

Teruma 5773

BS"D Parashat Teruma 5773

Part A:

In our parasha, HaShem commands Moshe to organize the construction of a portable sanctuary – the Mishkan. It was to serve the nation in the 39 years that they would sojourn in the desert, another 14 years in the town of Gilgal while the land was being liberated and the homesteads divided among the people, another 369 years in Shiloh, with the remaining 56 years in the towns of Nov and Givon, and then the ultimate journey with Am Yisrael to the Bet Hamikdash (Holy Temple) on Mount Moriah, in Yerushalayim.

The definitive, terminal and unambiguous purpose of the Mishkan and its final transformation into the Bet HaMikdash is stated by HaShem (Shemot 25,8)

And you shall make for me a sanctuary and I will dwell within you

The verse does not say “and I will dwell within it,” but rather “I will dwell within **you**“. In other words, when Am Yisrael will make a sanctuary for HaShem, then He will dwell within the minds and hearts of the Jewish people.

The desert's portable sanctuary – here today and tomorrow folded, covered and placed on caravans and on the shoulders of Levites for the next station – did not have the dynamism, impetus and potency necessary to create the metaphysical connection between the Creator of Heavens and Earth and lowly man. The proof is that when the Mishkan was disassembled, the place where the Mishkan had stood reverted back to be just one more piece of desert. Even where the “Holy of Holies” stood reverted to its previous unconsecrated status.

HaShem's intention to "dwell within you" was meant to be carried out through the ultimate Sanctuary, the Bet Hamikdash which was to serve as the conduit through which our tfilot (prayers and sacrifices) would ascend to the upper realms of the spiritual world, and HaShem's spiritual and material blessings would descend to this world.

In contrast to the previous sanctuaries, which did not imbue spiritual permanency to the area where they stood, the area of the Bet Hamikdash retains its consecrated status to this day, in wait for the Jewish people to initiate its rebuilding.

There is no substitute for Eretz Yisrael, for Yerushalayim, or for the Temple Mount. You can call a pig a princess, or the city of Vilna the "Yerushalayim of Lithuania", or Williamsburg in Brooklyn the "Yerushalayim of America," but a pig by any name smells not sweet.

Part B:

The issue of reward and punishment for man's actions is as far reaching as the heavens to earth. Why do the righteous suffer while the evildoers celebrate? Who metes out retribution in this world and who in the world to come? What is Gan Eden and what is Gehennom? Is resurrection an intricate part of Mashiach or are they separate matters? The list is as long as one's ability to project and theorize.

But for our limited purposes, it would be sufficient to examine the words of the prophet Yirmiyahu in Migilat Aicha (Lamentations 3,38):

From the mouth of the Most High neither calamities nor good come forth

Rashi, in his commentary on this verse, quotes Rabbi Yochanan who states that HaShem does not actively interfere in the reward or punishment process of man in this world but only in

the next world. He has, instead, imposed good or calamity as a natural consequence of man's actions.

My understanding of Rabbi Yochanan's words is that HaShem responds to man's actions only after the soul ascends to the world from whence it came, where each person's life can be judged in its totality. What transpires in our lives in this world is the result of our actions intermingled with so many other factors as to make it humanly impossible to recognize the sequence of events- except in unique situations where the reward or punishment is self evident.

Part C:

Einstein is quoted as having said that "there are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle."

We, who know that HaShem is the Creator and that nothing could exist if not for HaShem's ongoing life force, must try to see His hand and the application of His grand plan in everything that transpires.

Having been born and lived in the United States for the first 24 years of my life, I do not recall there being so many natural disasters and of such extreme devastation such as the recent hurricanes, tidal surges, tornadoes, snow storms, droughts and forest fires as we presently see. On top of these are the unprecedented economic woes of a national debt so high that the zeros run off the page, and the ever-growing threat from evil regimes such as North Korea and Iran.

When comparing the relative morality and reverence that the world's nations show to God, the United States ranks quite high. So what are the transgressions that cause so much suffering?

Another similar question...

I have repeatedly said that the failed Jewish community across the United States is on a slippery slope to oblivion.

According to reliable sources, the millions of Jews there who have assimilated have reduced the number of their halachic brethren to no more than about 50% of any number estimated for the number of Jews of the USA.

Even the orthodox have little to be proud of.

I invite you to open the following link and share in the dismal state of Yiddishkeit there.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323485704578258350111321138.html?mod=rss_mobile_uber_feed

The link deals with the ugly kiddush events which follow the “prayers” in the leading shuls. But this is only one facet of failed Jewish life there – superficial Torah learning, unethical business practices, search for comfort and luxuries all contribute.

As a rule, Jews, wherever they live, follow their gentile neighbors consciously and subconsciously. The gentile American mind is occupied with several areas that all begin with the letter S – financial **S**uccess, **S**ports, **S**ex, **S**pirits (drink) – leaving very little room for **S**pirituality.

And the average religious Jew is not far behind.

But don't get confused. This situation engulfing the US Jewish community is not the sin – it is the punishment. As Ben Azai taught (Pirkei Avot 4,2)

A mitzva begets a mitzva and a sin begets a sin. The remuneration for a mitzva is the opportunity to perform another mitzva, while the remuneration of a sin is the opportunity to perform another sin.

So I pose the same questions. What is the sin of the American nation? What is the sin of the Jewish community?

I believe that both America and their Jewish citizens suffer from the same behemoth sin – a sin that runs counter to the will of HaShem as He directs human events and specifically the history of His chosen people.

America as a nation and the Jews as a community, have created for the Jew an **alternative** to Eretz Yisrael – and that is the sin.

The visible “Golden Calf” of the *Land of the Free* is more attractive than the unseen but intimated will of HaShem that the galut is over and the Jews must now return to continue our history in God’s promised land – a history which was so unfortunately and abruptly suspended by our sins.

The good intentions of Yeshiva University, Chabad, and all the other American Jewish establishments to permit Jews to live a comfortable religious life have boomeranged. They have blinded the Jews there from seeing their role in contemporary Jewish history to rebuild a religious-national life in Eretz Yisrael.

The sin is the desire to remain with the goyim in galut, and all the exhaustive efforts on the part of the Jewish leadership, of all sorts, to make the tragedy of the galut as comfortable as possible.

Followed by the built-in, automatic punishment, beginning with an almost intangible opaque blurring of the 3500 year old differences which have existed between HaShem’s Torah nation and the gentile. Followed by ever increasing efforts to draw closer to the gentile and his ways, until the cultural differences between Jew and gentile become nebulous and eventually the gangrene of assimilation poisons the entire Jewish ethos.

Every U.S. administration has given great lip service to

Israel, but their policy has always been to hold us on a short leash. It began with the arms embargo in 1948 and continues to this very date when building a home in Bet El engenders the same reaction from the Americans as when the North Koreans explode a nuclear device. They sell us modern aircraft in order to hold over our heads the future sale of spare parts and ammunition.

Indeed, the sin is similar – to make it more comfortable for the Jew to remain in the galut, and the punishments are inherent in the sin.

In summary:

HaShem has provided the opportunity for every Jew who wishes to retain his and his children's connection to the Jewish nation to do so before the arrival of the tragic events which are facing the world. It is only here in Eretz Yisrael that a Jew can achieve his spiritual potential, as well as guaranteeing his physical well being.

Indeed!

And you shall make for me a sanctuary and I will dwell within you

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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