

BS"D Parashat Va'eira 5785

Prepare

A wise rabbi once said: "Though we cannot understand why things happen to us, but at least we can prepare for their eventuality".

Pure Truth

In a previous message, I related the following story about pure truth, which is often distressful, bitter and at times intolerable.

A man traversed the globe in search of the hidden truths of life. It was his habit in every place he visited to ask if anyone there knew the truths of life. At his last juncture, a townsman told him that it's rumored that on the adjoining mountain lives a woman of absolute truth.

He ascended the mountain and indeed before him stood the ugliest woman he had ever seen. She could have easily been over 120, with any beauty which might have been hers long ago lost. She was a pitiful sight.

He asked if she was the woman who knew truth. She replied that she was the personification of truth in the world. The young man could not look at her, but he was so enraptured by her wisdom and revelations on every subject that he stayed. After several weeks, he informed her that he had to return to civilization. When he was just about to leave, she said, "Young man. Remember! Tell everyone that I am **young and beautiful**".

The moral of this story is that we seek to sweeten and

beautify the truth, even when the facts are schlecht (bad) and bitter.

The Pre-Mashiach Period

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 98b) while discussing the pre-Mashiach period which will be very challenging, relates that three great rabbis Ula, Raba and Rabbi Yochanan declared that they would prefer not to see it, while Rabbi Yosef said that he wished to experience that period even though it entails great challenges.

This exchange of ideas was not a matter for halachic decision. The rabbis were expressing their personal fortitude and willingness to endure physical and emotional tests which are not measures of Torah erudition but the emotional make-up of the individual. But one thing is clear, the rabbis agreed that the pre-Mashiach period, the length of which we do not know, will be challenging and demanding.

We are now in that period. It includes the two world wars, the Shoah and up to our present struggle to fully return to Eretz Yisrael.

I would like to air my thoughts on what, I believe, will be the last and most difficult challenge of our time.

Remember the Exodus from Egypt

After the destruction of the second Bet Hamikdash, the Sanhedrin moved to the town of Yavne, where among other activities, they codified the texts of our prayers.

They prioritized the exodus from Egypt, so that we would recall the bitter memories of that period. We recall the Exodus in Kiddush of Shabbat and Festivals, in Birkat HaMazon (grace after meals), in the siddur between the end of kriyat shema and Amida; not to mention the Pesach Seder. Why?

These many referrals to the Exodus are all the more problematic in light of the Gemara (Brachot 12b) that quotes the prophet Yirmiyahu 16,15:

[illegible]

Here, the days are coming (our days) declares the Lord, when it will **no longer be said** “as surely as the Lord lives, who brought the **Israelites up out of Egypt**, but it will be said, surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.

Meaning: The prophet is informing us that in the future, the exodus will be cast in the shadows, in light of the enormous miracles of redemption that we will experience in the days of Mashiach.

So, the question: Why are there so many references of the Egyptian exodus which is destined to be sidelined in our collective memories?

I submit:

The rabbis of Yavne knew the secret. The last and biggest war in pre-Mashiach times will be an expounded repetition of the original Egyptian exodus, but enormously bigger and more impressive, and will include the major features of the first Egyptian experience.

The Egyptians will again attack with an army many times larger than ours. We will be gripped by fear and call out to HaShem to save us. And just as in ancient times when the entire

Egyptian army was drowned under hundreds of meters of sea water, so too, will contemporary Egypt be annihilated when the great Dam in Aswan collapses and oceans of water come roaring down the Nile Valley where all Egyptians live.

The re-enacting of the ancient Exodus step-by-step will be further proof of the authenticity of our historic Biblical description of the event, and since that is true then all the other episodes in the Torah are true.

Egypt Today

There are serious reasons to suspect that the Egyptians are preparing for war, although they are not seriously threatened by any enemy.

Egypt outnumbers Israel in almost every military category, they have:

- Army: approximately 310,000 regular army personnel
- Air Force: approximately 27,000 personnel
- Navy: approximately 32,000 personnel
- Air Defense Forces: approximately 85,000 personnel

In addition to the active-duty personnel, they have an estimated 479,000 reservists.

The IDF has:

- Army: approximately 135,000 personnel
- Air Force: approximately 25,000 personnel
- Navy: approximately 10,000 personnel

And an estimated 465,000 reservists.

The size and role of the Egyptian military is too excessive for its economic interests and capabilities. Yet we see a continuous buildup of their forces and their placement in the Sinai desert which divides our two countries.

Conclusion

To reveal the future is to prepare for it, not to grip people with fear.

The finale of the pre-Mashiah period will be a colossal repetition of the first Biblical salvation of Am YIsrael from Egyptian bondage, proving the authenticity of its Biblical narrative, and hence all other Biblical narratives; and HaShem's choice of Am YIsrael from out of all the other peoples of the world is indisputable.

And then the world will be prepared for the Mashiach.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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