

BS"D Parashat Va'aira 5783

Confusion and Perplexity!

Among the divergent ingredients that HaShem introduced into His "questionable creation" called "Man" was intelligence and logic. "Questionable creation"? The Midrash relates that HaShem concurred with angels if it was wise to create an entity who would be called Adam and would possess the freedom to do evil if he so chose? The angels had diverging opinions.

At the end of the deliberations, HaShem did create Man, who could not refrain from sinning more than an hour or two after creation, and then found himself and all future humanity expelled from Paradise and subject to death. HaShem's rationale for creating Man was that He could contain the iniquities of humanity for the sake of the mitzvot and Torah way of life that Am Yisrael will accept.

So Man, as a logical entity, seeks order and stability in his surroundings which would permit him to understand from where he came – and more important to predict where he is destined to go. However, HaShem holds the reins of power to limit Man's acquisitiveness and invention through a weapon called "confusion".

In Jewish history, we perceive examples of HaShem's supernatural intervention in the ongoing history of Am Yisrael when "confusion" reigned among our leaders. Just as the captain of a ship permits a midshipman to handle the wheel, but in rough weather the skipper "takes over".

Examples:

1- Bridging the last two parshiot of Shemot and Va'ai'ra is the scenario where Moshe is dispatched by HaShem to demand Paro free immediately millions of his Jewish slaves. Moshe knew at firsthand that it would be a mission fated to fail, which indeed turned out to be a disaster for the Jews. Moshe is confused and questions the Almighty why he was sent when the outcome would obviously be devastating for the millions of HaShem's own nation? Confusion and perplexity!

But little to Moshe's knowledge was that HaShem was signaling an oncoming unnatural act of salvation.

2- What was our father Avraham experiencing while walking towards Mount Moriah with Yitzchak in order to fulfill HaShem's command to offer up his son as a sacrifice? Confusion! For did not HaShem promise that Yitzchak would be Avraham's heir in establishing the Jewish nation? But Avraham could not have known that at the outcome of the experience HaShem would rescind His command to sacrifice Yitzchak and would bless Avraham's Jewish descendants for all time, as stated (Bereishiet 22,16-18):

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Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the

gate of their enemies, and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.

Yitzchak experienced confusion when the wells of water he had dug were repeatedly destroyed. Ya'akov could not understand the path that his life was taking, when the holy man (of the tent) was forced to live for 20 years in galut with the evil Lavan. Followed by the terrifying meeting with Aisav where Ya'akov prepared in three different ways – prayer, gifts and war. And then the 20-year estrangement from his beloved son Yosef. confusion preceding a great salvation of HaShem.

At the Red Sea the newly freed slaves and their leader Moshe were confused and bewildered as to what path to choose, when HaShem commanded them to enter the churning waters of the sea. Again, human bewilderment preceding HaShem's supra-natural salvation.

So was it with Queen Esther as related in the Gemara (Megila 15b). The profound feelings of rejection and confusion expressed by her entering the inner chamber of Achashverosh and called out the pasuk in Tehilim 22,2:

אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים לָמָּה עֶזְבָנוּ לְפָנָיו

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And in the last century the Shoah, which is beyond the understanding of our spiritual leaders, followed by the establishment of the Medina marking the beginning of the oncoming great salvation.

In our time the cacophony of opinions among religious leaders on most subjects leaves one with confusion. It is probably the foremost reason for young people leaving a life of Torah and mitzvot asking "where is HaShem?"

History teaches that human intelligence cannot provide us with clarity when the forces of confusion band together; and this occurs prior to a period of supra-natural events when HaShem, as it would be, is telling our leaders to curtail their activities and give room for the great miracles which HaShem alone will shortly provide for His chosen people.

The narrative in the Pesach Haggadah makes no mention of Moshe Rabbeinu, to the contrary, it emphasizes that HaShem alone brought the Jewish nation out of Egypt.

There was total confusion and consternation among the people. Eighty percent of the nation was dying because of their refusal to leave, and the surviving 20 percent saw no choice but to depart into the threatening desert wilderness. There was confusion and perplexity; the options of not following Moshe into the desert or following Moshe held little promise for the future.

It was on this background that HaShem alone suspended the "Laws of Nature" which He Himself had mandated for this world.

We can extrapolate from the Exodus experience to our own today. The options which are available for the Jews in galut are becoming fewer: to remain in galut with a questionable future or to leave – but leave to where? And the options for us here in the holy land are drawing further away from peace and tranquility.

This is the perfect background for HaShem to hasten the final redemption of our nation, may it be very soon.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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