

Bo 5773

Parashat Bo 5773

Part A:

Paro of the exodus is more than just one more tyrant who used his power to torment others. Paro was a paradigm and exemplar of the gentile who never learns that anti-Semitism is insanity. Insanity as defined by Albert Einstein is repeating again and again the same exercise and anticipating a different result. It has not entered the minds of Aisav and Yishmael that anti-Semitism can harm the Jew but it always destroys the perpetrator.

The Christians and Moslems will never internalize that the more they attempt to destroy the Jewish nation the more HaShem grants us the inner strength to survive and thrive, as the pasuk says (Shemot 1,12)

the more they (the Egyptians) tormented them (Am Yisrael) so did they (Am Yisrael) multiply and expand

Paro was brought to his knees so that he would acknowledge that HaShem, as Master of the universe, is not bound by natural law. HaShem created nature and is not subject to the limitations that bind mortal man.

Paro's behavior proves that he did not admit to the fact that HaShem is the God of all peoples – including the Egyptians, while maintaining a special covenant with the Jewish nation.

While he still maintained some semblance of free will at the plague of locusts, Paro did recognize that there is a higher Being who guards the Jews but with nothing in common with himself or with Egypt. As Paro says to Moshe, (Shemot 10,16-17):

¹⁶ *Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and Aaron and said, I have sinned against the Lord **your God** and against you.*

¹⁷ *Now forgive my sin once more and pray to the Lord **your God** to take this deadly plague away from me.*

Paro acknowledges that he had angered the Jewish God, but he says: "He is **your** God." Paro does not recognize HaShem Echad – one God, one Creator, one source of right and wrong. He believes that when the Jews will leave Egypt, their God will leave with them, and then Paro and Egyptian society will return to the god of Egypt. Nothing Paro experienced could bring him to admit that there is but one God and the Jewish people are His chosen nation. For this, Paro will ultimately drown in the waters of Yam Suf (Red Sea) and, with his last breath may realize the truth.

One might claim that Moshe caused Paro to err, because Moshe himself said (Shemot 10,25):

*"...You too shall provide us with animals which we will sacrifice to the Lord **our God***

However, it would be correct to assume that Moshe and Paro had theological discussions beyond the limited quotes in the Torah. When they discussed HaShem in the macro, Moshe told Paro that there is but one Master of the universe, who created and is consciously aware of all humanity – Jews and gentiles; however, the Jewish nation was chosen to maintain a unique, intimate relationship with the Creator, which extends from this finite, corporeal world into the metaphysical world of eternity. This is what Moshe meant when he said, "we will sacrifice to the Lord **our God.**"

From time immemorial, the greatest of the world's powers have tried to subdue the Jewish people in their unsuccessful attempts to prove that we are not Hashem's chosen people.

Until modern times, individual nations like ancient Egypt, Babylon etc., attempted to eradicate the Jewish nation, but today nations ally themselves in concerted efforts to reach that sinister impossible goal.

The hatred of the member states of the United Nations towards the Jews and the Jewish Medina, is vividly seen in the number and audacity of the 65 anti-Israel resolutions which were passed from 1955 to 1992 alone:

1. Resolution 106: "... 'condemns' Israel for Gaza raid"
2. Resolution 111: "... 'condemns' Israel for raid on Syria that killed fifty-six people"
3. Resolution 127: "... 'recommends' Israel suspend its 'no-man's zone' in Jerusalem"
4. Resolution 162: "... 'urges' Israel to comply with UN decisions"
5. Resolution 171: "...determines flagrant violations' by Israel in its attack on Syria"
6. Resolution 228: "... 'censures' Israel for its attack on Samu in the West Bank, then under Jordanian control"
7. Resolution 237: "... 'urges' Israel to allow return of new 1967 Palestinian refugees"
8. Resolution 248: "... 'condemns' Israel for its massive attack on Karameh in Jordan"
9. Resolution 250: "... 'calls' on Israel to refrain from holding military parade in Jerusalem"
10. Resolution 251: "... 'deeply deplores' Israeli military parade in Jerusalem in defiance of Resolution 250"
11. Resolution 252: "... 'declares invalid' Israel's acts to unify Jerusalem as Jewish capital"

12. Resolution 256: "... 'condemns' Israeli raids on Jordan as 'flagrant violation'"
13. Resolution 259: "... 'deplores' Israel's refusal to accept UN mission to probe occupation"
14. Resolution 262: "... 'condemns' Israel for attack on Beirut airport"
15. Resolution 265: "... 'condemns' Israel for air attacks for Salt in Jordan"
16. Resolution 267: "... 'censures' Israel for administrative acts to change the status of Jerusalem"
17. Resolution 270: "... 'condemns' Israel for air attacks on villages in southern Lebanon"
18. Resolution 271: "... 'condemns' Israel's failure to obey UN resolutions on Jerusalem"
19. Resolution 279: "... 'demands' withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon"
20. Resolution 280: "... 'condemns' Israeli's attacks against Lebanon"
21. Resolution 285: "... 'demands' immediate Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon"
22. Resolution 298: "... 'deplores' Israel's changing of the status of Jerusalem"
23. Resolution 313: "... 'demands' that Israel stop attacks against Lebanon"
24. Resolution 316: "... 'condemns' Israel for repeated attacks on Lebanon"
25. Resolution 317: "... 'deplores' Israel's refusal to release Arabs abducted in Lebanon"

26. Resolution 332: "... 'condemns' Israel's repeated attacks against Lebanon"
27. Resolution 337: "... 'condemns' Israel for violating Lebanon's sovereignty"
28. Resolution 347: "... 'condemns' Israeli attacks on Lebanon"
29. Resolution 425: "... 'calls' on Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon"
30. Resolution 427: "... 'calls' on Israel to complete its withdrawal from Lebanon"
31. Resolution 444: "... 'deplores' Israel's lack of cooperation with UN peacekeeping forces"
32. Resolution 446: "... 'determines' that Israeli settlements are a 'serious obstruction' to peace and calls on Israel to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention"
33. Resolution 450: "... 'calls' on Israel to stop attacking Lebanon"
34. Resolution 452: "... 'calls' on Israel to cease building settlements in occupied territories"
35. Resolution 465: "... 'deplores' Israel's settlements and asks all member states not to assist Israel's settlements program"
36. Resolution 467: "... 'strongly deplores' Israel's military intervention in Lebanon"
37. Resolution 468: "... 'calls' on Israel to rescind illegal expulsions of two Palestinian mayors and a judge and to facilitate their return"
38. Resolution 469: "... 'strongly deplores' Israel's failure to observe the council's order not to deport Palestinians"
39. Resolution 471: "... 'expresses deep concern' at Israel's

failure to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention”

40. Resolution 476: “... ‘reiterates’ that Israel’s claims to Jerusalem are ‘null and void’”

41. Resolution 478: “... ‘censures (Israel) in the strongest terms’ for its claim to Jerusalem in its ‘Basic Law’”

42. Resolution 484: “... ‘declares it imperative’ that Israel re-admit two deported Palestinian mayors”

43. Resolution 487: “... ‘strongly condemns’ Israel for its attack on Iraq’s nuclear facility”

44. Resolution 497: “... ‘decides’ that Israel’s annexation of Syria’s Golan Heights is ‘null and void’ and demands that Israel rescind its decision forthwith”

45. Resolution 498: “... ‘calls’ on Israel to withdraw from Lebanon”

46. Resolution 501: “... ‘calls’ on Israel to stop attacks against Lebanon and withdraw its troops”

47. Resolution 509: “... ‘demands’ that Israel withdraw its forces forthwith and unconditionally

from Lebanon”

48. Resolution 515: “... ‘demands’ that Israel lift its siege of Beirut and allow food supplies to be brought in”

49. Resolution 517: “... ‘censures’ Israel for failing to obey UN resolutions and demands that Israel withdraw its forces from Lebanon”

50. Resolution 518: “... ‘demands’ that Israel cooperate fully with UN forces in Lebanon”

51. Resolution 520: “... ‘condemns’ Israel’s attack into West Beirut”

52. Resolution 573: "... 'condemns' Israel 'vigorously' for bombing Tunisia in attack on PLO headquarters
53. Resolution 587: "... 'takes note' of previous calls on Israel to withdraw its forces from Lebanon and urges all parties to withdraw"
54. Resolution 592: "... 'strongly deplores' the killing of Palestinian students at Bir Zeit University by Israeli troops"
55. Resolution 605: "... 'strongly deplores' Israel's policies and practices denying the human rights of Palestinians
56. Resolution 607: "... 'calls' on Israel not to deport Palestinians and strongly requests it to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention
57. Resolution 608: "... 'deeply regrets' that Israel has defied the United Nations and deported Palestinian civilians"
58. Resolution 636: "... 'deeply regrets' Israeli deportation of Palestinian civilians"
59. Resolution 641: "... 'deplores' Israel's continuing deportation of Palestinians
60. Resolution 672: "... 'condemns' Israel for violence against Palestinians at the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount
61. Resolution 673: "... 'deplores' Israel's refusal to cooperate with the United Nations
62. Resolution 681: "... 'deplores' Israel's resumption of the deportation of Palestinians
63. Resolution 694: "... 'deplores' Israel's deportation of Palestinians and calls on it to ensure their safe and immediate return
64. Resolution 726: "... 'strongly condemns' Israel's deportation of Palestinians

65. Resolution 799: "...strongly condemns' Israel's deportation of 413 Palestinians and calls for their immediate return.

These nations, for the most part recognize the existence of a Higher Being; but like Paro they will never acknowledge the special relationship that exists between the Creator and the Children of Israel. They have engraved on their consciousness many ideas to dispute the covenant in order to plot and plan the destruction of the Jewish Medina.

Part B:

I have just returned from a session of the annual Torah learning week sponsored by Agudat Yisrael of America, which was held in the luxurious Renaissance Hotel in Yerushalayim. At first glance, it is a very impressive demonstration of Torah study by more than about 120 men who have taken off from work to travel ten thousand kilometers to study Torah in Eretz Yisrael.

Most are bearded with large velvet kipot, and all obviously learners of the Torah. At intermission, a gentleman introduced himself as someone who had visited the bet kneset in the Old City where I serve as rabbi. He looked around the room and with obvious sadness said, "No one in this room has ever seriously contemplated making aliya to Eretz Yisrael. Eretz Yisrael is not in their universe, being no more than a place to visit and say tehilim at the Kotel."

I was taken aback because from the looks of the men in the room, one could very easily mistake them for people from Bnei Brak or from the religious neighborhoods of Yerushlayim. This gentleman individual assured me of the accuracy of his statement with some interesting vital statistics of religious Jewry in the US.

I looked around the room and saw people who learn Torah, but if what I was told is accurate, then the Torah they study is not the authentic Torah given by HaShem to the children of

Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov at Mount Sinai to be kept on the national level in HaShem's Holy Land, not by individuals in isolated communities in the galut.

In total contrast to Paro, who acknowledged Moshe's Higher Being as, "The Lord **your** God", our fellow Jews who have come here to learn Torah for several days and then return to their places, would believe "The Lord **our** God." HaShem, they believe, makes no distinction based on where a Jew lives, as long as he abides by the Torah. But therein lies their great error.

HaShem is indeed "**our God**," the God of all Israel wherever they may be, however their understanding of the word "our" is fallacious.

The matter can be compared to parents living in, let's say, Brooklyn, who have two sons, Reuven and Shimon. Reuven lives near his parents and Shimon is a rabbi in Los Angeles.

Reuven and his family tend to the parents' every need. They are at the parents' home every day to clean, buy, cook, protect, and take father to the doctor once a week and very often in the middle of the night to the ER.

When Shimon first moved to LA, he would call his elderly parents daily, but as time went on the calls became weekly ones and eventually monthly ones. Shimon would fly to NY before the holidays, when it was convenient; but the needs of his growing congregation were increasingly imposing on his time.

When the parents passed on, their last will and testament stated that 90% of the substantial estate was to go to Reuven. Shimon protested the will claiming that Reuven must have influenced the parents in their distribution of the estate, because basic justice recognizes that both were sons. After delving into the respective relationships between the two sons and their parents, it was clear to the judge that even though

they were indeed biological sons, there was no doubt that the parents felt a far greater sense of appreciation and indebtedness towards Reuven for all the difficult years of loyal service to them.

HaShem loves every Jew, if only by virtue of his Jewish neshama (soul). However, their presence in the galut relegates their religious observance to an inferior level. The lifestyle of the observant Jews in the galut can never be equated to the mesirat nefesh (self sacrifice) of the Jewish sons and daughters forging out a religious-national life in Eretz Yisrael, despite the overwhelming difficulties HaShem has placed before us.

To come from the galut for four days of Torah learning is commendable. However, I wonder if the participants were aware of the tens of thousands of Jewish soldiers from the bitter cold peaks of the Hermon Mountains to the stark barren lands of the Arava, in the skies and under the oceans, who make it possible for them to bring back with them – to places like Boro Park, Monsey – the uplifting and pleasant memories of their Torah study sojourn in the 5-star luxurious Renaissance Hotel in beautiful and serene Yerushalayim.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

Copyright © 5773/2013 Nachman Kahana