

Naso 5772

BS"D Parashat Naso 5772

A message to the young Jewish adults in the galut



"The very air of Eretz Yisrael makes one wise" (Zohar)

My last message related to the tens of thousands of frum, chareidi Jews who congregated in Met's Stadium to discuss the spiritual dangers of the internet. A gentleman who was present at the occasion informed me that women were excluded from the event. To my query, "How would women know what was discussed there?" he answered very seriously, "It's all on the internet"!

We, the smartest people HaShem has forged in His world, act, at times, very strangely and indeed foolishly. Forgetting the unfortunate "oversight" of that holy assembly to at least mention that it was the 45th anniversary of the reunification of Yerushalayim, tens of thousands of Jews, led by influential religious leaders, cast aside their Jewish sensitivities of tzniut (modesty). While the matter of bitul Torah (wasting precious time that otherwise could be used for Torah study) is certainly a problem in which internet plays a role, the major issue is pornography. A community that values modesty treats these problems with embarrassment and definitely in private. It does not announce to the world that the chareidi community is plagued with this depravity.

In my opinion, this conduct cannot be labeled as anything less than insensitive and less than intelligent behavior.

Now the question is: What causes otherwise clever people to do very unclever things?

The Torah states (Devarim 4:9)



Take heed of yourself, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things which your eyes saw, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of thy life; but make them known unto your children and your children's children.

To which Rashi comments:

*If you will remember the mitzvot and abide by them, you will be considered to be wise; however, **if you forget them you will be considered as fools.***

There are other areas in our lives that make us look less than intelligent. Specifically: On the day following a Yom Tov (a festival) which is a regular work day in Eretz Yisrael, when we drive our cars, shop and do all the other things that daily life demands, we witness tourists from abroad who extend the last day of the festival, as if they were in Cleveland, Las Vegas and all other locations in the galut.

There are three halachic opinions regarding Yom Tov observance for tourists in Eretz Yisrael.

Some authorities state that a tourist acts no differently than a resident of Eretz Yisrael and keeps one day. Others say that a tourist acts just as if he was in the galut, keeping two days, and a third opinion states that a tourist acts as he was in the galut, except that on the last day one dons tefillin.

When people ask me what to do, I give the three opinions and say that since there is no overriding authority as to which opinion is to be accepted, you may choose the one you wish, but you must be consistent.

Most chareidim choose the severe opinion and act in accordance to what they do in the galut, but they forget a very important

detail.

When King Achasverosh returned from his walk in the garden and found that Haman, in an attempt to save his life, had fallen on the bed where Esther was reclining, the King said in rage, "Do you wish to conquer the Queen even when I am present in the palace?!"

When in Eretz Yisrael, if one feels it necessary to act in accordance with the customs of the galut, it must be done privately, with an insular minyan and a feeling of embarrassment. To walk the streets with a machzor in your hand making your way to say kiddush in a hotel, is to violate the honor of Eretz Yisrael, no less than what Haman did while the King himself was in the palace.

This, too, is part of the less than intelligent syndrome that the galut imposes on its victims.

The words of Rashi, "*If you will remember the mitzvot and abide by them, you will be considered to be wise; however, if you forget them **you will be considered as fools,***" ring loud and clear. To forget the Land, or to consciously disregard the return to our Promised Land, or to come as tourists and behave as if in the galut is a regression in Jewish intelligence.

But the most unintelligent, contradictory behavior occurs in shuls, yeshivot, and homes across the lands of the galut when three times every weekday, they beseech HaShem in the Amidah (shmoneh esray): "Blessed are You HaShem, who gathers in the dispersed of His nation Israel." What are they waiting for? That HaShem should provide each one with a private jet or yacht to Eretz Yisrael!

In birkat hamazon (grace after meals) they thank HaShem for granting the Jewish people, "a desired, a good and abundant land." For what purpose? To visit?!

But then the 140+ I.Q., which is not uncommon in our people,

invented the way to circumvent these minute technical details by factoring into the spiritual equation the Mashiach element – that no one may, or needs to leave, the divine galut until HaShem sends the Mashiach.

I have reason to believe that many readers will take objection to what I have written. They will claim that it is audacious, brazen and arrogant to criticize the Jews in the galut in such a way.

But let me explain. My wife and I came to Eretz Yisrael in 1962. It was a poor, besieged, and underpopulated country of about 2 million Jews. Now, after having lived in the Medina for half a century, we number 6 million Jews (over half the halachic Jews in the world), and after military victories which can compete with any of the miracles in the Tanach, and experiencing the Torah's growth and the development of this great land, the only conclusion has to be that the hand of God is upon His people in Eretz Yisrael.

So how can a believing Jew stay away?

Moshe Rabbeinu stated (Devarim 32:6)



*Is this the way you repay the Lord, **you foolish and unwise people**? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?*

Moshe did not say that the people of his time were evil. He said that after seeing all of HaShem's wonders performed for them, their conduct was "foolish and unwise".

It is a common expression stated in the Zohar and many other sources that:



"The very air of Eretz Yisrael makes one wiser"

And its converse: The very air of galut makes a Jew act foolish.

I am directing this week's message to the young adults in the galut. Come home! Granted, life in Israel is challenging. But here you can make your mark while living a full Jewish life, with the knowledge that you have closed the book on your 2000-year exile.

Life is a continuous chain of difficult choices. After the agonizing struggle for clarity and the choice having been made, implementation is usually relatively easy. History has shown time and again, that the galut is a terminal black hole for the Jewish people. It draws one into a destructive future, ending in eventual spiritual assimilation or physical tragedy.

On the festival of Shavuot, we read the Book of Ruth. The Midrash states (7:1):



Rabbi Berachya said: Boaz did what was required of him. Ruth did what was required of her. Naomi did what was required of her. And the Holy One Be He said, "Now I shall do what is required of me."

Now the big question. Don't look to your parents. Don't look to your rabbis. Look into your own Jewish conscience. Are you doing what is required of you as a Jewish man or woman, in this extraordinary time in the history of our nation?

Do you want the God of Israel to consider you wise or foolish?

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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