The Holy Rebels (2025)

(Parsha Ekev)

In this week's Parsha Moshe rebukes the Nation and says 'you were rebels ever since I knew you' (Dvarim 9:7). Hashem rebukes us and says don't think it's because of your righteousness that I am bringing you here. It is because of the evil of these Canaanite people and the promise I made to your forefathers (Dvarim 9:7). In other words, despite your rebelliousness, I am bringing you to this land. What does it mean because of the evil of these people?

Hashems Regret

Chazal tells us that Hashem regrets four things.

> There are four that the Holy One, Blessed is He, regrets having created. And these are they: The exile, the Chaldeans, the Ishmaelites, and the evil inclination. (Sukah 52b)

It may be understandable why Hashem regrets the evil inclination. Many people have been destroyed by it. However every great man became so, by overcoming it. Maybe this is why He regrets the Ishmaelites as well. If it had not been for the unprovoked attacks by Ishmael over and over again the reluctant conquerors of Israel would never have grown and expanded and caused their salvation and reflexively the salvation of the world to sprout. Even today if we are honest, it is only because of the hostages that on their backs we went to war and had so many successes. If it was not for the hostages there is no way we would have destroyed Gaza and considered the thought of transferring these cruel and hostile people to Sudan. Ironically it is the very same hostages that are being used by the Erev Rav to try and overthrow the government yet again.

What is legitimized in the Name of Hostages?

This week there was a mass strike by those who seek to undermine the government along with the masses that they have manipulated to join them. There are some similarities to the Korach story. Korach enlisted the masses allegedly to get back their rights, when it was really all about Korach's desire for power and the slight to his self esteem. The masses gained nothing from Korach's success. They were simply played by him for his personal advancement. In the news today we read:

> Iris Haim, mother of hostage Yotam Haim, opposes the strike, warning it would divide Israelis, damage the Israeli economy, and benefit Hamas without helping the hostages.
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> Avishai David, the father of hostage Evyatar David, voiced strong criticism against Sunday's disruptive nationwide demonstrations and said that their true purpose is not to return the hostages but rather to topple the government….The father was especially enraged by the use of a photo showing his son in captivity to promote the strike: "We saw the picture on the flyers promoting the strike; the strike is so wrong, I don't know who it helps. It horrified us that they used a picture of my son, as he looked burned by fire, and exploited it for political propaganda. It's upsetting and weakening. It's difficult for me; the cynicism and hypocrisy are so intense.' (Arutz Sheva News)

There was a poster circulating on social media of an Arab in a kefiyah praising the strikes with the caption 'united we will be victorious.' A cynical and sarcastic use of this phrase that has been plastered all over Israel since the war began (intended to unite the Jewish people).

How rebellious are we?

Are we really so bad and rebellious as we are painted in the Torah and the press today? It is true that in Hashem's book of accounting our sins may outweigh our merits. It may be that we are redeemed not for our sake, but for the sake of Hashem's holy name so that the nations don't think He redeemed us from Egypt only to destroy us in the desert (see Dvarim 9:28). And for the promise He made to our forefathers, plus the evil of our enemies. But on the other hand our rabbis tell us something else:

> 'The Sages, are more pleasant to me than the wine of the written Torah itself.'
> (Avodah Zarah 35a)

In other words more pleasing than the Torah that was given from above is the Torah we have struggled with and brought out through inference and extrapolation. The hard earned effort we have put in bears a unique fruit that we have paid for and reaped and 'owned' so to speak. For example the daughters of Tzelafchad brought down additional laws of Torah because of their

concern for their father and his legacy. But who was their father? Some say he was among those who repented from the sin of the spies and went to battle despite Moshe's warning that there was no blessing and that it was already too late. He was among those who defied Hashem and died in battle, yet from his defiance eventually new laws were written. How do we understand this?

Yet our father still loves us

Hashem tells us in the Haftorah the following.

> Shall a woman forget her sucking child, from having mercy on the child of her womb? These too shall forget, but I will not forget you.....but your spoilers and destroyers, must depart from you now. (Yeshayu 49:15-17)

Despite the mass demonstrations this week that threaten to topple Netanyahu, the government managed to do two great things. They changed the lock on the door of the Supreme Court judge who has been misusing her position of power to undermine the will of Am Israel. They also began dialogue with Sudan to transfer Arabs from Gaza there.

Hashem tells us clearly that we will be redeemed willingly or unwillingly because of the reasons we have mentioned earlier. He loves us especially however, when we return to Him and inherit His Torah and Land through our actions and toil. He also reminds us that He does not take a bribe. *For the Lord your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, mighty, and awesome God, who shows no favoritism and takes no bribe*. (Devarim 10:17). We may think we can bribe the world, or Hamas, or any of our enemies but Hashem always causes it to backfire if we do not pursue his true path.

Remove the Thorns

It's time to remove the spoilers and destroyers from their positions of power and influence so Hashem can drive our enemies away more and more (see Dvarin 7:23) and so this holy rebellious nation rebels for the right reasons to stand where others were previously silent and accuse those who accuse falsely so that our holiness far surpasses the rebelliousness of our people and cause our light to shine even greater than the original light we received at Sinai. That light is growing

each day as our soldiers advance on Gaza City and the minyan and stream of Torah increases and flows from the Har Habayit to the four corners of the world.

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