

- ב** אֲנִי יִשְׁנָה, וְלִבִּי עֹר; קוֹל דּוֹדִי דּוֹפֵק, פֶּתַח-
 לִי אֲחֹתִי רַעִיָּתִי יוֹנָתִי תַמְתִּי--שָׂרָאשִׁי נִמְלֵא-
 טַל, קְנֻצוֹתַי רִסְסִי לַיְלָה.
- ג** פָּשַׁטְתִּי, אֶת-כְּתֹנֶתִי--אֵיכָה, אֶלְבָּשֶׁנָּה;
 רָחַצְתִּי אֶת-רַגְלִי, אֵיכָה אֶטְנַפֵּם.
- ד** דּוֹדִי, שָׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן-הַחֹר, וּמַעִי, הָמוּ עָלָיו.
- ה** הָקַמְתִּי אֲנִי, לִפְתֹּחַ לְדוֹדִי; וַיְדִי נֹטֶפו־מֹר,
 וְאַצְבָּעוֹתַי מֹר עֹבֵר, עַל, כַּפּוֹת הַמִּנְעוּל.
- ו** פֶּתַחְתִּי אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי, וְדוֹדִי חָמַק עֹבֵר; וְנָפְשִׁי,
 יָצָא בְּדַבְרֹו--בְּקִשְׁתִּיהוּ וְלֹא מָצָאתִיהוּ,
 קָרָאתִיו וְלֹא עָנָנִי.
- 2** I sleep, but my heart waketh; Hark! my beloved knocketh: 'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops of the night.'
- 3** I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?
- 4** My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my heart was moved for him.
- 5** I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with flowing myrrh, upon the handles of the bar.
- 6** I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had turned away, and was gone. My soul failed me when he spoke. I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.
- Shir HaShirim 5: 2-6*

Eight years ago, in the midst of a night of the terrors of Majdanek, Treblinka, and Buchenwald; in a night of gas chambers and crematoria; in a night of total divine self concealment; in a night ruled by the devil of doubt and destruction who sought to sweep the Lover from her own tent into the Catholic Church; in a night of continuous searching for the Beloved — on that very night the Beloved appeared. The Almighty, who was hiding in His splendid sanctum, suddenly appeared and began to beckon at the tent of the Lover, who tossed and turned on her bed beset by convulsions and the agonies of hell. Because of the beating and knocking at the door of the mournful Lover, the State of Israel was born.

How many times did the Beloved knock on the door of the Lover? It appears to me that we can count at least six knocks.

First, the knock of the Beloved was heard in the political arena. From the point of view of international relations, no one will deny that the rebirth of the State of Israel, in a political sense, was an almost supernatural occurrence. Both Russia and the Western nations supported the establishment of the State of Israel. This was perhaps the one resolution on which East and West concurred [during the Cold War era]. I am inclined to believe that the United Nations was especially created for this end — for the sake of fulfilling the mission that Divine Providence had placed upon it. It appears to me that one cannot point to any other concrete accomplishment on the part of the United Nations. Our Rabbis of blessed memory already expressed this view: At times rain falls on account of one individual and for one blade of grass (Breishit Rabbah 66:2). I do not know who the representatives of the press, with their human eyes, saw to be the chairman in that fateful session of the General Assembly in which the creation of the State of Israel was decided, but he who looked carefully with his spiritual eye saw the true Chairman who conducted the proceedings — the Beloved. He knocked with his gavel on the lectern. Do we not interpret the passage “On that night the king could not sleep” (Esther 6:1) as meaning that the King of the Universe could not sleep? If Ahasuerus alone had been sleepless, the matter would not have been at all important and salvation would not have arisen on that night. If, however, the King, the Master of the Universe, could not sleep, as it were, redemption would be born. If just anyone were to have opened the session of the United Nations, the State of Israel would not have been born. But it was the Beloved who rapped on the Chairman’s lectern, and the miracle materialized. Listen! My Beloved Knocks!

Second, the knock of the Beloved was heard on the battlefield. The tiny defense forces of the State of Israel defeated the mighty Arab armies. The miracle of “the many delivered into the hands of the few” materialized before our eyes, and an even greater miracle happened! God hardened the heart of Ishmael and commanded him

to go into battle against the State of Israel. Had the Arabs not declared war on Israel and instead supported the Partition Plan, the State of Israel would have remained without Jerusalem, without a major portion of the Galilee, and without some areas of the Negev. If thousands of years ago Pharaoh had allowed the children of Israel to leave immediately, as Moses had originally requested, Moses would have been bound by his word to return in three days. Pharaoh, however, hardened his heart and did not listen to Moses. "The Holy One then took Israel out with a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm" (Deuteronomy 4:34). Consequently, the force of the promise [that the children of Israel would return to Egypt] was vitiated. No contract that is based upon mutuality of promise binds one side if the other party refuses to fulfill its obligations. Listen! My Beloved Knocks!

Third, the Beloved also began to knock on the door of the tent of theology, and possibly this is the strongest beckoning. I have, on several occasions, emphasized in my remarks concerning the Land of Israel that the theological arguments of Christian theologians to the effect that the Holy One has taken away from the Community of Israel its rights to the Land of Israel, and that all of the biblical promises relating to Zion and Jerusalem now refer in an allegorical sense to Christianity and the Christian Church, were all publicly shown to be false, baseless contentions by the establishment of the State of Israel. One must have a broad familiarity with theological literature from the time of Justin Martyr down to the theologians of our own day to comprehend the full extent of this marvel by which the central axiom of Christian theology was shattered. We should pay careful attention to the learned explanation of our Secretary of State, Mr. Dulles (who served as the deacon of an Episcopal Church), to a Committee of the United States Senate that the Arabs hate the Jews because they killed the founder of their religion. This "explanation" possesses hidden and deep symbolic significance. I am not a psychiatrist and surely not a psychoanalyst, but I know how to study Talmud, and I remember well what our Rabbis of blessed memory said about Balaam: "from his blessings ... you may learn what was in his heart" (TB Sanhedrin 105b). Sometimes, when a person speaks too much, something of the truth slips out. When one of the Senators asked the Secretary of State, "Why do the Arabs hate the Jews?" he really wanted to answer, "Personally, I too, as a Christian, have no great love for them, because they killed our Messiah and consequently forfeited their portion of Abraham's heritage." An angel sat in the throat of the Secretary, or a hook was put into it (as in the exegesis of the Rabbis of blessed memory on the phrase "and God put a word in Balaam's mouth" [Numbers 23:5, TB Sotah 10a], [i.e.] he put a hook in his mouth"), and instead of saying, "Our Lord" and "for myself," he let other words slip out, the "Arabs" and "Mohammed." In his subconscious he was terrified of the "awful" fact that the Community of Israel rules over Zion and Jerusalem. I find satisfaction in reading about the State of Israel in the Catholic and Protestant newspapers. Despite themselves they must mention the name of Israel when they report the news of Zion and Jerusalem, which we possess. I always have a special sense of satisfaction when I read in the paper that Israel's reaction is not as yet known because today is Saturday and government offices are closed or when I read, on the eve of Passover, an item from the United Press that "Jews will sit down tonight to the seder table in the hope that the miracles of Egypt will return and recur today." Listen! My Beloved Knocks!

Fourth, the Beloved knocks in the heart of the youth which is assimilated and perplexed. The period of hester panim in the 1940's brought confusion among the Jewish masses and especially Jewish youth. Assimilation increased, and the urge to flee from Judaism and the Jewish people reached its apex. Fear, despair, and ignorance caused many to forsake the Jewish community and "climb aboard the ship," to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord (Jonah 1:3), just as Jonah sought to flee God's presence. A seemingly unstoppable tidal wave stood over us and threatened to destroy us. Suddenly, the Beloved began to beckon to the hearts of the perplexed, and His beckoning, the establishment of the State of Israel, at least slowed the process of flight. Many who were once alienated are now bound to the Jewish State with ties of pride in its mighty accomplishments. Many American Jews who were partially assimilated find themselves beset by hidden fear and concern for any crisis that the State of Israel is at the time passing through, and they pray for its well-being and welfare even though they are far from

being totally committed to it. Even Jews who are hostile to the State of Israel must defend themselves from the strange charge of dual-loyalty and proclaim daily and declare that they have no stake in the Holy Land. It is good for a Jew when he cannot ignore his Jewishness and is obliged to perpetually answer the questions "Who are you?" and "What is your occupation?" (Jonah 1:8), even when extraordinary fear grips him and he does not have the strength or fortitude to answer with true pride, "I am a Jew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven" (Jonah 1:9). The unrelenting question of, "Who are you?" ties him to the Jewish people.

The very mention of the name Israel is a reminder to the fleeing Jew that he cannot escape from the community of Israel in whose midst he has been enmeshed from birth. Everywhere we turn we hear the name "Israel." When we listen to a radio station, when we open a paper, when we participate in a debate on current events, we encounter the question of Israel; it is always a topic of public concern.

This phenomenon is extremely important for Jews who are afflicted with self-hatred and want to turn away from Judaism and run for their lives. They hide, like Jonah in his day, in the recesses of the ship (Jonah 1:5) and seek to "slumber" (Jonah 1:5). The Captain, however, does not permit them to ignore their fate. The shadow of Israel continuously chases after them. Random thoughts and paradoxical reflections arise from the subconscious of even the most confirmed assimilationist. And when a Jew begins to think, to reflect, when he is unable to sleep, it is impossible to know where his thoughts will take him and how his doubts will be expressed. Listen! My Beloved Knocks!

The fifth knock of the Beloved is perhaps the most important. For the first time in the annals of our exile, Divine Providence has amazed our enemies with the astounding discovery that Jewish blood is not cheap! If the antisemites describe this phenomenon as being "an eye for an eye," we will agree with them. If we want to courageously defend our continued national and historical existence, we must, from time to time, interpret the verse of an "eye for an eye" literally. So many eyes were lost in the course of our bitter exile because we did not repay hurt for hurt. The time has come for us to fulfill the simple meaning of "an eye for an eye." (Exodus 21:24) Of course, I am sure everyone recognizes that I am an adherent of the Oral Law, and from my perspective there is no doubt that the verse refers to monetary restitution, as defined by halakhah. However, with respect to the Mufti and Nasser I would demand that we interpret the verse in accordance with its literal meaning — the taking of an actual eye! Pay no attention to the saccharine suggestions of known assimilationists and of some Jewish socialists who stand pat in their rebelliousness and think they are still living in Bialystok, Brest-Litovsk, and Minsk of the year 1905, and openly declare that revenge is forbidden to the Jewish people in any place, at any time, and under all circumstances. "Vanity of vanities!" (Ecclesiastes 1:2) Revenge is forbidden when it is pointless, but if one is aroused thereby to self-defense, it is the most elementary right of man to take his revenge.

The Torah has always taught that a man is permitted, indeed, has a sacred obligation, to defend himself. With the verse, "If a burglar is caught in the act of breaking in" (Exodus 22:1), the Torah establishes the halakhah that one may defend not only one's life but his property as well. If the thief who comes to take the property of the householder is capable of killing the householder (should the householder not comply with his demands), the householder may rise up against the criminal and kill him. For good reason the Torah relates that two of its great heroes, Abraham and Moses, took sword in hand to defend their brethren: "And when Abraham heard that his kinsman was taken captive, he led forth his retainers" (Genesis 14:14). "And when Moses saw the Egyptian smite a Jew ... he struck down the Egyptian" (Exodus 2:11–12). This behavior does not contradict the principle of loving-kindness and compassion. On the contrary, a passive position, without self-defense, may sometimes lead to the most awesome brutality. "And I will gain honor from Pharaoh, and all his hosts, his chariots, and his horsemen. And the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord" (Exodus 14:17–18). God did not seek honor and recognition. He wanted Pharaoh, Moses' contemporary, to know that he must pay a high price for his edict that "Every male child

born shall be cast into the river" (Exodus 1:22). His present desire is that the blood of Jewish children who were slain as they recited the eighteen benedictions of the daily [Amidah] prayer shall also be avenged. When God smote the Egyptians, He sought to demonstrate that there will always be accountability for the spilling of Jewish blood. At present, it is necessary not only to convince the dictator of Egypt [Nasser], but the self-righteous Nehru, the Foreign Office in London, and the sanctimonious members of the United Nations, that Jewish blood is not cheap. Therefore, how laughable it is when they try to persuade us to rely on the declaration of the three Great Powers guaranteeing the status quo. We all know from experience what value can be attached to the pronouncements of the British Foreign Office and the so-called friendship of certain officials in our State Department. In general, how absurd is the request that an entire people be dependent on the kindnesses of others and remain without the ability to defend itself. Public and private honor is dependent upon the possibility of defending one's life and one's honor. A people that cannot defend its freedom and tranquility is neither free nor independent. The third of the phrases of Divine redemption is "And I shall redeem you with an outstretched hand and with great judgments" (Exodus 6:6). Thank God we have lived to see the day when, with the help of God, Jews have it within their power to defend themselves.

Let us not forget that the poison of Hitlerite anti-Semitism (which made Jews fair game to all) still permeates this generation, which looked with equanimity upon the horrible scene of the suffocation of millions in gas chambers as a normal event that need not be challenged. The antidote for this venom that poisoned minds and dulled hearts is the readiness of the State of Israel to defend the lives of its citizens. Listen! My Beloved Knocks!

The sixth beckoning, of which we should also not lose sight, was heard at the time of the opening of the gates of the Land of Israel. A Jew escaping from an enemy's land now knows that he can find refuge in the land of his forefathers. This is a new phenomenon in the annals of our history. Up to now, when a Jewish population was uprooted, it wandered in the wilderness of the nations without finding shelter and habitation. The shutting of the gates in the face of the exiled caused total destruction for much of the Jewish people. Now the situation has changed. When any nation expels its Jewish minority, the exiled now direct their steps to Zion, and she, as a compassionate mother, absorbs them. We are all witnesses to the settlement of Oriental Jewry in Israel over the last several years. Who knows what would have been in store for these brothers of ours in the lands of their origin if not for the State of Israel, which brought them to her in planes and ships? Had Israel been born before the Hitlerian Holocaust, hundreds of thousands of Jews could have been saved from the gas chambers and the crematoria. The miracle of the State tarried somewhat, and in the wake of its delay, thousands and tens of thousands of Jews were taken to the slaughter. Now that the hour of hester panim has passed, however, the possibility exists for Jews who are pried from their homes to take root in the Holy Land. This should not be taken lightly. Listen! My Beloved Knocks!

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