

BS"D Parashiot Matot-Masei
5785

An Irresistible Force Meets an Immovable Object

PART ONE

As on a sheet of music where every note has its innate sound, each pasuk in the Torah has its music. Some are joyful like Bereishiet 24,67:

[illegible]

Yitzchak brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rivka. So, she became his wife, and he loved her; and Yitzchak was comforted after his mother's demise

And some are dramatic (Shemot 5,1):

[illegible]

Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, "This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Let my people go!"

And there are those that roar with anger like in our parshat

Masay (32,6):

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Moses said to the tribes of Gad and Reuven: "Should your fellow Israelites go to war while you sit here?"

In our time, the dedicated religious population is divided more than ever because of the issue of military service, especially now at a time of existential danger to the Medina and its millions of Jews.

Before us is an empirical case of the theoretical “irresistible force meeting an immovable object”. With the irresistible force being Religious Zionism (RZ) pointing to the disproportional number of RZ husbands, fathers, brothers, sons and daughters in our military cemeteries challenging the immovable Chareidi position.

Two principles stand behind the RZ demand that all capable young Jewish men, especially sincere learners of Torah, must serve in Tzahal at this precarious period in our history:

1- The pasuk (Vayikra 19,16):










Do not stand aloof when your Jewish brother's life is in danger

2- The privilege of defending HaShem's chosen people against a merciless, sadistic ideology rampant among tens of millions of Arab Moslems. Contrasting the Chareidi position that one who is entirely engrossed in Torah learning defends the country no

less than a war toughened paratrooper.

In the absence of a prophet or Sanhedrin, we cannot determine which position is the Halachic one of choice, leaving each side to be led by the discretion of their rabbanim and each individual's orientation.

However, I have a suggestion which could mitigate the animosity that is created when an “irresistible RZ force crashes into a Chareidi immovable object”.

First, let's project what, at the end of the day, the final goals of each position would look like:

The RZ camp would find its yeshiva students being shot at and vehicles passing over land mines. The student-soldiers would not eat while sitting at a cloth covered table with a napkin under the chin, lest a bit of food stain their uniform. The combat soldier showers once a week if “lucky”, and changes his shoes and clothing (like my grandchildren) few and far apart. His cell phone is not with him, and he has no way to connect to family, and anyway he is too busy standing between the satanic Moslem Nazis and HaShem’s chosen people.

On the Chareidi side we see the final goal of their position where the learners are present in the comfort of an air-conditioned bet midrash, after arriving from a good night's rest at home or in the yeshiva dorm and a nutritious breakfast and shower.

When comparing the two lifestyles one could question the position that one who is engrossed in Torah learning defends the country no less than a war toughened paratrooper. Because the differences shout out loud;

[illegible]

Moses said to the Gadites and Reubenites, "Should your fellow Israelites go to war while you sit here"?

Both camps can truthfully claim that their positions have halachic roots, but one cannot deny that the practical outcome of their positions are so disproportionate and resonate with the call of Moshe to Reuven and Gad "... while you sit here"!

The answer lies in closing the gap between the two camps.

We cannot change the surroundings of the combat soldier, but we can increase the demands put on the "ben Torah" that demonstrate a greater degree of "mesirat nefesh" and empathy with his RZ brother.

I suggest conditions that winnow down the presence of non-serious students:

- 1- The two month long yearly recess period called bain hazemanim to be abolished.
- 2- Unmarried students live in dorms for extended periods, not at home, and the married ones go home only for Shabbat.
- 3- The scholastic demands must be upgraded. Testing with a passing grade of 90% in order to continue to the next year in the yeshiva. A minimum quantity of material must be completed every year, starting with completion of the Shas in four years.
- 4- Attendance at tefilla is required.

And more conditions to reject the less gifted and the uncommitted students.

But, at the end of the day, even if these and other measures are introduced, we all know that no one will be shot at while delving over a complicated issue in the Gemara.

PART TWO

I cannot determine if it is old age or the penetrating introspection that comes in the nine days that direct me to think out of the box; but here I am pondering three issues.

1- In the 30 days between the 9th of Av and the 8th of Elul in the year 70 C.E. (3830 years after Adam and Chava) there was hand-to-hand fighting between the emaciated Jewish fighters and the powerful Romans. Nevertheless, it took the Romans 30 days to advance the 100-150 meters from the Temple Mount to the upper city, which illustrates the ferocity and determination of the Jewish defenders against the overwhelming Roman forces.

I can picture in my mind's eye the slaughter of the Jewish civilian population; the stench of death from every corner and uncontrollable cruelty of the descendants of Aisav.

Not a stone upon a stone remained intact. The remaining live Jews were shackled and sent to the slave markets of the Middle East and Europe. Among them were my (and your) grandparents, looking back at what had been the beautiful Yerushalayim, now under pools of blood. Savta says to Saba, "it's all gone. Our sins have brought this about. All hope is gone!" And Saba replies: "We have before us a long period of suffering in exile; hundreds or even thousands of years of wandering across the planet. But one day our descendants will return and rebuild what we have lost."

And today I call out to them: "Saba and Savta it's me – Nachman, son of Yechezkel Sharaga HaKohen and Sarah Chana, daughter of the illustrious Gaon Harav Baruch Shalom Trainin. I'm your 100th generation grandson. I and my wife Feiga returned in the year 5722 – the 2000th year after you witnessed the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash; and our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren all born and living here.

The family members are conscious kohanim like you. I don't fill in every day like you and learn the oral Torah that you knew by heart, but which was written down centuries later. The last Roman walked the planet about 1800 years ago. There is no Roman to rejoice in their cruelty; they are a relic, while we and our family live again to walk the streets that you walked and breathe the holy air of Yerushalayim, as you did. Our generation is restoring the beauty and sanctity that your generation lost. Yes, Saba and Savta! – It is happening. And your descendants are a part of the dream come true”.

HaShem, through His prophets promised and is now fulfilling His holy words that the Jewish nation will return.

2- Initially it appears as though this world is a disaster. A logical, compassionate person who reads a chapter or two of world history could be forgiven for raising the question, that when the Creator brought forth chimpanzees, why did He not stop there? Why take the extra step in the Darwinian ladder?

For even the Torah says in Bereishiet (8,21):

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The innate nature of Man is evil.

So why did HaShem make Man? The well-known political scientist R. J. Rummel estimated that in the 20th century alone, over 230 million persons were systematically and cruelly killed by the actions of governments!

It took time; but I finally caught on. Humanity, except for the Jewish nation and some individual gentile stars who probably had Jewish blood, is evil. But it has produced many cultures and civilizations that are the background on which Am Yisrael is commanded to fulfill HaShem's mitzvot.

To keep the Torah in a world filled with yetzer tov (innate instinct of good) is no challenge, but to do so when the world is a very narrow bridge and with one false step you can find yourself on a slippery slope to oblivion, is another matter. To keep the Torah in Gan Eden was not a challenge, so Adam and Chava were sent away. To observe the Torah among evil doers is a kiddush HaShem, when the good and the holy triumph over evil.

The classic paradox of what happens when an irresistible force meets an immovable object becomes real in Jewish history. When the irresistible force of Judenhass (anti-Semitism) meets the immovable emunah (belief and trust) of the Jewish nation in HaShem, the result is a buildup of emotional and religious friction that explodes with expulsions, pogroms and peaks with extermination camps.

But dear Saba and Savta, the Jewish nation is now beyond that bitter history with the miraculous establishment of the Jewish Medina. HaShem has changed the gears of history, and we have turned the corner, from victim to master, of our holy destiny.

Today, if one stretches a little to see a bit beyond the horizon, he will see the third Bet Hamikdash and all Am Yisrael filling every corner of Eretz Yisrael as described by the prophet Yechezkel.

3- What is happening now in the Medina between those who want a Jewish Medina and those who want a Medina of Jews, is a result of a natural law that states: Every material object or secular concept or value becomes, at some point, obsolete and is discarded.

The “mob” that we see here running wild has no concept of kedusha. They are culturally closer to western non-values than to the nation into which they were born. About 25 years ago a religious Aluf (general in Tzahal) who was scheduled to be appointed head of military intelligence, said in a TV

interview that the secular here are “like goyim who speak Ivrit (Hebrew”. He immediately lost his appointment for telling the truth.

Secular Zionism had a major share in establishing the Medina at a time when the religious and rabbinic world did not, could not, and even opposed political Zionism and the creation of a secular Jewish state. But secular Zionism has run its course, as in the words of a former secular minister of education: "we dreamt to create a society of apikorsim (erudite atheists) but succeeded in only producing a generation of ignoramuses".

The screamers in the streets are varied but are united on one point. They truly fear pending religious legislation in the Knesset. They are aware that the numbers have changed in the Medina and there is no way that they can return to governmental power.

Medinat Yisrael will be a Torah religious state.

Those who will push forward on the right side of history will endure, but those who seek to derail the train of history will be rejected, just as tiny bits of diamond dust fall away at the hands of the expert cutter.

Conclusion: After rereading the above, it is clear to me that these are not the thoughts of old age, neither are they the emotions of a mourner for Zion; but rather those of a Jew tied to history who hears the words of the prophet Zecharia (8.18-19);

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¹⁸ *The word of HaShem came to me.*

¹⁹ *This is what Hashem declared: The fasts of the fourth (month) and fifth (month of Av) and seventh (month) and the tenth (month), will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah, where truth and peace shall be loved (by man).*

A meaningful fast to all. May we merit to celebrate all the dates of mourning as holidays as the prophet has stated.

TOGETHER WE SHALL WIN

And if one should ask who is this “together”?

Answer: See the Zohar part 3, page 1, in parashat Emor (and is widely quoted) that states:

“אִתּוֹ אֵין מַחְלָק וְאֵין מַחְלָקִים אֵין מַחְלָקִים אֵין מַחְלָקִים”

The Holy One blessed He and the Torah and Yisrael are one (together – inseparable)

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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