

BS"D Parashat Yitro 5786

Being Held Hostage

A good friend, who is also a kohen, took it upon himself to not shave until the last hostage would be returned. The last one was returned from Gaza and his beard got a big cut.

I suggested to him "not so fast" because there are still millions of Jews being held hostage in the galut; one is hostage to his beautiful house, another to his work, another who has to wait for the twins to finish high school, and many who follow rabbis who don't believe in the legitimacy of the Medina.

The prophet Yirmiyahu, chapter 31, describes how our Mother Rachel refuses to be comforted because not all of her children have returned home.

The Mitzva of Our Era

Jewish life has evolved into a kaleidoscope of concepts, values, commentaries, hopes, halachic decisions, conflicts, etc., where everyone is so sure of himself, but no one really has it right.

We were taught in yeshiva that the full gamut of the 613 Torah laws, and the many additions legislated by authentic Sanhedrins from the time of Moshe continuing their work in its chamber in the Holy Temple, passing to Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai in Yavne and disbanded by the Romans in its final site Teveria (Tiberias), in 425 C.E.

Rabbinic amendments instituted by the Sanhedrin are incumbent

on every Jew. So much so, that if a potential convert declares that he accepts Judaism totally except for one thing, be it even a rabbinic amendment, he is rejected. But in addition, every Jew has his custom-made, particular mission or mitzva that is cardinal to him or her. Just as a sixth-year medical student feels the call to his specialty. So too, does every generation, or era, have its particular role to fulfill in HaShem's universal master plan.

The individual is a small piece of HaShem's "Lego", while the era fills a much larger vacuum in the ultimate puzzle. So, what is the mission expected from our people, let's say beginning with the Jewish calendar year ה'תש"ס paralleling the C.E. year 1840 (the letter ת stands for 5000, and ה'ת for 600) and extending to this day?

I submit that it is to achieve a self-awakening that the time has arrived to initiate our efforts towards self-emancipation from the shackles put upon us by the goyim since our exile from Eretz Yisrael 2000 years ago.

Indeed, there is a counter movement in some sectors of Chareidi society that prohibits taking any steps toward our redemption before the arrival of the Mashiach, including even the establishment of a total Torah Medina in Eretz Yisrael. For just as it was in Egypt, where the Jews were passive and HaShem sent His messengers – Moshe and Aharon – to activate their redemption, they believe that we too must continue to live under the goyim until HaShem sends His messenger. The bearers and disseminators of this idea are the Chassidim of Satmar.

Now, where does the truth lie? How can we know what HaShem wants? The answer lies in the results.

The establishment of a Jewish Medina in Eretz Yisrael after 2000 years of exile is a miraculous unprecedented event. Eight million Jews now live in the holy land and overcoming our

enemies is the proof. Because we could not have accomplished it without the long-unbroken chain of miraculous events from the tragic Shoah to what the Medina is today, without the wonders of HaShem.

And of course, the fact, that if HaShem would deem our return as being premature, as stated by those who believe so, HaShem certainly knows how to negate an undesirable initiative. Just ask the Babylonian architects of the Tower.

I recall discussing this with an intelligent (I thought) Chassid in the states. The tragedy of the Shoah came up. He said that there is nothing to discuss because the Shoah was the secret hand of HaShem.

Then I brought up the return of millions of Jews to the holy land. To this he replied that the Medina is the hand of the Sitra Achra (Aramaic for "the Other Side") a term used when speaking of evil forces that exist in the world or the Satan.

I replied that his life was an optical illusion, because the Shoah was the work of the Satan and our return home is the blessed desire of our Father and King in heaven. We parted with a handshake, not with a slap.

The all-encompassing mitzva of our era is to actualize HaShem's master plan of revoking the decree of exile and the return of His children to our status of chosen nation; in order to continue the eternal dialogue between Creator and His chosen nation in His chosen land where HaShem is forever present, as the pasuk says in Devarim 11:12):

אֶרֶץ חֵן יְהוָה הִיא אֶרֶץ חֵן יְהוָה ,אֶרֶץ חֵן יְהוָה 'וְהָיָה עֵינֵי יְהוָה אֶל אֶרֶץ חֵן יְהוָה .אֶרֶץ חֵן יְהוָה

A land the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your God are continually upon it from the beginning of the year to

its end.

In contrast to those who fulfill the holy will of HaShem by continuing to cling to the blood filled lands of Europe and the 'holy" soil of Monticello and New York's diamond center, we perceive HaShem as being the ultimate Religious Zionist by declaring that living in Eretz Yisrael is equal qualitatively to the sum total of all the mitzvot, as recorded in many of our sources.

Looking Ahead via the Prophets

What lies in store for the wise Jews who will be here at the appointed time, is brought at the end of the book of Yoel 4:16-21:

וְהָיָה בְּהַיּוֹם הַהוּא ,וְהָיָה בְּהַיּוֹם הַהוּא וְהָיָה בְּהַיּוֹם הַהוּא
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¹⁶ *The Lord will roar from Zion and thunder from Jerusalem, the earth and the heavens will tremble; but the Lord will be a refuge for his people, a stronghold for the people of Israel.*

¹⁷ *Then you will know that I, the Lord your God, dwell in Zion, my holy mountain: then Jerusalem will be holy, and never again will foreigners invade her.*

¹⁸ *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains will drip down sweet new wine, and the hills will flow with milk, and all the brooks of Judah will flow with waters; and a fountain will flow out of the house of the Lord, and will water the valley of Shittim.*

¹⁹ *But Egypt will be desolate, and Edom a desert waste, because of violence done to the people of Judah, in whose land they shed innocent blood.*

²⁰ *But Judah will be inhabited forever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.*

²¹ *Shall I leave their innocent blood unavenged? No, I will not. And the Lord dwells in Zion.*

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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