

Ki Tisa and Purim 5778

BS"D Parashat Ki Tisa and Purim 5778

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

A Meaningful Wink from the Almighty

In our parasha, Moshe pleads to comprehend the inner essence of the Almighty. His plea is answered to a degree that no other man had or would ever achieve, although far less than what Moshe intended.

We too thirst for a sign of HaShem's presence, but too often we are disappointed. However, there were and are times when HaShem does "wink" at his people. It is usually by His awesome timing of world events.

This week we were gifted with a meaningful "wink".

Moving the US Embassy

I have reason to believe that President Trump did not have me in mind when he announced that the US embassy will be moving to Yerushalayim on the 14th of May 2018, even though May 14 (1938) is also my birthday. But I don't feel slighted by his oversight.

Seventy years ago, on May 14, 1948, Medinat Yisrael came into being; and the guillotine came down on the 2000-year galut of our people. For me, it was a great tenth year birthday

present.

Although the relocation is scheduled to happen two and a half months from now, there is a Biblical element to President Trump's announcement made during this week of Purim. It is one of those incidents when HaShem shows His hand to the Jewish people.

The Megillah relates that Esther appeared at the King's antechamber. He understood that she had a request to make. "What is your wish?" he said, "I can give to you up to half of my kingdom."

Chazal explain that Achashverosh's intention was to deny any attempt on her part to rebuild the Bet Hamikdash and Yerushalayim, which were equal to half his monarchy.

Trump's move to recognize Yerushalayim as our historic and religious capital, in the face of the world's opposition, is on the level of what President Truman did in 1948 when he recognized the State of Israel. The announcement contrasts with Achashverosh's denial of our rights to Yerushalayim and the future Bet Hamikdash.

Is President Trump a tikun for Achashverosh? Are Mr. Kushner and his wife Ivanka the modern-day Mordechai and Esther? Who can know the secrets of HaShem as he slowly, but relentlessly, guides the Jewish people's future through the darkness of human history?

On another matter...

Harav Shmuel Auerbach passed away on Shabbat at the age of 86. The rabbi was the spiritual force behind the group called "Peleg Yerushalayim"- the Jerusalem group that vehemently opposes anything that has to do with military service, including their refusal to even register with the army as is

required by law. They are responsible for the aggressive riots that have paralyzed many major cities in order for them to get their point across.

What is bizarre about their total opposition to military service is that the miracle of Purim occurred on the background of a great military victory, not to speak of the 25-year war of the Maccabees against Greece that gave rise to Chanuka. It is no secret that military victories are dependent on training and preparation. If you don't prepare, you will die very quickly in battle against a well-armed and trained enemy. The extreme stance taken by Peleg Yerushalayim is irrational and has no roots in Torah nor in normative Jewish history. One need not be a military expert to know that the State of Israel is in the midst of a milchemet mitzva – a war for dear life – where every able-bodied young man must do his share.

It is not a comfortable place to be in when one's opinions contrast with those of rabbis like Rabbi Auerbach. But the truth of Jewish history, human nature and the teachings of classic Torah are on our side. To learn Torah without being aware of what is transpiring around us is a luxury our generation cannot afford.

I would hope that Rav Auerbach was not the fomenter of these riots but rather his lieutenants who spoke in his name. The Rabbi's father, Harav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, was a man of the people. It is recorded that when one of his students wanted to pray at the gravesites of the many righteous rabbis buried in the Galil, Harav Auerbach responded: "Why waste your time going so far when there are thousands of great tzaddikim one kilometer from here on Mount Herzl's military cemetery?"

It is very convenient to stand by and let others spill their blood for you.

When viewing the animosity of the thousands who participated

in the aggressive demonstrations of the Peleg group, it brought to mind the hatred that existed between the rival groups at the end of the second Temple. We are told that this hatred was responsible for its destruction.

This degree of hatred should not be tolerated. People can have different opinions, but no one – not even the greatest rabbis – have a personal line to heaven like Moshe Rabbeinu had. The public debate has to be held on the background of our return home after 2000 years of galut. We all have to contribute to the holy structure of the Medina.

There is a simple solution for those who feel such animosity against the State. Take a trip to the former concentration camps in Germany or Poland, or to any of the thousands of camps spread out over Europe. If you are too squeamish, take a walk in Paris or London with your kippa on. You will quickly learn to kiss the ground of Eretz Yisrael that you so readily refuse to defend.

Shabbat Shalom and Purim Samaiyach,

Nachman Kahana