

Vayakhel 5776

BS"D Parashat Vayakhel 5776

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Jewish Pride & Courage

Shemot 35,30-35:

וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת בְּתַזְאֵל בֶּן-אֲדָמ בֶּן-אֲרִיֵּה אֲשֶׁר מִבְּנֵי-יְהוּדָה (פ)
:וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ

:וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ (פ)

:וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ וַיִּמְלֵךְ אֹתוֹ (פ)

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30: Then Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the Lord has chosen Betzalel son of Uri, the son of Chur, of the tribe of Yehuda

31: and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills

32: to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze

33: to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts.

34: And He has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others.

35: He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them skilled workers and designers.”

There is an ongoing debate among scholars: Does man make history or does history make the man?

Had there not been a Second World War the talents of a man like Churchill would never have come to the fore. On the other hand, it was his talent that navigated the nation through the war.

That is the gentile way of analyzing the two sides of the coin; but like all things there is the Jewish way.

HaShem is the Creator of the universes; also their producer, director and screenwriter of all that transpires in them, except for the areas which He leaves for human free choice. However, prior to the advent of an epic event, HaShem brings into the world a charismatic, talented individual whose freedom of choice will lead the respective nation for good or for evil.

The Jewish nation was destined to erect a Mishkan in the desert to serve as a temporary Bet HaMikdash. The Mishkan's vessels, implements, utensils, instruments, tools and apparatus, as well as the Kohanic garments were unique, elaborate, and complicated, requiring the highest level of expertise and skill for their creation.

As in the case of the Menorah, Rashi explains in parashat Beha'a'lotcha (Bamidbar 8,4) that Moshe could not grasp its appearance until HaShem showed him how it should look. And even then, according to the Midrash, it was beyond human

ability to carve it out of one solid piece of gold. So HaShem brought forth the Menorah.

Into that generation two Jews were born who were granted the rare ability to form, carve and produce amazing items from gold, silver and all the other materials which were directed by HaShem to constitute the Mishkan and its artifacts.

They were Betzalel ben Chur from the tribe of Yehuda and Ohaliav ben Achisamach from the tribe of Dan. Betzalel was at the time thirteen years old and Ohaliav was probably not much older. They were imbued with the highest degree of human talents possible in the creation of material items. Had they not been born, then these items could not have been created.

It was a case where history brought forth the greatest talents of people, and where their talents then influenced the history of our nation for the following 480 years until the building of the Bet HaMikdash by King Shlomo.

Pro-Palestinian students again Jews on American Campuses

As reported by New York newspapers, there were very disturbing anti-Semitic incidents in several colleges of CUNY – City University of New York, which consists of six community colleges, eleven senior colleges and seven graduate schools, including Brooklyn College, Hunter, Queens College and Baruch College.

The NY Post reported on Feb 21 2016:

“Jewish students at four City University of New York campuses are being harassed and intimidated by a pro-Palestinian student group, and the university isn’t doing enough to protect them, according to a leading advocacy group.”

The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) sent a 14-page letter to CUNY's chancellor and board of trustees claiming members of Students for Justice in Palestine have engaged in "hateful, anti-Semitic and violence-inciting conduct."

ZOA urged the university to investigate the group with an eye toward banning it from all 23 university campuses.

"Such bigotry would never be tolerated by CUNY if it were being directed against another ethnic, racial or other targeted group."

"Please do not wait until the situation escalates further and someone gets hurt," wrote ZOA President Morton Klein. "This group does not deserve a place on any CUNY campus until it can demonstrate that it will respect and abide by the rules and standards that apply to everyone else."

Among the incidents cited by the group:

At John Jay College, which specializes in criminal justice, Jewish students have been the target of so many slurs that at least three have transferred. One John Jay administrator responded to a Jewish student's concerns by saying, "What are these white kids complaining about?"

On Nov. 12 at Hunter College, during a demonstration for free tuition, Jewish students were denounced as "racist sons of bitches," "fascists" and "Nazis" and were greeted with comments such as "Jews out of CUNY." One student tweeted at the time, "Full-blown anti-Semitism allowed at my college . . . I witnessed this and froze in fear."

At Brooklyn College, the pro-Palestinian group disrupted a faculty meeting last week and called a professor wearing a yarmulka a "Zionist pig". Brooklyn College slammed the "hateful" comments and the disruption.

At The College of Staten Island, a pro-Palestinian

demonstrator told a Jewish student last November, "I don't hug murderers." Swastikas also defaced the college's desks and walls.

"Such bigotry would never be tolerated by CUNY if it were being directed against another ethnic, racial or other targeted group," Klein wrote. "CUNY should not be tolerating it when the bigotry is directed against Jews."

A CUNY official said it just received ZOA's letter on Tuesday and that a detailed response would be issued after consulting with campus officials.

CUNY also noted that the university's college presidents had issued statements condemning some of the incidents of bigotry mentioned in the ZOA letter.

Jewish Pride

What was reported by the NY post is a mere "drop in the bucket" of what is occurring across campuses around the United States.

Where is the Jewish response? Where is Jewish pride? Anti-Semitism is hatred of the Jew and hatred of the Jewish God. Where is our need to stand for the honor of the Creator who chose you as His beloved nation?

Fifty years ago, HaShem brought onto the stage of contemporary Jewish history a talented, charismatic man to teach Jewish pride and organize Jewish physical retaliation against anti-Semites. But 25 years ago he was assassinated by an Arab in the Marriott Hotel in NY, after delivering an address on Jewish pride.

That man was my brother Rav Meir Kahana zt"l.

Were he alive today he would be organizing response groups on every campus with bats, chains and other methods in real time against any anti-Semitic incidences.

As it appears, among the 5-6 million Jews in the USA today, there is not one who has the courage and the aptitude to do what that one small voice of Meir Kahana did.

And one could ask: Why does HaShem not send another leader with the talents of Meir Kahana to unify Jews to protect their own well-being?

I can suggest two possible contrasting answers to why HaShem is not sending a "savior" for the Jews in the U.S.

Answer 1:

By not having even one Jew to organize strong and effective anti-Semitic responses, HaShem is telling the Jews in the galut that the time for self-defense has long since passed. The time has come to leave the galut. Those leaders who are in self-denial and believe that there is yet a future for Jews in the exile will stand before HaShem to answer for their illusions and delusions, as they lead their adherents to a point of no return, as was the case before the Shoah.

I recall, when Meir was attempting to create a US national defense group, he asked me to use my position in the government (I was assistant to the Minister of Religious Affairs) to meet with Menachem Begin and request his help. What transpired at the meeting was very interesting, and appears in a chapter in my forthcoming autobiography.

The religious leaders in the galut cannot, or will not, see beyond the stretches of their influence. The rabbi of Square Town will not see beyond the ends of his fiefdom. As is the case with the rabbis of Satmar, Lakewood, Flatbush and the growing Jewish community in Las Vegas, to mention a few.

Thus said the Lord: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children refusing to be comforted, because they are not here".

Thus said the Lord: "Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded," declares the Lord, "They will return from the land of the enemy".

"There is hope for your descendants," declares the Lord, "Your children will return to their own land".

Medinat Yisrael and its loyal and proud Jews are waiting for you! However, I am afraid that Mother Rachel could be highly disappointed.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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