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International section B
11 Teves, 5769 January 7, 2009

Red Alert to Klal Yisrael

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The following is based on a shiur delivered by Hagaon Harav Moshe Sternbuch, Gaavad of the Eidah Chareidis of Yerushalayim, leil Shabbos Parashas Vayigash in Beis Knesses HaGra, Har Nof

This week the Jewish people have witnessed miracles in Eretz Yisrael the likes of which have not been seen since the time of the Beis Hamikdash. The missiles fired at us have the power to level buildings, yet open miracles have taken place, and we have been spared from mass destruction. Even the most secular newspapers report that there is no way to explain these events according to natural law.

While the word “miracle” has been liberally splashed around by the media, neither the secular nor the religious press has grasped the vital message of the hour. The current situation obligates each Jew to ask himself: “Why is Hashem performing these open miracles for us? How should I be conducting myself in these extraordinary times?”

If we do not deal with these questions immediately, this current security crisis could escalate into the most dangerous period in Jewish history.

Hashem performs miracles for the Jewish people so that we will become more aware of His Presence in our lives. In recent days, He has made it perfectly clear that He alone wields power in the world; that no missile can harm so much as a hair on the head of a Jew without His consent. Every rocket has an address that He predetermines, though the terrorists may believe that they can aim at a particular target.

Miracles are Hashem’s alarm bells, “a red alert” that we must wake up and become truly conscious of Hashem’s hashgachah — His “personal” guidance — of our daily lives. If we ignore these messages and conclude that miracles are just a “natural” part of living in Israel, the tables will quickly turn. We will in fact be handed over to natural law, and the missiles will begin to hit their targets with greater frequency. And that means that the lives of our fellow Jews — our brothers and sisters living in Israel — are in mortal danger.

We must learn this lesson from the story of the meraglim. When they returned from Eretz Yisrael, they claimed that the Land was a place where miracles were apparent on a daily basis, and therefore an extremely high spiritual level would be demanded of those who dwelled there. There was no way that Klal Yisrael as a nation could maintain such a level, and therefore the spies, who were all Gedolei Yisrael, ruled that the people should not enter the Land.

The opinion of the meraglim was brought before the Sanhedrin, who concurred with their ruling. It may seem on the surface that their reasoning was sound, and logic dictated that it was unwise to enter Eretz Yisrael. Yet we see from the grave punishment incurred by that generation that that could not have been further from the truth. What was the mistake in their reasoning?

The answer is simple: If Hashem told us to enter Eretz Yisrael, He obviously knew that we would ascend to the spiritual level necessary for a nation which sees open miracles on a daily basis. For this reason, the claim of the meraglim was kefirah, and we suffer from its bitter consequences to this very day.

In more recent times, Harav Yechiel Weinberg, zt”l, mechaber of *She’eilos u’Teshuvos Seridei Esh*, once told me about a meeting of secular non-Jewish and Jewish professors convened to discuss the authorship of the Torah. Their conclusion was that while the Torah was far too complex to be manmade, they were not ready to attribute it to a Divine source that they knew nothing about. Like the meraglim, they perceived the significance of the Divine influence but refused to follow through by accepting the full import of this conclusion.

During the current military operation, we are facing the same challenge. Hashem is sending us a message that we must make real changes in our lives and raise our level of consciousness of His Presence, to the point where we are worthy of such supernatural treatment.

If we rise to the occasion and raise our level of emunah as a result of these miracles, then we will pass the nisayon, and it is very likely that Moshiach will arrive shortly.

Chazal offer us practical advice in this area: Reciting 100 brachos every day and saying amen yehei Shemei Rabbah has the power to annul gezeiros.

Reciting Tehillim is important, but we need to make sure that our tefillah is also said with the proper kavanah. Everyone should take upon himself or herself to do something, even a small thing, to raise his level of emunah. We must consider ourselves armed by the lessons of our history: If Hashem shows us miracles and we do not respond by strengthening our emunah, His mercy turns to fury, and we are handed over to the forces of natural law. We dare not speak about what this could lead to, but we all understand the ruthless nature and implacable hatred of the enemy we face.

Now is the time, while Hashem continues to shower His miracles upon us, to recognize His Hand in our lives on a national and individual level, to turn to Him in tefillah and teshuvah, and to eagerly watch the redemption unfold before our very eyes.

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