

# Vayechi 5772

## BS"D Parashat Va'ye'chi 5772

Ya'akov Avienu was the last of the three patriarchs, and the only one to have witnessed the metamorphosis of his small family (father, mother and two brothers) into 12 tribal units, and the beginning of their evolution into nationhood.

Upon his death bed, Ya'akov gathered his 12 sons to deliver his parting words to them. All were God-fearing Jews who followed in the ways of Avraham, Yitzchak and their father Ya'akov, but each son was graced with a unique characteristic that is alluded to in Ya'akov's words: courage, erudition, zeal, etc. It is their diversification of aptitudes and characteristics that together form the genius of the Jewish nation.

That is not to say that we do not have our share of evil doers and lunatics, from the original miraglim (spies) who weakened the nation's resolve to liberate the holy land from the Canaanite encroachers, to contemporary miraglim who disparage the obligation on all Jews to return to Eretz Yisrael and liberate the holy land from the gentile encroachers.

However, it appears that in this finite world, that HaShem created, there is also need for evil and even anti-Godly ideas and acts.

This, in fact, was the question posed to HaShem by King David (Yalkut Shimoni chapter 131). Why was it necessary to create insanity? And HaShem replied that one day David himself would be in dire need of this malady. And it occurred when David fled from King Shaul's anger to the Philistine city of Gat, where he was saved from the clutches of King Achish by acting as if he had lost his sanity.

There is a small, but vicious, segment in the charaidi camp

based mostly in Me'a She'arim and in Bet Shemesh that exploits the principles of the Torah as a way of expressing their aggressive tendencies. They do not learn Torah, because people who learn Torah are tolerant of those who do not have the privilege of being exposed to a Torah way of life. They call our police "Nazis" even though 99% of them could not find Germany or Poland on a map. They premeditatedly bring disgrace on the Jews in Eretz Yisrael, because their ignorance prevents them from interacting with most people who are knowledgeable of Torah, erudite in the ways of the world, productive and intellectually healthy.

They refuse any benefits from the Medina because they are funded by anti-Israel charaidi groups in the United States like the Satmar and Neturei Karta, who send their representatives to kiss and embrace with Achmadijad in Teheran. On the walls in the Me'a Shearim market you can find the flag of the terrorist organization PLO who dreams of uprooting Medinat Yisrael and murdering every Jew here. You can also find slogans such as "Arabs Yes, Zionists No".

Their world outlook is based on hatred of anyone who is different from them. The target of their hatred is also secular Jews, but their bows are tauter when they aim their arrows at religious Jews who belong to a different Chassidic sect, and in their mind the devil incarnate wears a knitted kippa and builds homes, shuls and yeshivot in the God-given areas of Shomron and Yehuda.

There is a psychological syndrome where one habitually hates his fellow Jew, and the root cause is the hatred he feels towards himself for what he is and for what he is not. By contrast, one who has *ahavat Yisrael* (love for fellow Jew) loves Hashem and perceives himself in a positive light like the legendary Rav Aryeh Levin whose love and respect for all Jews was not the exception to the rule, Reb Aryeh was the model for what HaShem expects from all Jews.

So, I, like King David ask Hashem: Why do You permit people like this to exist and disparage your holy name and Torah?

The answer is that, just like insanity and other very negative situations play a necessary role in the world, these people fulfill an important role in our lives, as follows:

1- Their conduct relegates to the back-burners the usual issues of the day, such as the economy and defense, and brings to the national discussion table the issue of what the Torah really says.

People who would normally divert their concentration when a rabbi is interviewed by the media, are paying close attention to the rabbis who condemned these emissaries of hate and explain what the Torah requires of us.

A circus clown dons the face of a crying man as he makes the audience laugh. So too, the embarrassing and sad conduct of these people has opened public debate as to what normative Torah Judaism demands from a member of God's chosen nation.

2- During our 2000 years of galut (exile), the ritualistic, metaphysical practices of the Torah overshadowed our identification as a nation with a homeland, a capital city, a language and all the other marks of a distinct nation. In the last century, Zionism, and in particular religious Zionism, aroused our collective memory from where we came and to where we must return.

The renaissance of Jewish nationalism became greatly intensified by the establishment of the Medina, the miraculous, even Biblically charged victories of Tzahal, our sovereignty over the holy city of Yerushalayim and large parts of Eretz Yisrael. All this and the miraculous development of our people in all fields of human endeavor have had an intoxicating effect on many. Some see the Medina not as the beginning of our national redemption but as the long awaited Mashiach. And for many it is the Mashiach. For the survivors

of the death camps of Europe who were discarded "goods" that no one wanted, the Medina was their savior and their medium of physical and spiritual resurrection. For the million Jews from Moslem lands who were expelled from their homes and all their belongings confiscated, the Medina was their refuge. The Mashiach was not just a dream or lip service for the more than one million Jews who came here from the Soviet Union.

For those who are knowledgeable of Jewish history during the dark days of our galut, the Medina is the "Hand of God" that overshadows most of the many acts of HaShem which we call "miracles".

Enter this charaidi sect which is an embarrassment to us all. But they remind us that despite the huge spiritual and physical advances of the Jewish people, the Mashiach has not yet come.

Am Yisrael has a way to go.

If there is one Jewish child here who does not know Shema by heart, our work has not been completed. If the Shabbat is not the rule all over the land, we have been derelict in our religious responsibility.

If there are places in the land where a Jew fears to enter, like Shechem or Chevron, we still owe a large debt to Jewish history.

And as long as our land is occupied by the Arabs, in what they call Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and the Sinai Peninsula, our generation has not yet fulfilled its historic and religious missions.

Whatever we think of these people, they have succeeded in creating a national debate on the subject of what the Torah requires from God's chosen people, and they remind us of the equilibrium we must keep between the spiritual and national forces in our lives.

But at the end of the day, if, in the heavens, failing grades are given for chillul HaShem (desecration of the Holy Name), I would not want to venture a guess as to who gets a lower mark: these people whose conduct has no connection with the Torah but who are part and parcel of the the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael, or the outwardly devout Jews whose presence in the galut undermines the Godly promise to Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'akov that the holy land of Eretz Yisrael is a gift and an obligation to their descendants.

This being written on the fast day of the 10th of Tevet, when 2200 years ago, Nevuchadnetzer King of Babylon began the seige on Yerushalayim, which subsequently led to the first Temple's destruction and the exile. Let us always keep in mind what we have read today in the Torah (Shemot 32,13):



***Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom thou vowed and said to them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give to your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.***

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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