

Balak 5777

BS"D Parashat Balak 5777

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Balak, the Midianite was appointed king over Moav for the duration of the national emergency; he invites the notorious Bilam to save Moav from the existential danger called the "Jewish problem".

Bilam arrives and Balak requests him to aid in the war effort by cursing the Jews that they be defeated in battle. The blatant question is: Balak could have arrived at the same resolution to his problem by requesting Bilam to bless Moav to win the war, rather than cursing the Jews to lose the war, why didn't he?

The answer is: we are dealing here with pathological anti-Semites who are more interested in destroying the Jewish nation than in advancing their own interests.

Jewish Anti-Semites

History repeats itself, as we find ourselves in a similar situation today. The UN is busy condemning Israel for every pretext under the sun rather than dealing with life and death situations in the Arab world. Hundreds are murdered daily in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen; but who cares in the face of the ultimate international disaster if Shulamit would build another toilet for the kindergarten in Kedumim.

Am Yisrael is used to goyim who are anti-Semites; they get it through the milk of their mothers; however, we are always

shocked when confronted with Jewish anti-Semites. Jews who intend and perform in ways meant to weaken the Jewish presence in the world, especially Medinat Yisrael.

If one wishes to be non-observant it is between him and God. However, when individuals band together to create a movement to weaken the Jewish nation, that is called self-hate and self-anti-Semitism. We have been dealing with such a movement for over 200 years; it is called the Reform movement.

What began as an attempt to bring Jewish life into the modern age, the early German-Jewish reformers of the mid-19th century emphasized the universal ethical teachings of the prophets. They denied that ritual observance was ordained by God and therefore inviolate, but viewed halacha as a means to reinforce the prophetic ideals of justice, freedom, and peace.

The early rejectionists of Halacha and the unique status of Jews as God's chosen people, and in fact their rejection of God the Creator, has degenerated into a movement where most of their younger generation is now anti State of Israel, and would not shed a tear if the Medinah did not exist.

However, what disturbs me with the Reform movement is their lack of intellectual honesty.

Reform implies that the reformer is well versed in the matter that he believes requires reforming, and he has an agenda for how to rectify its present shortcomings.

However, contemporary leaders of the reform movement and certainly their parishioners might be well versed in psychology, sociology and history of the Catholic church, but have little or no knowledge of Judaism. To reject 3300 years of traditional Judaism without even knowing what it is, is the height of anti-intellectualism.

The honest way to approach the so-called need to reform Judaism is to live a one-year cycle as a Halachic person,

Shabbat, kashrut, family purity, Torah study, attending bet kneset and visiting Israel. At the end of which time one can decide that all the previous generations of tens of thousands of learned rabbis and millions of their congregants were primitive in their thinking, archaic in their traditions, oblivious to the needs of society, and unsophisticated in their approach to their fellow human beings. The rabbi of his temple is a man of today; so sophisticated that he can enjoy eating pig and lobster, so enlightened that he can marry together Tom and Mike, and so open minded that he understands and even justifies Arabs murdering Israelis sitting in a bus.

The Real Need for Reform

So, for the enlightened Reform Jew who might seriously attempt to know what he is reforming, let's start at lesson number one.

When putting the pieces of a puzzle together, the first and most important objective is to build the four sides of the framework, so here are four of the major rudiments of Judaism.

1- There is an infinite entity that created all that exists ex nihilo (from nothing), including time itself. Don't attempt to analyze or even contemplate what infinity means, it will drive you mad, just as one should not stare at the sun which will cause permanent blindness in less than a minute. Darwin's Theory of Evolution has been proven wrong by leading paleontologists because the 13.7 billion years that our planet is in existence is too short a time for randomness to evolve man from a lone atom.

2- That entity which we call God, imposed His prerogative as Creator to select the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be His chosen people. All the ancient empires and modern day would-be empires that conquered vast regions of the world

believing that their “Reichs” would last 1000 years are gone. Whereas the Jews – God’s chosen people – are alive and thriving in our ancient home land after 2000 years of exile, and are experiencing unprecedented miracles in every walk of life.

3- God revealed himself at Mount Sinai and presented to the Jewish nation His 613 mitzvot (commandments) to insure our unique sanctity. God has been our continuous guardian even at times when the Jewish people acted in a manner inappropriate for a holy nation, and were forced to pay for our indiscretions. The return to our ancient home land is the highest expression of God’s love for the Jewish people.

4- Death is the final stage of our physical appearance in this world, however the eternal Jewish soul lives on in another dimension. It is here that each Jewish soul is shown to what degree he or she lived their lives according to the dictates of the Creator through the Torah. It is here where reward and punishment are decided. A Jew who does not reach out to the Torah, being content with hiding behind the hollow excuse “my rabbi never told me” (because the Reform rabbi did not know or did not believe), will be hard pressed to answer for his sins.

In conclusion: What really is in need of reform is the Reform Movement itself. The door is open to all who wish to return to the Jewish way of life; to reconnect to the 3300 year long chain of Jews beginning with our father Abraham and continuing to the end of days.

Shabbat Shalom,

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