

Yom Ha'Atzmaut 5780

BS"D Parashat Yom Ha'Atzmaut 5780

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Yom Ha'Atzmaut

I was born on Shabbat the 13th of Iyar, which coincided in that year with May 14th – two very auspicious dates.

For my 10th birthday on May 14th, 1948 HaShem presented me with a one-time unique gift – Medinat Yisrael. It was the day when the British mandate expired and the Medina was declared.

On Shabbat the 13th of Iyar 5758 (1998) our daughter-in-law Chagit (wife of Brigadier General [ret.] Mordechai Kahana) gave birth to twin boys; so we are exactly 60 years apart – the same day of the week, Shabbat and same day of the month 13th of Iyar.

Where are the twins today?

After years in yeshiva they are now in the IDF. The younger brother is an officer in the parachute corps. and the older is serving in a unit that “doesn't exit” – if you know what I mean.

The following is an incident in their lives that tells it all, as far as I am concerned.

The younger had just completed a parachute course and we were invited to attend the ceremony when the soldiers receive their parachute pins.

It was, as always, electrifying to see these young, handsome and strong Jewish boys taking their turn in Jewish history to defend HaShem's chosen people in Eretz Yisrael. After the ceremony, several families came together to eat lunch and I was asked to say a few words.

I told the families of the tragic death of Rabbi Chananya Ben Tradyon (Avoda Zara 18a) at the hands of the now extinct Roman empire. The rabbi was arrested for teaching Torah. He was sentenced to die by fire while wrapped in the Sefer Torah that he was teaching in full view of his students. When the fires began to consume the Rav his students asked, "What do you see at this moment?" He replied, "I see the parchments burning and the letters ascending on high".

And the question is: We know that in our world what goes up has to come down, so where are these Torah letters today?

Then I told the families: if you ever saw a plane releasing our paratrooper sons and grandsons as they float down to earth, you have witnessed the return of the holy Torah letters to Eretz Yisrael.

The older twin also parachuted, but we were not invited to any ceremony since the unit does not exist so how can it have a ceremony?!

Mazal tov Am Yisrael on the 72nd year of Medinat Yisrael!

Today we celebrate two occasions: one, the birthday of the Medina; two, HaShem's gift to us to be able to participate in and appreciate the miracle we are living.

There are large numbers of observant Jews who shudder at the thought of saying Hallel on this holy day. They are the ones who cannot utter a prayer for the Medina nor for the soldiers who are protecting them. But we acknowledge the gift that HaShem presents to us every day to love, defend and feel pride for our Medina. Medinat Yisrael which marks the closing of

2000 years of galut as promised to us through our prophets.

But this is only the beginning of the new world order described by the prophets; a world whose spiritual center will be Yerushalayim, as stated by the prophet Yeshayahu (56,6-7):

וְהָיוּ לְיְהוָה אֱמָנוֹת וְעַבְדָּיו יִשְׁמְרוּ יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל
:וְהָיוּ לְיְהוָה אֱמָנוֹת וְעַבְדָּיו יִשְׁמְרוּ יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל

וְהָיוּ לְיְהוָה אֱמָנוֹת וְעַבְדָּיו יִשְׁמְרוּ יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל
:וְהָיוּ לְיְהוָה אֱמָנוֹת וְעַבְדָּיו יִשְׁמְרוּ יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל

And those of the nations who bind themselves to HaShem to minister to Him, to love the name of HaShem, and to be His servants, all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it and who hold fast to My covenant these I will bring to My holy mountain and give them joy in My house of prayer.

Their burnt offerings and sacrifices will be accepted on my altar; for My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.

MAZAL TOV AM YISRAEL!

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