

Re'ah 5778

BS"D Parashat Re'ah 5778

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Curses Concealed as Blessings

Devarim 11,26-28:

וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי אֹמֵר וְעָשָׂה לְךָ כְּדָבָר
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26) Perceive (comprehend)! I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse

27) The blessing if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I command you today;

28) And the curse if you do not obey the commands of the Lord your God and turn from the way that I command you today by following other beliefs, which are foreign to you.

It is apparent from these verses that there are three possible situations in the Creator-Yisrael relationship:

Verse 27) "...if you obey..." – life will be a blessing

Verse 28) "...if you do not obey..." – then life will be a curse

Verse 26) "Perceive! I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse" – when life is a blessing imbedded and disguised as a curse, as is transpiring today in front of our eyes.

For example:

The Israeli public, and certainly our political leaders who are more privy to what is happening, are angry and frustrated at the double standard being applied by the "enlightened" peoples of the world against the Jewish State.

Many Western European institutions and personalities are leading the movement to isolate Israel by boycotts, divestments and sanctions. The problem is that they assert their moral indignation only against the Jewish State. Where are the demonstrations on behalf of the Tibetans, Syrians, Kurds, Armenians, and Ukrainians? Where are the boycotts against the Chinese, the Russians, the Cubans or the Turks? However, if one has "Jewish eyes," he will discern that the double standard is a blessing in disguise!

There is a powerful subconscious compulsion active behind the double standard which the Christian and Moslem countries are imposing against the Jewish State. It is their painful, destabilizing gut feeling based on the Jewish nation's quantitative and qualitative survival record that we are indeed God's chosen people. Therefore, they must make every effort to prove that the Jews and the Jewish State are immoral and non-spiritual; and not only are we not God's chosen, but we are unworthy to be included in the family of nations.

The hatred shown to us by these anti-Semites is a glaring expression of their own awareness that we are indeed God's chosen people. For the more they attempt to negate the historical fact laid down at Mount Sinai and isolate us, the

greater is their frustration as the Jewish State goes from success to super success, from victory to greater victory.

Here is HaShem's blessing – the visible truth – arising out of man's attempt to curse, as the prophet Yishayahu (54,17) said 2500 years ago:

אין אשׁר יִסְּרֵם אֶתְּכֶם וְאֵין אֲשֶׁר יִבְרָא אֶתְּכֶם
'וְאֵין אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁפֹּט אֶתְּכֶם וְאֵין אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁפֹּט אֶתְּכֶם

*No weapon forged against you will prevail,
and every accusing tongue will be silenced.
This is the heritage of the servants of God,
and this is their vindication from me,
declares the Lord.*

One more example of man's curse from which arises HaShem's blessing:

The State of Israel is weary and fearful with every military acquisition made by an Arab country. Since we cannot acquire the quantity of arms that fill the facilities of our neighbors' armies, we strive to maintain a qualitative edge. However, it is predicated on military circles that quantity becomes quality when the figures reach over three to one. A great pilot can expect to be victorious when combatting 2-3 enemy planes. Beyond that number, he is in serious trouble.

The total quantity of weapons given to our neighbors by powers such as the United States, Russia, England and France is beyond 4 to 1 and, and in some cases, 10 to 1 compared to Israel. Here is the curse, but where is the blessing that arises from this curse?

These great quantities of weapons are used daily to fan the fires of hatred among the Arabs themselves – in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Sinai desert, Yemen, Somalia, Mali, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Every day, our Arab enemies murder their own Moslem Sunni and Shiite co-religionists and become less focused on Israel.

Even in times when large segments of the Jewish nation do not observe the mitzvot prescribed in the Torah and the quality of harsh justice (midat hadin) demands its full expression, our heavenly Father reluctantly decrees a curse upon His children. He very carefully and with great dignity imbeds a cloaked blessing in the decree.

What is happening today is a replay of sorts of what transpired in ancient Egypt, where the Torah (Shemot 1,12) states:

:וַיִּכְרֹתוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-בָּתָּיִם וְאֶת-אֲדָמָהּ וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲדָמָהּ וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲדָמָהּ וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲדָמָהּ

But the more they (the Jewish people) were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread.

This will be the pattern of our history for the foreseeable future. We will face one danger after another, and in every case HaShem will extricate His children Yisrael, until the time when the cumulative miracles being performed for the Jewish nation in Medinat Yisrael will leave no room for doubt that we are and always were the exclusive nation of the Creator.

However, there is a reverse situation arising from verse 26) “Perceive! I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse”, when life is a blessing and also a curse. For example:

A beautiful, spacious home in a nice Jewish neighborhood in London, Buenos Aires, or Lawrence. Two cars in the driveway

and an income of over a quarter million dollars a year. Children in day-schools, in universities. Daf Yomi with the chevra and a great talmid chacham teaching. Pesach in any one of the high-end hotels, which is not embarrassed to take from you \$25k to \$30k for the eight days.

Or an adequate home or nice apartment in any one of the yeshiva communities in the galut, where your soul feels uplifted daily, especially under the tutelage of an outstanding rosh yeshiva who upholds the belief that soon the Mashiach will come and bring an end to the Jewish suffering by whisking every Jew back to Eretz Yisrael to the 10-room house with adjoining Olympic pool in the Rechavia section of Yerushalayim.

Here are two instances of blessings which conceal an extreme curse, because the individuals involved have been sentenced to life imprisonment in the penitentiary of galut, with no chance of parole.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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