

Emor 5781

BS"D Parashat Emor 5781

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

How can both be right?

A disputing couple came to a rav for help. After hearing the narratives of the two, the rav said, "It appears that the husband is right, but the wife is also right". The rebbetzin then chimed in, "How can both be right?" And the rav replied, "You too are right".

We read last Shabbat concerning the two goats brought before the Kohen Gadol who would determine the fate of each animal. Halacha states that both must be identical in appearance, in height and in monetary value. Yet only one will be sacrificed to HaShem while the other will experience a far different fate.

One lesson to be gleaned from this is that two entities, two ideas or two opinions can appear to be correct to the same degree but, in fact, only one is true.

Last week, I received two messages: one from a dear friend of close to 70 years. I am beholden to him for his and his family's friendship over these many years, and for all he has done for Talmudic Commentaries Foundation. In his message he "rakes me over the coals," as they say, because of the articles I write that point out the failures of the rabbis in galut to encourage aliyah, while some spiritual leaders even negate coming home until some unspecified time in our history.

The other message is from a family who I do not know personally and will be coming on aliyah this summer in no small measure due to the ideas I put forward in these weekly articles.

The messages represent polar differences, but each is a legitimate opinion and carry a degree of truth. But, dear reader, you might ask, how can they both be legitimate and truthful when they are so different? You too are right!

But, in fact, despite what is true to the person endorsing his own ideas, there is only one absolute truth over which we are wrestling to prove.

The critical message:

"It is a chillul Hashem to denigrate the members of the clergy who are working hard to hold their congregations together during these difficult times. It is time to stop! It's time to take a look at your own back yard and what's going on and make sure that the Holy Land does not have any blemishes before you start looking at the problems that are elsewhere in the world. It is disgusting to Bash Americans and America. It is the hand that has fed you. It is the country that has supported Israel. Without the US Israel would have barely survived. So, from henceforth it's time to look at Israel's problems and write about them and how you can heal them, stop looking elsewhere until you are perfect! And as you said, there is no perfection in this world."

The encouraging message:

"Rabbi

Hope you are well.

We've never met, but my wife and I have read your weekly divrei Torah for the last 5 years. Our family has finally decided to make Aliyah, something we have always dreamt of, but never thought would really materialize. We have spent many years growing up in the system which talks about the value and importance of Israel, yet we were not on the track to making the move...

There are many factors that lined up and led to this special move.

One of the most consistent factors has been receiving your weekly emails, which to be honest invokes many mixed feelings and emotions, many of which leave us motivated and inspired. There are only so many years we can read about the exodus and the "cleansing" process of chamushim (1/5th), or about the lady at the Pesach seder who started crying at l'shana haba... because she would miss the chandelier... The list goes on...

There was a point in time, maybe at the onset of covid, where you made reference to having received too much negative feedback, and people feeling judged...

We wanted to write this email to you, with tremendous gratitude for the constant work, effort, and chizzuk you give so many readers.

We are awaiting our papers, which should be ready shortly bh, and have a planned date of motzei Tisha B'Av.

Look forward to one day meeting you in person,

If we can ever help you in any way please let us know,"

So, in order to determine the path that I should be taking between refraining from hurting the feelings of some spiritual leaders in the galut or speaking my mind after experiencing galut life for 24 years, and 59 years (so far) in our Medina in Eretz Yisrael, I turned to the prophet Yechezkel for enlightenment.

Yechezkel 36,18-22:

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¹⁸ So I poured out My wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. ¹⁹ 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**'. ²¹ I had concern for My holy name, which the people of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone. ²² Therefore say to the Israelites, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone'.

The navi is telling us that the very presence of Jews in the galut is a desecration of Hashem's holy name. And the Gemara in four places (Brachot 19b; ibid 28b; Airuvin 63b and Sanhedrin 82a) states that in the process of halting a chillul HaShem, one must not be impeded by the personal feelings of any individual, be it as it may. So, I will go with the prophet Yechezkel, while attempting to relate to all religious leaders in the galut with derech erez.

Prohibition regarding Kohanim and a Corpse

The parasha begins with an admonition to Kohanim not to touch any human corpse nor to be present under the same roof with the corpse of a Jew (the accepted view is that of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai that a Kohen may be under the same roof with the corpse of a non-Jew).

The prohibition on Kohanim is in effect even before death sets in, when the ill party enters into a state of *gesisa* (death throes). There is an earlier state when a Kohen may be in close contact with one who will shortly die, when the individual has been declared to be terminally ill, but not yet *gosais*.

Life signs of a near death human can be extended artificially by feeding tubes, parenteral nutrition, mechanical ventilation, dialysis, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, defibrillation, artificial pacemaker, etc., but the Angel of Death's patience has its limits.

The manifold parts of a whole human organism cease to function very soon after death sets in; however, individual organs can cease to function even before death (e.g., a limb can be gangrenous and amputated and internal organs removed with the patient continuing to live).

There are also maladies classified as autoimmune diseases, where the body produces antibodies that are meant to attack and destroy foreign entities (e.g., germs, viruses, etc.), but for some reason they begin to destroy the body's own healthy tissues, often leading to death.

Terminal Illness of the Galut

The galut can be viewed as a living, breathing organism composed of many individual organs called Jewish communities. Each community can function independently, but when one is diseased it can compromise the existence of all the others.

We are witnessing a slow but progressive spread of spiritual gangrene overtaking the galut organism, deeming the general galut as “terminally ill” and the unaffiliated Jew and Reform as gosasim (death throes). The spiritual gangrene is deadly and very contagious, with the official diagnosis being the distancing of Jews from their holy tasks as God’s chosen people. This disease, when not treated spreads very quickly, as it dismembers limbs from the nation’s body by intermarriage.

Jewish presence in the galut always was and is still “a terminal illness”, with no chance of survival. Its life signs are being extended by the artificial intervention of spiritual leaders who provide their communities with a feeding tube of distorted pseudo-Torah, like “sit tight until the Mashiach sends a limousine to whisk you off to your private plantation in the holy land”.

The new, vibrant Jewish communities dotting the gentile landscapes across the good old USA, with their affordable homes, day schools, mikvaot, and kollelim in places too difficult to spell, are shots of adrenaline or morphine which can extend the end for a while, but the writing is on the wall. The galut has served its purpose – to punish the Jewish nation after we were exiled from our land for leaving the Torah. And as all things in nature, when its purpose has been exhausted it withers, shrivels, and dies. So too, our long sojourn in the lands of Aisav and Yishmael has finished its historic purpose and now will go the way of all things.

The galut organism is presently also under attack by a

reprehensible **autoimmune disease**, in which the body produces antibodies that attack its own tissues. It manifests when Satmars and other break-away “lovers of Zion” demonstrate against the Medina, and by association, against the holy land of Eretz Yisrael. The end result will be that they themselves will wither away as they break off from the mainstream of Judaism.

Ritually Impure

Over 2000 years ago, two great rabbis Rabbis, Yosi ben Yo’ezer and Yosi ben Yochanan, with the agreement of the Sanhedrin, declared all the lands outside of Eretz Yisrael to be tomai’im (ritually impure) to the extent of the tuma exuded by a corpse. Several parallel reasons have been suggested for this broad based, global decree. Tosefot in tractate Nazir (54b) states that a major reason was that Jews should remain in the holy land.

The decree has special significance for Kohanim, who as stated in our parsha must refrain from the tuma of a corpse.

One need not be on the high spiritual level of Rabbis Yosi ben Yo’ezer and Yosi ben Yochanan to see how correct they and the Sanhedrin were. The dying communities of the galut exude tuma, and the faster our brothers and sisters escape the better they and all the nation of Yisrael will be.

Shabbat Shalom and prayers for refuah shelaima when the disbursed of our people come home.

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