

Tazria Metzora 5777

BS"D Parashat Tazria Metzora 5777

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Spiritual Contamination & Yom HaShoah

SPIRITUAL CONTAMINATION

Tsara'at is a pale area on one's body in which the hair has lost its color by turning white. The inflicted person becomes tamai (impure) and is prohibited from entering a walled city in Eretz Yisrael, thereby being excluded from being a part of normal Jewish society. This is the punishment for the sin of lashon hara – derogatory and defaming speech.

In contrast to the spiritual world(s), our material universe consists of vast numbers of distinct entities.

The average human body consists of 37.2 trillion cells and the number of microbial cells is estimated at 100 trillion. One teaspoon of a neutron star would weigh six billion tons on earth. It takes 225 million years for our sun to travel around our galaxy. Space expands faster than the speed of light at 300,000 kilometers per second.

In the non-physical spiritual world the numbers decrease dramatically.

Multiple numbers fulfill a critical role in the details of the

Torah and its mitzvot. There were six days of creation, ten generations from Adam to Noach and ten from Noach to Avraham, 210 years of slavery and 40 years in the desert. It takes ten adult men for a minyan, two witnesses and seven days of Pesach and Succot. The list is endless.

Notwithstanding the multiple numbers which are critical in the details of the Torah, the keystone that supports the 248 organs and 365 tendons of the Torah is limited numerically to only one, as expressed in the words –

אֵתָּבָרְךָ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים

Ata ba'char'tanu mi'kal ha'amim

You have chosen us above all other nations

This is the lifeblood of Judaism.

Judaism emanates from HaShem's revelation on Mount Sinai. There He separated the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov from all other nations, just as a man chooses a particular woman to be his wife while rejecting all others.

When the Shechina (Divine Presence of Hashem) appeared on the scene, it created a chain reaction that instantaneously produced 613 mitzvot. They continue to increase exponentially engulfing the Jewish nation to this day.

If a Jew rejects this most fundamental principle of our faith – “Ata bachartanu – You have chosen us above all other nations” – there is no rationale for keeping the Torah or to be Jewish for that matter. If we are just another one in the family of nations, and even if we are more moral, it is suicidal to remain Jewish and suffer the indignities, degradation, and genocidal hatred of the goyim (non-Jewish nations).

If a Jew rejects “Ata bachartanu,” then he has no legal or

moral claim to the land east of the Mediterranean Sea after being away from it for 2000 years.

If a Jew rejects “Ata bachartanu,” how can he explain our phenomenal “luck” of having survived the long and tortuous galut (dispersion) and the Holocaust to find ourselves back in Eretz Yisrael? And how can the thin green line of IDF soldiers hold back the hordes of hundreds of millions of Arab enemies whose hatred for us is boundless?

If a Jew rejects “Ata bachartanu,” how can he recite the bracha (blessing) over the Torah “Asher bachar tanu mekol ha’amim – You who has chosen us from all the nations”?

In the galut, the unaffiliated, Reform and Conservatives leaders and laymen, who reject the concept of a “chosen nation,” are Jews by accident of birth but are “outsiders” to our past and to the Jewish nation’s future.

Observant Jews in the galut reject the idea that they are part of God’s chosen nation by the mere fact that they continue to live among those nations whom HaShem rejected from his spiritual domain. If you believe that you have been chosen by the Creator, why would you be content to live in the slums of humanity when the gates of HaShem’s holy land are open?

“Ata bachartanu” is the fulcrum that creates the great divide between the authentic Jew and the hangers on. It is told that the Baal Shem Tov revealed that he was placed in this world to teach the Jews to discern between the primary and the petty non-essential factors in life.

“Ata bachartanu” serves to distinguish the sincere authentic Jew from those whose visible deeds do not portray their insincere and inconsistent inner feelings.

Jews who deny that the Creator has chosen the Jewish nation are guilty of speaking lashon hara about the God of Israel. They are akin to the pale blemish of one who is afflicted with

tzara'at, having lost their particular Jewish belief of "Ata bachartanu". We are living witnesses to the spiritual contamination that they create in their surroundings.

YOM HASHOAH

The inevitable question. How did it come about in HaShem's world that six million Jews (the actual number is closer to seven and a half million Jews), including one-and-a-half million children, were sent to Olam Haba (the next world) through the chimneys of Aisav's death camps?

It would be irreverent to answer that the Shoah was punishment for our sins, because all Jews are mutual guarantors (kol Yisrael arayvim ze la'ze – all of Israel are responsible for one another) and only the Jews of Europe and parts of North Africa suffered that fate. The Jews of the U.S. and Eretz Yisrael were not only spared but also prospered.

My personal understanding of these events consoles me in some small way when facing the unspeakable horrors of the Shoah.

The Gemara (Bava Kama 60a) explains the underlying meaning of the verse in Shemot 22,5:

אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶרֶץ חֵמָה וְאִם אֶרֶץ חֵמָה וְאִם אֶרֶץ חֵמָה וְאִם אֶרֶץ חֵמָה
וְאִם אֶרֶץ חֵמָה וְאִם אֶרֶץ חֵמָה וְאִם אֶרֶץ חֵמָה

If a fire spreads to weeds (in another's field) and devours bales of wheat or uncut wheat or the entire field, the negligent perpetrator must make payment.

In addition to the explicit judicial responsibility of a man for his actions, the Gemara explains that "weeds" are the evildoers of the world and "the bales of wheat and uncut wheat" are the righteous of Am Yisrael. When HaShem decrees

that the “weeds” be destroyed, the free hand of the Angel of Death begins with the coveted “bales of wheat” – the first and most to suffer are the righteous who happen to be present among the evildoers.

I reject any allegation that my fellow Jewish brothers and sisters sinned to a degree which justified the horrors of the Shoah. Some “experts” at counting other peoples’ sins place the blame on assimilation. But never has Jewish history encountered the numbers and rate of assimilation and intermarriage found today among the Jews of the United States, yet they continue to thrive. Other sin counters put the blame on Zionism, while others on the lack of Zionism.

The Shoah was HaShem’s decree, beginning with the First World War, that the evil descendants of Aisav should put an end to one another and that Aisav should devour Aisav. In other words, Russians should kill Germans, and Germans should slaughter Englishmen, the Ukrainians should kill the Americans, and Americans should kill the Turks. It is common knowledge that the Second World War was a continuation of the First World War, after an extended ceasefire.

The Jews were turned into smoke and soap because the leash on insanity was released, and the Jews were caught up in it BECAUSE WE WERE THERE! We were there because we did not understand that when Aisav kills Aisav, it is no place for Ya’akov to be.

When the inhibitions of hatred are released, then the ever-present hatred of Jews rises to the fore and Aisav seeks to put an end to Ya’akov.

If you reject the proposition that the two world wars were death sentences decreed on the goyim, and we were swept into it just because we were there, you are left with two very bad options. Either the Jews of Europe sinned to the extent that

1,500,000 little children had to die, or the whole matter is beyond our comprehension. So let's just continue building bigger and more expensive Holocaust museums and go back to living.

Conclusion: If you live in a depraved or a potentially depraved gentile society, then no matter how frum or how erudite in Torah, you can suddenly find yourself swept up in the tsunamis and 9/11's of that nation.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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