

# Mas'ai 5776

BS"D Parashat Mas'ai 5776

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

## Liberate and Settle the Land

Bamidbar 33,50-56:

:וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אֶלְנָתָן בֶּן נֹחַ אֶלְנָתָן אֲחֵי הַיִּזְרְעֵלִים וְאֶל שֵׁבִיל בֶּן גֵּזִי וְאֶל חִיטָּן בֶּן מֵדִי וְאֶל כְּנִזְזִי בֶן מֵדִי (ו)

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*On the plains of Moav by the Jordan across from Yericho, HaShem said to Moshe:*

*“Speak to the Children of Israel and say to them: ‘When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, drive out all the inhabitants*

*of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess. Distribute the land by lot, according to your families. To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one. Whatever falls to them by lot will be theirs. Distribute it according to your ancestral tribes.*

*But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. And then I will do to you what I had planned to do to them.'"*

Christine agreed to marry Mendel on the condition that he convert to Christianity and change his name to Matthew, which he did. On the morning after the wedding, the newly christened Matthew was about to don his talit and tefillin when his loving, devoted wife said to him: "Matthew, did you forget that you're now a Christian?" With great chagrin Matthew cried out, "Oy, Goishe kop" (someone who fails to use his/her head, a non-Jewish head).

With every gentile nation to which the Jewish people have had the misfortune to be exiled, there exists a query regarding the political and religious leadership: are their leaders more evil than stupid, or more stupid than evil?

For 3500 years, beginning with King Nimrod of Bavel down to the contemporary BDS boycotters, there have been goyim who have attempted to destroy the Jewish people. Many have scarred and maimed us, but the end result has always been the same: the anti-Semite evaporated into a speck of history and the Jewish nation ascended to ever-growing heights.

The anti-Semite refuses to internalize that a people blessed by the Creator can be destroyed only by destroying the Creator

Himself. The anti-Semites are like the ocean's waves, which believe that they will succeed in devouring the land mass when all the previous waves have failed. The anti-Semite will never concede to the fact that no power in the world can destroy that which the Creator has deemed to be eternal.

The moral and mental inadequacies of the anti-Semites have become more glaring in our time with our return to Eretz Yisrael and all that the Medina stands for and its miraculous accomplishments in our short 68 years.

Where is the gentile leader who recognizes the guiding hand of the Creator that hovers over the Jewish State? The gentile leader who will guide his nation in assisting the Medina to the best of his/her ability? The gentile leader who will openly recognize the unique status of the Jewish race above all the world's nations, and that just like a body is composed of various organs and led by the head, the head of humanity is the Jewish nation in Eretz Yisrael? The gentile leader who will force the Jews in his land to return home to contribute to the gene pool of Jewish genius for the good of humanity? Who will assist us in our achieving the biblical boundaries as set down in the Torah? Who will dedicate all his nation's energies to advancing the spiritual and material position of Hashem's chosen people. Who will transfer all his nation's R&D funding to the Universities of Israel and wait for the cure for cancer and all the other ills that plague mankind.

But don't bother to seek one out, for two reasons: Firstly, the majority of the Jewish remnant of 2000 years of exile have themselves forgotten who they are. They have forgotten having stood by the river bank of the Jordan while listening to the last words of encouragement voiced by Moshe Rabbeinu before the liberation of the Holy Land.

Secondly, humanity is covered with a thick cloud of insanity, denial and dementia, where the great thoughts of man are condensed into a mini handheld computer sending out irrelevant

messages to one another. And when political leaders are happy to retire for the night satisfied that no mass terror attack occurred in their land during the day.

In our parasha, HaShem commands the Jewish nation to liberate and settle the Land of Israel – not as a gift but as a mitzva not less than Shabbat or belief in One God which are in effect to this day and until the end of time.

A Jew who remains in galut voluntary because he does not value what it means to be a Jew or because he follows leaders who do not understand what HaShem requires of a Jew, should not expect to be treated with love by the inbred anti-Semitism of the gentile.

Today, the gates of the Holy Land are open wide for their return home, just as they were in this week's parasha where HaShem awaits His chosen nation to liberate and settle the Land. Let those who continue to remain in the galut harken to the words of Moshe Rabbeinu to the tribes of Reuven and Gad in parashat Matot, when they requested to remain on the eastern side of the Jordan River, not ten thousand kilometers to the west.

## **What are we mourning?**

Whenever this time of year comes around, I am reminded of a set of siddurim in the womens' section of my father's bet kneset in Brooklyn. They were very detailed, providing detailed instructions on how and when to say each particular prayer. Various prayers and psalms were introduced with the heading "dur vaint'men – here one cries", ending with "biz danet – until here".

Shabbat of last week was the 17th of Tamuz ushering in a three-week period of mourning for the unspeakable catastrophe

that befell our people 1946 years ago in Eretz Yisrael. The halachic expressions of mourning increase in intensity at the arrival of the new month of Menachem Av and more so in the week in which the 9th of Av falls.

What essentially is happening is that in the cycle of the Jewish year, the Shulchan Aruch commands “dur vaint’men – here one cries” on the 17 of Tamuz and releases us from mourning at the end of the 9th of Av. Here you cry; here you don’t!

To be truthful, this is not mourning. One mourns not by command but by one’s heart strings. So what are we mourning for? For the destroyed Bet Hamikdash? The Jewish people are faring quite well without it!

Do we mourn our being exiled from our land? Look around at the packed hotels, summer camps, bungalow colonies, tour trips to exotic places, Acapulco, the casinos of Las Vegas and Macao, and glatt kosher ski resorts like Vale, Colorado. Each one has a mincha minyan and some even have a daf yomi. Thank G-d the Jews have finally found the elusive safety and peace of mind they have been searching for since the exile 2000 years ago!

So what are we mourning for? We mourn over the greatest tragedy of them all – we mourn the absence of mourning!

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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