

Distractions

Preparations by HaRav Ariel Bar Tzadok

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How long will it be before full scale war breaks out in the Middle East and then from there spread elsewhere to affect many things on foreign shores? Most likely, it is coming soon. Maybe just after Rosh HaShana, the Jewish New Year. Maybe!

Now, this is not a prediction. This is not a forecast or a prophecy. I do not know the future and neither does anyone else, period! So, war may come and then again, it may not. Needless to say, only time will tell.

In all due respect the present situation is so terrible that maybe a devastating war with terrible causalities is exactly what collective Israel needs at this time. We have allowed such terrible perversions and corruption to run rampant in Israel, its government, its people and world Jewry in general. With all the calls for national repentance, all we get is one form of extremism after another. The religious extremists are as bad as the secular ones. Everyone is fighting and everything is imbalanced and is thus falling apart.

G-d will judge, this is sure. The delusional religious cry out in their blindness that G-d will protect them, no matter what and that nothing bad will befall them. This contradicts the warnings of our Sages over the centuries and is even contradicted by Biblical prophecy itself. This type of blind faith, in my opinion, is nothing short of delusions of grandeur. Those who do not take practical steps and prepare with wisdom, will end up like their spiritual counterparts in the Holocaust. Maybe, like them, the doomed, will blindly and foolishly proclaim that such sacrifice must be G-d's Will and that is what they will surrender to, no matter what.

Of course, this attitude is seriously ill, misguided and dead wrong. This is not an expression of faith, this is not the way of Torah, this is not the Will of G-d. Torah states over and over again that it is the Will of G-d for us to live, not to die! Therefore those who in their blind faith chose death over life will indeed meet their fate. And good riddance to them! The Jewish nation is suffering terribly under the leadership and influence of the blind leading the blind.

Learn from the wise words of American General George Patton who exhorted his troops telling them, "your job is not to die for your country, your job is to make the other guy die for his." This is good and sound Torah advice. Anyone contradicting this, contradicts Torah, contradicts G-d and contradicts normalcy. If any religious leader would contradict this, he is a danger to his community and to all the Jewish people.

If the rank and file G-d fearing, sincere Torah observant people will not rise up to remove these poisonous leaders from among us, then G-d will do us all a favor and remove them Himself, personally, through the movement of His Mighty Hand of Judgment. This is the way it has always been and sooner or later, it will be again!

Kabbalistic teachings in the Zohar clearly states that when G-d unleashes the “dogs of war” it is time to “duck and hide.” It is time to “head for the hills,” and to go into concealment. It is time to leave the major urban areas and to find some type of refuge in smaller rural communities. In ancient times, we learned from the likes of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai that hiding out in a cave has profoundly positive spiritual affects. The benefits of such isolation (hitbodedut) are so beneficial that one should not wait for war and the need to flee. One should go out into the open wild, find a cave (or a similarly concealed area) and isolate oneself there and meditate upon G-d and His ultimate reality. This alone is the ticket to survival when the “dogs of war” are on the prowl.

We all must remember that everything that happens, comes forth from G-d. Be it good or evil, G-d is the author of all things. Although this is true we must at the same time remember the wise words of Rebbe Tarphon who said, it is not up to you to finish the job, but you are not free to avoid your share [of the work].” While we may not be able to save the world, there are steps that each of us can take that can be instrumental in saving ourselves.

Remember this! We must do what we can and G-d will do what we cannot! G-d helps those who help themselves, Benjamin Franklin said. G-d will bless the work of our hands, but if our hands do not work, then there is nothing to be blessed. This is why the misguided religious always end up dead. Unless they take practical, physical steps to defend themselves, they end up falling victim to their own lack of wisdom and preparation.

Long ago, our Sages warned us not to rely upon miracles. A miracle is something that occurs outside of the natural order and against natural law. For those who misguidedly trust in G-d with blind faith, a religious attitude which is devoid of any practical form of realistic practice, they do not understand that religious rituals are simply not enough to keep one safe. We are told not to rely on miracles, and that is exactly what the misguided do.

So, will our prayers and supplications avoid a war? No! It is unrealistic to think so. If there is a war will Israel be hit seriously, big time and harder than ever before? Most likely. Will this war break out in the next few weeks? Perhaps, then again, perhaps not! Whether it does or not really doesn't matter. War or peace is not the issue. War and peace are both distractions. They keep our attentions focused on the externals and not upon the necessary internals that reveal to us the truths of G-d.

For twelve years, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai sat in a cave. He did not worry day to day for his physical safety because he was so divorced from physical attachments that he could survive on just eating carobs and drinking spring water, whenever necessary. Who today is like this great Rabbi? No one! Even the Talmud says many have tried to be like Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai and have failed.

Although we can not achieve the lofty level of a Rabbi Shimon, we can still follow in his footsteps and walk the path of detachment. Just remember, Rabbi Shimon was pursued by the Roman authorities. He did not just sit in his house and trust in G-d that his enemies would spontaneously burst into flames and be dispatched. No! Like Eliyahu HaNavi before him, as recorded in 1 Kings, when his life was threatened, he “high-tailed” it out of there.

Eliyahu HaNavi and Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai, the two most spiritual men in Torah tradition after the Biblical prophets, were practical, wise and down-to-earth, all the while that they

were sublimely spiritual and connected to Heaven. As lofty as they rose, they never became so “Heavenly-minded” that they became no “Earthly-good.”

We must learn the lessons of our great ones from the past. They too faced horrible, destructive times. Yet, they acted with wisdom and practicality towards those times. They did what was necessary and did not rely upon delusional miracles. Both men could have made miracles, but G-d had other plans. So too, we must make other plans.

So, right now, with war coming or not, do not focus on the Earthly, focus instead on Heaven. Isolate your minds and your bodies. Seek out G-d in prophetic/meditative communion. If you accomplish this, then like Eliyahu HaNavi, you will cultivate a sensitivity to the “still, inner Voice” that speaks within the heart. This Voice alone will guide one where to go, what to do there and when one should move to that place.

Life is a dance. Torah and Halakha (the natural Jewish way) is the ballet of harmony that unites us with Heaven and thus keeps us in place here on Earth. Do not be distracted by the external world. Focus on hearing the “still inner Voice.” This is the secret of salvation.

Help yourself both spiritually and physically and recognize that there is no separation anywhere in G-d's creation. When you can see with your own eyes the Way of Heaven, then you will also know the Way of Earth. Then will you see in advance when war is coming (or not) and it will not matter. You will see and understand that if war comes, then it comes to rectify things and to move the Divine Plan forward towards the inevitable ultimate coming of Mashiah and his army. While this may not come for some time yet, still it might come sooner than later.

Cast off distractions. Focus on G-d. Forget the rest. And be practical, realistic and down-to-earth. Although you forget the rest does not mean that you ignore it. That you cannot and must not ever do! Do what you must, do what you can. Push yourself to the limits of natural law. Only when natural law ends is YHVH revealed. Embrace both and see both YHVH and ELOHIM, united as one, as we say, HaShem Hu HaElohim. When you meet G-d, He in turn will meet you. And right now, He (YHVH) is waiting for you.

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