

Vayigash 5777

BS"D Parashat Vayigash 5777

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Who is passionate for the future of Am Yisrael?

Imposed galut

In this week's parasha, Ya'akov and his family begin an imposed galut experience that was to last hundreds of years when we returned home with Yehoshua Bin Nun.

We were again sent into galut with the destruction of the First Bet Hamikdash, which ended 70 years later when Ezra and his generation returned.

The third galut experience began when the Romans destroyed the second Bet Hamikdash and has lasted for nearly 2000 years, terminating on the 5th of Iyar 5708.

Where are we – Am Yisrael – in this last galut experience when so many Jews are still in foreign lands?

(From this Shabbat's haftara (Yechezkel 37,21-27

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: אֲנִי יְהוָה

21 ... "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will take the children of Israel out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land.

22 I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms.

23 They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

24 My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow My laws and be careful to keep My decrees.

25 They will live in the land I gave to My servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and

their children's children will live there forever, and David My servant will be their prince forever.

26 I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put My sanctuary among them forever.

27 My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be My people.

28 Then the nations will know that I the Lord make Israel holy, when My sanctuary is among them forever."

The statistics paint a dismal future

The Pew survey of US Jews taken in 2013 presents a very dismal future for the Jews there.

Intermarriage among the secular and the reform ranges from 79%-85%, equal to the percentage of Jews who refused to leave Egypt and subsequently disappeared from our history.

Of 100 secular Jews today, there will be a decrease to 11 Jewish grandchildren and 4 Jewish great grandchildren.

Of 100 reform Jews, there will remain 26 Jewish grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren;

100 conservatives will have 65 Jewish grandchildren and 52 great grandchildren.

Today, 100 "centrist orthodox" Jews will have 225 grandchildren and 337 great grandchildren.

While 100 chareidim will have 1039 grandchildren who will

bring forth 3398 great grandchildren.

Despite the vast differences between the segments, there is one issue that they share – they all are firmly planted in the galut.

The failure of American Jews to make aliya tells all about the quality of Jewish education there. The chareidi education is anti-Medinat Yisrael and the centrist orthodox is pareve at best.

Each year, an average of just 3000 American-Canadian Jews immigrate to Israel, of whom 80% are Orthodox. That equals approximately one-third of 1% of the Orthodox Jews.

It is a conscious negation of Devarim 11,12 defining Eretz Yisrael as the land “which the Lord your God cares for; the eyes of the Lord your G-d are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year”, and the midrash that declares “dwelling in the Land of Israel is the equivalent of all the mitzvot in the Torah”.

Three times a day for the last two thousand years, our ancestors faced Jerusalem pleading with HaShem to “gather us in from the four corners of the earth.”

Now, after nearly 70 years since the establishment of the State, what can we – or what should we – do to arouse our brothers and sisters in the galut to come home?

Seeking pure authentic Jewish souls

My answer is: do nothing

For like a precious work of art, Eretz Yisrael is a matter for love. Just as a person cannot be persuaded to love a painting or a piece of music if it does not speak to his soul, so too

anyone who is attached to the galut cannot be convinced to leave his familiar surroundings to continue his life in HaShem's holy land if love of authentic historic Judaism does not pulsate strongly in his soul.

Shmuel (1, chap. 16) was sent by HaShem to the house of Yishai in Bet Lechem to choose a successor to King Shaul. When Shmuel laid his eyes on Eliav, Yishai's eldest son, he was convinced that he had found the next king of Yisrael. However, HaShem appeared to Shmuel saying:

אל תהיה מוּפְתָּהּ בְּמִשְׁכָּוֹתָיו וּבְגָדָיו כִּי אֶבְרַח אֹתוֹ כִּי אֶנְתָּה מְבַרְכִּים לְפָנָי וְאֶנְתָּה מְרַחֵם לְעַמִּי וְלְבֵיתֶךָ
:אֲנִי הָאֵל וְאֵתְּנָה אֶתְּכָל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָדְךָ וְאֶתְּנָה אֶתְּכָל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָדְךָ

Do not be impressed by his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. Humans look at outward appearances, but HaShem understands a man's heart."

When David was brought before Shmuel, HaShem said "מָה אֶתְּכָל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָדְךָ" – Anoint him, for he (David) is the one.

Yechezkel (37,21-27) prophesied that HaShem would "take the children of Israel out of the nations where they have gone, and gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land".

However, not all who call themselves Jews – even religious ones – will be aroused by the Creator to ascend to the holy land. HaShem arouses only those who have pure authentic Jewish souls (including sincere converts) and feel a passion to return to the Promised Land.

In the last 68 years since the gates of Eretz Yisrael were thrown open for aliya, millions of galut Jews have not taken advantage of this window of opportunity and will find themselves in the unenviable position of not being welcomed by HaShem. These include the majority of galut Jews who fall by the wayside of our history through intermarriage, and others

who accept the false teaching that Jews must wait for the Mashiach before leaving the galut.

The strong links in the golden chain

Despite the low potential of olim, we still have a duty to continue writing, preaching and teaching that HaShem has announced that our galut punishment is ending, and perhaps reach the soul of the tiny minority who feel a passion for the future of Am Yisrael in our homeland.

The emphasis of Am Yisrael now and forever more is to create a perfect society based on our intimate relationship with the Creator in Eretz Yisrael. Today's galut with all that they do and build will be no more than a footnote in the chapter of our redemption process here.

Let us not forget that there is also a negative side to aliya. The Medina is not in need of secular or reform Jews who will only weaken the fabric of our Jewishness.

In conclusion

Over the millenniums that we have bonded with the Creator, we can sense a certain order to HaShem's dealings with Am Yisrael.

HaShem is the master of preferences, as stated in the Torah when He chose Shet (Seth), Noach, Shem, Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Levi, Aharon, Elazar, Pinchas, etc.

HaShem chose 20% of the Jews to be freed from Egypt, while rejecting the other 80%. Of the 20% only two entered Eretz

Yisrael – Yehoshua and Calev.

HaShem's modus operandi in choosing those who will continue the future of Am Yisrael is through a "filter" called "Aliya".

Happy are those who are chosen to be the links in the golden chain of Am Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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