

Nitzavim 5776

BS"D Parashat Nitzavim last Shabbat of 5776

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

It is HaShem's Prerogative to Choose

The fleeting moments just before Yom HaDin – the day of judgment, is our final opportunity of this year to make a reckoning of what we have or have not done properly in the eyes of HaShem.

Just as Hashem is infinite so too are the depths of understanding necessary in order to grasp His motives and actions; nevertheless, there are several basic concepts which can lead one along the path of understanding.

HaShem, the Creator, always was and will always be. We humans and all that exists are created objects, all of whom once never existed and at some future time will return to that state of non-existence – except for the eternal Jewish soul.

HaShem, as the Creator, not only determines what and who shall come into existence, He also determines the relative importance of His created entities. On Rosh Hashanah, when you take a teaspoon of honey to put on the challah or apple, remember that during its entire life a lowly honey bee produces no more than half a teaspoon of honey. But it was created to radiate the message that HaShem determines the sweetness of life for those who are faithful to Him.

HaShem applies His "prerogative" or "entitlement" to choose, as in the case of a weed vis-à-vis a rose, a human being over a honey bee and the Jewish nation above all others. There is

no equality in the created world, each thing and person has a number in the order of importance in HaShem's grand scheme.

From Noach's three sons, HaShem chose Shem over Cham and Yefet.

From Shem, Hashem chose Avraham while rejecting all the others of mankind. HaShem chose Yitzchak over Yishmael and Ya'akov over Aisav. He chose the tribe of Levi and the family of Amram, from whom He chose Aharon to serve as the Kohen Gadol and Moshe to be the conduit to receive the Torah for Am Yisrael.

HaShem chose Am Yisrael while rejecting all the others of humanity, which was in fact an act of retribution after humanity rejected HaShem.

That all men are created equal is a myth imposed by the majority of mankind who are born with inferior qualities of intellect, motivation, ambition and imagination upon the more gifted minority.

HaShem scrutinized the planet and chose Eretz Yisrael to be the seat of His sanctity. In Eretz Yisrael, He chose Yerushalayim, then Mount Moriah, the Bet HaMikdash and the Holy of Holies.

HaShem's only promise to our forefathers

This year's weekly messages were variations on one sole theme – the centrality of Eretz Yisrael to everything Jewish.

Eretz Yisrael is not just one more tool in the shed of a Torah true Jew; it is the shed itself. The holy land determines the quantity and quality of our mitzvot. There are quantitatively

more mitzvot to be fulfilled here than in the galut, and the quality of a mitzva observed in the galut compared to its observance in Eretz Yisrael is like a weed to a rose.

Our land is the border crossing between this world and the next. And when we sinned HaShem exiled us to the brutal galut where our books and bodies were burned and our thoughts perverted.

Eretz Yisrael is the focal point of Judaism; the holy precinct which is directly under the kisei hakavod – the holy throne.

To practice Torah in the galut even to its fullest is no substitute for being in the holy land. Moshe Rabbeinu prayed to HaShem 515 times to enter the western side of the Jordan River because he knew that observing the Torah even in the tribal areas of Reuven, Gad and Menashe cannot equal its fulfillment as on the western side.

In last week's parsha Ki Tavo, one who has fulfilled all his commitments regarding the various tithes comes to the Bet HaMikdash and declares that he has done so and then offers a prayer (Devarim 26,15):

אני הוצאתני מצרימה ואתה הוצאתני ממצרים
אני הוצאתני מצרימה ואתה הוצאתני ממצרים
אני הוצאתני מצרימה ואתה הוצאתני ממצרים
אני הוצאתני מצרימה ואתה הוצאתני ממצרים

Gaze from Your holy abode from the heavens and bless Your people Yisrael and the land that You have given us, as You swore to our forefathers, a land flowing with milk and honey.

And in this week's parsha Nitzavim, Moshe reiterated what was already common knowledge, that the covenant which HaShem entered into with our forefathers: Avraham Yitzchak and Ya'akov, were all centered around the holy land. Indeed, the only thing HaShem ever promised our forefathers was Eretz Yisrael.

5777 Forecast

In this coming year of 5777, the world will witness challenging situations. A resurgence of unabashed anti-Semitism; bitter international hostilities, antagonism between peoples within their own national boundaries and weapons of mass destruction in the hands of irrational uncontained nations and groups.

As Aisav and Yishmael struggle to destroy each other, Medinat Yisrael will continue to flourish amazingly. Our life here will demonstrate the miraculous "behind-the-scenes" guardianship of HaShem over His people in Eretz Yisrael. The daily events in the land will confirm and espouse the 3000-year covenant between the Creator and His nation Yisrael.

At the same time, we will continue to hear sounds of discord from certain religious leaders in the galut, who like King Menashe intentionally in public lectures pervert the true meanings of pesukim, as attested to in Yalkut Shimoni (Vayaitzai chap. 129), and lost his place in the world-to-come. We hear these leaders as they diminish the status of Eretz Yisrael in the life of a Jew, as they offer pseudo-halachic license to well-meaning, naive Jews to remain in the exile. They should be expelled from our midst.

Shana Tova!

With blessings from Zion and Yerushalayim to all who have read and encouraged me in these weekly writings. May we all merit to witness the final redemption of Am Yisrael, and walk together to the Temple Mount, to the dwelling place of the Creator in this world.

Shabbat Shalom & Shana Tova,

Nachman Kahana

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