

Vayishlach 5775

BS"D Parashat Vayishlach 5775

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Ya'akov Returns in Strength

Shimon and Levi annihilated the residents of Shechem for failing to bring Shechem ben Chamor to justice for what he did to their sister Dina.

What was behind this seemingly excessive, disproportionate "Goldstonian" reaction by two nice Jewish boys?

Avraham Aveinu arrived in Eretz Yisrael over 100 years before, where he was met by the pagan tribal descendants of Cham, son of Noach: The Canaani, Chieti, Emori, etc.

Despite the religious and cultural opposition of these idolatrous pagans, Avraham made impressive advances in the teachings of monotheism; even establishing a yeshiva-hotel where many gathered to hear the word of God.

This was anathema for their religious and political establishment. Avraham was undermining the core beliefs of society by introducing God and morality which touched on matters such as family, law, treatment of slaves, ethics in business and more.

But at the time of our parasha, the charismatic Avraham and his wife Sarah were long gone. Yitzchak is old and disabled. Ya'akov, the ben Torah, has not been seen in Eretz Yisrael for over twenty years. The only relevant descendant of Avraham is

Aisav, with whom the idolators got along with fabulously, since Aisav was one of their own.

For all intents and purposes, Yiddishkeit was no longer a threat to the religious and social fabric of the land; so the idolatrous natives could happily return to their old ways, uninterrupted by conscious pangs caused by those "holier-than-thou" Jews.

Suddenly, Ya'akov the Jew and his family reappear in Eretz Yisrael.

His arrival could have been restrained and muted like that of our Zionist chalutzim at the beginning of the last century, when they bought "a dunam here and a dunam there;" built a house here and a house there, planted orange trees and drained swamp land, with no impressive message signaling their presence.

However, HaShem "speaks" to people in the language that they understand. To Am Yisrael HaShem speaks in the language we comprehend – as a father teaching Torah. To the gentiles HaShem speaks in the language that they comprehend – the language of strength, aggression and violence.

Ya'akov has returned. The evil inhabitants of Shechem were felled by the swords of Shimon and Levi in the name of common decency and justice.

It took less than a day for the electrifying news of Shechem's destruction at the hands of Ya'akov to reach all the land and beyond.

From now on the Canaanite occupiers of Eretz Yisrael will have to learn that life in the Holy Land will no longer be the same.

HaShem, the ultimate playwright, brings about Ya'akov's return to the stage of history in an explosive manner. The

reappearance of the Jewish people and their zealous conduct in the name of good over evil created the desired impression upon the descendants of Cham. It was the language they understood, the language of strength.

When Ya'akov and his 69 relatives left the Holy Land to join with Yosef in Egypt, the land was once again devoid of Yiddishkeit. 250 years later, under the leadership of Moshe and Yehoshua, the two super-powers of Og King of Bashan and Sichon King of Emori were annihilated, and Yehoshua continued to destroy 31 idolatrous city states.

The news reverberated throughout the Middle East and beyond. The world was in shock! The Jews have returned! Turmoil overtook the 'mosques and churches'. "Moral conscience has returned to haunt us. Where have we gone wrong?" was the pitiful wailing of the sons and daughters of Cham.

Once again, the chosen of HaShem reentered the land not by a "dunam here and dunam there," but in the language that the gentiles understood – strength.

For 2000 years, the main body of the Jewish nation was in exile, with only a small remnant remaining in the land.

With the Holocaust, our enemies were certain that it was only a matter of time when the world would be "free" of the "conscience arousing" teachings of Judaism; the "Wandering Jew" would soon become the "Vanished Jew".

Then in 1948, the Jewish nation again leaped onto the platform of history with an explosion that caught the attention of the world.

On the day following our declaration of statehood, the nascent Jewish State was invaded by seven Arab armies in the "War of Independence".

The world was certain that 600 thousand people, with a rag tag

army with no air force and no mechanized machines, could not withstand the ferocious Arab onslaught.

But despite an arms boycott on Israel enforced by the United States and European countries, Israel trounced the Arab forces, doubling the land area of the State.

The world stood in amazement – Ya'akov has returned home!

In 1967, we were again in existential danger. The combined forces of Egypt, Syria, Jordan and others, had sworn to erase Israel from the map. It took two hours in the morning of June 6th, 1967 to demonstrate to the world what King David wrote (Tehilim 20,8-9):

Some trust in chariots, and some in horses;

But we come in the name of the LORD, our God.

They are bowed down and fallen;

But we are risen, and stand upright.

News of the Medina's miraculous military victories and the Medina's development at the cutting edge of almost every scientific and intellectual field has reached the far corners of the world.

In time, Medinat Yisrael will be the Almighty's medium to bring His message of Torah, the Noachide laws and hope to a fractured, dissonant world.

Welcome Home, Ya'akov. Beruchim Haba'im, the holy people of Am Yisrael.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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