

Beha'alot'cha 5773

BS"D Parashat Beha'alot'cha 5773

The world has always been a complex place for thinking people. RamBam composed "Moreh Nevuchim" (Guide to the Perplexed) as an aid to Torah observers in filtering out the static in their lives and to permit them to focus on what is true, relevant and the essential will of HaShem for His chosen people.

In the 1000 years since the RamBam, the world has become progressively more complex conceptually and practically, to the extent that the well-intentioned Jew stands paralyzed and perplexed before the supermarket of rabbinic decisions and directives, not knowing where to turn. Things have reached such a point that one can know beforehand what a particular rabbi will decide, allowing the questioner to shop for the answer that best suits him. If you want to eat a certain brand of tuna fish, you know who to ask and who not to ask. If you need encouragement, support and reassurance to ignore the miracles of our generation and remain in the galut, ask almost any rabbi in the galut.

Every rabbi speaks with the self-assurance and authority of one who has received a message directly from the Almighty. Each sect claims to have a monopoly on the Torah's truth, so that one who does not subscribe to his hashkafa (outlook) risks eternal damnation. Chabad has no use for Breslav and Breslav has little respect for Lithuanians, and no one is armored with Satmar. And in every case, if your hat or shtreimel is not cut in the style of my sect, the kashrut in your home is questionable. In certain quarters, if your son serves or has served in the army, the fear that your daughters will live out their lives in spinsterhood is very real.

Should one be a learner or an earner?

Should one stand when Hatikva is played, or continue walking

as an Arab, in total disregard of the words “Hatikva shnot alpayim” – our hope of 2000 years?

Should one live in the tuma of Boro Park rather than in the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael? I saw a recent photo of 13th Avenue in Boro Park, and immediately recalled a similar photo I had seen, with the caption “Warsaw 1938”.

So the question is: What can a Jew of pure heart do in order to discover the real and authentic Jewish way?

The answer I believe lies in the seemingly simple song “Ain kelo-hainu” we sing at the conclusion of our prayers: “Ain Kelo-hainu, ain kadonainu, ain kemalkainu ain kemoshi'ainu” – There is none like our Elokim, there is non like our Adon (Master), there is none like our monarch, there is none like our savior .

I will explain, but first two questions:

1) The Gemara (Pesachim 119b) relates that in the future HaShem will cater a great feast for the righteous at the end of which a cup of wine will be passed to Avraham Avienu in order to recite the birkat ha-zeemun (invitation to recite grace after the meal). Avraham will refuse on the grounds that he is not worthy because he brought the evil Yishmael into the world. The cup will be passed to Yitzchak, who too will refuse because he begot the evil Eisav.

Yaakov will receive the cup; he too will refuse because he married two sisters, which was destined to be prohibited by the Torah.

The cup will then be passed to Moshe Rabbeinu who will declare that he does not merit the honor because he did not enter Eretz Yisrael.

It will then be passed to Yehoshua, who will decline because he did not merit to have a male offspring to whom he could

convey the mesora (tradition) of the Torah.

Finally, the cup will be passed to King David, who will welcome it and declare that he is worthy of the mitzvah.

Now, the question is: Why was King David deserving of this preferential status? Did he in fact possess not one fault as did each of the others, but all the faults of his predecessors! Did he not have several children he could not have been proud of like Avshalom and Amnon? King David had a problematic relationship with a wife, as did Ya'akov, and for a period in time David was forced to live in galut (like Moshe and Aharon) over which he suffered as recorded in tractate Ketubot 110b. And yet David was the preferred personage at this momentous meal to lead all the righteous of Israel in blessing Hashem.

2) In the Amidah (Shmoneh Esrai prayer) the names: Avraham, Yitchak and Ya'akov are mentioned in their status as the fathers of the nation. However, of all the other great Bible personalities only one other man is mentioned; and indeed twice – King David. What did David do to deserve the special treatment that was accorded him at the great feast and in the prayer that we recite three times daily ?

Let's return to the "Ain Ke'lokainu" poem. It is centered around four major words: Elo-hainu (our omnipotent God), Adonainu (Our Master), Malkainu (Our monarch) and Moshi'ainu (our savior).

I submit that the author intended that each word represent a major period in history. Elo-hainu stands for the 2000 years from creation until Avraham, when idolatry replaced monotheism, as we find the name "Elo-him" used in the Torah as the characteristic of the Almighty when creating the universe.

"Adonainu" (our Master) or the non-possessive form "Adon" (Master) was first discovered by Avraham when he realized that HaShem did not create the world and then abandon His

creations, but rather He is the ongoing Master of all that transpires in all the worlds.

The Adon period continued throughout the lives of the patriarchs, the period of slavery, the 400 years of tribal loyalty from the time of Yehoshua until Shmuel the Prophet.

Shmuel was sent by HaShem to anoint David son of Yishai from Bet Lechem as King of Israel. And it is the monarchy of David who created the awareness that HaShem is the direct monarch of the Jewish nation, with His capitol Yerushalayim and His sanctuary the Bet Hamikdash on the Temple Mount.

And the final period in world history as represented by the word "Moshi'ainu" our savior which is the period we are now experiencing.

Indeed, the life of David which saw the 12 tribes united as one people with a central spiritual and political capital overshadowed the accomplishments of his predecessors. King David will be the deserving personality when HaShem once again reveals Himself to His people in Eretz Yisrael.

To return to the dilemma of discerning the correct hashkafa among the potpourri of hashkafot proposed by the many contemporary spiritual leaders.

I believe that the authentic hashkafa is the one which is represented by King David. The world view that the Jewish people is not a shteible of 10 Jews in Uman, or the bet midrash of Ger or the Mir. Am Yisrael is every Jew, whether he or she is close to the Torah or far away. We are a nation of HaShem's children, and a parent cannot divorce a child. Any group of any size which is isolationist in its essence, claiming that the Torah and Yiddishkeit is its exclusive possession, is invalidated to speak in the name of Judaism.

The State of Israel is the central authority of the land and the world acknowledged spokesman for the Jewish nation,

whether some people like it or not. It is not perfect; but when one compares our society with that of the Kings of Yisrael or Yehuda of biblical times, we are far ahead in the race towards perfection. The prophets castigated the leaders of those societies on the injustices they perpetrated to their own people, whereas today the desire to do justice and charity is an integral part of the Israeli establishment and our people.

And the most compelling fact – the people here love the Medina, and most would protect her with their lives.

Part B:

King Solomon laid down the principle for educators (Mishlai 22:6):

וְיָדַעְתָּ לְיָתוּם וְלְאִלְמָנָה וְלְכָל אֲדָמָה וְלְכָל בְּיָרֵא וְלְכָל אֲדָמָה וְלְכָל אֲדָמָה

Educate the young in accordance (in harmony) to his way (disposition, inclination and temperament).

A child who has aggressive tendencies or shows an aptitude for creativeness, the educator must fashion the methods and goals pursuant to the individual child's inclination. With King Shlomo's directive in mind, it might be correct to conclude that Aisav turned out the way he did because he received the same education as his spiritually minded brother, Ya'akov.

As it goes with individuals, so too does it go with groups of people and even with nations.

The national characteristic of a people has to channel the leadership in its ways and means.

The Jewish nation was commanded to fulfill three mitzvot upon entering Eretz Yisrael: to appoint a king, to destroy Amalek and to construct the Bet HaMikdash on the Temple Mount.

It took 400 years before Shaul was appointed as Israel's first

King, because this was the time it took to prepare the hearts of the tribal orientated nation to see the need for a central authority.

At the time of the prophet Shmuel, 400 years after entering the Land with Yehoshua Bin Nun, the tribal representative requested of him to appoint a king.

HaShem appeared to Shmuel and affirmed the national desire by directing Shmuel to annoint Shaul , the son of Kish, from the tribe of Binyamin.

Shaul failed in his mission to destroy all of Amalek, and after his death, Shmuel was commanded by HaShem to anoint David, son of Yishai, as King.

David felt the pulse of the nation and was loved and admired (Book of Shmuel 1 29,5).

In his 40 years as King, David established Yerushalayim as the eternal capital of the Jewish nation, extended Jewish control over all the area designated by the Torah as Eretz Yisrael, laid the groundwork for the Bet Hamikdash, authored Tehillim and was a rabbinic posek (halachic judge).

David achieved greatness by being a man of the people. He sensed the needs and potential of the nation and saw the entire scope of the Jewish people. He did not retreat to a semi-hermitic life and let HaShem take care of matters. David was a great Talmid Chacham, the nation's military leader, a pious Jew and initiator of the national agenda.

One hundred years ago, our spiritual leaders did not sense the flow of history which had gripped many peoples, as nationalism and love of country became the main issues of the day. Our nation was ready to a great degree to entertain the idea of returning en mass to Eretz Yisrael, and the leadership was taken over by secular Zionism.

Today in Eretz Yisrael the pulse of the nation is in protecting and building our great country.

The chareidi rabbinic leadership must acknowledge, what the religious Zionist rabbis have acknowledged, that the Medina is here to stay. The nation has gathered around the national leadership and loves the land.

Our rabbinic leaders will succeed in drawing the people to Torah not by being aloof and distant, but by acknowledging the reality of the Medina and being the nation's leaders in all fields.

The most respected institution in Israel is Tzahal. By boycotting Tzahal the chareidi leadership has slipped away from the national consensus and driven away many potential people from clinging to the Torah.

The logic pruned from our history is:

לְבַרְכּוֹת יְהוָה יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבְּעֵינֵי הַיָּלְדִים וְהַיָּלְדוֹת

Educate the young in accordance (in harmony) to his way (disposition, inclination and temperament).

The religious segment must enter all walks of life if we seriously desire a Torah state. We must fill the army with dati and chareidi soldiers and officers, as well as the industrial and managerial sectors.

It is up to the chareidi leadership to feel the pulse of the nation, like King David in his time, and to take part in the leadership process.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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