

# Lech Lecha 5778

## BS"D Parashat Lech Lecha 5778

# Rabbi Nachman Kahana

# Universal Catastrophe: The Mad Mission of Iran

A student at the Hebrew University was noticeably affected while reading the Bible. When his professor asked what had so aroused his enthusiasm, the young man replied that it was the story of the parting of the Red Sea. The professor, who was not a Torah-observant person, told the young student to calm down because, according to the scientists, the Red Sea at that time was, at most, ten centimeters deep. A few minutes later, the young student became even more enthusiastic as he read further, and again the professor asked for the reason. The student replied, "What a great God we have. He was able to drown the entire Egyptian army in only ten centimeters of water."

I can understand that as a man of reason, the professor would see some of the episodes related in the Torah as outlandishly fantastic. I am sure that the professor was scratching his forehead when he read parashat Lech Lecha, where Avraham and his 318 student-soldiers vanquished the allied forces of four major kings with their highly trained and battle-hardened troops.

But the dilemma regarding this battle begins long before the final victory.

There was a military alliance of four powerful kings:

[illegible]

*King Amrafel of Shin'ar, identified as Bavel (Iraq); King Aryoch of Alasar; King Kadarla'omer of Elam, identified as either Persia or Greece; and King Tidal of Goyim, identified as the head of an alliance of many smaller states.*

The entire region was under threat of conquest, because after their stunning victory in Eretz Yisrael it would be logical to assume that the four kings were on their way to further expansionist conquests after defeating the five kings of the Jordan Valley; for nothing succeeds more than success. On this background, it would be safe to assume that the region's nations, such as Egypt and the countries in North Africa and Asia Minor, were sharpening their spears in preparation for defending their own countries.

But nothing of the sort is recorded in the Torah. Quite the opposite! The only force that gathered to make battle with the four kings was Avraham and his 318 student-soldiers.

Our highly respected and learned professor would be justified in casting doubt on the reliability of the biblical account of Avraham's battle against these four powerful kings, except for one undeniable fact! A similar scenario is taking place today in front of our very own eyes.

The civilized world is being threatened by the enemies of humanity and freedom, led by the Islamic-fascist state of Iran. The mad leaders of Iran belong to the Shiite Islam sect that believes that their last Imam, their Mashiah, will appear only on the background of a universal catastrophe. And it is the mission of Iran to bring about that horrific catastrophe that is driving the Iranians to forge ahead with their nuclear program.

On this background, one would expect the Christian nations to band together with the "moderate" Arab nations to pre-empt

this threat. The USA, with its vast military capability, and the United Nations with its capacity to organize an international military force, would be expected to lead the free world in continuing to be free.

However, the reality of Avraham vs. the four kings has come back to haunt the free world. The eyes of free people are not focused on the world's military powers; but rather the object of the world's expectation of eradicating the Iranian threat is none other than the isolated, besmirched and hated State of Israel. Will we attack? When will it happen? How will we surprise the Iranians? Planes? Submarines? Cruise missiles? Land forces? How will the Israelis do it?

As in the time of Avraham, when the free world was numbed by fear, in our days miniscule David will have to stride to center stage in order to destroy the mad Goliath!

So, the episode in parashat Lech Lecha becomes frighteningly realistic even to the cynical, agnostic professors of Hebrew University.

But there is a difference! It is called Tzahal. Avraham, by necessity, was aided by HaShem in a supernatural way; with 318 soldiers defeating four armies. But in our time, HaShem expects the Jewish nation to act according to the Torah and the rules governing human behavior where miracles are subtly hidden. The fist of Am Yisrael is our young holy soldiers of Tzahal.

The episodes depicted in the Torah describe what occurred in those times, but they are also projections of what will transpire with respect to Am Yisrael in our time, prior to the advent of the Mashiach. So, when Israel acts, the world will be taken by surprise. But not us, who know the future by learning the "simple" stories of our past.

# A warning for the Chareidi Roshei Yeshivot

The term used in the yeshiva world to describe inter-session between the “zemanim” (semesters) of intense Torah study is “bayn hazemanim”, translated literally “between the times”.

Despite the wane in spiritual intensity during “bayn hazemanim” the yeshiva student is expected to conduct himself in a manner which brings respect to his stature as a rabbinic student.

Unfortunately, bayn hazemanim is often used to provoke, demonstrate, and aggressively promote opinions which are the sole possessions of a marginalized minority who have no consideration for the feelings and rights of others.

The illustrious Harav Chaim Kanievsky shlita came out this week with a scorching condemnation of the break-off Lithuanian yeshiva faction called “Peleg,” using soubriquets rarely sounded in the yeshiva world. The wild unworthy conduct of their followers and leaders during the bayn hazemanim period leaves a black smear on the Torah they claim to represent.

Israeli law requires that every eighteen-year-old register with the army and then each proceeds with his personal status vis a vis actual service. Those who wish to serve do so. A woman who declares that she is observant can request to be exempt from military service, and every student in a recognized yeshiva may ask to be exempt.

There are tens of thousands of young, fit men learning in yeshivot who are exempt from military service; thereby forcing the army to increase the numbers of women soldiers in combat units, as well as to increase the already heavy burden of service on the reserve forces, which creates negative economic, social, and family repercussions.

The people who make up the “peleg” group under the leadership of Harav Shmuel Aurbach shlita, refuse to even register with the army. They demonstrate violently at sensitive road junctions, paralyzing thousands of people, including life and death emergency crews.

Their spokesman, a Rabbi Zuker, was interviewed last week on the radio where he said, “we will burn down the Medina before registering”. He also stated that for them it is a matter of life and death.

I, as well as most observant Jews in Israel, disagree with the Chareidi position. In our view there is no bigger mitzva today than protecting the lives of the 6.5 million Jews who have returned here to carry on from where our history went into deep freeze 2000 years ago, when we were sent into galut.

I cannot change the Chareidim, but I have a warning for the Chareidi Roshei Yeshivot.

At some point in the not too distant future, when the Chareidi population will swell to the extent that the numbers of yeshiva exemptions will near 100 thousand, Israel will change to a totally volunteer army, highly compensated, as – has been the case for the last fifty or more years in the United States. And when the draft will be eliminated, the Chareidi yeshivot will become virtually empty. Chassidic yeshivot will be left with about 10% of their present numbers and the Lithuanian ones will fare a bit better with about 20 percent remaining. Many will join the army for the good pay, and most will enter the work place.

My advice is to be thankful to the secular government for creating the yeshiva world here, and stay under the radar, because the repercussions for anti-Israel behavior will be swift in coming and will be irreversible.

Shabbat Shalom,

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