

From the Pen of Rabbi Nachman HaKohen Kahana

Yom Yerushalayim

There is a custom among many to conclude the Shacharit (morning) service by reciting the six Torah verses that emphasize the need to remember a particular event: The day we left Egypt; Shabbat; revelation at Mount Sinai; when we angered Hashem in the desert; the punishment of Miriam; and Amalek .

The Torah saw it necessary to emphasize the memory of these incidents because human nature is such that we tend to sublimate facts of life which cause us to feel uncomfortable.

In 1945 at the end of the war, after visiting several concentration camps, General Eisenhower concluded his tour with a command to the army and a request to civilians to photograph everything in the camps, because in time there will be anti-Semitic individuals and nations who will deny that these inhuman acts ever happened, or will attempt to minimize the horrors.

HaShem's command to Am Yisrael to actively recall what Amalek planned for us and Eisenhower's command for what the modern day Amalek nearly succeeded in doing to us are examples of prevention of denial of that which is undeniable.

But denial is not limited to horrors; it can occur even regarding overwhelming

spiritual experiences, as I will explain later.

The population of our nation is relatively tiny, when after subtracting half the Jews in America who identify as Jews but are halachically gentiles, we number around 13 million worldwide. Our small number necessitates that we place greater emphasis on unity and mutual help. A nation 3300 years old with that small number of Jews also testifies to the "high" moral level the gentile nations and their religions "ascended" to in their dealings with our people in the 2000 year galut.

HaShem, who chose the Jews as His exclusive, foremost, commanding and pre-eminent emissaries in this and in the next world necessitates within us genuine feelings of commitment, dedication, devotion and fidelity to one another, in the spirit of "Love thy fellow Jew as yourself".

However, there are factors in our history that result in the opposite. Why did Hashem form us from 12 tribes born from four different mothers: Rachel, Leah, Bilha and Zilpa; a situation that created the basis for fraternal discord and division?

In addition, the distinctive differences became emphasized in our desert experience when the 12 tribes were arranged into four groups of three, with each group positioned around a different side of the Mishkan: Dan, Naftali and Asher to the north; Reuven

Shimon and Gad to the south; Efrayim, Menashe and Binyamin to the west; and Yeuda, Zevulun and Yissachar to the east.

And again, the respective tribes were allotted their land holding in Eretz Yisrael according to their tribal affiliation, which by necessity provoked competitive economic and political interests.

Unity Unity thy name is disunity!

I believe the reason was that HaShem wished to produce a nation bearing many diverse and competitive interests, with only one overriding, essential, central, cardinal factor which would merge and coordinate the nation: the Torah; its mitzvot, commitments, and mutual suffering when deviating from the Torah, and above all, HaShem's promise that He would never forsake us.

HaShem often intervenes in Jewish history by bringing forth miracles beyond the laws of nature and physics. Trying to grade the qualitative and quantitative ratings of these miracles is an "exercise in futility", since each has objective and subjective implications.

But, in life, such as in our life, there are exceptions.

On erev Shabbat of this week we will be celebrating the 56th year of the most shocking and unexpected miracle that HaShem has bestowed on His beloved nation in Eretz Ysrael. On the 28th of Iyar, we will be celebrating the restora-

tion of Jewish sovereignty over the Temple Mount, Yerushalayim, Yehuda and Shomron, the Golan, and the Sinai Peninsula, for the first time in over 2000 years.

On that unforgettable Wednesday, our holy soldiers liberated the Old City of Yerushalayim, released the Temple Mount from its Moslem occupiers and raised the blue and white flag over the Kotel.

It was a modern version of the liberation of Yerushalayim from the Jebusites 3000 years ago by King David, thereby establishing the seat of David's monarchy and his descendants in Yerushalayim until the Meshiach will appear.

When the extent of the victory of the Six Day war became known, Christians and Moslems were paralyzed by the implication of the events of this day on their religious beliefs. The Jews have returned! It was the day when the Levis and Shimons of today destroyed our sworn enemies and the nations stood aside in disbelief while witnessing Am Yisrael returning to the Temple Mount and to the lands of the Tanach .

I had the privilege of being at the Kotel on the first day it was opened to the public - Chag Shavuot . It was 3:00AM when we began walking from the Romema neighborhood. As we walked toward the Old City we were joined by thousands from all directions, until we merged into a great river of Am Yisrael

yearning to touch the walls that saw the Beit HaMikdash.

Now to the point:

That three week period in the month of Iyar has set our nation apart in modern history by its implications on the Medina and on the world. Indeed! A miracle of Biblical proportions!

The people of Yisrael were in an existential threat at the hands of the Egyptians, Syrians, Jordanians etc. - the Amalekites. And in only two hours on Monday morning our air force, flying with angels as co-pilots, decimated the air forces of all the Arab countries in our region.

Tzahal, in six days liberated more of Eretz Yisrael than Yehoshua bin Nun did in seven years!

But how quickly we forget!

What is worse? To forget that there was a Treblinka, or to forget the miraculous salvation of Am Yisrael?

I am not addressing Jews who have left the Torah, but those who are deeply committed to Am Yisrael and Torah Yisrael - how quickly you forget!

How and why did the exhilaration dissipate? For six days, HaShem led our small armed forces in defeating enemies many times larger, and presented Yerushalayim and the highland areas to us on a silver tray. The impossible capture of the Golan Heights in one day; the unstoppable drive to capture the

huge Sinai Peninsula; the liberation of Chevron, city of our fathers without a fight; Beit Lechem, city of David's birth, and on and on.

Where was the mass aliya home? There are more non-Jews from eastern Europe here than Jews from western countries!

I see in periodicals, like the OU Jewish Action, the growing communities in the States; why not here?

Why YU or Harvard when here we have universities without progressive insanity, and where you can hear a Jewish speaker laud the State of Israel.

I see young Jewish orthodox couples going to areas whose names I cannot recognize in the mid-west and the south, advertising day schools, mikvaot and whatever a Jewish family could desire. Why not here in Shilo or Beit El?

How quickly we forget 2000 years of galut and the wings of eagles that have carried us home!

How quickly we forget!

The bottom line: A child can forget a parent, but parents forever remember their child. So even when Jews in the galut forget or ignore the miracle called Medinat Yisrael, the Medina will always remember you and will welcome you when your time arrives.

So Jewish Yerushalayim forever and a day!