

Tzav & Shabbat HaGadol 5772

BS"D Parshat Tzav and Shabbat HaGadol 5772

On the night of the 15th of Nisan, the seder night, each and every Jew is directed to envision himself as if he had experienced the exodus from Egyptian slavery. This is a near impossible requirement, because the deja vu experience cannot be elicited at will, it just happens or it doesn't happen.

But twice in my lifetime, I came very close to feeling the exhilaration of freedom that closely paralleled that of our ancestors.

The first was on the 5th of Iyar 5708 (May 14, 1948) when the British mandate on Palestine was terminated and the State of Israel was declared, and the gates of the Holy Land were thrown open for the exodus of the Jewish people from their 2000 year galut.

The second time I experienced the exhilaration of freedom was on Wednesday morning, the 28th of Iyar, 5727 (June 7th 1967) when Hashem's earthly angels in Tzahal's olive green uniforms liberated the Temple Mount and all of Yerushalayim, after 2000 years under the control of the "zar" (the stranger).

On the seder night when I am directed to experience the feeling of freedom, I simply look back at what I had felt 45 and 64 years ago.

Freedom is a many edged sword. For some it is the license to entertain one's lust without limit; for others it is the ability to present, previously prohibited, ideas for social betterment. A rabbit that is let out its cage will hop a bit and might even return to it; but a bird that is freed will soar on high.

The more than a century of Afro-American slavery came to a

close in the middle of the 19th century, but as a group they fail to soar to great heights. The enslavement of the Jewish nation in Egypt was much longer and much more cruel. Nevertheless, 50 days after our emancipation, we received the Torah at Mount Sinai, and from that time on, our accomplishments and contributions to the world, in all fields of endeavor, have made us the object of jealousy and resentment. Take away the Jewish contribution and you would be left with a barbaric, brutish, idolatrous world, devoid of ideals or ideas. The organized religions that we know today would never have come about. And the concept of a Creator who sees and knows all, and judges every man according to his deeds, would have long ago been discarded, as it was in the time of Noach.

Probably, the closest experience of freedom that the Jewish nation has enjoyed since the day when King Solomon completed the first Holy Temple, was the establishment of the State of Israel. Never before has a nation in exile returned to its ancient homeland; and what's more, after a 2000 year physical estrangement (I don't include certain chareidi fringe elements in this Jewish equation, because they are on a different mental planet than the main stream of religious Jewry).

So the big question is: Why do the Jews in the galut sit at their seder table pretending to empathize with the Jews of the exodus of 3000 years ago, while they remain apathetic, at best, to the modern miracles happening before their very eyes?

Are we in Eretz Yisrael made of a different cloth than our brothers and sisters who choose to remain in the galut? Is there something we know that they don't?

Is the Gemara at the end of tractate Ketubot, which speaks of the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael as opposed to the galut, censored out of the Talmuds that are printed in the galut?

Wherein lies the immense gulf of loyalty and preparedness to

sacrifice for kiddush Hashem (the sanctity of the holy Name) in defense of the Holy Land?

One does not need a psychiatrist's couch to unravel this dilemma.

Hashem, within the context of His total mastery and control over all that exists, has given us a tiny window called "free choice". Now, just as in the physical world there exists the phenomena of the survival of the fittest, so too in the spiritual world there is the survival of the spiritual fittest. As we draw closer to the "end of time", time passes more quickly, and the circumstances that determine who will survive spiritually and physically are sharper, more articulate and salient. Will the statistics of intermarriage move you to come home? Or possibly the increasing acts of anti-Semitism will convince you that the galut has served its purpose and HaShem is closing the door? Or perhaps the idea of freedom as a Jew in your ancient home-land means little to you, and you will decide to ride it out in the spirit of "tomorrow is another day".

On this coming shabbat , "Shabbat Ha'gadol", we recall and commemorate the valiant act of our ancestors when they took the lamb, which was the symbol of Egyptian worship, in preparation for offering it as the Pessach sacrifice. This was an act of great courage, that took place on Shabbat the 10th of Nissan of that year. Forty years later, on that same day, the 10th of Nissan, the Jewish nation under the leadership of Yehoshua bin Nun, crossed the Jordan River with the intent to liberate the Holy Land from its Canaanite conquerors. This too was an act of great courage.

Permit me to make a suggestion to all those in the galut who read this.

This Shabbat, the day that saw great acts of courage on the part of the Jewish nation, take the leap of faith and decide

that for you and your family it will be “This year in Yerushalayim” and forever!

I would suggest that you show this message to your local rabbi or rosh yeshiva.

If indeed, on this Shabbat you make the most decisive decision of your life to come home to your land and your people, please let me know.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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