

Devarim 5774

BS"D Parashat Devarim 5774

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

May I sit and cry with you?

We are now entering the 22nd day in this round against the Hamas wing of Amalek. If left to their own devices, Hamas could present a strategic threat to the Medina, which doesn't seem to bother the American President or most of the world.

We are paying a huge price in our efforts to crush the head of the serpent; 53 of our holy soldiers have died.

Each was a world unto himself; their beautiful young faces on the front pages of the newspapers brings one to tears.

The following is part of the message I wrote for parashat Acharei – Kedoshim in the year 5767-2007.

"Memorial Day and Yom Ha'Atzma'ut

...Last Sunday night, Jerusalem's Convention Hall was filled to capacity in order to pay homage to the memory of the 22,305 soldiers and the thousands of citizens who were murdered by Arab and Islamic terrorism.

The "event" lasted over three hours and was replete with very moving moments. David Chatuel spoke of the murder of his wife, Tali and their four daughters in Gush Katif, and Dr. Nimrod Adi, assistant head of emergency medicine at Ichilov hospital in Tel Aviv described the battles in the last war in Lebanon.

There were many opportunities to cry. But despite my personal losses of an aunt and two cousins who were murdered in 1938 on the way to Tzfat, my only brother, HaRav Meir, who was murdered in 1990, and his son and daughter-in-law who were murdered in 2000 – I did not cry.

I was sitting near our youngest son, a very senior infantry officer, who took part in almost every major confrontation in the last sixteen years. At the most dramatic heart rending moments of the evening, when surely his thoughts were on the too many young soldiers and officers whose funerals he attended, I could not discern a tear nor an emotion. His face was stolid and his body language composed, but he was deep in thought.

I looked around the cavernous hall and noticed that, although there were some who cried, most were like me and our son – pensive and controlled.

I have known for a long time, being here 45 years, the reason for this, so called, lack of emotion. Soldiers don't cry in the thick of battle. The release of emotions comes when the cannons are finally silent and the cost becomes known. We in Eretz Yisrael have been in the thick of battle for 100 years, so the time for tears has not yet come.

When the Mashiach appears, Jews the world over will congregate in their shtiblach and in the sanctuaries of the great synagogues to break out the cases of 18 year old scotch to drink l'chayim. There will be dancing and rejoicing in the streets of Williamsburg and Lakewood, in Golders Green in London and in the diamond centers of Belgium.

But here in Eretz Yisrael weeping will be heard; for the battle to re-establish our presence in our holy land will have been won; so now the soldiers can cry.

Who are these soldiers? They are every man, woman and child in this country. We are all soldiers, for here even the home

front is part of the battle field.

In the midst of the tumult of song and dance in the great Torah centers of the galut, the Mashiach will quietly slip away and come to David Chatuel and to Libby Kahana and all the others, and in a bashful whisper will say, 'May I sit and cry with you?'"

Shemita and Redemption

A Breita (a Tannaic work similar to the Mishna) quoted in the Gemara (Megila 17b) outlines the structure of the 19 blessings which comprise the Amida prayer (shemoneh esrai). The seventh blessing beginning ראה נא (Re'eh na v'ai'nai' nu) and ending ברוך אתה 'הוה (Blessed are You who redeems Israel) was inserted into seventh place to allude to the tradition received from Sinai that the redemption of the Jewish nation will occur in a Shemita (Sabbatical) year, which falls in seven year cycles.

The rabbis in the yeshiva at the time questioned the Breita in view of our tradition that Jewish redemption will occur in the year following a Shemita year, not in the Shemita year itself?

And the reply is that the "big" war will begin in the Shemita year, which will signal the beginning of our redemption, to be completed in the post Shemita year.

This does little to increase our understanding of when the redemption will be, because the Gemara does not stipulate to which Shemita year the Breita is referring.

Amelek's Final Defeat

Predicting the future has always been a precarious business; ever more so when predicting the future of Am Yisrael, as many prophesiers have discovered. But as we draw closer to the "end", the chances of success become greater.

I would like to try my hand at deciphering the signs of the redemption and the time frame in which it will happen; and in doing so, uncover the disguised intentions of Chazal.

The Gemara in Megilla 14a states that Esther argued before the rabbis that the episode of Purim deserved to be recorded in the Tanach. The rabbis initially denied her request, relying on a verse in Mishlei (24,20)

אִמְלֵק יִזְכָּר שְׁמֵוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה

Which by tradition means that Amalek can be mentioned only three times in the Tanach, which are already in parashat Beshalach, parashat Ki Ta'tzei and in the Book of Shmuel. So the addition of the Purim story would bring it to four times. Esther argued that the two times Amalek is mentioned in the Torah – parashat Beshalach and parashat Ki Ta'tzei – should be considered as one, the Book of Shmuel the second, and Megillat Esther the third time. The rabbis accepted Esther's understanding and proclaimed Megillat Esther as the 24th book of the Tanach.

What does all this mean?

I suggest that the verse in Mishlei, which limits the number of times Amalek may be mentioned in the Tanach to three, is telling us that the final redemption of the Jewish people will come about in the generation of 70 years (Tehilim 90:10) when Amalek will be defeated three times – the number of times that

their defeat is mentioned in Tanach.

The Jewish people have a long track record of defeating enemies, beginning with the ancient Egyptians and continuing with the Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans, etc. But never have we experienced the downfall of an Ameleki empire three times or even twice in one generation.

But there is one generation in which the potential for this to happen exists – the 70 years from 1945 to 2015. In 1945 the arch evil Amalek nation of Germany was defeated. In 1991 the arch evil Soviet Union collapsed. And by next year – 2015, we shall be'ezrat Hashem witness the third collapse of Amalek.

Interestingly, the year 2015 corresponding to our year 5775 is a Shemita year, which brings to mind the above quoted Breita that states that world wars will begin in a Shemita year followed by the total redemption of the Jewish nation.

In addition, next year is known in Hebrew as י"ח"ת"ש a word which means salvation.

And although the Shemita year does not begin until Rosh HaShana, it is similar to Shabbat whose spirit begins to be felt earlier in the day when we begin to be limited in the activities we may begin. So too the spirit of Shemita begins halachically right after Pesach of the sixth year, when we are limited in the agricultural activities, such as the prohibition on planting fruit trees.

So too are we now, several weeks before Rosh HaShana, experiencing the heightening of international tension and ugly rivalries.

Be prepared to witness the third and total destruction of Amalek which includes Islam, from Hamas to Iran, Christianity and all anti-Semites, wherever they might be. The major potential participants are all in place. The United States, Russia, China, Pakistan with its Islamic atomic bomb, Iran and

Saudia with their Islamic fanaticism.

Today, July 28, marks the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. That war contained within it the seeds of the Second World War, and laid down the road map for the pending great war of Gog King of Magog through the artificial creation of national boundaries in Europe and in the Middle East.

I don't view the present conflict between Israel and Hamas drawing to a close. To the contrary, I see more and more Arab and Moslem nations joining in the frenzy of war, which by necessity will drag in the United States, European states and China, each for its own reasons. By any yard stick, in one year from now the world will be a far far different place than today.

The outcome is already known to us through the prophets. Am Yisrael will prevail through it all by the great miracles which HaShem will provide for His chosen people. And then all humanity will understand that we are HaShem's chosen people.

Where can a Jew Find Protection?

Now, if indeed, the near future does not bring peace to the world, but rather the most ghastly armed conflict in human history, where would an observant Torah Jew prefer to be: In the United States under the leadership of Hussein Obama or in Eretz Yisrael, the land where HaShem observes her "from the beginning of the year to its end"?

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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