

Parsha Pearls

FROM THE WORDS OF THE GEDOLIM

Tazria/Metzora 5770

If a woman's blood flows for many days outside of her period of separation... (15:25)

The Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 19:5) connects this verse with another verse containing the words "many days" (ימים רבים), a prophecy about the Jewish exile: "And many days will pass by for Israel without a true G-d and without a kohein to teach and without Torah. And they will repent, in their trouble, to Hashem, G-d of Israel, and they will seek Him and He will be found by them. And in those times, there will be no peace for people coming and going, for many upheavals will affect the inhabitants of all the lands. One nation will be battered by the other, and one city by the other, for G-d will confound them with all kinds of trouble. But you be strong, and let your hands not weaken, for there is reward for your actions" (Divrei Hayamim II 15:3-7).

The Midrash explains that "without a true G-d" means that G-d's attribute of justice will not be exercised in the world; the nations will persecute the Jews and seemingly escape punishment. "Without a kohein to teach" means that the office of kohein gadol will cease to exist. "Without Torah" means that the Sanhedrin will cease to exist.

Apart from the similarity of words, what is the connection between this and the subject of our Parsha? The Parsha speaks about a woman's monthly state of separation (nidah). The prophets compare the Jewish people's exile to a state of nidah separation: "Their way was considered by Me like the defilement of nidah" (Yechezkel 36:17). Rashi comments, "Scripture compares the Jewish people to a wife in a state of nidah, whose husband is waiting and looking forward to her becoming clean again." Similarly the Radak says, "Just as a husband sends his wife away from him during her nidah and brings her back after she has become clean, so too G-d exiled the Jewish people into the lands of the nations because of their sins and He will bring them back after they repent to Him and become pure of sin."

But there are two types of nidah: the regular monthly nidah, and the zavah. The regular monthly nidah is predictable and short. It lasts seven days, and then she is clean again (15:19). The zavah, on the other hand, occurs at irregular times, and can last indefinitely - until she has seven clean days in a row. The Jewish people as well have had two types of exiles. The Babylonian exile had an explicitly stated time limit of 70 years, whereas the current exile stretches on and on and seems to have no end. The Midrash is comparing our current exile to the zavah.

The Midrash continues, "When the Jews at that time heard this bleak prophecy, they became discouraged. Then a Divine Voice proclaimed the words of Yishaya 35:3-4: 'Strengthen weak hands and give support to falling knees! Say to the impatient-hearted: Be strong, do not fear. Behold, your G-d will come in vengeance, with Divine retribution He will come and save you.'" The impatient-hearted, explains the Midrash, are those who force the end of exile before its time.

This coming Monday is the anniversary of the day when these impatient-hearted people declared that they had had enough of Hashem's decree of exile, and they had decided to end it with their own action. Although the official declaration was made on that day, it was preceded by six months of fighting, in which the Zionists brought the anger of the local and neighboring Arabs upon the Jews of Eretz Yisroel. Jerusalem was besieged, and the Arab villages along

the western approach to Jerusalem became major battlefields. In the midst of this war, on April 8, 1948, the Brisker Rav and the Chazon Ish encouraged all the religious Jews of Jerusalem to come out to the streets and wave the white flag to show the Arabs and the British that they were not Zionists and wanted no part in this war. The demonstration was led by Rabbi Yaakov Halperin, a close disciple of the Chazon Ish, and Rabbi Amram Blau, a close disciple of the Brisker Rav.

Several hundred Jews of the Old Yishuv gathered in the Meah Shearim Yeshiva to say Tehillim and hear speeches. Then they came out and began to march down Meah Shearim Street. Businesses closed and thousands of other residents joined the march. They held white banners reading, "We are for peace! We demand a ceasefire!" The leaflets they handed out read, "Do not blindly follow the leaders of the Zionist Agency, who refuse to listen to our holy Torah! Do not allow your sons and daughters to be killed for the sake of a state of emptiness! We are for peace! Jews, rise up against the policies of the leadership of the Agency, who are mafkir Jewish blood. The Zionist leadership does not represent us! We are Jews, and we will follow the Torah's guidance! We are for peace! We turn to the British Government to save us from our predicament!"

The demonstrators had planned to march to the British Mandate offices to deliver their message in person. But they had only reached the Geulah neighborhood when the Zionist Haganah met them with blows and shots. They beat the demonstrators mercilessly until they scattered and ran home. The Zionists also confiscated all films and pictures taken of the demonstration before they could reach the media. The Jews of the Old Yishuv submitted their plea to the British in writing.

After the demonstration, another leaflet was published explaining its purpose, and, following in the footsteps of Yishaya Hanavi, telling the impatient-hearted to wait for Hashem's redemption: "It is true that among the nations of the world the sword rules, and whoever is stronger wins. But the Jewish people is completely different. Its salvation and redemption will come from the Rock of Israel, and as fast as we repent and purify our minds of thoughts borrowed from the nations, that is how fast our redemption will come. Our land then will be much bigger than the strip they are fighting for now. But we will not get it through our power and not by the sword, but by Hashem's salvation. In the meantime, let us not force the end by killing, G-d forbid, the remainder of the Jews. Let us guard the coal of Israel from being extinguished, G-d forbid. Let us keep our young men, each of whom is worth an entire world... Let us gird ourselves with patience for that great and awesome day, when Hashem will gather us in... We knew we would be beaten for delivering this message. We knew we would be laughed at. But the feelings of Ahavas Yisroel that burn in our hearts did not allow us to stay home and keep our bodies and dignity intact. We exposed ourselves to blows in order to express our position, which is only for the good of the Jewish people."

The Chazon Ish later remarked, "When the state was established, there was a kitrug (accusation) in Heaven against Jews of Eretz Yisroel for not leaving the state. I myself was ready to leave. But when they marched in Jerusalem holding white banners demanding a ceasefire, the accusation was dropped and there was atonement."



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