

Va'ye'chi 5773

BS"D Parashat Va'ye'chi 5773

Part A:

This week's message is being written on the occasion of the 90th annual conference of Agudat Yisrael, opening today (14th of Tevet) at the luxurious, opulent and mehadrin specially kashered out Hilton in New Brunswick New Jersey, for the ultra religious for whom nothing but the best would be tolerated.

There are two major schools of thought in the anti-Medinat Yisrael chareidi camp in the galut:

1) The mainline charedi thinking, represented by Agudat Yisrael, of not relating religiously, practically or emotionally to the Medina, because it was established by non-observant Jews, so they must wait for the Mashiach to come and fetch them from galut.

This mind set was spelled out by Rabbi Pesach Krohn, a rabbi of some influence in the United States, who authored a book which was brought to my attention, whose basic premise is that Eretz Yisrael is not an obligatory mitzvah until the advent of the Mashaich.

On page 204, after leaving the city of Vilna, the author writes: "The bastions of Torah have moved elsewhere. Perhaps this is why the Torah was given in the desert: to symbolize that Torah has **no permanent home until the coming of Mashiach**".

On page 290 he writes: "That long journey has taken thousands of years and its final destination lies at the footsteps of Mashiach. **When he arrives we will begin the glorious march home**".

2) The more extreme school of Satmar, which contends that it

is a sin to take any action in our emancipation from galut, even in order to establish a Torah-true Medina.

With all due respect to the worthy geonim, rabbis and baalei batim at the convention who adhere to their view, and to the adherents of Satmar and the Neturei Karta of America; I would like to humbly state my opinion regarding these groups of observant Jews in the galut.

If the main stream chareidi objection to the Medina is based on the personalities of those who gave their lives to make the land live again, the Satmar Rebbe and those who follow him base their objections on the three vows recorded in the Gemara (Ketuvot 111,a):

1. The Jews would not rebel against the Gentiles in the galut.
2. The Gentiles would not mistreat the Jews in the galut.
3. The Jews would not attempt to invade Eretz Yisrael militarily as "Crusaders".

History has proven that:

1. We did not rebel against the Gentiles during our sojourn in their "hospitable" lands.
2. The Gentiles breached their vow and "mistreated" us in every way and in every land.
3. The two-thirds majority vote in the United Nations on Nov. 29, 1947 establishing the State of Israel made the vow of not taking the Holy Land through military force obsolete.
- 4- The presence of the majority of the world's halachic Jews now in Eretz Yisrael and the renaissance of Torah in a way not seen in 2000 years are proof that the chareidi and Satmar ideologies are grossly mistaken. Medinat Yisrael is an act of HaShem.

5- And when every other possible avenue of logic and words of Chazal do not succeed in opening their eyes and hearts, then perhaps the concerted voices of the seven and a half million Jews (a more accurate number than six million) who were murdered in the Shoah might bring them to realize that their place is not in the make-believe Yerushalayims of Vilna , Lakewood or New Brunswick.

6- I cannot conjecture any more hubristic, arrogant, haughty false sense of importance than to think that the Mashiach will come and invite the Jews of the galut to join with us in Eretz Yisrael. Remember and never forget that every inch of this Holy Land is paved with the blood of over 22,000 young men and women of Tzahal and many thousands of civilians who gave their lives for the Jewish return to Eretz Yisrael.

One cannot even imagine the colossal amount of effort that it takes to hold up the Medina for even one day – the military, health, education, welfare, housing, manufacturing, airways, shipping and so much more. It is absurd, even obscene, to even imagine that after all the blood sweat and tears that we are investing in this land, the Mashiach will roll out the red carpet when the Jews of the galut graciously agree to leave Flatbush, etc..

I perceive a very different reality. The future of the Jewish communities, with their religious leadership in the galut, will parallel what occurred at the time of the exodus from Egypt – either they will be like the 80% who refused to leave Egypt together with Moshe, or like the miraglim who refused to enter the land. The fate of them both is well documented.

No thinking Jew could entertain the idea that the entrance to Gan Eden is a free ticket. Why then would the Mashiach bring anyone here who has contributed nothing but lip service to the Jewish renaissance now being actualized through the self-sacrifice of the Jews in Eretz Yisrael?

Did Moshe not admonish the tribes of Reuven and Gad when they requested to remain in the eastern part of the Jordan River while the other tribes went to fight the Canaanites (Bamidbar 32,6)?

Will your brothers will go out to war and you will sit here?!

I very strongly suggest that the good Jews in the lands of the galut disengage themselves from leaders who seek to anesthetize them. There are no “free meals” in life, and certainly not when it comes to the holy land of Eretz Yisrael. As Rabi Shimon ben Yochai states (Berachot 5,a):

*HaShem presented three gifts to Israel and each one can be
– possessed only through effort and pain*

Torah knowledge, Eretz Yisrael and the World to Come

In summary: To the good and innocent Jews in the galut, if you subscribe to the notion that the Torah permits one to live out his life in the galut when the gates of Eretz Yisrael are beckoning for you to return, then you are playing with fire. And if you are a rabbi who represents this notion to others then you are playing with the fire of Gehhenom.

Part B:

Ya'akov Aveinu, in the last hours of his physical existence in this world (*Ya'akov lo met* – *Ya'akov* – *Ya'akov* did not go through the experience which we call “death”) gathered together his 12 sons, progenitors of the tribes of Israel, for the purpose of revealing to them what lays in store for the Jewish nation at the end of the cycle of time called “*olam hazeh*” (this world).

However, at the precise moment when the hearts and minds of his sons were at their peak attentiveness, HaShem withdrew His *shechina* (holy spirit) and *Ya'akov's* mind became cloudy,

blocking him from revealing the future.

This is cited in tractate Pesachim 56a.

The gemara proceeds to describe what transpired after Ya'akov realized that HaSHEM had blocked the revelation.

Ya'akov was at a loss to understand why. He looked at his 12 sons with apprehension, lest the reason be that one or more of the brothers was a heretic. For just as his grandfather Avraham had begot the sinful Yishmael and his own father Yitzchak had begot the evil Eisav, he too might be cursed with a wayward son.

The gemara relates that the brothers turned to their father in order to assuage his fears and in unison recited:

Hear Yisrael (our father) the Lord is our God, the Lord is One

Ya'akov replied:

Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever

When reciting "*Shema Yisrael*" morning and night, the halacha is that "*Shema*" is said aloud, but "*Baruch shem* etc." is said quietly.

This Gemara presents several difficulties:

1- Prior to this episode, there is no precedent for reciting "*Shema Yisrael*" in preparation for one's final moments in life. We are not told that either Avraham or Yitzchak said "*Shema*" on their death beds. Moreover, the ones reciting "*Shema*" here are the sons not Ya'akov who is about to die, but rather his sons!

2- Why are we obliged to recite the six words of Shema twice daily just because the brothers said them?

3- Why is “*Baruch shem...*” recited quietly?

I suggest:

The brothers were waiting impatiently to hear from Ya’akov details of the future *ge’ula* (redemption). When Ya’akov realized that HaShem did not want the details to be disclosed, he turned to his sons suspecting that perhaps they were the cause.

At that moment, in order to dispel Ya’akov’s fears, HaShem brought His holy *Shechina* onto the brothers and **they** began to prophesy how the future redemption will evolve, albeit in general terms.

They prophesied that the *ge’ula* will come about in three stages:

- 1) *Shema Yisrael* – Harken Israel
- 2) *HaShem Elokaynu* – the Lord is our God
- 3) *HaShem Echad* – the Lord is one

1) In the initial stage of “*Shema Yisrael*”, HaShem’s name is not mentioned, only the name of Am Yisrael. This stage will see the ingathering of *Bnei Yisrael* from the far corners of the globe to *Eretz Yisrael*. They will return for a variety of reasons, many of them not religious – fleeing anti-semitism, escape from totalitarian regimes, secular Zionism, etc.

2) The second stage “*HaShem Elokaynu*” now includes the name “*Elokaynu*” in the plural. Denoting a period of differences among various rabbis how to interpret the will of Hashem as it manifests itself in the miraculous events which we witness on a daily basis in Eretz Yisrael. The matter in question will be the theological status of the Medina as the direct will of HaShem or just a political episode in our history where Hashem is not involved.

3) The third stage "*HaShem Echad*" will mark the unity of Am Yisrael under the leadership of the *Mashiach* with the rebuilt *Bet HaMikdash* on the Temple Mount, when all will agree that the advent of *Medinat Yisrael* was the handiwork of HaShem.

Upon hearing the revelations voiced by his sons, Ya'akov added a fourth stage:

"*Baruch shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed*" (blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever) signals the universal acceptance of HaShem's total mastery as Creator and Preserver of all things.

The *halacha* states that the first three stages be said aloud, because they pertain exclusively to the Jewish nation. But the fourth stage, which will be recited by all mankind, is out of our control and thus is to be recited quietly until that time when the *tikkun* (restoration, repentance) of mankind will bring us back full circle to the days of *Gan Eden*.

Today, with the majority of halachic Jews in the world having returned to *Eretz Yisrael*, we have already passed the first stage of "*Shema Yisrael*."

The failed attempts of our enemies to destroy *Medinat Yisrael* places us currently in the middle of the second stage. And we shall shortly witness miracles far surpassing those of the exodus from Egypt, as the gemara says at the end of the first chapter of tractate *Berachot*. It is a time of debate regarding the theological essence of the State and the miracles performed here.

We will soon be propelled into the third stage of absolute unity under the leadership of the *Mashiach*, who according to the Rambam will be a military man and Torah scholar, with the rebuilt *Bet HaMikdash* on the Temple Mount, and all will agree that *Medinat Yisrael* is the handiwork HaShem.

As it appears now, before the fourth and final stage where all

humanity will perceive the true God and that Am Yisrael is His chosen people, the world will yet have to undergo major changes.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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