

BS"D Parashat Kedoshim 5784

Aftershocks

Remembrance of the Shoah, its atrocities and implication are never far from the Jewish national psyche. Notwithstanding this fact, the Israeli government declared the 28th of Nissan of every year as the memorial day for the millions of murdered Jews when the schools, media etc., focus on every evil detail that the Germans perpetrated against our people.

The Shoah was level 9.5 on the Jewish Richter scale. And like major earthquakes which are followed by unpleasant aftershocks, so too are all the anti-Jewish actions of the last 80 years aftershocks caused by the Shoah. Why?

The Shoah had two messages:

- The Jewish claim to be the Creators "chosen people" is empirically false, because if it is true then their god would have protected them!
- If you wish to protect your religion, then all Jews would have to be destroyed, either in the name of Yishmael or Aisav.

What happened on the Shabbat of last Shemini Atzeret, when the Islamic-Nazis converged on our towns and bases, where they murdered, raped, mutilated the live and the dead, and put children into lit stoves, was an aftershock of what the Germans did.

So, this eve of entering Rafah, "capital" of "Chamastan" in Aza, is an awakening for Jews wherever they are to the fact that Paro, Haman, Hitler, Stalin and all the rest are dead but their intentions are alive and kicking.

Resurrecting the Jewish Defense League

Due to the alarming rise in the number, intensity, and frequency of Judenhass (anti-Jewish) and “itbach al yehud” (murder the Jew – a frequent Arab call for action) in the U.S., there is a growing interest in resurrecting the JDL – Jewish Defense League, which was established by my brother, Rabbi Meir Kahana hy”d, in the late 1960s to protect local Jews.

I have been asked for my opinion on the matter.

Firstly, at the time when the JDL was being established in the U.S., My wife and I were already living in Israel for 5-6 years; so, I had no part in this initiative other than superficial updates from time to time in our brotherly correspondence. Hence my opinion is no more valid than that of anyone else.

Times have changed radically. The original JDL was created to react to local thugs of many colors and creeds, who would do annoying things, such as breaking car windows or stealing old lady’s handbags.

Today, Islamic Jihad has been brought into the equation. Jihadis, in the spectrum of sadism, will grow more extreme until they reach the level of murdering Jews just for being Jews, as they view themselves as the implementers of their psychotic, lunatic, deranged, demented, obsessed, delusional conception of what their deity desires of its adherents. A god of blood, anger and violence; of mutilation of bodies, rape and sadism, I’ll refrain from detailing the inhuman acts that these Islamic-Nazis did and would do again if the opportunity presents itself. God forbid!

Re-establishing the JDL is important, but one has to take into account, that like Newton's third law of motion, every force has an equal and opposite reaction force. The JDL will cause the creation of a MDL (Moslem Defense League); and there is already an organization that calls itself the GDL (Goyim Defense League).

The inescapable fact is the inevitable conclusion: aliya to the promised land of Yisrael.

Meanwhile, while packing your bags, it's good to have a JDL nearby that will be available to accompany your wife to the supermarket and your children to and from their Jewish day-schools.

But the effectiveness of such an organization would depend on the degree to which Ya'akov (Jacob – the Jew) adopts some of his brother Aisav's characteristics: such as physical strength, determination, toughness, tenaciousness, unyielding strength, and no fear to physically punish.

A World that Disappeared

Several years ago, I received a glossy magazine by the name of "Edim Sheketim" [Silent Witnesses]. The edition was focused on a survey of what became of the sites that served as yeshivot and synagogues in Russia, Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, and Hungary in pre-war Europe; with an announcement that in the future a similar edition would be published regarding Slovakia and Poland.

The publication shows Torah centers from before the outbreak of the World War II, whose names are etched in our memories even more so than the Torah centers of Sura and Nahardara in Babylonia. All have a common denominator: they no longer exist as Torah institutions.

In the building of the Slobodka Yeshiva, “Lithuanian women sew inexpensive jackets”. The building of the former Ponovezh Yeshiva serves as a government school. The Telz Yeshiva lies in ruins. The synagogue of the Holy Ruzhiner Rebbe is a carpentry shop. The Central Synagogue of Brisk is a movie theater, and the Yeshiva of Kaminitz serves as an induction center for the Belarus Army.

The sounds of Torah heard day and night in the yeshivot of Brisk, Navardok, and Baranovitz are nothing but a distant memory. The birds that flew over these holy places and were singed by the Torah learning of Torah scholars now fly without fear.

As things are quickly deteriorating in major Jewish population centers in the States, it is only a matter of time before a similar magazine edition could appear that will feature the buildings of what were once the Mir Yeshiva in Brooklyn, the Lakewood Yeshiva, Telz, Ner Israel, and my own Nevardik Yeshiva.

Let’s hope that it will be a painless transition.

Kedoshim

A word on this week’s parasha Kedoshim.

Moshe calls upon the nation to strive to be kedoshim, “holy”.

HaShem instructs Moshe to relate to the nation the message that HaShem expects them to be “kedoshim” – holy.

I understand that this message from HaShem came as a thunderous surprise to the newly freed slaves and even to Moshe himself.

I imagine that the predominant feeling among the Jews was that

they were freed in order to perform HaShem's will through the mitzvot, as was performed by their forefathers and mothers. But for a human being to enter the spiritual realm of Kedusha is beyond the HaShem-Yisrael relationship. A righteous Jew? Yes! But a holy Jew? No! Because a physical entity cannot pass through the impenetrable perimeter that separates it from the spiritual realms.

The message that Hashem sent through Moshe was that a gentile cannot be "kadosh"; however, not only can Jews achieve kedusha, they are commanded and expected to do so.

Torah commentators suggest, each according to his world outlook, how one can achieve kedusha – holiness.

There is little that I can add to their suggestions except for one comment that I can vouch for personally having been born and lived 24 years in galut.

A Jew can achieve Torah erudition through great diligence and inspiration anywhere in the world, but kedusha can be achieved only in Eretz Yisrael.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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