

## **Miketz 2016**

**Delivered by Rabbi Aaron Krupnick 12/31/16**

Our Jewish calendar assures that the Torah portions that are read during the Chanukah season are always the stories of Joseph. And Joseph's life, as I spoke of last week, closely parallels a lot of our own. Joseph, after all, lived most of his life in the Diaspora, in Egypt. In fact, in this week's portion, he even takes on an Egyptian name. He has a "regular name" and a Jewish name. But another very important parallel in Joseph's life is that in spite of the fact that he lived mostly outside of Israel, he never lost his love for the land (in fact he insisted that he be buried there) and the decisions that he made, in the Diaspora, to provide food and material support for his Israeli brothers, shaped the course of Israel's history. And in that we are, once again closely aligned with our ancient ancestor for the Jewish State needs our support once again.

By failing to veto the latest anti-Israel resolution in the UN, and then adding fuel to the anti-Israel fire through John Kerry's speech, leaders of the Executive Branch of the United States have undermined Israel's ability to negotiate with the Palestinians, and pushed the Palestinians even further from the negotiating table. Why negotiate to end building for a solid peace when the world, and by abstention the United States, will do it for you?

I know that many of you, most of you, have been reading and listening to the media as they debate the legality of Israel's building on land that shifted from Jordanian control to Israel's control when Jordan joined the Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt. (Had Jordan stayed out of that war they would still likely have much of the West Bank as part of their own country.) And I could fill you in and differentiate between what the media is calling "settlements" as if they were squatters tents, and the areas that are actually suburban, bedroom communities of Israel. In Israel, itself, there is a whole lot of animated conversation about what areas should be part of Israel and what could be part of a future Palestinian State. But if we got embroiled in that discussion, we, like most of the world media would miss the larger and more important point. And it's not about settlements or borders or boundaries. That's not why this past week has been so bad for Israel, and that's not why almost all Israeli's are aghast at what the United States has just done on the world stage.

Let's forget, for the moment (as if we ever could) the double standard that the UN applies to Israel, routinely condemning the Jewish State while human right abuses and annexations go largely unmentioned. Let's set aside that fact that even the outgoing United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has said the organization has a "disproportionate" volume of resolutions against Israel, which he believes has "foiled the ability of the UN to fulfill its role effectively". In my opinion, what really gets at the heart of the issue that Israel's opponents, Hamas in Gaza, Hizbollah in Lebanon, and the future nuclear nation of Iran are not engaged in a border dispute, these boundaries or those. They are not engaged in discussions about where Israel chooses to build suburbs. These extremely, extremely dangerous, unpredictable and well-armed enemies of Israel deny, as a matter of non-negotiable religious (not political) principle, Israel's right to be a Jewish State within any boundaries whatsoever. They are sworn to the destruction of the Jewish State, and by now focusing the world's attention on the so-called settlements, the real issues, the existential issues so vital to all Israelis and Jews, are being eclipsed and once again ignored. That's the real problem. The real problem is that so much of the world fails to realize that if Israel's enemies were to lay down their weapons there would be peace, but if Israel lays down its weapons there would be no more Israel. This week the US seemed to say we are not really concerned about that. That's why so many Israeli's feel sold out.

Israelis know, and we should all remember, that Hizbollah, Hamas and Iran look for any opportunity to undermine Israel's security, militarily and politically, and America just gave them fresh opportunities to do so. And we can argue about American politics but the enemies of the Jewish State are not interested in that - all they see is Israel weakened on the world stage. Period.

There is no nation among the 192 member nations of the UN whose existence is called into question the way Israel's is. And until the Jewish People wins the right to be; until people including we ourselves, realize that the threat Israel faces is ultimate and total; until Iran, Hamas and Hizbollah agree that the Jews have a right to their land within any boundaries whatsoever, all other debate is a costly distraction. And with this vote and subsequent speech, the world is once again drawn away from the true source of conflict.

Like Joseph, we too may live in the Diaspora, but we are also responsible for the success of the Jewish State. By keeping the focus on the real issues we can do a great deal to protect our brothers and sisters in Israel, and keep Israel at the heart and soul of the Jewish People worldwide. That is our task. That is our responsibility.