



Sermon Tidbits

AUGUST 4, 2014

Parashat Vaetchanan – Shabbat Nachamu

A Tiny Country

And behold with your eyes (Deuteronomy 3:27)

וראה בעיניך (דברים ג:כז)

Denied permission to enter the Promised Land, Moses is instead instructed to climb a mountain, “and lift up your eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold with your eyes...” (verse 27) Before his death, Moses does just that: “And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo...And the Lord showed him all the land...” (Deut. 34:1) What was the purpose of showing him the Land? Shmuel David Luzzatto (see his Shadal commentary to Numbers 27:13) writes, “[God] wishes to show him the Land, so that Moses would see just how close they were to it, so [he would] see that all his efforts were not in vain.”

Moses’ ability to view the entire Land of Israel highlights the close proximity of Israel to neighboring countries – a fact not lost on Iranian officials planning to supply arms to terrorists in the West Bank.

Quoted in [The Jerusalem Post](#), Amir Mousavi, a former adviser to the Iranian defense minister, said that Tehran plans to provide missiles to Palestinians in the West Bank. “A new front must be opened from the West Bank, after it has been armed – especially with missiles, because we know very well that the distance between the West Bank and Tel Aviv, Haifa and other areas is much shorter than the distance from Gaza, therefore, simple means are required. There is no need for long-range missiles” Mousavi said on Lebanese Al-Mayadeen TV. Mousavi’s candid admission of Iranian military support for terrorists in the West Bank highlights the Islamic Republic as the leading state sponsor of terrorism around the world. In addition, his comments also emphasize the very real danger of a strong Hamas presence in the West Bank, a direct result of the recently formed unity government between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. Mousavi concluded by noting that the “arming of Gaza will be stepped up and strategic weapons will be introduced into the West Bank.”

Moses’ ability to view much of the Promised Land from above the Jordan River reminds us of Israel’s small geographical size, and the danger seemingly “small” rockets would pose to the entire country. Sadly, this fact is also not lost on Iran, eagerly looking to supply even more terrorists with rockets that they seek to fire at Israel.■

Bipartisan Support for Israel

Every one of you this day (Deuteronomy 4:4)

חיים כלכם היום (דברים ד:ד)

Moses teaches the people that the path of idolatry had brought the nation death and destruction: “You that did cleave to the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day.” (verse 4) Yet, what is the secret that will bring us life? The Midrash Tanchuma, explaining that the words *chayim kulchem* (“every one of you”) can also be read to mean, “All of you living together,” teaches us that the key is unity. “When [is every one of you alive]? When you become one [united] group. If one tries to break a bundle of straw, he cannot break it in two. Yet, if he were to take each straw one by one, even a small child could break them.”

Unity served as the glue which brought the Children of Israel great strength in the desert. Today, unity in Congress from across the political spectrum has brought strength and critical support for Israel’s right to self-defense.

As Israel faced unrelenting international criticism for its efforts to rein in the unceasing rocket fire and terrorist tunnel attacks from Hamas, members from both political parties in the U.S. Congress have joined together in multiple efforts to offer support for the Jewish State. The Senate unanimously passed two resolutions in support of Israel's right to self-defense. The [first resolution](#), passed on the first night of the ground offensive, condemned “unprovoked rocket fire and call[ed] on Hamas to stop all rocket attacks on Israel.” The [second resolution](#) passed last week reiterated the Senate's support of Israel's right to defend itself from Hamas rocket attacks and condemned a “biased” United Nations report. The House also passed a bipartisan resolution reaffirming Israel's right to self-defense and voiced support for permanently demilitarizing the Gaza Strip and removing Hamas' terror infrastructure. Additionally, Congress authorized an additional [\\$225 million](#) in support for Israel's Iron Dome system Friday—just hours before the legislature's August recess—bringing total Iron Dome funding from the U.S. to \$925 million over the past five years. The Iron Dome has successfully protected Israeli cities and towns from hundreds of Hamas rockets, and the American government has been unified in supporting it.

Unity served as the bond which brought life and strength to the Jewish nation. Today, the strong unity from both political parties in their support for Israel serves as an anchor of strength for the Jewish state. ■

Looking Ahead for Consolation – Shabbat Nachamu

Comfort you, comfort you My people (Isaiah 40:1)

נחמו נחמו עמי (ישעיהו מ:א)

Who was Isaiah seeking to comfort? Which exile was he predicting would end? Rabbi Moshe HaKohen explained Isaiah's prophecy to allude to the Babylonian exile, but Ibn Ezra (on verse 1) notes that he felt that Isaiah was instead referring to the current, two-millennia-long exile which would take place long after Isaiah's death. Rashi (on verse 1) explains that Isaiah, rather than addressing the people of his day, offered words of comfort and consolation to Jews living long into the future who would suffer terribly through centuries of exile. Yet despite the destruction and degradation of exile, Isaiah's words continue to comfort us. They remind us that although we may suffer, the day of consolation and redemption is indeed near.

Following the mourning of Tisha B'av, Shabbat Nachamu reminds us that a bright future is right around the corner. Today, nowhere is that more true than in Israel, which is experiencing an investment boom—even as war rages.

While the citizens of Israel have spent the past month running to bomb shelters, foreign companies, rather than being frightened, remain confident in their investment in the Jewish state. According to [Bloomberg News](#), “Since the conflict [in Israel] escalated six weeks ago... investors have kicked \$598 million into the country's tech startups. During the time between June 12 and July 24, investing has actually accelerated...” Rather than disrupt Israel's tech economy, the rocket attacks may indeed have had the opposite effect, instilling a sense of resiliency and toughness, two qualities critical for successful companies. The conflict has also drawn companies together as they support each other during a time of war. According to [Israel21c](#), Israel's ability to withstand to the rocket attacks has bolstered Israel's image. “Openheimer Israel co-CEO Avivit Mannel-Kalil [said] that the Iron Dome defense system is reinforcing Israel's tough image. ‘People see a country with dozens of missiles exploding every day that is successfully defending itself. That is arousing a wave of admiration for Israeli technology.’”

Even before the destruction occurred, Isaiah offered words of consolation, promising the nation redemption. Today, as Israel endures the challenges and struggles of war, signs of better times offer consolation and hope. ■

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