

Re'eh 5779

BS"D Parashat Re'ai 5779

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Open Your Eyes and See!

Devarim 11,26-28:

וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁמַע ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי אֹמֵר וְהָיָה לְךָ בְּרָכָה וְשִׁשְׁבַּע
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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 four possibilities in the Creator-Yisrael relationship:

1- "...if you obey..." – life will be a blessing

2- "...if you do not obey..." – then life will be a curse

3,4- "Perceive! I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse", when life is 3- a blessing disguised as a curse, 4- when life is a curse disguised as a blessing. 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 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 revulsion is intensified by the fact 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?

At "Black September" Jordan murdered more "Palestinians" than those killed in Israel in 120 years; with no threats of BDS.

However, if one has "Jewish eyes" he will discern that the double standard is a blessing in disguise!

How?

There is a powerful, subconscious compulsion behind the double standard which the Christian and Moslem countries are imposing against the Jewish State. It is their painful, destabilizing, maddening perception 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 of even being 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 facts 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 יִשְׁפֹּט 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.

Another 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 which fill the facilities of our neighbors' armies, we strive to maintain a qualitative edge. However, it is predicated in 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 the United States, Russia, England, France etc., is beyond 4 to one and in some cases 10 to one compared to Israel.

Here is the curse! Where is the blessing that arises from the curse?

These great quantities of weapons are used daily to fan the fires of hatred between the Arabs and themselves. In Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Sinai desert, Yemen, Somalia, Mali, Saudi Arabia, 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 Torah mitzvot and the quality of harsh justice (midat hadin) demands its full expression, our Father in heaven reluctantly decrees a curse upon His children, and 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 עֹבֵד עֲבָדִים וַיִּכְרֹתוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹבֵד עֲבָדִים וַיִּכְרֹתוּ אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹבֵד עֲבָדִים:

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.

And the fourth case of a blessing and a curse, when the curse is disguised as a blessing, for example:

A beautiful, spacious home in a nice Jewish neighborhood in London, Buenos Aires, 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 a great talmid chacham teaching. Pesach in any one of the high-end hotels which is not embarrassed to relieve you of 25-30 thousand dollars for the eight days.

Or, an adequate home or nice apartment in any one of the yeshiva communities, 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, and whisk 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.

Parashat Re'eh from beginning to end is Eretz Yisrael

Chapter 12,1 states:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה אֲמַרְתָּ אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲמַרְתָּ אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲמַרְתָּ אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲמַרְתָּ אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם

Moshe Rabbeinu tells the nation that the mitzvot of HaShem are to be fulfilled in Eretz Yisrael, the land that HaShem, the God of our fathers, has given us for an inheritance.

Chapter 14,2:

אנחנו אומה קדושה 'כי אנחנו אומה קדושה 'כי אנחנו אומה קדושה
אנחנו אומה קדושה 'כי אנחנו אומה קדושה 'כי אנחנו אומה קדושה

For we are a hallowed people, chosen by HaShem to be His chosen nation because of our inherent spiritual nature.

The Land was chosen and sanctified by the Creator. He chose the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov to live in the Land to serve as the torchbearers of His presence in this world.

Happy and blessed are the descendants who have kept the faith by returning to the Land and fulfilling the call from Sinai with no lame excuses.

How very sad that so many Jews are duped to believe fantasies that keep them incarcerated in that penitentiary of galut.

May Hashem open their eyes as the parasha demands with the word "Re'ai" – see. That they should see that their religious life is compared to a driver whose foot is pressed on the accelerator pedal down to the floor while the gear is in neutral or even in reverse.

Shabbat Shalom and a meaningful, sincere Chodesh Elul.

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