

The American president is acting against all historical reason, against all political logic, but his actions are decidedly in keeping with the Divine plan, which he surely doesn't know about

The president of the United States, Barack Hussein Obama, has no idea whose interests he's serving with his decision to pressure Israel to stop building in Jerusalem. Perhaps he thinks he decided independently, although he is acting on the guidance of his Jewish advisers. It could be that he accepts the judgments of the Center for American Progress, which is active in Washington and supplies him with an endless stream of position papers, all hostile to Israel. If I let my imagination run a bit wilder, it whispers that maybe he is attuned to the wishes of the Saudis, whose petro-dollars play a key role in any political constellation. It doesn't matter. It appears to him on the surface that with this demand he will win over the Palestinians, and surely, then, he will succeed in promoting peace, as peace is conceived by Barack Obama, Rahm Emanuel, and David Axelrod.

What never occurs to him is that he is faithfully carrying out the "Road Map" that "Somebody," exalted over the highest ruler, plotted out long ago. On this "Road Map" it is clearly written that the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East will culminate in a struggle over Jerusalem. This being so, Obama and his advisers are merely pawns in the chess game of international affairs, which has been rigged to lead the world to the gateway of Geulah, with Jerusalem playing a decisive role. It seems that the American president has begun to carry out the program, and he has sent the starting signal to us in the form of an irrational call for a halt in housing construction in Jerusalem.

We who hold true to Torah tradition have known all along that this would happen, that one day, in one way or another, we would find ourselves on this collision course, as we shall see below when we look into our holy seforim. The fascinating thing, though, is that even through the sober, political eyes of one of the best minds in Israeli statesmanship, this was foreseen decades ago. And this was at a time when the prevailing opinion, in Israel and around the world, was that Israel had entered an era in which it would see no more wars. It was just after the amazing Six Day War, and the entire

Jewish world was drunk with euphoria. The man was Dr. Yaakov Herzog, the son of Chief Rabbi Yitzchak Herzog and one of the most brilliant diplomats ever to serve the State of Israel, in addition to being a *talmid chacham* and a most enterprising individual. He perceived already in 1968, just a year after the war, that the real conflict with the Arabs still lay before us, and that the future of Jerusalem would be at the center of the struggle. His analysis of the geopolitical situation following the war led him to this surprising conclusion, as he told the world in his excellent pamphlet, "A Nation That Lives Alone." No one else at that time was thinking in this direction.

But let us read the following passage from the holy *Zohar* (*Bereishis* 119), which I've quoted once before, although now, against the background of recent events it takes on new meaning:

"And the children of Yishmael are destined, at that time, to rise up together with all the peoples of the world to come to Jerusalem, as it is written, 'And I shall gather all the nations to make war upon Jerusalem' (*Zechariah* 14:2)."

Rav Moshe Cordevero, one of the great kabbalists who lived over 400 years ago, explained the words of the *Zohar* this way:

"And all the nations will unite, and form an alliance between them, and turn upon Israel to destroy it, because they established themselves a kingdom. And it will be a time of trouble for Yaakov; yet they will not be broken, but will be saved from it."

The facts revealed in these words speak for themselves.

1) The children of Yishmael will manage to incite the nations of the world to make war on us. The Palestinian issue will loom large in the world's perception, beyond all logical proportions, and become an international problem. They will even succeed in forming a coalition of nations to fight us ("And the children of Yishmael are destined ... to rise up together with all the peoples of the world ...")

2) The reason for the international attack led by the

Arabs, as Rav Moshe Cordevero reveals to us, is an event that has indeed occurred: the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael ("because they established themselves a kingdom") before the coming of the complete Redemption.

Are we not seeing the opening scene of this film? Isn't the president carrying out a plan not of his own making?

Now let's examine the situation that is unfolding. The American president's hard-line demand, simply by being presented, changes things in Jerusalem. The peace plans of previous prime ministers of Israel, such as Ehud Olmert, for example, offered sweeping territorial concessions, even in Jerusalem, yet they were rejected out of hand by the Arabs, and not just because the Israelis asked to retain a certain hold on the Old City and the Temple Mount. Apparently, even the ever-conciliatory Ehud Olmert couldn't bring himself to yield on that point. What this means, first and foremost, is that in the end, the quarrel between us and the Arabs has become a religious struggle over Har HaBayis, to the sorrow of the secular Zionist leaders of Israel, who never thought they would see such a day. In the past, I have quoted from the writings of Zionist thinkers, and we've seen that Jerusalem was not exactly the apple of their eye. Yet here they are, pushed into this corner, and this is the paradox of secular Israeli politics. The government finds itself forced to defend Jerusalem uncompromisingly, in the name of all the religious symbols contained in this city. But on the practical level, nothing has actually changed.

Now, before an agreement has been reached between us and the Arabs, Obama has stood up and "paskened" that Jerusalem, too, is an unwanted "settlement," and that Jews should not be building homes or living there. In other words, it is to be the only city in the world where restrictions are set on Jewish residency, and all this coming from a liberal president who knows perfectly well, from his upbringing, how wrong that is.

The president knows, deep in his heart, that Jerusalem belongs entirely to us. As an American citizen who grew up in the States, and according to the testimony of Jews who know him and say he indeed loves the Bible, it is strange that he, of all people, should insist that the city be handed over to the Palestinian entity.

If the president were to spread out a map of his country and read the names of towns across America, from Massachusetts to Oregon, he would find at least twenty-five places named after Jerusalem, in one variation or another. These names express the special regard of the American people for this city, their belief in the Bible, and their knowledge of what Jerusalem means to us. It's not for nothing that this understanding is so deeply rooted in American consciousness and culture. Is history to be distorted now?! Is Jerusalem to be handed over to the Palestinians?! If Jerusalem truly belonged to them, as Mr. Obama is forcing himself to believe, then why aren't those twenty-five towns called Al Quds, as the Arabs call it?

The American president is acting against all historical reason, against all political logic; but his actions are decidedly in keeping with the Divine plan, which he surely doesn't know about. He is only a secondary player, after all, on this playing field, or battlefield, of Divine Providence. And Providence has informed us in advance that the final clash before the Redemption will be over Jerusalem.

So we shouldn't get overly upset by what's happening. We would do well to try and sense the Hand of Providence, which is conducting a revolution while nothing actually changes in terms of daily life. Let us daven that it will all be accomplished peacefully, and remember the words of Rav Moshe Cordevero, who said that indeed it would be "a time of trouble for Yaakov," yet "they will not be broken, but will be saved from it." As the conflict over Jerusalem grows more intense, we can be that much surer that Redemption is near. ■

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What can we learn from a taxi? Humility. If you want to get in, you have to stoop. (Rebbe Aharon of Belz)