

# Tetzaveh 5776

BS"D Parashat Tetzaveh 5776

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## Middle East Scorecard

One needs a scorecard to keep track of the sides and the initiatives of what is now transpiring in the Arab Gehennom of the Middle East.

Assad of Syria is from the minority Alawian faith which is attached to Shi'ah Islam, and he, as his father before him, tyrannically rules over a Syrian Sunni majority.

Sunni rebels or militants from many countries are fighting this Assad regime. To date close to a million people have been killed in Syria during the five years of conflict. Another eight million have lost their homes, forced to become refugees, with great numbers breaking down the walls of Europe destitute and in desperation.

Shi'ite Iran and Shi'ite Hezbollah of Lebanon are fighting for Assad. They are heavily backed by Russia, which has huge financial interests in Iran including the sale of sophisticated weapons. Russia needs Shi'ite Iran to help prevent a potential uprising of Russia's southern Moslem nations which were once part of the Soviet Union.

Sunni Turkey is backing the militants opposing Assad. Turkey, as a member of NATO, is demanding that the European military pact join in the battle against Assad. To date only the UK, France and Germany have participated minimally.

The US is backing the rebels against Russia, which is bombing them.

The Sunni Gulf States such as Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, as well as Egypt, are about to enter the fray with ground troops to topple the Alawite-Shi'ate Assad.

Let's not forget ISIS or ISIL which controls large swaths of land in Iraq and Syria, and is whetting its appetite for Jihad murder to conquer the world.

Syria, the rebels, the US, Russia, the Gulf States, Turkey, Egypt, Iran, Hezbollah, the Kurds – everyone against everyone in a free-for-all of murder for religious, political and economic interests but in total disregard of the others' interests. However, there is complete agreement on one single item – Israel. Ironically and miraculously, and despite all the bloodshed, none of them has lifted a hand or a bullet against the Jewish State.

Coincidence? Hardly! The explanation is found in our parsha.

## What merit do we have?

The Gemara (Yuma 5b) points out a discrepancy regarding the manner in which Aharon and his four sons donned the sacred Kohanic vestments.

In parashat Tetzaveh (28:41), it states:

וְאַהֲרֹן יִדְּבֵשׁ אֶת־בְּנָיו יְצַוֵּם יַחְדָּם וְיִדְּבֵשׁוּ אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן יַחְדָּם וְיָבִישׁוּ אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן יַחְדָּם

*And you shall dress Aharon your brother (with the holy vestments) together with his sons.*

However, in parashat Pekudai (40,13-14), it states:

וְיָבִישׁוּ אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן יַחְדָּם וְיָבִישׁוּ אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן יַחְדָּם וְיָבִישׁוּ אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן יַחְדָּם

:וְיָבִישׁוּ אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן יַחְדָּם וְיָבִישׁוּ אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן יַחְדָּם וְיָבִישׁוּ אֶת־הַכֹּהֵן יַחְדָּם

*And you shall dress Aharon with the holy vestments and anoint him to serve Me. And you shall bring his sons and dress them in the tunics.*

In parashat Tetzaveh, the understanding is that Aharon and his sons are to be dressed in unison; whereas, in parashat Pekudai, the Torah states that only after Aharon has completed donning his holy vestments do his sons begin to don theirs.

At first, the rabbis of the Gemara deemed the entire matter to be of no consequence, because at the time of the next Bet Hamikdash when the order of dress will become pertinent, there will be resurrection of the dead and Moshe and Aharon will direct us regarding how to conduct the matter. But the Gemara proceeds to deal with the question, concluding that, in fact, Aharon donned the vestments and only after he completed doing so did his sons don their vestments.

My understanding of the order of donning the holy vestments relates to the basic question of the source of Kohanic sanctity.

If Aharon and his sons donned the holy vestments in unison, then Aharon (and all subsequent Kohanim Gedolim) are equal members of the Kohanic family, with the Kohen Gadol first among equals. However, if Aharon donned his holy vestments before his sons, the implication is that the sacred order of Kehuna emanated from HaShem to Aharon and from Aharon to his sons. This implies that Aharon was ordained to be the source of Kehuna, which then emanated from him to his sons.

This has great implications for our understanding of HaShem's relationship with the Jewish nation.

In parashat Yitro, HaShem relates to Am Yisrael with the sobriquet 'mamlechet kohanim' – Kingdom of Kohanim. However, only 5 percent of the Jews are Kohanim.

I submit:

HaShem's revelation of His intimate relationship with the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov was identical to the process of sanctifying the Kohanim. Am Yisrael is not first among equal nations. We are the only nation with whom HaShem has an intimate relationship, and it is only through us – and because of us – that the Creator deals with what is known as “humanity”.

Chazal have taught that HaShem created the world only to bring forth the Jewish nation. And indeed as HaShem has planned it, that the only proof of His existence is His guardianship and the miraculous survival of the Jewish nation for 4000 years, and our unprecedented return to Eretz Yisrael after 2000 years in exile.

Now one might ask why we should believe that HaShem is zealously guarding Medinat Yisrael? Are we such great tzaddikim to deserve His supernatural miracles?

To this I would reply with two reasons:

1- There were very few generations where so many Jews were willing to put their lives in jeopardy to be in Eretz Yisrael for no other reason than they are Jews. Both Torah-observant people, and those who are not halachically observant have come to this Land to defend and develop her, and will never leave – because they are Jews. The proof of the love the people in Medinat Yisrael have for the Land of Israel is the millions of other Jews who choose to remain in the galut rather than risk their lives for the Jewish State. It is this love of being Jewish that resonates in the heavens and arouses HaShem's love, devotion, and protection of His chosen people.

2- If the Medina would, God forbid, not succeed, it would be the beginning of the end of the Jewish nation the world over – a situation that HaShem would never permit. And the proof:



*Yeravam rested with his ancestors, the kings of Yisrael. And Zechariah his son succeeded him as king.*

The second Yeravam was very far from being a halachic person; indeed, he was a rasha. Yet, he was victorious in all his military campaigns, including enlarging the borders of the Land and capturing Damascus.

The reason for his great successes could not be attributed to his great 'righteousness'. It was because "the Lord had seen how bitterly everyone in Israel was suffering with no one to help them. And the Lord had said that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven".

When the enemies of Yisrael are so many, and the merits of the nation are less than what they should be, HaShem has no choice but to save His chosen people just as a father protects his beloved child.

And this explains why the Medina remains unscathed while existing in a veritable sea of war and hate.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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