

Nitzavim 5781

BS"D Parashat Nitzavim 5781

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Nitzavim – Last Shabbat of 5781

Every Jew – man and woman, is alluded to in the intricate texts of the Bible, as are the manifold episodes of every generation hidden behind some word or phrase in the Torah.

Where is our generation alluded to in the Torah?

Initially, we have to define the unique parameters and circumstances of our generation which set it apart from all others. This is fortunately not a herculean task! For there has never before been an exile of such duration and cruelty as the one we have experienced these past 2000 years, concluding with Hashem's miraculous restoration of the majority of His people to a sizable part of the biblical borders of Eretz Yisrael, which we call today Medinat Yisrael.

One need not seek out our generation in the texts of the Torah with a magnifying glass, because it is explicit in parashat Nitzavim chapter 30:

וְהִנֵּה תְּהִלֵּת הַיּוֹם כִּי כָל-עַמּוֹד תְּהִלֵּת הַיּוֹם כִּי כָל-עַמּוֹד
:וְהִנֵּה תְּהִלֵּת הַיּוֹם כִּי כָל-עַמּוֹד

:וְהִנֵּה תְּהִלֵּת הַיּוֹם כִּי כָל-עַמּוֹד תְּהִלֵּת הַיּוֹם כִּי כָל-עַמּוֹד
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:וְהִנֵּה תְּהִלֵּת הַיּוֹם כִּי כָל-עַמּוֹד

³ Then the Lord your God will return you from captivity and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where He scattered you. ⁴ Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back.

⁵ He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors.

Indeed, we were scattered to the four corners of the globe, and HaShem is now in the process of returning all the Jews to His holy land – those who return willingly, as well as those who cling to the unholy galut and will have to be wrenched away from their sweet captivity.

However, it might appear that the opening verses of this chapter (30) are not pointing to our generation, for it says:

וְיִשְׁרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְנְאָמָר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְנְאָמָר (ו)
:וְיִשְׁרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְנְאָמָר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְנְאָמָר

וְיִשְׁרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְנְאָמָר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְנְאָמָר 'וְיִשְׁרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (ו)
:וְיִשְׁרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְנְאָמָר

וְיִשְׁרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְנְאָמָר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתְנְאָמָר 'וְיִשְׁרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ (ו)
:וְיִשְׁרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ 'ו

¹ When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations, ² and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, ³ then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where He scattered you.

For how can we say that we are living in the time of national restoration which is conditioned upon the Jews doing teshuva, “And when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today”? When did this ever happen?

I submit:

Teshuva is a subjective term, which finds expression in accordance with the individual and his regrettable past.

The pasukim (Bereishiet 25,8-9) relate that when Avraham passed away, his two sons came to bury their holy father, as follows:

:בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם (ד)

וְאַתָּה בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם (ה)

:בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

⁸ **Then Abraham died at an advanced age, elderly and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.** ⁹ **His sons Isaac and Yishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite.**

Chazal say that verse 9 reveals that Yishmael did teshuva, because although Yishmael was older, he agreed that Yitzchak should be the spiritual heir to Avraham as we learn from the fact that the name of Yitzchak is stated in the pasuk before the name of Yishmael. However, the statement that Yishmael did teshuva is difficult, because he was an idolater to the end of his life, as attested to by the fact that he took the evil Aisav to be his son-in-law.

However, as stated above, “teshuva is a subjective term” which finds expression in accordance with the individual and his regrettable past.

Yishmael's great fault was his stubborn insistence on being the heir to Avraham's spiritual status.

HaShem's grievance to Yishmael was not that he was not a talmid chacham or that he accepted idolatry. What grieved HaShem was that Yishmael never accepted the fact that he was not and never was connected spiritually to Avraham. So, when Yitzchak precedes Yishmael in the pasuk, it is the Torah's way of saying that Yishmael finally accepted Yitzchak's superior spiritual status – and that was Yishmael's personal teshuva.

The great historic sin of the Jewish people of 2000 years ago was our desire to be accepted and loved by the gentiles. Many Jews were involved with the Greek and Roman cultures. We dressed like them, spoke their language and were a part of their political intrigues; all in the name of being accepted by the goy.

Our experience of living under the goyim reached its climax with the Shoah. It became clear to most Jews that we must leave the hated galut, return to our own Biblical homeland and distance ourselves from the “favors” of Aisav and Yishmael, and acknowledge that we are a unique entity in the world.

This is the teshuva that HaShem was waiting for, and it in itself was sufficient to open the doors of return to Eretz Yisrael and the restoration of our national life.

The next phase in the teshuva process will be our return to actively fulfilling the Torah's mitzvot, towards which we in the holy land are advancing every day.

Our Long-Awaited Redemption

The real-life game changing decisions are not revealed in history books. What I know about the Yom Kippur Wars will never appear in the official documents of our nation but was

critical to the ongoing events.

We are now in the throes of events which could have far-reaching consequences for the Middle East and the world. Will the US and Europe attack Iran? Will Iran react by attacking Israel? Will fanatical, extreme Islam over-take many countries in Africa and Asia? Will the Moslems in the US and Europe turn on their host countries? Will Russia and China find reasons to join in the free-for-all? Will Judenhass spread faster than Covid-19?

Our parasha states (Devarim 29,28):

תְּרוּמָה תְּהִלָּה תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה-וְ 'תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה תְּמִימָה

The secret things are known to the Lord our God, but the revealed episodes are known to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

The real diabolical motives behind the “moral” positions of the Western powers are known to HaShem but not to the general public. The US and Europe will not act to prevent the Iranians from achieving nuclear weapons. The reality, which may never be proven, is that the basis for their decisions is steeped in abiding Judenhass.

The Christian world will never reconcile with the existence of the State of Israel, which for them is the most merciless, ruthless, and unrelenting repudiation and abrogation of Christianity.

And all their intellectual gymnastics to explain why their deity permitted the Jewish people to return to Eretz Yisrael after he ‘rejected’ them is wasted on any thinking, intelligent person.

You, dear reader, may think that this line of thought is hallucinatory. I too would have thought so were if not for the

Midrash Tanchuma which is quoted by Rashi in the Book of Yechezkel 35,10:

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Midrash Tanchuma explains the intention of Yechezkel in this verse to mean that Aisav married the daughter of Yishmael with the intent of influencing him to kill Yitzchak. Then he (Aisav) would act as the “goel hadam” – the justified avenger – to kill Yishmael; thereby paving the way for him to be the uncontested spiritual heir to Avraham.

Replace the name "Aisav" with Christian Europe, replace "Yishmael" with the Moslem Arab countries, and replace "Yitzchak" with Jewish Medinat Yisrael and you have the script of what is transpiring these very days.

Aisav the Christian arouses the Yishmaelite Persians to attack Yitzchak the Jew.

The time of our long-awaited redemption may be at hand. Our Father in Heaven will protect His people Israel.

During times of stress, the prophetic words of Yeshayahu (40:15,17) must always be in the forefront of our thoughts:

¹⁵ Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; He weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

¹⁷ Before Him all the nations are as nothing; they are regarded by Him as worthless and less than nothing.

Retribution

We might be entering the period of HaShem's retribution for what the gentiles have done to us. When it happens, the Jewish communities in the galut will not be immune. Their fate will not be concerted "establishment" anti-Semitism, but rather ground root "street" violence. When the genie of hate is released, the blacks and Moslems will smell blood and react with violence. They will run through the streets smashing, vandalizing, and burning Jewish stores, attacking Jews on the streets and destroying their cars and homes.

Let us hope and pray that this will never happen. However, one can never know when HaShem will change the gears of history, and the lives of people will never again be the same.

Question: Why should such an idea even enter one's mind?

A former Minister for Tourism, Dr. Uzi Landau, revealed a sickening statistic. That from 1948 to the present, less than 15% of the Jews of the United States ever visited Medinat Yisrael.

It is estimated that there are 5 million Jews in the US, of which one million are Torah observant.

The 15% of 5 million who visited Eretz Yisrael is 750,000, half of whom are presumably non-Torah observant, leaving the number of observant Jews currently living in galut who ever visited Israel at around 375,000.

Numbers don't lie. These numbers reveal that the vast majority – 625,000 out of one million religious Jews of the US have never stepped foot on the soil of God's holy land.

Among these 625,000 there are principals and teachers in religious day schools, pulpit rabbis, yeshiva and kollel students and more.

It has not yet been internalized by the Jews in the galut that our Father in Heaven is very serious when it “comes to religion”. HaShem was the initiator of Religious Zionism when He revealed himself to Avraham and promised to him and his descendants sovereignty over “Eretz Hakodesh”.

The religious leaders in the galut would do well to recognize the awesome responsibility they have for the physical and spiritual welfare of their adherents by not guiding them to return home, and the ultimate blame for not doing so will be upon them. Their responsibility goes even beyond that of the religious leaders of the 1930s in Europe who saw the black clouds over the horizon yet did not use their prestige to arouse their adherents to return home.

Let us hope that in the coming year of 5782 the Quality of Chesed (compassion) will overcome the Quality of Severe Justice, and all of Am Yisrael will be united in our holy land of Eretz Yisrael.

*Shabbat Shalom,
K’tiva vachatima tova,
Nachman Kahana*

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