

Tzav Shabbat HaGadol 5773

BS"D Parashat Tzav Shabbat HaGadol 5773

Part A:

Shemot 12:17

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-מַצּוֹת הַמַּצּוֹת כִּי-בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יָצִיאתִי אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם
:וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֶת-יּוֹם הַזֶּה כְּחֹק עֹשֵׂה לְדוֹרוֹתָיִם לְבָרֶכֶת

And you shall guard the matzot, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.

And Rashi comments:

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-מַצּוֹת הַמַּצּוֹת – שְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת-הַמִּצְוֹת וְאֶת-הַמַּצּוֹת
,וְעָשִׂיתֶם אֶת-יּוֹם הַזֶּה כְּחֹק עֹשֵׂה לְדוֹרוֹתָיִם לְבָרֶכֶת
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And you shall guard the matzot that they should not become chametz... R. Yoshiah says do not read the word "matzot" to mean only matzot, but read it to refer also to the mitzvot (commandments), and just as one must not procrastinate while baking the matzot and thus cause them to be chametz, one should not procrastinate in keeping a mitzva but must fulfill the mitzva immediately.

Part B:

The definitive difference between a free person and a slave is, in one word – time.

If one is evil and clever, and wishes to enslave another human being, or another nation, chains and whips are not the best method; one need only to control the victim's time.

A very prevalent example of this is the lender-borrower relationship. The borrower must spend his time earning the money to return the debt, as Shlomo HaMelech says (Mishlay 22,7)

הַעֲשִׂירִים יִרְדּוּ עַל הָעַבְדִּים וְעַל הָעֲלִיּוֹת וְעַל הַבּוֹרְרוֹת וְעַל הַשְּׂכָרִים וְעַל הַבְּנוֹת וְעַל הַבְּנוֹת וְעַל הַבְּנוֹת

The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender

Hitler conquered Europe with tanks and planes; modern Germany is conquering countries like Greece, Spain and soon Italy by granting them loans, which will force them to work and slave to repay the debts.

This is perhaps one of the reasons that the Shemitta year cancels debts, because the Jewish people are freemen.

Many seemingly free people are in fact captives, in the sense that every moment of their lives is filled with things they are coerced to do or would prefer not do. A freeman is one who can choose how to spend his time in a manner desirable to him. People work and save for the "golden years" when they will be "free" to do all the things which were out of reach in their younger years, then find that their time is not theirs but dominated by visits to the doctor or worse.

Time is allusive. It cannot be defined. The past is no longer here, the future has yet to arrive, and the present exists only in a billionth of a second before turning into the past. Yet the Torah shows us the way to petrify time, to make it infinite. By using time to perform a mitzva which is never forgotten in the real world, thus time becomes a part of

eternity.

This is the meaning of HaShem "mekadesh et hazmanim" (HaShem sanctifies time), by commanding us to perform mitzva in the time He allots us in this world.

How fleeting time is, and how much we have to value the opportunities that HaShem awards us, is magnified by the lesson taught by Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha (thought by many to have been the son of Rabbi Akiva) in the Gemara (Berachot 7a)

אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי, אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי :אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי
אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי

So said the Holy One Blessed Be He, "When I wanted you did not want, now that you want I do not want".

Meaning: At the miraculous episode of the Burning Bush, HaShem spoke to Moshe who turned his face away from seeing that which no man before was permitted, as the verse says (Shemot 3,6):

אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי
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Then He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitzchak and the God of Ya'akov. And Moses hid his face, out of fear of seeing the omnipotent God.

However, after the sin of the Golden calf when Moshe returned to stand before HaShem on Mount Sinai to beg forgiveness for the Jewish nation, he requested of HaShem (ibid 33,18-20)

אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי אמר ר' יוחנן ב"ר זכתי
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Then Moses said, Now show me your glory.

And the Lord said,... you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.

That is to say: "When I wanted you did not want, now that you want I do not want".

A major characteristic of our great biblical ancestors was their appreciation of the limits of time. Avraham rose early in the morning to begin the journey to Mount Moriah where he was commanded by HaShem to offer up his son, Yitzchak, as a sacrifice. The character trait of acting quickly in face of the unknown dictates of time was passed down by Avraham to his Jewish descendants.

In the Book of Melachim 2 (Kings2) King David tells Natan, the reigning prophet of the time, of his intention to erect a Holy Temple for HaShem in Yerushalayim.

That very night Hashem appeared to Natan with a command that he go immediately to David with the message that HaShem does not want David to be the builder of His Temple.

The Midrash explains (Yalkut Shimoni Shmuel B 143) that HaShem knew that once David decided to do a mitzva there will be no hesitation, and by the time morning would come David will have already made a vow to build the Temple and will have already hired all the workers.

Time is the essence of Pessach.

In Egypt, each family was commanded to take a young lamb or goat, on the 10th of Nisan, and then sacrifice it on the afternoon of the 14th of Nisan. The meat was to be eaten no later than midnight, or according to another opinion no later than dawn on the night between the 14th and 15th of Nisan. At the crack of dawn the Jews were rushed out of their homes to

leave Egypt, and the dough they were preparing for the journey did not reach the 18 minute time necessary for it to rise into bread, so we have matza.

The whole slavery experience was planned to be for 210 years and it ended in 210 years.

HaShem "works" with a stop watch.

The qualities that comprise an authentic, unspoiled Jew are courage, perseverance, alacrity, and promptitude – the recognition that when dealing with spiritual matters time does not work in our favor – the most dominant. These are the building bricks of the Torah personality, without which the most one can hope for in Torah study and in the fulfillment of mitzvot is mediocrity.

The 80% of the Jewish nation that refused to leave Egypt that morning in order to follow Moshe into the wilderness lacked those character qualities. The 20% who left were instilled with these qualities, but not to the degree necessary to enter Eretz Yisrael and make battle with the Canaanites. Rather they requested to delay their aliya to some future time, and succumbed in the 40 years of our desert experience. Their children inherited the qualities necessary to begin our 3500 year unending connection with Eretz Yisrael, and they fulfilled HaShem's time table of 7 years of conquest and another 7 years of dividing the land.

World history evolves with nothing permanent but change itself, except for one entity which has never lost its essential qualities – that part of the Jewish people who are courageous, persevering, maintain alacrity, and promptitude. Those Jews who feel the pulse of history beating in the Jewish heart, and have no more patience for the galut.

Those who have these qualities are reliving the Exodus experience, here in Eretz Yisrael not after 210 years but after 2000 years of oppression.

Part C:

Take a wide look at the Jewish world today, with Medinat Yisrael as the center of the Jewish solar system with the various world Jewish communities revolving around it, each with its own characteristics and dilemmas. The conclusion of my observations is that the vast majority of what ails the Jewish nation lies in the ill "timing" of our leaders. The Jewish State is 100 years too late in its creation. Had the Medina been established in 1848 rather than 1948, our nation would look today very very different. The founding fathers of the 1848 Medina would have been great religious leaders, and the constitution would have been the Torah. The Nazi horror would have not fallen on six million Jews, because the majority of our people would have been in Eretz Yisrael.

But for the ideology that lead the religious of that time and is still rampant in certain segments of religious society to do nothing for our own emancipation other than wait for the mashiach, our lives would have been very different today.

But it seems that HaShem reached the limits of His patience with the religious leadership, and in the beginning of the 20th century, He opened the door for the secular Zionists and some religious Zionists to drain the swamps, establish settlements, build a military force to defend the Jewish inhabitants against the Arab murderers, lay down the infrastructure of the new State, and on May 14, 1948 (Iyar 5, 5708) declare the establishment of the State of Israel.

But it was too late to save the Jews from the physical holocaust, and the subsequent spiritual holocaust we are witnessing today of widespread assimilation in the galut.

It's all in the timing!

The gates to the Medina are still opened for any Jew who wishes to come. And with the state of the world becoming evermore belligerent and hostile there will be Jews who will

be caught in the lava of the world's upheavals.

Courage, perseverance, alacrity, and promptitude – the recognition that when dealing with spiritual matters time does not wait for any man.

As in the words of R. Yoshiah

וְשָׂמַרְתָּ אֶת-מַצּוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת – אֲנִי מְבַרְכֶיךָ
,וְשָׂמַרְתָּ אֶת-מַצּוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת מִצְוֹת .וְשָׂמַרְתָּ
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This year in Yerushalayim – and in Shechem, Yericho, Chevron, Bet Lechem. Next year in all the lands of Eretz Yisrael, as stated in the Torah.

Shabbat shalom ve'chag Pesach kasher ve'samay'ach

Nachman Kahana

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