

# Balak 5776

BS"D Parashat Balak 5776

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

## Dwelling Apart

The infamous Bilam was greatly inspired by the configuration of the Jewish encampment and its particular way of life, and he called out (Bamidbar 23,9)

אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים  
אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים  
אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים  
אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים  
אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים  
אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים  
אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים  
אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים  
אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים  
אני ראיתי אותם מן ההרים

*From the rocky peaks I see them, from the heights I view them  
(the Jewish nation of the future), a people that dwells apart  
and is not concerned by the (gentile) nations*

An example of Jewish “dwelling apart” was told to me by one of our sons-in-law, who was sent by Tzahal to negotiate a transaction with the German Federal Police, whose headquarters is in the former Gestapo building in Berlin.

When they broke for lunch, the Germans feasted on wurst, sauerkraut, bacon and lots of beer, while our son-in-law took out his lunch of a mana chama – dehydrated vegetables which become edible when boiling water is added.

While the Germans were feasting away, one of them remarked to the Israeli officer with a kipa on his head eating away at the Osem company mana chama, “Haven’t the Jewish people suffered enough?”

At first glance it’s a good joke. However, underlying the

comment was the German's intention to exonerate his people from what they did to us in the Shoah. He was saying, "how strange and different you are from the civilized peoples of Europe. We partake of the best foods that this land can offer, while you struggle with dehydrated veggies. What happened to your people during the last 2000 years is a consequence of your law that has turned you into "a people that dwells apart and is not concerned by the (gentile) nations."

The Torah does not intend to make the Jewish people isolationists. On the contrary, King Solomon and those who followed him sent merchant ships to all the known world at the time; and international delegations met with King Solomon and with his heirs, establishing political and economic relationships with major powers such as Assyria, Aram, Egypt, India and eastward.

The Jewish ideal is to be involved with the world, while at the same time to be fiercely protective of our particular spiritual status, making sure that it is we who are influencing the nations while being impervious to any of their anti-Torah influences.

In the words of our prophets (Yeshayahu 2,2 and Micha 4,1) the nation in the Holy Land will be the desired model for the gentile peoples. They will stream to our shores to learn law and morality and offer their sacrifices at our Bet Hamikdash. It will be a great time to be alive – for the Jews and also for the gentiles.

In the interim, as we prepare the Medina for world leadership and dominance, it is incumbent on every Jew to participate in laying a brick on a brick in constructing the earthy Gan Eden; whoever turns his back in denial of this spiritual calling will not live to share its fruits.

# 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Entebbe Operation

While the loyal citizens of the Medina are celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Entebbe operation to free the hijacked Israeli citizens and other Jews, there appeared a letter to the editor in the last edition of Mishpacha magazine. The writer quotes a renowned posak (Halachic authority) in Bnei Brak who declared that the operation was forbidden by Halacha for reasons of pikuach nefesh – threat to the lives of the soldiers. According to the writer, the rabbi suggested that appropriate halachic response would have been to yield to the demands of the Arab-Moslem terrorists!

I cast a long shadow of doubt on the veracity of the writer's quote. I cannot fathom that any responsible, erudite rabbi would make a judgment that runs counter to halachic logic and precedent, for the following reasons:

1- When I am asked by people who suffer from serious medical conditions, if they are permitted to fast on Tish'a Be'av or Yom Kippur, I politely answer that this is a question for a doctor, not a rabbi. I don't recall that this posak had a wide-ranging military background.

2- I am quite certain that the General Staff did not inform the rabbi of the classified military details. How many soldiers would be sent and from which units; the fuel capacity of the planes; the length of the runway in Entebbe; the number of Ugandan soldiers and their positions at the airport; the weather forecast for Entebbe; alternative plans in case something goes amiss; how many fighter planes would be accompanying the cargo planes; what weapons the soldiers would be carrying and their fire power; how many doctors would have to accompany the force; how low the planes would have to fly in order to be under the radar; etc.





and the list goes on.

David ben Yishai would have acted differently.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

Copyright © 5776/2016 Nachman Kahana