

Chukat 5773

BS"D Parashat Chukat 5773

Part A:

After obtaining HaShem's promise that He would not destroy the Jewish nation despite the dire sin of the Aigel Hazahav (the Golden Calf), Moshe requested of HaShem:

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי מֹשֶׁה וְכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֵלֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

Please reveal to me Your glory

To which HaShem replied:

וְלֹא יָכֹחַ אָדָם לִרְאוֹת אֶת אֵפֶס פָּנַי
כִּי יֵרָאֶה אֶת אֵלֹהִים

You will not be able to see My face

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha explains why Hashem refused to allow Moshe to "see" His glory (Brachot 7a):

אֵלֹהִים מְרֻבָּבִים ,וְהָאֱלֹהִים מְרֻבָּבִים :וְהָאֱלֹהִים מְרֻבָּבִים
וְהָאֱלֹהִים מְרֻבָּבִים – וְהָאֱלֹהִים

HaShem denied Moshe's request at Mount Sinai to "see" His
Magnificence, saying:

*When I permitted you to see My Magnificence at the burning
bush you turned away*

*(Shemot 3,6:... and Moshe hid his face in fear of seeing the
Lord God)*

*And now that you wish to see My Magnificence, I no longer
wish it*

Part B:

During the forty exacerbating years of leadership, Moshe had put forth before HaShem many requests, all but two of which dealt with the rebellious conduct of the Jewish nation. The other two requests were personal ones which Moshe very much desired: the one on Mount Sinai to perceive HaShem's magnificence, and the 515 times that Moshe beseeched Hashem to allow him to enter Eretz Yisrael.

Both were denied.

Moshe was denied entry into the Promised Land, because he hit the rock instead of speaking to it – as HaShem had commanded in our parasha. And Moshe was denied the merit to perceive HaShem in a manner not known to any man before him, because Moshe had previously spurned that opportunity offered him by HaShem at the burning bush.

Part C:

Every God-fearing Israeli was stunned, shocked, appalled, nauseated, and repulsed by the pictures of the masses of chareidim demonstrating in front of the Israeli consulate in New York against our government's plan to limit the numbers of military draft deferments of yeshiva students.

The sheer gall, brazenness, chutzpah, hostility, impudence and malice exhibited by these haters of Zion by intervening in the security interests, or any interest of Israel for that matter, while they cling to the despised galut is abhorrent.

But even the Almighty, who is so long suffering and forgiving,
has His day.

What will be the destiny of these religious leaders, who desecrate the Holy Name by staying in galut when the gates of the Holy Land are open, as stated by the prophet Yechezkel (36,19-20)

[illegible]

‘וַיִּפְרֹשׂ אֶת־הֵם בְּתוֹכֵי הַגּוֹיִם וְהֵם נִשְׁתָּרְפוּ
בְּתוֹכֵי הַמְּדִינֹת וַיִּשְׁפֹּט אֶת־הֵם כְּכַוְנָתָם
וְכַפְּזָתָם

I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. ²⁰ And wherever they went among the nations they profaned My holy name, for it was said of them, ‘These are the Lord’s people, and yet they had to leave His land’.

HaShem punishes the sinner according to the principle of mida keneged mida – measure for measure.

The punishment will take two forms: As I stated many times before, the United States will soon restore the national draft (probably to quell the riots of the millions of disfranchised when the free give-aways cease), and the people who demonstrated against the State of Israel will find their sons and daughters, grandsons and grand daughters, drafted into the “shomer shabbat and kosher kitchen” U.S. military, with all that that implies.

The second punishment will be the loss of opportunity to enter the Holy Land, for the two reasons that Moshe was denied entrance.

Moshe declined the opportunity to perceive the sanctity of Hashem at the burning bush and was later denied that same opportunity at Mount Sinai.

HaShem is providing the scattered Jewish people the opportunity for atonement and spiritual elevation by returning home, but they are rejecting the opportunity – and eventually it will be denied to them.

A little lesson of history. From the end of the First World War in 1918 until the pogroms of 1929, there was free and open immigration to Eretz Yisrael. Tens of thousands, even hundreds

of thousands of Jews could have come home, but unfortunately only a small number took advantage of this Divine opportunity. Ten years later, on September 1, 1939, the Germans invaded Poland and the Shoah began. The Jews who came to Eretz Yisrael were saved, but those who clung to the galut of Europe bore the brunt of their lost opportunity.

Hashem has given the Jewish nation a rare period of relative peace and prosperity to enable them to come home. Those who turn down this opportunity to “see the face of HaShem” will have no one but themselves to blame for the consequences.

They will be denied the opportunity to come home also for the second reason Moshe was so denied, namely for “hitting” the rock instead of speaking to it.

Since its inception, the majority of the chareidi leadership in the galut has taken every opportunity to castigate, berate and rebuke the Medina for not being “Art Scroll” perfect tzaddikim.

They “hit” the Medina as Moshe hit the rock, because it is more convenient to live in Boro Park and demonstrate in front of the Israeli consulate and “hit”, than it is to come here, to be close to us and speak the language of brothers and sisters who are laying the groundwork for the Mashiach.

My heart goes out to the good and frum people of the galut who are consumed by teachings of people considered there to be the guardians of the Torah, and thus responsible for endowing and imparting the Torah in letter and spirit to the next generation; but in fact, they have no inkling about the requirements of the Torah in our generation.

For example:

An acquaintance of mine once asked a well-known Mashgiach (who is no longer with us) in a prominent yeshiva in the United States, for his opinion regarding aliya. The rabbi responded

by pointing out that the additional mitzvahs that one can do in Israel are only of rabbinical origin at this time. Furthermore, the land of Israel has a special Kedushah (holiness). Therefore, if one does a mitzvah there, one gets more reward than if one does the exact same mitzvah in galut. However, if one does something wrong in Israel, it is much worse than if one commits the same wrong deed here. "You just don't go to Israel," he told me. "You have to be on the right spiritual level before you go."

The baselessness of this teaching which is shared by many spiritual leaders in galut is nakedly apparent. Firstly, to reside in the Holy Land is a Torah requirement for all generations. Are not the prohibition on orla and kilayim Torah laws in Eretz Yisrael while their status in the galut is halachically different (here is not the place to go into details). And even if mitzvot like shemita, truma and masrot are rabbinic (according to the Rambam in hilchot terumot 1,26; Raivad disagrees and claims they are in affect today from the Torah), it does not diminish their importance. Just the opposite.

Both the Bavli and Yerushalmi Talmuds in the first chapter of Tractate Berachot state that Hashem deals more harshly with those who desecrate a rabbinic mitzva than those who violate a Torah mitzva. So much for the rabbinic mitzvot in Eretz Yisrael.

As for the religious level of being qualified to live here. Where did that come from? The Mishna in the last chapter of Tractate Kiddushin lists the people Ezra brought with him from Bavel to Eretz Yisrael. Among them were mamzerim, chalalim (kohanim born from prohibited marriages) freed gentile slaves, Givonim who were prohibited to marry Jews, and children whose parents were unknown and halachically problematic. Indeed, a great array of righteous people.

The Tanach relates that the prophet Chagai tested the

knowledge of the kohanim with regard to the second and third levels of tuma, but nowhere is there a test of righteousness as a prerequisite for coming home.

While viewing the dais at the demonstration, I was impressed by the number and appearance of so many rabbis. I am sure that most are God-fearing and erudite in Torah, so the mystery of their antagonism to the mitzva of residing in Eretz Yisrael is baffling.

I believe that it is not a matter for psychologists or psychiatrists why men so steeped in Judaism choose to be alienated from our historic and religious source of Eretz Yisrael. The answer lies in our parasha of Chukat.

The parasha deals with the spiritual state of tuma which has no external signs. Tuma cannot be seen or measured in a laboratory. Not even a micron camera can detect it.

The "scratch in the brain" with regard to HaShem's Holy Land can only be explained on the metaphysical level, where we have no entrance, because Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge but not from the Tree of Life.

When I view what is happening in the religious world in the galut I cannot help but recall the words of the prophet Yechezkel (13,9)

וְהָיָה כִּי יִרְאוּ הַנְּבִיאִים אֶת הַחֲזִוִּיִּם אֲשֶׁר יִרְאוּ וְהָיוּ לָהֶם
כְּחֻזִּיִּם וְהָיוּ לָהֶם כְּחֻזִּיִּם וְהָיוּ לָהֶם כְּחֻזִּיִּם
'וְאֵין לָהֶם חֵן וְאֵין לָהֶם חֵן

*My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions
and utter lying divinations. They will not belong to the
council of my people or be listed in the records of Israel,
nor will they enter the land of Israel. Then you will know
that I am the Sovereign Lord.*

As always, I say to my brothers and sisters in Eretz Yisrael:

offer thanks to the Creator for giving us a holy soul of Eretz Yisrael and permitting us to see and feel that which others do not.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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