

Tzav – Purim 5779

BS"D Parashat Tzav – Purim 5779

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Who is the Third Amalek?

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 HaShem's intervention for the Jewish nation in our miraculous victory over the forces of Amalek.

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

:אָבִיבִי אֶתְּשֶׁנֶּה אֶתְּשֶׁנֶּה אֶתְּשֶׁנֶּה אֶתְּשֶׁנֶּה אֶתְּשֶׁנֶּה אֶתְּשֶׁנֶּה

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 Amalek may not be mentioned in the TaNaCh* more than three times, and since it already appears three times there is no possibility to include the events of Purim. The three times are: once in parashat 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, in the saga of King Shaul.

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 Nevi'im (prophets); 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 Melech Shlomo that Amalek may be written in the TaNaCh, because herein lies the hermetically sealed secret of how the final redemption will come about, and when.

I would like to share my thoughts on what is behind this tradition, with the hope that they will be verified in the very near future.

My premise is that the three appearances of Amalek as recorded in the TaNaCh means that when Amalek will be weakened or defeated three times in a short time frame of under 100 years, the final redemption of Am Yisrael will have arrived.

It has never yet happened in the history of nations that three evil empires fell in a short span of years; since it takes hundreds of years for an empire to develop, to peak, become corrupt and then die.

But it is occurring right now in our generation!

The count began in 1945, when Germany, unmistakably Amalek, was defeated.

Forty-six years later, in 1991, the leaders of the evil Soviet Union, also sons of Amalek, together with their anti-Semitic ideology, were discarded into the trash bin of history.

We can now expect to see the demise of a third Amalek. Who

will it be?

Perhaps the Haman of the Koran spinning his hatred from Persia-Iran; or perhaps world Christianity or Islam who view themselves as "replacement" religions of Judaism.

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

Fear

The Megila records that Achashverosh permitted the Jews to defend themselves on the 13th of Adar against their murderous neighbors in the 127 areas under the King's control. On that day, the Jews killed 75,000 of the enemy in the outlying areas. An additional 800 were killed in Shushan, the capital, on the 14th of Adar. In the two days of fighting on the 13th and 14th of Adar 75,800 Persians were killed!

וְהַיְהוּדִים הָרַגוּ מֵעַמֵּי הַיָּם וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה
וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה
:וְהַיְהוּדִים הָרַגוּ מֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה

And in every state and in every city wherever the King's decree reached, the Jews were happy and joyful feasting and in celebration, with many of the gentiles drawing close to Judaism because fear of the Jews was upon them

Fear of the Jew is a mighty weapon. It is alluded to in the Song at the Sea (shirat hayam) recited daily in the morning prayer (Shemot 15:14-16)

וְהַיְהוּדִים הָרַגוּ מֵעַמֵּי הַיָּם וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה וּמֵעַמֵּי הַבְּרָאָה
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The nations will hear and tremble; anguish will grip the people of Philistia. The chiefs of Edom will be terrified, the leaders of Moav will be seized with trembling, the people of Canaan will melt away. Terror and dread will fall on them. By the power of your arm Eretz Yisrael will be petrified as stone, until your people pass by, LORD, until the people you acquired pass by.

What are the lessons for our time?

Medinat Yisrael was awarded the rare opportunity of "fear of the Jews was upon them". When we could do no wrong, and the opportunities for a major leap towards our final redemption was in our hands.

It happened in 1967, as a result of the Six Day War. The world, both Jews and Gentiles, were preparing for the devastating, unspeakable destruction of the nascent Jewish State and the annihilation of all its Jewish citizens. Preparations were being made in the US to save the surviving Jewish children; as if there would have been any Jewish children to save had we lost the war. I recall reading that money was collected to erect a great memorial for the gallant State of Israel which is no more!

Israel at that time was small in area and tiny in population. Our army and air force were a mere shadow of what they are today.

The war erupted in the early hours of Monday morning, the 25th of Iyar (June 5th) when Israel made a preemptive attack, destroying the air forces of Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan and Saudia.

The ground war commenced. In 6 days, we liberated Yehuda, Shomron, the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights and Azza. On

Wednesday the holy soldiers of Tzahal liberated the Old City and for the first time in 2,000 years the Temple Mount was in our possession. Tzahal, with the aid of HaShem, did more in six days than what Yehoshua Bin Nun had accomplished in seven years!

The world was aghast – as if they had seen a ghost. For indeed we emerged from the grave of history to take our rightful place at the peak of God's miracles.

During those six days and even a bit later we could have removed the desecration of HaShem's holy Mount by demolishing the Al Aksa mosque and the golden domed building in the heat of battle, as was suggested by Rabbi Shlomo Goren, but rejected by Moshe Dayan.

And the world would have been silent.

We could have conquered Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and established pro-Israel puppet governments. And the world would have been silent.

We could have transferred all of the alien peoples from our lands and had a totally Jewish country. And the world would have been silent.

We could have expelled the murderous Arabs of Hevron and other potential threats across the Jordan River. And the world would have been silent.

But we did not do any of these justified acts because we were afraid to act like proper Jews. The 'fear of the Jews was upon them' did not register with our leaders.

Today Israel is being accused of war crimes. I admit to one unforgivable omission, when in 1948 and again in 1967 we did not expel all our enemies from the country, including the entire Gaza Strip. This is our crime, for which we, our children and grandchildren might yet have to pay the full

price.

We did not learn the lesson of Purim; that when HaShem performs miracles, it is incumbent upon us to advance the opportunities afforded us and proceed with conviction and courage along the path of Jewish redemption.

The Pasuk (verse) says (Devarim 28,10):

וְכָל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ יִרְאוּ כִּי קָרָאתָ בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְיִרְאוּ אֹתְךָ

And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall fear you

Rabbi Eliezer the Great explains (Berachot 6a) that the object that will instill fear in the hearts of our enemies is tefillin (phylacteries) placed on one's head.

The opportunity for 'fear of the Jews was upon them' will again present itself.

In view of the political and security experiences of the last years, and the religious awakening, I am confident that we will know how to seize the next opportunity to sanctify HaShem's holy name in Eretz Yisrael.

While in the Purim mode, I would like to conclude with a light story with a serious message.

An Arab once entered a bank in Yerushalayim, just as the automatic mechanism closed the safe. In reply to his demand to receive some cash, the teller told him that the safe could not be opened until eight o'clock the following morning. The Arab became very nasty, even threatening the life of the teller. At this point, the manager approached the Arab, picked him up, and threw him out.

While the Arab was nursing his wounds, the teller approached

him saying: "Didn't I tell you that the safe is closed until tomorrow morning?" The Arab turned to the teller and said: "Yes. You told me, but he explained it".

It is senseless to tell our enemies of the folly of their ways. They will understand only when it is explained to them, in the spirit of "Fear of the Jews was upon them".

Perplexed?

When the news arrived first in the capital city Shushan, that the Kings had decreed the death sentence on all Jews, the Megila records:

ששן ששן ששן

The City of Shushan is perplexed.

The accepted translations of "nevoch" are perplexed, confused, bewildered. However, I would think that the overriding emotion at the time was fear and trepidation, because every Jew must have felt the cold blade of the knife on their necks; so why the adverb "perplexed" which does not express "fear"?

I submit: Fear certainly gripping the Jews of the 127 regions under Persian control. But the immediate reactions were consternation, confusion and perplexity, caused by the suddenness of the change in their lives.

Until that day, the Jews were faithful, loyal and devoted members of the Persian society. Were they not honored guests at the King's royal feasts? Didn't they display their allegiance to the Reign by turning their backs on their Jewish nationality and by partaking of the vessels taken from the Holy Temple in Yerushalayim?

How was it possible that in one moment everything changed, from being fellow citizens totally accepted in Persian society to suddenly becoming enemies of the State who have to be

eliminated, in one day – with no appeals?

But it is happening again in Europe. The Jews of Europe who so much seek the good life of the galut, are waking up to a new day where the ground under them is burning. Fear stalks them in their airports, sport arenas, central bus stations, batei kneset, yeshivot and just walking down the street. The fear is beginning to grip the general population within Western Europe and will move very quickly to all of the continent. At some point the Jews will be singled out for bringing the Islamic terror, as irrational as it might sound.

We Jews are very clever people, but most suffer from two faults. They love the galut because of their obsession to be accepted by the goyim, and they are slow learners when it comes to their own survival.

Shabbat Shalom ve'Purim samayach,

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