

Yitro 5782

BS"D Parashat Yitro 5782

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Significance of Mount Sinai for the Created World

Parshat Yitro relates the most dramatic and significant episode for the existence of Am Yisrael and the world at large – the receiving of HaShem's Torah. In fact, the parasha can be characterized as "to be or not to be".

Midrash Raba (parashat Vayaitzai) quotes the Amora Raish Lakish, that HaShem stipulated a fundamental provision underlying the entire spectrum of creation: if the Jewish nation will accept the Torah at Mount Sinai the universe (or universes) will continue to exist; however, if the Jews reject the Torah there would be no justification to maintain this material world and all matter would return to nothingness.

Another Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni parshat Yitro) states that HaShem uprooted Mount Sinai and held it over the heads of the Nation, declaring, "If you accept the Torah all will be well, but if you reject it then here will be your place of death".

The Jewish worldview is that the importance of Am Yisrael and our observance of the "letter and spirit" for creation cannot be overstated.

Ignorance and stupidity

We humans are born totally ignorant, and it is our obligation and responsibility in the years HaShem allots us not to add stupidity to our ignorance. Unfortunately, the great majority

of humanity falls into the trap of believing that they are learned and intelligent, when in fact, they are far from both.

Rabbi Shimon in the Midrash (Bereishiet Raba 8) teaches that when HaShem informed the heavenly angels of his intention to create a being half-spiritual and half-animal to be called Adam (Man) the angels separated into two groups to voice their opinions about the “new boy on the block”, with shared natures of good and bad.

The angel Chesed (compassion) agreed that it was worthwhile to make Man because he would be capable of acts of compassion. Emet (truth) opposed on the grounds that such a creature would always seek the path of least resistance and would live a life of falsehood. Tzedek (justice) agreed to making Man because he would be capable of acts of justice. The Angel of Peace disapproved on the grounds that man’s animalistic instincts would overcome his angelic ones, and he would shed oceans of blood. HaShem, after hearing the pros and cons of His angel committee, “took truth and thrust it down to earth”.

What does this mean?

HaShem rejected the opinion of the pro-mankind angels and agreed in principle with the opposition, as stated in Bereishiet 8,2:

וְכָל חֵשֶׁב הַלֵּב אֲדָמָה רָע מֵרֵאשִׁית

...every inclination of the human heart is evil from birth

As demonstrated from the first day of creation, when Adam and Chava were expelled from Gan Eden within the first three hours of their existence, also causing the ultimate death of every human being yet to be born. Kayin murdered his brother Abel not long after. Ten generations down the line HaShem’s Quality of Justice emerged and caused the destruction of all humanity save for one man – Noach and his immediate family, and the

innocent species of the animal world. Not long after HaShem dispersed the “family of man” to the four corners of the earth, because they were plotting to make war on the Creator himself.

But HaShem had already decided to create Man, so He had to find a way of hope for His new and multi-complex species to survive for 6000 years. He would take His ultimate truth (Torah) and thrust it down on a particular people forcing them to be His agents in giving hope for mankind’s and the physical world’s survival – the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya’akov, the Jewish nation, through the Torah way of life.

This is the background of our parashat Yitro, where HaShem held Mount Sinai over the heads of our ancestors and declared that if they refused to accept and keep the Torah, they would die there.

Over time nations and empires successively rose and fell due to their arrogance, ignorance, and stupidity. They failed to learn from their predecessors that the life raft of survival in this world for gentiles depends on the degree to which they acknowledge, respect, uphold, defend, support, extol, glorify, aid and abet the Jews, both as the Creator’s chosen nation and as individuals.

As long as a nation showed respect and fidelity to the Jews, that nation would be blessed; but each in turn turned its back and betrayed us. That was the point of no return for any nation that sealed its fate to descent from the stage of history and give way to another would-be “reich of a thousand years”.

In descending historical order: The present United Nations. England used their League of Nation’s mandate to prevent the establishment of an independent Jewish state and closed the escape route for European Jewry during the Shoah. Germany, and Russia before them. The Ottoman Turks, Christian Spain; the

Crusaders, Christian Byzantine, Rome, Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, etc. We met them all, and they are now or will soon be chapters in the history books that we write.

At this juncture in our return to Eretz Yisrael, we are witnessing the metamorphosis of the western world democracies as they change their colors to blood red anti-Semitism; slowly but surely. In academia, and the workplace, attacks on Jewish sites and institutions, degrading the State of Israel as being apartheid, and worst of all pointing out our dire sin of building a kindergarten in the land where the Jewish Bible was written. The kindergarten, which initiates a phone call from the State Department after being informed of its existence by the US Embassy in Yerushalayim, to take down this warmongering structure – Now!

Humanity is presently perched on a seam of history awaiting a meaningful event to unfurl. Nuclear war? Decimation of half the world's population through viral infection? Economic downturn, plunging all mankind into poverty? Racial and religious wars?

Who knows?

But one thing is certain. In all of these scenarios Medinat Yisrael will be a major player, and the Jews who comprise the Medina will reap the fruit planted by our ancestors beginning with Avraham Aveinu, through Torah at Sinai, Eretz Yisrael, destruction, exodus and redemption in our day.

The gentile world will either be on the right side of history and exist, or resist its Godly flow and bow out of human history.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

Copyright © 5782/2022 Nachman Kahana