

Shemini 5773

BS"D Parashat Shemini 5773

Part A:

At the most dramatic moment in our parasha, when Nadav and Avihu, the two eldest sons of Aharon haKohen haGadol placed sacred fire on the incense altar, our parasha relates (10:2-3)

וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַנֶּחֱסֵי הַבְּשָׂרִים וְאֶת־הַשֶּׁמֶן וַיִּזְבֹּחַ אֹתָם בְּאֵת־הַזֶּבֶחַ

וַיִּבְרַח אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּשְׂרֹף אֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
:וַיִּשְׂרֹף אֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

And fire came out from the presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.

Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the Lord spoke of when he said: "Among those who approach me I will be proved holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored.

And Aharon remained silent.

Aharon remained silent because he understood the message that HaShem had sent to the Jewish people.

Part B:

Now, at the close of Pessach the holiday of freedom, we should take the time to consider what the holiday meant for each of us.

A fundamental principle of the Hagada is that each Jew should see in his mind's eye that he too was liberated from Egyptian slavery. In addition to being a fundamental principle it is also a convenient and functional one, albeit not in the manner that our rabbis had intended. But leave it to the Jewish genius, imagination and ingenuity to round off the corners and

square the circles of Halacha and tradition to fit the convenience of the moment.

This same principle can be utilized for each Jew to see himself as if he too was with Yehoshua Bin Nun when storming the city of Yericho. He can remain in Boro Park today, close his eyes and see himself as if he too is living in Eretz Yisrael, defending its borders and connected with the Jews who are building Torah and the land.

It sounds absurd, but the opinions within the religious communities in galut abound with greater absurdities!

I am writing this, as always, with full knowledge that the Jews in galut, except for a trickle, will not return home. In the USA, the reform and conservatives are on a slippery slope to assimilation. Others like Satmar and the "Yeshivishe" world who would not eat in the home of an "orthodox" Jew and view marriage with the "orthodox" as shmad (conversion to another faith), are close to declaring themselves as the "Real Am Yisrael", not very different from the early Christians who declared themselves as the "New Israel" with a new testament, abandoned Yerushalayim for points west, and declared the rabbis and majority of Am Yisrael as rejects.

The remaining "Orthodox" – OU, Young Israel, Yeshivah University – will wake up but, I am afraid, too late.

Part C:

A RETURN TO MEGILAT ESTHER

Probably the most intriguing dilemma regarding the Megila, the 24th book of the TaNaCh is its total absence of HaShem's name. However, I believe that the absence of His name was not a literary, historical or religious oversight on the part of Mordechai and Esther, but was intentionally eliminated in order to emphasize that HaShem's was present at every moment and in every place in the episode, in every line and in every

word and in-between them all.

The Megila consists of short “vignettes” conveniently and coincidentally pieced together to create a most improbable drama. While, in fact, the dramatic links were forged by Hashem and then welded together, as the Master stands invisibly in the background.

How often do we search for HaShem in our private and national lives, but with nary a realistic hope of finding Him. How totally wrong! HaShem is on the front, middle and last pages of every newspaper in Eretz Yisrael, which serve as commentaries to the Megilot of our lives.

To demonstrate this, I choose at random the front page of the Jerusalem Post, of the 20th of Nisan (March 31, 2013).

Headline: GAS FROM TAMAR RESERVOIR (offshore of Haifa) BEGINS TO FLOW INTO ISRAEL

What does it really mean?

Following WWII, an Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry was sent to Palestine to study conditions there and report to the UN. At that time there were about 600,000 Jews and a non-stipulated Arab population, the vast majority of whom had come from neighboring Arab countries in search of work at the Jews initiatives. The findings of the Committee cover three volumes; but one conclusion is most interesting. The learned committee concluded that in terms of available water, Palestine could not support any more people.

It was announced last week that the population of the Medina has surpassed 8 million (6 million of them Jews), and I don't know anyone who is thirsty!

What the learned members of the committee were not aware of was the Gemara (Gitin 57a) that explains the expression “Eretz Zvi” (translated as either A Land of the Deer or A Beautiful

Land), which the prophet Yirmiyahu used to describe Eretz Yisrael.

A deer's skin grows to any dimension necessary to cover the animal as long as it is alive; but when the deer is no longer alive and the skin removed, it shrinks and can no longer cover the area it did before.

The Prophet Yirmiyahu states that Eretz Yisrael expands and contracts according to the number of Jews living here. When the nation is in galut, the land turns into a desert unable to support more than a few camels, but when Am Yisrael is present in the Land, it expands to supply the needs of every Jew here.

The discovery of gas in the two reservoirs – Tamar and its much bigger brother Leviatan – makes us energy independent in terms of natural gas; and beneath the gas is oil. We will be energy independent until the Mashiach comes, and will soon be a major exporter!

I have often written in these weekly messages that, based on the words of the prophets, we in Eretz Yisrael are destined to be materially the wealthiest nation in the world – followed by a return of the entire Jewish people to the Torah.

The gifts of HaShem will free us from our dependence on gentile “friends” and from the goodwill of Jewish communities in the galut who will be sending their “shnorrers” here for financial assistance.

In Shemot chap 6 HaShem tells Moshe:

אֲנִי ה' וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים כְּעֹלְמֵנוּ וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים כְּעֹלְמֵנוּ
:אֲנִי ה' וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים כְּעֹלְמֵנוּ וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים כְּעֹלְמֵנוּ

אֲנִי ה' וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים כְּעֹלְמֵנוּ ...אֲנִי ה' וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים
'אֲנִי ה' וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים כְּעֹלְמֵנוּ וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים כְּעֹלְמֵנוּ

I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke

*of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them,
and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with
mighty acts of judgment ...*

*And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand
to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to
you as a possession. I am the LORD'.*

It has come to pass in our days. HaShem has handpicked everyone in Eretz Yisrael to turn the dream into reality.

Indeed, how fortunate we are!

Another headline on the same page:

US SAYS IT TAKES NORTH KOREA THREATS SERIOUSLY

Why just now?

1- The new-old US administration has decided to flex its pro-Islamic muscles in order to force Israel to make suicidal concessions to the Amaleki Arabs. To this end, the American Secretary of State, who it seems has nothing else to do with his time, will be coming to Israel every two weeks to make sure that we free more murderers from our jails and do not put another nail in a wall in Judea and Samaria.

But as the Yiddish saying goes, "a mensch tracht und Gut lacht" – "Man plans and God laughs".

HaShem is making sure that the President and his cabinet will be so busy with Korea, China and Japan they would have no time for that thorny little Jewish country in "Palestine".

2- It is the feeling here that the US administration is perfectly aware of Iran's intention to build a nuclear device, but the President is creating smoke screens in the form of sanctions and boycotts to give them the time they need.

Israel is under threat but it does not ring any bells in the

steeple of the White House.

Comes HaShem and behind the scenes places the US in a similar position, so that now Obama will have some derech eretz for Binyamin Netanyahu, and act to sever the tentacles of the evil axis of Iran and North Korea.

How great is the salvation of our God!

3- The article states that the US is sending to the area warships and planes, including those that can carry nuclear bombs. If the N. Korean verbal threats gather impetus and enter into the realm of "pushing", the US will begin calling up its reserve military; and the President and his new Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel will restore the military draft.

I have sent this warning several times before. Your sons and daughters will be inducted into the US army. Religious observance by woman or "divinity" studies will not be ample reasons for exemption as they were in the past.

In the book "With All Your Might", I wrote:

"Now, one might guess that I am suggesting Aliya to Eretz Yisrael as an alternative; but what kind of a solution is that, for here too your sons must serve in the army. True! But what a difference it makes when your brigade commander, a colonel, is a Yeshiva bocher who doesn't shave during the sefira period; who understands that the regulation time of half an hour for shacharit is not enough; who makes sure that what you and he eat is kosher; who will not let you violate the Shabbat unless it is halachically permitted, when the Colonel, who is unapproachable for a regular soldier, davens with you and even blesses you with birkat kohanim.

When your flab turns into muscle and you get calloused feet as the ground you march on are the hills of Yehuda and

Shomron, as did your forefathers 2000 years before you in the defense of Eretz Ha'Kodesh.

A member in my bet kneset told me of his first day in the US army in 1957. The first night before going to sleep, the sergeant called out to all the men, "Be very careful with your personal belongings. For all you know you might be sleeping near a Jew".

I recall a poem we learned in high school. It described two soldiers in the First World War who were shooting at each other. One was a soldier in the German army and the other a soldier in the Russian army – both were Jews. The stanzas revert from the thoughts of one soldier to the other. The German Jew asks HaShem why he has to serve the Kaiser, and the Russian Jew asks HaShem why he has to serve the Czar.

Both take careful aim and mortally wound each other. With their waning strength, they both crawl out to meet the man who is taking away his life. When they are very close, one says, "Sh'ma Yisrael". The other says, "HaShem Elokaynu". And then gripping each other's arms both call out, "HaShem Echad".

So tonight, go into your son's bedroom and look at him sleeping so peacefully.

Don't forget to pull up the blankets. You wouldn't want him to catch cold.

It is incumbent upon each Torah Jew to try and understand the messages HaShem is constantly sending us, as Aharon was able to do at the demise of his two sons.

In totality, HaShem is telling us, "Jew! Beware! The world is a dangerous place for you, except in your homeland – Eretz Yisrael".

If world affairs continue to deteriorate, the Jews in the galut could find themselves in a most regrettable situation, with no way of escape.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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