

BS"D Parashat Vayetze 5786

Suicidal Galut & The New Sheriff

The moment HaShem established Medinat Yisrael, the curtain of extinction began coming down on all the Jewish communities in the galut. They are becoming increasingly irrelevant to the ongoing and future history of the Jewish people. It is only a question of time, and not too long, when they will disappear.

Let me explain on the background of the last two Torah parshiot of Toldot and Va'yai'tzai.

The Gemara (Yuma 83b) relates that the illustrious Tana, Rabbi Meir, was able to discern the basic character of a person from his name. And it is cited in various rabbinic works that when parents name a newborn child it is considered a ne'vu'a ketana; a minor prophecy, because it descends into the root of the infant's neshama.

The world's most illustrious twins were named by their parents, Ya'akov (Jacob) and Aisav (Esau).

Aisav means wild growing grass, weeds or herbs. Aisav is described as a man of the field – eesh ha'sadeh. Ya'akov, taken from the Hebrew aikev (heel) implies consistency, as when walking, one foot follows the other with cadence and precision. And Ya'akov is described as a "dweller of the tent" – yoshev o'halim.

These descriptions are embedded in the names and characters of the two brothers.

A field is an open area, permitting unhindered free access to

wherever one wishes to go. Devoid of obligation or responsibility to any particular point in the field; so, when it becomes uncomfortable one can just move on. A field contains any assortment of weeds, grass and herbs intertwined or growing alone depending on where the wind has scattered the seeds.

Open fields have no order. No law except the law of the jungle. Just pick and choose whatever appeals to you at that given moment and discard what is disturbing or irritating.

This was Aisav: the man of the field. He discarded the responsibilities that come with being a firstborn, selling it for a pittance. He returns from the field so fatigued that he implores his brother Ya'akov to feed him lentils. The details are a drag on him; just give him the pleasures without the effort.

Aisav sees no importance in living a disciplined life, because as he said to Ya'akov (Bereishiet 25:32):

וְאַתָּה תַּעֲבֹר אֶת־אֶחָתֶךָ וְאַתָּה תִּשְׁכַּח כָּל־עֲבָדָתֶךָ וְאַתָּה תַּעֲשֶׂה כָּל־בְּנֵי־עֲמָקָם וְאַתָּה תַּעֲשֶׂה כָּל־בְּנֵי־עֲמָקָם

I will soon die, so why do I need the birthright?

Aisav's value system serves as the ideological basis of today's Reform movement and its inevitable result – assimilation. Discarding what is inconvenient; Shabbat, kashrut, family purity, marrying within the Jewish nation, and certainly the embarrassment of the Jewish State, Eretz Yisrael, where Hebrew is spoken and the chosen people take the Bible seriously.

With so much Judaism in the way, it becomes uncomfortable to be "one" with gentile neighbors and more difficult to become assimilated into their ways. So, for them, Judaism must be discarded.

If lentils were good enough for Aisav, son of Yitzchak and Rivka, then bacon and lobster are good enough for those who wish to escape the “unfortunate” fact of being born a Jew.

Wild weeds grow in their Reform temples in the form of same-sex marriages, and the “spiritual leader” who performs Joey and Jane’s wedding together with the local priest. The reform leader who services the whims of his or her congregants and counts them as Jews even when only the father is Jewish. Wherever the money and conveniences are, there you will find the many Aisavs of Reform Judaism.

Ya’akov is different. He lived a structured life where consistency was the rule of the day. He is the tent dweller which demands conduct suitable for living a demarcated lifestyle. Structured davening (prayers) three times a day; laws pertaining to what and when one eats. Moral and ethical conduct between people in accordance with the value system revealed by HaShem. The acceptance of responsibility without escaping through rationalizations based on weakness and fear.

Aisav cannot be Ya’akov any more than Ya’akov can be Aisav. Their dispositions, characters and ambitions are reflections of their souls. Rivka felt this when each child was aroused in her womb; Ya’akov upon passing a place of Torah study and Aisav when passing a place of avoda zara (idolatry).

The dichotomy of Ya’akov and Aisav is clear cut. Ya’akov clings to HaShem through Torah and mitzvot (commandments) from which he derives the lifeblood of his existence, whereas Aisav sees his survival through the ability to stalk his prey in the field with his bow and arrows. He has no need for HaShem, for he is the master of his own life and future.

Now with the distinction between the God-fearing, responsibility-taking Ya’akov and the anarchistic, hedonistic Aisav so clear, it would be correct to conclude that the two cannot thrive together. One is either with the mainstream of

God-driven history, where the galut has finished serving its historical purpose of “hosting” the exiled Jewish nation, or with the peripheral segments of Judaism heading towards oblivion.

At this time in our history, HaShem has placed before His children in Israel the huge historic challenge of restoring our national independence within the borders of Eretz Yisrael, in preparation for the next stage of world history. This stage will witness the execution of Godly justice upon those nations which dealt so cruelly with Am Yisrael, while the Jewish people will be under HaShem’s protective wing in Eretz Yisrael.

But confusion reigns. Not much different from the time of Chanuka. Then, as now, Am Yisrael was faced with an existential threat. A large percentage of our people were drawn to Hellenism and discarded the Torah. Each Jew was faced with the personal challenge to the depths of his soul: join with the Maccabim at the risk of your life or be a bystander in the life-and-death struggle for the soul of Am Yisrael.

Through the sacrifices of the strong and courageous, HaShem awarded us independence from foreign rule for a good part of the following 200 years. And it is in the merit of the mesirut nefesh (self-sacrifice) of those holy people that we celebrate the holiday of Chanuka today.

At this juncture in our history, each Jew is again faced with the choice of being Ya’akov or Aisav: of picking up the gauntlet of the strong and courageous or of backing off from the responsibility of a firstborn. Either choosing to join in the struggle to rebuild our nation in Eretz Yisrael or cringing in the corner behind the apron strings of your fears.

It is not easy to be “Ya’akov” in a world surrounded by Aisavs, but it is the Ya’akovs who will survive and guarantee the eternal existence of Am Yisrael.

So be on the winning side of history!

New Sheriff in Town

The surname of the newly elected mayor of NYC is maMDani.

Reverse the two middle letters M and D what do you get?
Instead of maMDaNi it becomes

MaD Man.

Initially, he looks and acts normal, as diagnosed by President Trump after their meeting in the White House. But he belongs to a select group of deranged historical figures diagnosed with the Don Quixote syndrome – an insane inner compulsion to overcome forces over and beyond any human force; be it a four-armed windmill or in our case the Judenhass people who sought to defeat the Almighty by destroying His chosen people – Medinat Yisrael and Am Yisrael; from Paro, Haman, Torquemada, Hitler, Stalin and now a new member in the hall of shame.

But the new sheriff in town, as disturbed as he might be, is clever. He loves Jews. Some of his best friends have shtreimels and live in Williamsburg. Nevertheless, he dreams of the day when the Jewish State will be no more, even if it entails throwing its 8 million Jewish citizens into the sea.

The prophet Yeshayahu (57,20-21):

וְאֵתָהּ תְּבִדֵּל תְּבִדֵּל תְּבִדֵּל תְּבִדֵּל תְּבִדֵּל תְּבִדֵּל תְּבִדֵּל תְּבִדֵּל

וְאֵתָהּ תְּבִדֵּל תְּבִדֵּל-וְאֵתָהּ תְּבִדֵּל תְּבִדֵּל

But the wicked (who do not repent) are like the tossing sea, which cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and mud. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked (who like the sea waves

see the destruction of the previous wave as it falls before the sand but continues in its suicidal assault to the beach).

When one Jew-hater hits the ground, another follows like the breaking waves on the sands of history. However, one cannot deny Mamdani's contribution to the efforts of encouraging Jews to return home.

For this he does not deserve a full tree in Yad Vashem's modest forest of righteous gentiles, but a small shrub would be in order.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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