

Vayechie 5774

Rashi in our parsha alludes to the Gemara (Pesachim 56a) which describes the last hours of Ya'akov's physical existence in this world, when he gathered his 12 sons to reveal to them what awaits the Jewish nation in the "end of days".

However, at the precise moment when their hearts and minds were at their peak attentiveness, HaShem withdrew His Shechina (Divine spirit) from Yaakov and the revelations became obscured. Ya'akov feared that HaShem's withdrawal might be due to one or more of his sons being a heretic. For just as his grandfather Avraham had begot the sinful Yishmael and his own father Yitzchak begot the evil Esav, he too might be cursed with a wayward son.

The brothers then turned to their father and in unison recited:

שמע ישראל יהוה אחד יהוה אחד יהוה אחד

"Hearken Yisrael (our father), the Lord is our God, the Lord is One"

Yaakov then replied:

ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד

"Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever"

Question: How could the single statement "Shema Yisrael" diffuse Ya'akov's deep seated suspicion of heresy? Why did Ya'akov not consider the possibility that the "heretical son" (if there was one) was lying?

I suggest:

The brothers waited impatiently to hear of the future *geula*.

the Medina. Religious-Zionist rabbanim will see the Medina as the expression of HaShem's quality of compassion for His people Yisrael. The Medina is HaShem's declaration that the Shoah was the last major test in the 2000-year period of anger and galut (exile), and the beginning of a new period of our renaissance leading to the fulfillment of all our prophets' visions. Millions of Jews have returned, our sovereignty over Yerushalayim and the Temple Mount and the extraordinary military victories are undeniable signs that the geula is at hand.

In contrast, other Torah scholars will claim that the period of "*Elokeinu*" – harsh judgment – is still in effect with the Medina just a stage in the natural development of political societies.

3) Phase three "*HaShem Echad*", is when HaShem's quality of compassion will reign alone and all rabbinic leaders will unite in the reality that the Medina is HaShem's avenue for the advent of Mashiach and our final redemption.

Yaakov, upon hearing the revelations voiced by his sons, added a fourth stage: "*Baruch shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed*" – blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever – signaling the **universal** acceptance of HaShem's total mastery as Creator and Preserver of all things.

Today, with the near majority of the world's halachic Jews in EY, we are in the midst of the second stage of *HaShem Elokeinu* where most of the chareidi rabbinic leadership do not hear the footsteps of the Mashiach in Medinat Yisrael.

The third stage of total unity will come about when we witness the miraculous demise of our enemies, as stated at the end of the first chapter of Tractate Berachot, that we will witness miracles far surpassing those of the exodus from Egypt.

We are not far from a religious awakening among the people of EY, unparalleled since the time of Ezra Ha'Sofer. HaShem will

“shine His countenance” upon all those who are here to receive it.

May HaShem grant our gallant soldiers victory over the forces of evil, for the final redemption of our people will come about in the merit of the *mesirut nefesh* (self-sacrifice) of His loyal children in Eretz Yisrael.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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