

Tetzaveh and Zachor 5780

BS"D Parashat Tetzaveh and Zachor 5780

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The Luxury of Knowing

The accepted practice when dealing with a nation's future is for the planners to research its past accomplishments and its contemporary human resources and work from there to develop a rational approach to the future possibilities of the nation. Not so with the Jewish people. As in all things, we are very different than any other nation. We don't predict where we are heading based on from where we came; we have the luxury of knowing our future destiny and need only synchronize the present with that future which includes the in-gathering of all Jews to our holy land; restoration of our sovereignty over all of biblical Eretz Yisrael, the Bet Hamikdash and much more.

A Message to the Gentiles

This Shabbat – Shabbat Zachor, we will read about the irrational, inborn hatred of Amalek towards the Jewish nation. There is no meeting ground with Amalek that could even begin a rational discussion to alleviate the hate. So HaShem who knows the instincts of all men declared in His Torah that there is only one way to deal with this evil seed, and that is to rid the planet of them, and of every vestige of their evil culture, down to the last Volkswagen.

In contrast to Amalek, our relations with the larger gentile world can be conducted in a constructive manner, and so it is to these gentiles to whom I am directing this week's parasha.

Purim

In the wake of our amazing military victory over the mixed multitude under Persian rule who were directed by the king to destroy the Jews, there occurred two dramatic reactions: 1) Our rabbis taught that the Jewish people fulfilled the Torah's mitzvot after being coerced to do so at Mount Sinai. But in the wake of the "turnabout" miracle that occurred in Persia the Jewish nation declared that they were now willingly accepting all of HaShem's directives. 2) As reported in the Megila, great numbers of gentiles after witnessing the "turnabout" and the religious resurgence of Am Yisrael, rejected their gentile religious beliefs and became Jews (Megila 8,17;9,1):

In every province and in every city to which the edict of the king came, there was joy and gladness among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating. And many people of other nationalities became Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them. On the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overcome them, but now the reality was reversed (v'nahafoch) and the Jews attained mastery over those who hated them.

In our times we have witnessed an "historical reversal" far greater than what had occurred at the time of Mordechai and Esther. In three short years, the Jewish nation reverted from being gassed to death and burned in crematoria to establishing the third Jewish Commonwealth in the holy land. From 1945 to 1948 the world literally turned over.

However, in contrast to what occurred in Persia in the wake of the miraculous “reversal” when untold numbers of gentiles converted to Judaism, there was no such development among contemporary gentiles towards Judaism.

There are hundreds of millions of gentiles the world over who now reject their religious teachings; most churches are virtually empty except for several old people and perhaps a grandchild helping them, and the mosques are staging areas for training terrorists.

Our tradition states that at a certain point in history many nations will become Jews. Three times a day we recite the liturgical poem Ayeinu Le’shabai’ach that predicts the future tikun olam – reformation of the world’s evils, when all will accept the “Kingdom of Heaven”.

How is this going to happen? By a vast worldwide miracle, or by the sword as did Mohamed when he crossed North Africa to Europe? Who knows! But as things look now it will be a more natural process.

I put forward the suggestion that we change our paradigm vis-à-vis the gentiles. That we break the religious isolationist bubble that encloses us and call for all enlightened peoples to investigate the religious messages of Judaism. They have to be told that we, as the “mother” of all monotheistic beliefs, are the only authentic messengers of the Creator. They must also be informed that in the advent of Mashiach, conversion to Judaism will cease.

I am not suggesting that we be lenient in the conversion process, because Halacha is king; it is just that Judaism has so much to offer mankind, which is stumbling as a blind person in a maze. How can the multitudes of nations accept the “Kingdom of HaShem” if they are unaware of who HaShem is, and our eternal bond as His chosen people? As our rabbis have taught and as it appears in the prophecies of our Nevi'im,

We have returned from physical exile, to be free to show the world the way of "Tikun Olam", the reformation of all mankind. As stated by the prophet Yirmiyahu (16,19):

The Lord is my refuge in time of distress, to You the nations will come from the ends of the earth and say, "Our ancestors possessed nothing but false gods, worthless idols that did them no good".

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