

BS"D Parashat Aikev 5785

Beyond Comprehension

An important idea regarding a “difficult” verse in last week’s parashat Va’etchanan

Devarim 4,6:

שמע ישראל יהוה אחד
יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד
יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד

שמע ישראל יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד
יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד.

*Observe them (the mitzvot) carefully, for this will reveal your wisdom and understanding in the estimation of the nations when you perform all these **decrees** and they will say, “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people”.*

Question: A chok (חוק) by definition is a heavenly decree beyond Man’s ability to comprehend (kosher vs unkosher animals, the red heifer, tuma and tahara, etc.). The pasuk says that erudite, learned goyim will praise our wisdom when we abide by the chukim. But this negates the fundamental basis of the scientific method that places logic and empirical proof as the guiding tools which open the secrets of nature. So why would the goyim reap praise upon us for acting in accordance with chukim?

I submit: the acceptance of chukim implies that we are aware

that there is a world beyond human logic (Quantum Mechanics), and it is that leap of faith and intellectual acceptance which demonstrates our wisdom and understanding.

And its inverse, when the Jews distance themselves from the Torah, they make foolish mistakes and appear to be unwise in the eyes of the gentile peoples.

How to win a war

I recall that on the first Shabbat of basic training (tiranut) in boot-camp a few kilometers from the evil city of Shechem, I was asked to speak at the Shabbat meal. I spoke about our ancestors who entered Eretz Yisrael under the leadership of Yehoshua bin Nun with the order to “eliminate” all men, women and children of the seven Canaanite nations who controlled the land. I asked the soldiers that if we would get orders to enter Shechem and destroy the city and all its inhabitants, who among us would be able to carry out the order. Very few hands went up. And then I said that is the reason that the Medina will continue to suffer many more years of bloodshed.

There are no innocent citizens when at war with another country or religious faith, because whoever identifies with the aims of their leaders is as guilty as the soldier in uniform who shoots an RPG (anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade).

In 1933, approximately 3.6% of the German population were official members of the Nazi Party. In 1939, however, it was estimated that the vast majority of Germans identified with the goals of Judenrein (a land and world free of Jews). This was justification enough for the United States and the United Kingdom to kill hundreds of thousands (not enough) of non-combatants through bombing raids of the major cities.

The Germans were hungry, and the allies provided them with humanitarian aid in the form of half-ton bombs. The Germans

were sick, and the allies sent them antibiotics in the form of TNT. That's the way to win a war.

Viewing the enemy as human

Perhaps, the opening word of the Torah begins with the letter BET in order to inform us that this world is plan B and not what HaShem originally planned. Adam was the perfect male and Chava the perfect female, and Gan Eden the perfect location. Yet, they both managed to sin on the very first day they were created; and from that sin, death appeared and all the evils that Man has perpetrated to this day.

The lesson to be learned is that the mother of all further sins is the first sin. It has been proven empirically by leading physicists that when one closes the first button on a sweater improperly, chances are that all the rest will be out of place.

In the wake of the Shemini Atzeret atrocities, the original sin of our government was to negotiate with Hamas. This sin erroneously acknowledged their status as human beings; when, in fact and in Halacha, they became the living dead.

It is not recommended to approach an angry cobra and attempt to negotiate with it. If the "peace now" humanitarian does not immediately kill the cobra, then he will become its next meal.

Insanity is the de facto state of affairs in Gaza today. Hamas toys with Israel every day. The majority of international humanitarian aid continues to be violently hijacked by Hamas thugs and then sold to their Arab brothers at usurious prices. At the same time, the Hamas leadership offers unacceptable and constantly changing terms for releasing our live and dead hostages and ceasing the war.

The twins, Yaakov and Esau, were endowed with opposing genes –

Yaakov with kindness and his brother Esau with the killer instinct. That is why there are only 13 million Jews in the world but billions of descendants of Esau.

Our mantra should be JLMM (Jewish Lives Matter More), because the life of one Jew is more precious than all the people of Gaza and their allies.

Following is a case in point...

Sparing enemy lives

The book of Melachim (chap. 20) relates the incidents pertaining to the battles between Achav, King of the northern tribes, and Ben-Hadad, King of Aram (today's Syria).

Ben-Hadad mustered a huge army led by 32 kings with their horses and chariots, and besieged Samaria, the capital of the northern tribes.

After Ben-Hadad made impossible demands of the Jewish people, Achav and his generals understood that war was imminent.

A prophet appeared before Achav and announced, "This is what the Lord says: Do you see this vast army? I will give it into your hand today, and then you will know that I am the Lord."

The army of Israel defeated the Arameans. Ben-Hadad escaped on horseback with some of his soldiers, while Achav's army inflicted heavy losses on the Arameans.

The prophet returned to Achav with the warning that Ben-Hadad would renew the war in the coming year, and Achav would again be victorious.

The following Spring, Ben-Hadad did indeed declare war. This time, the Jews killed 100,000 Aramean foot soldiers in one day, and a wall collapsed on another 27,000 as they attempted to enter the city of Aphek.

Ben-Hadad hid in an underground room, knowing that his chances for survival were nil; but his officers said to him, "Look, we have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful. Let us go to the king of Israel with sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads. Perhaps he will spare your life."

They sent a message to Achav to the effect that Ben-Hadad was still alive and was begging for mercy.

Achav received the message and replied, "Is he still alive? **My brother?**" And Achav permitted Ben-Hadad safe passage back to Aram. When Ben-Hadad came out of his hiding place, Achav had him climb into his own royal chariot.

The prophet reappeared to Achav and said, "You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore, it is your life for his life, your people for his people". The following year, Ben Hadad attacked again and Achav was killed.

Lesson #1: When HaShem delivers an archenemy into our hands, we do not have the right to spare him, notwithstanding any political and other calculations.

In the latest round between Israel and Hamas, their military leadership is deep underground trying to escape our bombs. Although our leaders have not described Hamas as "our brothers", we continue to allow them in Gaza and in Qatar to plan and try to carry out their clear and unwavering goal of destroying Medinat Yisrael and murdering every Jew here.

The Hamas leaders and followers are no better than Ben-Hadad of Aram. They have forfeited any privilege to live. Were it not for the perverse and misguided democratic morality of our State, the war would have been over a year ago.

Remember JLMM – Jewish Lives Matter More

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

