

Devarim 5776 Shabbat Chazon Tisha B'Av

BS"D Parashat Devarim

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

1946 Years Ago vs. Today

During the three weeks between the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Menachem Av, 1946 years ago, a hand-to-hand battle raged between the soldiers of Rome and the Jewish defenders over every meter of hallowed ground in the walled city of Yerushalayim. It took the Roman Tenth Legion – superior in number and weapons, and led by the infamous Titus – three weeks to defeat the Jews who entered the battle already sick and famished. It took the Romans another 32 days to advance a distance of 150 meters from the Temple Mount to today's Jewish Quarter, illustrating the ferocity with which our forefathers fought in defending the Holy City.

On the 11th of Elul, the city finally fell to the battered Roman Legion. The smell of death and the cries of the dying filled the air. Carnage filled the narrow alleyways. The Romans showed no pity, neither to those who were still alive nor to the dead who they defiled.

Picture an elderly couple with hands tied behind their backs and whip marks on their bodies being taken away to be sold as slaves, or any of the other terrible fates that awaited them. The elderly man says to his wife, "We have sinned and HaShem has punished us as we deserve. We were warned but did not respond. Who will live on and who will return? Who will rebuild that which has been destroyed? The carnage, the destruction, the dead covering every stone. Who will return?"

And his wife answers, "Moshe, the time will come when our descendants will return and rebuild every house, every street and every bet midrash. And then they will rebuild the Bet HaMikdash."

The elderly couple is our grandparents – every one of us. To whom was savta referring when she said to saba that their descendants would return and rebuild?

She was referring to you and to me and to all our brothers and sisters who merit being in Eretz Yisrael at this time. We are the chosen of HaShem to rebuild, to restore the physical destruction and to re-ignite the torch of hope in our hearts for the final redemption that will be realized here in HaShem's Holy Land.

Our generation is one of the greatest for a Jew. Of all the millions of Jews who have passed this world in the last 2000 years, it is we whom HaShem has chosen to be His agents in restoring His presence in the Holy Land.

The challenges are great; the rewards are even more amazing. The rewards in this world are the fruits of our labor, from the small trickle of olim 120 years ago to their children who are erecting the skyscrapers of Tel Aviv and the pilots who police the skies above the Holy Land and learn HaShem's holy Torah in purity.

What a joy to see our younger generation, who after years of yeshiva study, are taking their places of leadership at the helm of Israeli society, in education, the military, medicine, academia, industry, engineering etc., preparing the Land for the next phase of Jewish greatness.

Employing Evil to Produce Good

The Midrash (Bamidbar parashat Chukat chapter 19) describes a phenomenon which is solely in HaShem's realm, in which He orchestrates history by employing evil to produce good:

אברהם , יצחק , יעקב , יוסף , משה , דוד ,
יונה , יחזקאל , יחזקאל , יחזקאל , יחזקאל , יחזקאל ,
יחזקאל , יחזקאל , יחזקאל , יחזקאל , יחזקאל ,
יחזקאל , יחזקאל , יחזקאל , יחזקאל , יחזקאל ,

Avraham born from Terach, King Chizkiyahu from Achaz, King Yoshiyahu from Amon, Mordechai from Shi'mie, the Jewish nation from idolators, the World to come from out of this world. Who is able to perform these things? Only HaShem Himself.

In addition, Moshe came from the palace of Paro, the enslaver who would free the Jewish nation, as did Queen Esther who saved the Jewish people from the clutches of Achashverosh and Haman. Moshe turned the bitter waters of Marah sweet by inserting a bitter branch into the water. King David was the great grandson of Ruth who was a direct descendant of the evil Eglon, King of Moav. The descendants of Haman studied Torah in Bnei Brak. The descendants of Sisrah taught Torah to the children of Yerushalayim; and Shemaya and Avtalyon, descendants of Sancheriv the Assyrian, were the teachers of the great Hillel.

Many people here and in the galut vociferously condemn the Islamic President Obama and his hopeful successor Hillary Clinton. On the one hand, it is not our business whom America chooses to be their leader. It only becomes very much our business when it directly or indirectly influences the destiny of Am Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael.

Despite the popular anti-Obama feeling, we in Israel should

put up a statue in honor of the first Moslem president of the US. He is the president who has advanced the security interests of Israel probably more than any other.

Because of his failed policies, turmoil rages in the Middle East and Libya in North Africa, and Israel is now in its best position since the establishment of the State.

Because of Obama and the "chachomim" in his administration, Syria and Iraq are dismembered states and no longer military threats to Israel. Because of Obama's deal with Iran, Turkey feels the need to renew relations with Israel. The extreme Sunni nation of Saudi Arabia, as well as other Gulf states, are overtly warming up to Israel and covertly reaching understandings in many areas. Egypt, because of Obama's betrayal, is closer to Israel now than it has been in the last 70 years. And we are advancing to be the pivotal country in the region; perhaps even becoming the financial Switzerland of the Middle East.

So thank you Mr. Obama. You served your purpose in history as HaShem's messenger. Now you can go.

HaShem exhibits His guardianship over Am Yisrael in ways that cannot be interpreted as "natural events". He employs malevolent personalities to produce blessings for His people Yisrael, as in the case of the infamous Bilaam.

HaShem attains salvation for His people from world leaders who would deprive us of salvation just as certainly as He attains our salvation from those leaders who would do good for His "Chosen People".

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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