

Chayai Sarah 5781

BS"D Parashat Chayai Sarah 5781

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

The 2020 presidential election in the US

If I were able to deliver a message to President Donald Trump, I would suggest the following:

Bow your head and thank the good Lord for terminating your presidency. In fact, this applies equally to Jared Kushner, Ambassador David Friedman, Avi Berkowitz and all the other Jews who contributed over the last four years to the security of Israel and to the enduring noble status of Yerushalayim, in view of what is brought down in the Talmud (tractate Chagiga 5a).

The Talmud quotes a verse in the book of Job 15:15:

אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִשְׁתָּדֵל בְּקִדְשׁוֹ (אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִשְׁתָּדֵל בְּקִדְשׁוֹ) אֱלֹהִים לֹא יִשְׁתָּדֵל בְּקִדְשׁוֹ

God places no trust in his holy ones

And it goes on to explain the intent of this verse. There is a phenomenon in life where a great righteous Torah scholar passes away at a young age. The reason is that HaShem knows that this individual has reached the peak of his spiritual potential. Therefore, out of HaShem's desire that the man

experience the full measure of his reward in the world to come, he passes away in order not to defile his lofty accomplishments.

Mr. Trump, your name is already etched in the eternal memory of the Jewish nation – no less than that of Koresh, the great king of Persia and Medes, for permitting the Jews to rebuild the second Temple. From this pinnacle of accomplishments for HaShem's chosen people, we can already sense the slippery slope of descent.

Your proposal for peace in the Holy Land, where the Jews retain 30% of Judea and Samaria and the Yishmaelite Arabs 70%, to establish there the 23rd failed Arab nation – a state of Fatah and Hamas – would be an existential threat to the Jewish state. They will lob rockets into Ben Gurion Airport and Tel Aviv 24/7, despite all the signed agreements which would be breached before the ink could dry.

The good Lord is saving you and your associates from yourselves in order to preserve all the merits you accumulated over the last four years.

So, go my “good man” and give praise to the Lord of Israel for giving you this window of unstained accomplishments which will remain forever.

Parashat Chayai Sarah

Our rabbis have taught that HaShem put Avraham Avinu through ten tests. Most commentators say that the ninth was the “binding of Yitzchak” (Akeidat Yitzchak) and the tenth, the negotiations between Avraham and the Hittite Council of Elders for the purchase of Ma'arat Ha'machpela as a burial site for Sarah.

If logic dictates that every succeeding test increased in difficulty, then what was the focus of this last test of real estate purchase set before Avraham that caused it to be more challenging than the Akeida?

Was it the need to deal with worldly matters of “real estate” while he was steeped in a profound emotional crisis at the loss of his beloved Sarah? Perhaps! Was it his being taken advantage of by the unscrupulous Efron the Hittite, who charged 400 shekels for a burial site? Perhaps!

These were indeed aggravating realities, but the real hard core of the test – I believe – ran far deeper into the area which was to impact upon Jewish history.

A fundamental religious principle appears in many of our classical commentaries and responsa:

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The actions of the fathers (Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov) guide their children (the Jewish people) along the path to redemption

The moment of truth came when Avraham, despite the ramifications of what he was presently going to say, stood up before the Hittite Council of Elders and proclaimed:

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I am a stranger and a dweller among you

Rashi quotes the midrash which explains what Avraham meant:

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If you wish [to sell the burial site], I will act as a stranger who recognizes your right of ownership over the area; but if you do not [sell me the burial site], I will implement my right of sovereignty and seize the land by virtue of G-d's promise to me, "And to your children will I give this land"

Recall that Avraham was told by HaShem to leave his land, his birthplace and his father's home to take up residence in a land which HaShem would identify later. At that time, Europe was desolate, as were most parts of Africa and Asia, not to speak of the Americas. But instead of sending Avraham to establish a Jewish State in an unpopulated area where there would be no protest, Avraham was directed to the most populous area in the world – a thin sliver of land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea inhabited by seven nations numbering in the hundreds of thousands, possibly even millions.

Each of these peoples, all descendants of Cham the son of Noach, arrived in the land much before Avraham. They cultivated its fields, constructed buildings, and established places of worship, which taken together served as a common civilization.

At this juncture in their history, a stranger arrives from the east and declares that he is the true sovereign over all the land. Not just the area of Canaan, but of all the lands from the Euphrates in the north to the Nile in the south, and from the Mediterranean in the west to Mesopotamia in the east.

By this statement, Avraham challenged the rights of countless peoples who considered themselves as the owners of these lands by virtue of conquest and possession. This was an act of

immense courage; because from that moment on, Avraham was perceived by everyone to be a threat to their way of life – to their very existence.

We were here before you! You are a foreign implant in the Middle East. We do not tolerate other beliefs! Does this sound strangely familiar? Don't we hear it daily from Arab spokesmen, echoing the feelings of the ancient children of Cham when reacting to Avraham's declaration of sovereignty? These anti-G-d, latter-day advocates of denial spew their venom in the media, on campus, in the Security Council, on Capitol Hill, and on the Temple Mount.

And we ask ourselves where is the Avraham of our generation who will stand up before the world and declare that Eretz Yisrael is our G-d-given heritage?

This is obviously too huge a test for today's Jewish leaders – whether they be great talmidei chachamim who, almost to the man, advocate a low profile when dealing with Yishmael in the east and Esav in the west, and certainly the secular Jews who believe that our ties to the land are historic and do not stem from G-d's promise to our forefathers.

If I were to merit the opportunity to stand before an international forum, I would shout the words of Avraham Avinu. Although we recognize certain individual rights of non-Jews in the Holy Land, G-d and His people Israel are the sovereigns over the entire land between the two great rivers.

The rejection of our sovereignty over Eretz Yisrael as being G-d given is the root cause of all our problems today in Eretz Yisrael.

In the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War, when Hashem presented to Am Yisrael the entire area of Eretz Yisrael west of the Jordan River on a silver platter, the Jewish thing to do would have been to immediately:

1. Erase the two abominations standing on the Temple Mount.
2. Annex all the areas of Shomron, Yehuda, Aza, and the Golan Heights into the State of Israel.
3. Open the bridges over the Jordan River to Jordan and help, facilitate, assist and inspire all the Arabs to leave the country.
4. Commence on an ambitious project of resettling the newly acquired land between the Sea and the River.
5. Throw open the gates of Aliya for the millions who would have returned had the government acted according to the first four.

However, since our leaders lack the Jewish pride which filled Avraham Avinu, we are witnessing the negation of everything which is right.

1. The Temple Mount has become the focal point for Moslems in Eretz Yisrael, when on a typical Friday in Ramadan 300,000 Moslems ascend the Mount and turn their backs on Yerushalayim to bow down to Mecca.
2. Our government is being pressured to establish another failed Arab state in the area of Shomron, Yehuda and Aza, and to relinquishing the Golan Heights to the Syrians in return for a piece of paper.
3. Instead of diminishing the Arab population, our government does everything to increase it as they turn a blind eye to the multiple Arab marriages, so that a Bedouin family can number from 50 to 75 and more children, and slowly take over the entire Negev.

The long-awaited ingathering of all Jews to Eretz Yisrael did not crystallize because of the weakness of the "children" compared to the pride and strength of Avraham Avinu when he declared our G-d-given sovereignty over every millimeter of this Holy Land.

In past desperate periods in our history, HaShem sent a leader who exuded the Jewish pride exemplified by Avraham Avinu. When

that day will come in our time, Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran and all the other would-be Hitlers who slither around the planet will be no more. And the banners of the twelve Jewish tribes will be raised by the people who have returned to take possession of all of Eretz Yisrael.

We need the gallant leader who would stand tall on the Temple Mount with talit and tefillin and announce to the world that the “Land of Israel” is not a mere cliché, it is a fundamental decree of HaShem that the Land is sanctified and is the possession of HaShem’s chosen people, according to the minimum borders as stated in the Torah. These borders include the present day’s states of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Sinai Peninsula, parts of Turkey; in short all the lands between the Mediterranean and the entire length of the Euphrates River whose source begins in Turkey and empties into what is commonly called the Persian Gulf.

So, remember the three Bs: B careful, B healthy, B here

And JLMM: Jewish Lives Matter More

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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