

Re'eh 5772

BS"D Parashat Re'eh 5772

Our parasha records HaShem's command that on the very day the Jews enter Eretz Yisrael, they make their way to Alon Morah. There they will find a valley created by Mount Grizim to the south and Mount Eyal to the north. Half the tribes will ascend Mt. Grizim and half will ascend Mt. Eyval. The Holy Arc is to be placed in the valley, surrounded by the kohanim, and around the kohanim will be the levite elders with the main portion of the levites on the mountain.

The kohanim and levite elders turned towards Mt. Grizim and declared the blessings which HaShem will present to those who keep the mitzvot and the curses to those who would reject them were declared towards Mt. Eyval. A particular mitzva was voiced while facing Mt. Grizim, and the people would answer Amen. Then the kohanim and levite elders would turn towards Mt. Eyval and voice the curse on one who rejected the mitzva, and all would answer Amen.

This protocol is seemingly schematically too well defined. Blessing vs. curse; mitzva vs. sin. Isn't there a middle way where one is not sinning nor is he performing a mitzva?

Let's return to this later.

Part A:

This week, our Prime Minister and the Minister of Education went to visit several kindergartens and early education classes in the west of the country. And I asked myself, "Is that the best they can do for us at this most turbulent time in our history; to sit and draw pictures with 5-year-olds?"

Then I recalled a story. There was once a Polish poritz (land owner) whose wide ranging properties were dotted with Jewish

shtetles. The poretz told his manager to increase the Jews' taxes by 10% and then report to him of their reaction. The manager returned and said that the Jews are up at arms in anger. The poretz then instructed the manager to increase the taxes by another 10% and report back. He returned and said that the Jews are angrily demonstrating in the streets. At the third increase of taxes the manager reported that the Jews were now sitting back and laughing. The poretz instructed the manager to rescind the last increase.

The poretz then explained to the manager that when things get so far out of hand for the Jews, and there is nothing they can do, they sit back, have a good laugh and wait for their God to intervene – which He eventually does.

Mssrs. Netanyahu and Sa'ar looked over the globe in the PM's office and said, "Lets take the day off and laugh with the children".

Where there is a mosque or church, anywhere in the world, it is a source of infective anti-Jew and anti-Israel hatred.

The UN is like a swarming mass of infective germs, microbes, bacterium, viruses etc, swarming around each other under a lab microscope. The automatic anti-Israel hand raise is commonplace in the Security Council, the General Assembly and in all the UN commissions. Israel is the only UN member state that cannot be a member of the Security Council, because we do not belong to any regional organization!

The European Union is no better in its attitude toward the Jewish State.

Today, most leaders of nations have their plates filled with unsolvable problems, but none have a plate as big as the one set before our Prime Minister.

Some of the minor problems facing the nation are: the civil war in Syria with hundreds of thousands of Syrians just

waiting to escape to the Golan; the worsening economies of Europe where 30% of our exports go; the rising price of food and raw materials; the unfriendly nation of Turkey to the north; the wool being pulled over our eyes by the American administration which promises to deal with Iran but passes trivial sanctions, and thinks we believe them; and the millions of Jews in the U.S. who could not care less about the Jewish State.

The more serious problems are three major headaches facing the State of Israel: Hizbullah in Southern Lebanon with their tens of thousands of rockets and missiles supplied by Syria and Iran, Iran (modern day Persia) which is tinkering with the atomic bomb, and the newest member into the Islamic circus – Egypt, with the largest military in the Middle East.

Our situation is the setting for the “Greatest show on Earth”, that HaShem will soon perform before mortal man.

I would like to address the major sources of stress in our lives, and attempt the impossible – to understand what HaShem is telling us.

Why Iran and why Hizbullah in Southern Lebanon? Egypt will come later.

The world owes the Jewish people enormous debts for our contributions to humanity, ranging from monotheism, Shabbat, justice, morality, science and so much more.

But there are two nations to whom we owe a religious and national debt – Iran-Persia and Southern Lebanon.

Hiram, King of Tzur (Tyre) in southern Lebanon, supplied King Shlomo with construction materials and artisans for the first Bet HaMikdash. And although he was paid handsomely, it appears that his merit has not been fully balanced.

Cyrus; King of Persia, permitted the Jewish exiles in his

lands to return and rebuild the Bet Ha'Mikdash. 42,000 took advantage of the opportunity, and returned to Eretz Yisrael to rebuild the Bet HaMikdash under the leadership of Ezra and Nechemia. For this we owe the Persians a debt.

HaShem, whose accounting system of right and wrong, justice and injustice, is perfect, will not consummate the redemption process of Am Yisrael, as long as we, the Jewish nation, continue to owe these debts surrounding the Bet Hamikdash.

With every day of belligerence and hatred by Iran and Hizbullah, the debt becomes smaller, until the hate neutralizes any residual good that they have done for us.

Egypt is another story. Their re-entry into headline history has more far reaching implications – the authenticity of the Bible itself.

Several times in the past, I have brought in these messages the commentary of the Malbim on the book of Yechezkel (Ezekiel) chapter 32 verse 17.

It will come to pass in the end of days, after the Jewish people will return to the land of Israel, that the nations will come together in order to capture Yerushalayim. The prophet names the nations who will come. Gog, the king of Meshech and Tuval from the north and west who are uncircumcised and called "Edom", who are the descendants of Yefet living now in Europe. And Paras, Kush, and the House of Turgama who are all circumcised and adhering to the belief of Yishmael, will join with the children of Edom to attempt to capture the Land of Israel from the Jews.

But when they arrive, they will create chaos among themselves and make war on each other, that is, Edom will make war on Yishmael because their beliefs are different.

And there God will judge them in sword and blood as stated by the prophet Zecharia chapter 14.

*And here the prophet (Yechezkel) relates how they all will be lost; and singles out Egypt, Ashur and Elam who adhere to the religion of Yishmael and are today circumcised. He then mentions Meshech, Tuval and Edom, their kings and princes from the north who are all uncircumcised. And between them will there be a war. **The first to be utterly destroyed will be the Egyptians**, who are the closest to the Land of Israel and will come forward first and fall. Then the Assyrians and Persians will come to avenge their ally and they all will be destroyed.*

The Egyptians “will be utterly destroyed” as they were at the time of the exodus. But before they become submerged under the 6 billion cubic meters of water from the Nasser Lake when the great Aswan Dam breaks, I would not be surprised if they undergo a series of plagues reminiscent of what transpired 3300 years ago, as related in the Torah.

With regard to Iran, I quoted the The Midrash Yalkut Shimoni, commenting on the end of the Book of Yeshayahu (#499):

In the future, Paras (Persia-Iran) will be the dread of the entire world. The world's leaders will be frustrated in their useless efforts to save what they can, to no avail. The people of Yisrael will also be petrified by the impending danger. HaShem will say to us, “Why are you afraid? All of this I have done in order to bring you the awaited redemption. And this redemption will not be like the redemption from Egypt, which was followed by suffering. This redemption will be absolute, followed with peace”.

I would suggest to the PM and the ministers not to be nervous, but just fulfill their functions in accordance to what is necessary for the security of the nation. But with full knowledge that the invisible hand of HaShem is always upon us. He will bless His chosen people as was divulged to our prophets.

We, in Eretz Yisrael, will merit to see the destruction of our enemies and the fulfillment of our great destiny.

Part B:

The Mishna in tractate Ta'anit states that the happiest days in their times were Yom Kippur and the 15th of Av.

The gemara explains that the joy of Yom Kippur was generated by the knowledge that HaShem forgives our sins on that day.

The joy of the 15th of Av was based on a religious-historical event.

In the year 733 BCE, Hoshea ben Elah ascended the throne of the northern tribes of Israel. These tribes separated from the southern tribes of Yehuda and Binyamin through an act of betrayal by the arch evil Yeravam ben Navat. In order to consolidate his newly established "nation", Yeravam prohibited his citizens from going to Yerushalayim. This was the situation when Hoshea ben Elah became king.

On the 15 of Av, Hoshea rescinded the prohibition.

Then the Gemara asks, "Since Hosea ben Elah opened the way to Yerushalayim, why, in his time, did HaShem permit the Assyrians to exile the ten tribes?"

And the answer which the Gemara provides is that Hosea ben Elah opened the way to the holy city, but the people did not come! And Hoshea was held personally accountable because he did not force the people to come to Yerushalayim.

Strange: King Hosea could have claimed that he opened the way to Yerushalayim, and if the nation did not come, why is he being held accountable? His status after removing the barriers and border guards was one of neutrality – no mitzva and no avaira (sin).

To return to the blessings and curses on the two mountains. it

appears from the protocol of Grizim and Eyval, that there are only two possibilities which apply in our relationship with HaShem – mitzva or avaira. There is no neutral zone.

King Hosea was punished for not forcing the Jews in the north to reunite with their brothers to the south and to the holy city of Yerushalayim.

Sound strangely familiar?

For the last 64 years the gates to the holy land have been open to all Jews. Many came but many did not!

The punishment of the northern tribes for not coming to Yerushalayim was banishment into exile until this very day. What can be the punishment for today's knowledgeable and Torah erudite Jews of the US and other exile communities who cling to the galut?

There is no middle, neutral road regarding the mitzva of being in Eretz Yisrael – If you are here, you are fulfilling a Torah mitzva; if you are not here, the Gemara in Ketuvot states that you are as one who does not have God in his heart.

HaShem cannot punish the Jews who refuse to come home with exile, because they are already in exile.

Their punishment will be to live in Eretz Yisrael! [sarcasm]

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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