

movements.

When the history of our times will be written, American orthodoxy will probably be credited with no more than a footnote. Lakewood is not better than the Slabodka yeshiva, which is now a clothing factory. Ner Yisrael of Baltimore is not better than the Ponovezher yeshiva, which is now a non-Jewish school. Telz of Cleveland is not holier than the Telz yeshiva, which is now a dilapidated eroding shell. The Fifth Avenue Synagogue is not more sacred than the beit kneset of the Saba Kadisha of Ruzhin, which is now a carpentry shop. The central beit kneset of Brisk is now a theater, and the yeshiva building in Kaminetz now serves as a draft center for the Belarus army. This is the fate of all Jewish communities in the galut.

My heart aches because of the Chareidi groups in Eretz Yisrael.

I did not attend their demonstration in Yerushalayim. Not because I deny the validity of some of their claims. I understand the need to develop the next generation of their Torah scholars together with the Torah scholars of the religious Zionist yeshivot, where military service at the sensitive age of 18 to 23 could be detrimental.

I did not attend the demonstration because the discussion of military service is no longer an ideological issue between rational people. It has degenerated into feelings of hatred by the Chareidi side towards whoever disagrees with their view. And where there is hate between Jew and Jew – I am not there. I am willing to criticize, but not to hate.

My objection to the Chareidi conduct is derived from their insensitive, ingratiating attitude towards those who sacrifice so much in order that we can live normal lives in Eretz Yisrael. Without Tzahal, not only would there not be yeshivot here, no Jew would be able to live here for more than one day.

At the end of the Megila reading, we praise the evil Charvona for bringing to the King's attention the gallows that Haman had prepared for Mordechai, and upon which Haman was hanged. Charvona was Haman's man, but he changed sides when he saw that Haman was going down. After 2700 years we still praise this man, which proves that we do have the quality of gratitude within us. So why does it stop just short of the soldiers of Tzahal?

Of all the many Chareidi yeshivot in Eretz Yisrael, I am quite certain that there is not even one in which the prayer for Tzahal is recited. Where is the hakarat hatov (thankfulness, appreciation, recognition) for the hundreds of thousands of their age who give three years of their lives to keep our nation safe and the yeshivot open?

It is standard procedure in the army for new recruits to take an oath of loyalty to the Medina and to the army.

Things would be much better here if yeshiva students who are exempt from military service would undergo two procedures:

1- Upon entering the yeshiva, every new student must take an oath of loyalty to Torah study, where he declares his stated goal to be as erudite as he can, without laxness or laziness.

2- Hospital visitations to see and experience the pain that wounded soldiers endure for the nation, and military cemeteries to see the price that so many have paid so that life can continue here, including the privilege to learn Torah.

Perhaps then they would understand that the prayer for Tzahal is **less** about our soldiers than it is for the yeshiva students **themselves**.

Purim 5774

The Gemara (Megila 7a) tells of Esther's request that the

miraculous salvation of the Jewish people and the events leading up to it be included in the TaNaCh (Bible) as its 24th book, to be an everlasting remembrance of our miraculous victory over the forces of Amalek.

The rabbis rejected her request, basing their rejection on a verse in Mishlay (Proverbs 24:20)

:אני לא כתבתי לך שלוש משלים ואני לא כתבתי לך משלים ואני לא כתבתי לך משלים

*Have I not written **three** sayings for you, sayings of counsel and knowledge*

The rabbis explained to Esther that this verse is the basis of our oral tradition that victory over Amelek may be written in the TaNaCh only three times: – once in parshat Beshalach in the book of Shemot, the second in parshat Ki Taytzay in the book of Devarim, and the third in the Book of Samuel, where King Shaul vanquished Amalek. If we were to add the miracle of Purim to the TaNaCh it would be the fourth victory over Amalek, which is prohibited.

Eventually, Esther convinced the rabbis that the two victories mentioned in Shemot and Devarim are to be counted as one entry, since they appear in the Torah; the episode of King Shaul in the book of Shmuel as the second entry which appears in the Neviim; and the victory over Haman as the third which appears in the Ketuvim.

(TaNaCh is an acronym of the first Hebrew letter of each of the three Torah subdivisions: Torah [Five Books of Moshe], Nevi'im [Prophets] and Ketuvim [Writings]).

The rabbis agreed; so today we have Megilat Esther as the 24th book of the TaNaCh.

The Gemara does not elaborate on the tradition stated by

Union, also sons of Amalek, together with their anti-Semitic ideology, were discarded into the trash bin of history.

Seventy years later – the year 2015 – we shall BE”H witness the destruction of another Amalek power.

Who will it be?

Perhaps it will be the Haman of the Koran spinning his hatred from Persia-Iran; or perhaps world Christianity or Islam; possibly all of them.

What makes this projection ever more interesting is the fact that the year 2015 is a Shmitta (Sabbatical) year and corresponds to our calendar year of 5775:

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Which means salvation.

I submit this in full knowledge that, at the end of the day, all human calculations could be proven false in the face of what HaShem has in store for us.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana