people from Eretz Yisrael. Woe to us, our sins and our punishment! How can we exist with this awful scar upon us and our leaders?

And HaShem replied, "My children, you are wrong. Wait and see how your generation will develop into the greatest of all in Jewish history. What you will soon accomplish will dominate all preceding generations; even that of the generation that left Egypt and received the Torah at Mount Sinai". Not the self-defacement of Yankel the impostor, but pride in being HaShem's sole chosen people.

HaShem continued: In the year 5708 (1948) three years' time after the Shoah and after 2000 years of agony in the galut, your generation will open the gates of Eretz Yisrael to all My children. You will, in 70 years, bring the number of my children home to seven million, when never before had there been so many Jews in My holy land. Your land will be the envy of all the nations, where heart, mind and soul will come together to sanctify My holy name.

You will be praised by friend and foe alike. I will give you imagination and intelligence to show the wonders of my world. Torah will live in Eretz Yisrael in the way I have always wanted but did not get the co-operation of My people. You will create a Torah empire never before realized, where so many young men and women will thirst for the knowledge of my Torah. Never did a people survive 2000 years of suffering in My name, while I did not reveal Myself to you, not by prophet nor by open miracles. It is to your credit, your courage and boldness and resoluteness for My sake with no revealed reward. I coerced the generation to leave Egypt and to enter the land under threat of extinction. You have come home with faith while clinging to Me and Judaism.

Your generation is the greatest so far but will be surpassed by subsequent generations of your children in Eretz Yisrael.

The essence of the last 70 years

Chapter 20 of Tehillim contains 70 words, which capture the essence of the last 70 years of the Medina, as follows:

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A psalm of David.

1 May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

2 May He send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion.

3 May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings.

4 May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.

5 May we shout for joy over your victory and lift up our banners in the name of our God.

May the Lord grant all your requests.

6 Now this I know: The Lord gives victory to His anointed. He answers him from His heavenly sanctuary with the victorious power of His right hand.

7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.

8 They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.

9 Lord, give victory to the king! Answer us when we call!



My Israeli brothers and sisters – be proud of who we are, of what we have accomplished, and what is still waiting for us to do.

I say all this in total recognition and sadness for the huge

human sacrifices we have had to make to attain what we now have. However, the total number of military sacrifices is equal to just two days in the single camp of Auschwitz. At the end of the day, the lesson is that there is life in Eretz Yisrael, while galut means for the Jew both spiritual and physical death.

Shabbat Shalom and Yom Ha'atzma'ut samayach,

Nachman Kahana

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