

Tzav – Shabbat Hagadol 5778

BS"D Parashat Tzav – Shabbat Hagadol 5778

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Worlds Apart

Preface:

1) This week's pre-Pesach message is a repeat of what I have sent out for the past 15 years.

Nevertheless, it is always appropriate and timely. Because every year, as we draw closer to the final geula, the message becomes more challenging for contemporary religious leaders in galut who are as blind to HaShem's personal guidance of the Jewish nation as were the 80% of the Jews who refused to leave Egypt.

2) I am annoyed when people who live in the galut say to me, "Rav Kahana, we so much enjoyed this week's article". My messages are intended to challenge, confront, dispute, oppose and defy the messengers and their false messages they preach to the innocent, captive, naive Jews in the galut; they are not intended to entertain. Although there are too many Jews in the galut who are not innocent, nor are they captive or naive. They are Jews who are unconcerned with the survival of our holy nation and our return to the Promised Land, they seek out rabbinic leaders who echo their disciples' galut aspirations.

Now for the message...

A Luxurious Passover in America

Instructions: The following is to be read aloud by the leader of the seder, any time during the main course.

The scene is of a frum (Torah observant) family living in any one of the great Torah centers in the world. The family could even be your next-door neighbors in Boro Park or Flatbush.

Reb Sender and Rayza's home is impeccable, as a result of the enormous time and energy – and not to mention, money – which the expeditious, skillful and mercurial ba'alat ha'bayit (woman of the house) has devoted to it.

The inviting sofas and armchairs in the sitting room are covered with uncomfortable thick plastic to ensure that the upholstery retains its "new" look.

The five-meter-long dining table is covered with the finest Irish linen tablecloth. In the middle of the table stand the imposing sterling silver candlesticks handed down from mother to daughter for generations. The china is the finest Rosenthal, with each plate delicately rounded off with a band of gold. The silverware has been put away in favor of goldware, in honor of the great night.

On the table, under a hand-embroidered silk cloth, lie the matzot. On the insistence of the two sons learning in the recently-opened Yeshiva Taharas Ha'Torah (purity of Torah) in Las Vegas (in order to bring the voice of Torah even to the entrance of Gehennom), the matzot are from the first 18-minute batch, guaranteeing that no naughty piece of dough was hiding in any of the rollers. The hand matzot were personally chosen by the rebbe of the shtiebel where the family has just joined because of the exorbitant cost of davening at the central shul. The rebbe assures the boys that the matzot are bubble-

free and with no overturned edges.

The wall-to-wall carpet is as deep as the grass in the beautiful garden. Over the table hangs the family's pride and joy – a multi-sided crystal chandelier, personally chosen by Rayza on the family's last visit to Prague.

Reb Sender is wearing his new bekeshe (silk robe), the one with the swirls of blue and a gold-buckled gartel (belt). Rayza has just said the Shehechiyanu blessing over her \$3000 dress imported from Paris. The boys are handsome in their wide-brimmed black hats; and the two girls will make beautiful kallahs (brides) when the time comes, dressed in their very expensive dresses.

The seder goes better than expected. Words of Torah begin with an invitation to the hungry to join them in the meal (despite the fact that there is not a needy person for 50 miles). Then a lively discussion develops on the characters of the "Four Sons", and the afikomen (ritual dessert matza) is "stolen" by the youngest daughter who, for its return, has succeeded in extorting from Tattie (father) a vacation in Aruba.

Songs of thanks are recited to HaShem for freeing the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt, for it is a mitzva on this night for each person to consider him/herself as having been a slave in Mitzrayim (Egypt).

Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals) is said, as is the second part of Hallel. Chad Gadya puts the final touch on the mitzvot of the night. Now, just as HaShem destroys the "Angel of Death" in the song, father jumps up and gathers the family in a circle as they all break out in a frenzy of song – "Leshana ha'ba'a Be'Yerushalayim" – next year in Jerusalem. Again and again around the table "Leshana ha'ba'a Be'Yerushalayim" is sounded. Louder and louder do their voices resonate, until their song merges with the same melody bursting from the neighbors' homes, cutting a path into the highest realms of

heaven.

Without warning, Rayza begins crying real tears as she collapses into a chair. The singing stops. Reb Sender runs over and asks her why she is crying, just now, at the apex of the beautiful sacred night?

"What do you mean next year in Yerushalayim? What about the table, the chandelier, the deep carpet, the Rosenthal China? How can we leave all this behind?"

Reb Sender takes her hand, while gently dabbing the tears away, and in a voice full of compassion says to his beloved wife, "Darling, don't cry. IT'S ONLY A SONG!"

Pesach In the Holy Land

Ten thousand kilometers to the east, in Eretz Yisrael, lives Reb Sender's brother Kalman who moved to Eretz Yisrael many years ago and was blessed with a beautiful family, and an adequate apartment and income. His son Yossi will not be home for the Seder night, because he is doing his army service within the Hesder yeshiva system. The parents are not overly worried, because Yossi himself told them that he is in a safe place in the north and that next year they will all be together for the Seder.

At 12 noon, on the 14th of Nisan, Erev Pesach, Yossi and three other soldiers from the same yeshiva are called to the company commander's room, where he informs them that they have been chosen for a mission that very night of the Seder. They are to cross the border into Hezbollah-held territory in Southern Lebanon and man the outpost bunker Hill 432.

Yossi knows the hill well. He has been there several times in the past year. It is euphemistically called a "bunker," but in

reality it is only a foxhole, barely large enough for four soldiers. Their assignment is to track terrorist movements and destroy them on contact. It is tolerable except when it rains, causing the bottom of the hole to be soggy and muddy. Today, however, the four soldiers are hoping that it will rain, even though chances are slim because of Pesach falling late in the season. The moon is full on the 14th of every Hebrew month, which presents a greater danger when crossing into enemy territory, so rain would be a mixed blessing.

At 5 PM, they are given the necessary equipment. In addition to the weapons and ammo, the army rabbinate has provided them with 4 plastic holders containing all the ingredients necessary for a Seder, as well as 4 plastic bottles of wine sufficient for 4 cups, and, of course, Haggadot (the ritual text).

At 6 PM, they wait at the fence for the electricity to be turned off so that they can cross into hostile territory. Yossi holds a map of the minefield they will have to cross. It is so strange, Yossi thinks to himself, that this is the area assigned to the tribe of Naftali, and we have to enter it crawling on our stomachs.

At 6:15 PM, the gate opens and they pass through. As they had hoped, it is raining and the thick fog turns to their advantage.

At that moment, ten thousand kilometers to the west, it is 11:15 AM, and Yossi's two cousins in New York are just entering the immaculately clean mikva (ritual bath) to prepare for the Pesach holiday. They exit on a spiritual high, having purified themselves in body and soul to sanctify the holy name of HaShem.

The four soldiers reach Hill 432 after walking double time for 5 kilometers. They remove the camouflage and, settling in, pull the grassy cover over them.

Each soldier is assigned a direction. Talking is forbidden. If the murderers are sighted, a light tap on the shoulder will bring them all to the direction. They can now daven Ma'ariv (the evening prayers) and begin the Seder. They finish within a half hour, and miraculously the four cups of wine have had no detrimental effect on their senses.

At 6 PM in New York, Reb Sender and his two sons return from shul to begin the Seder. They are met with an uplifting scene. The table, the cushions to lean upon, the crystal wine decanter for the four cups of freedom, and even the maror looks sumptuous, after not having eaten since lunch.

At midnight in Eretz Yisrael, the four soldiers are waging a heroic battle against boredom and sleep. The minutes crawl by; and at the first approach of light, they leave their outpost and return through the minefield and electric fence to the base. After reporting to the officer in charge, the four enter their tent and collapse on their cots without removing clothing or shoes, because in an hour they will have to begin the Shacharit service.

Where do you and your family fit into the story?

Chag kasher vesamai'ach

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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