

## The Cock Still Crows Before Dawn

Written by Victoria Radin

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Then He (Yeshua) said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me." (Luke 22:34)

In the above scripture, Yeshua might have just been giving Peter information as to when his denial would take place, but it is more likely that there is a deeper message attached to Peter's denial. The Hebrew sages say that each scripture has different levels of understanding from the obvious to the mystical that can be uncovered only through consistent Bible study and prayer.

In the same way that the rabbis apply various interpretations to *words* to tell stories and the teachings of the Bible, artists often create

*images*

to express

*their*

ideas, some of which are obvious and others that are hidden in their paintings. Twentieth century artist, Marc Chagall (a Russian Jew), utilized images in his paintings to make a 'comment on life' as a storyteller of that era. Some of the 'stories' he labored to paint were plain to see and others were often mystical, but always telling 'a story'. Chagall, who was not a believer in Yeshua (at least not openly)

, painted quite a number of canvases depicting the 'story' of the crucifixion and other biblical themes wherein the crucified Yeshua appeared. Chagall never sought to 'explain' his paintings, but said:

"For me, Christ has always symbolized the true type of the Jewish martyr. That is how I understood him in 1908 when I used this figure for the first time...It was under the influence of the pogroms. Then I painted and drew him in pictures about ghettos, surrounded by Jewish troubles, by Jewish mothers, running terrified with little children in their arms." "My Christ, as I depict him, is always the type of the Jewish martyr, in pogroms and in our other troubles, and not otherwise."

The various images he used stemmed from his Jewish upbringing, which images were understood not only in Chagall's day, but in Yeshua's day as well. The rooster is one such example. A rabbi explains the Hebraic perception of this figure, which is symbolic of an attitude filled with optimism, hope and belief.

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“A friend once shared with me a great thought. Although a rooster crows at the beginning of each day it actually happens some time before it gets light. When it senses that dawn will break soon, and light is on the way to substitute the darkness, he emits the crowing noise that became the ancient alarm clock. Every day we thank G-d for the wisdom of the rooster. It is the rooster's lesson that will carry us through every part of the day.

“In every day there are periods of light—clarity, blessing, peace of mind and prosperity. But there are also sometimes patches of darkness—challenge, confusion and difficulty. It takes special strength not to be caught up in the moments of challenge. It takes maturity to look beyond the darkness and see the light that awaits us. A wise person learns from the rooster. He/she knows that the darkness is only temporary and light is on the way. The rooster is symbolic of an attitude filled with optimism, hope and belief. The rooster teaches us to envisage and celebrate blessing even before it comes. “—Rabbi Michoel Gourarie

It would seem that Yeshua was telling Peter, *“There’s a very dark time coming, a time of unimaginable betrayal. But at the worst moment, when you have denied me three times, the cock will crow, signaling that the dawn is about to break with the light of a new day, filled with optimism, hope and belief.”* Yeshua wanted Peter [and us] to be encouraged by His words during "the dark times" even before they came to pass. He strengthened Peter with these words:

“And the L-rd said, Simon, Simon [Insert Your Name], behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:31, 32)

While this is a wonderful, encouraging revelation of a deep, allegorical insight into this scripture, there is yet another significant, solemn metaphor that can be drawn from the image of the rooster. In Chagall's painting, *Descent from the Cross*, a 'Rooster/Man' appears to be carrying Yeshua off the cross. Although Chagall may have only intended it to symbolize hope, Chagall's 'Rooster/Man' appears metaphorically to be representing the Christ coming off the cross as the substitute sacrifice as seen in modern-day Ultra-Orthodox practice. It seems that G-d was reaching out to the Ultra-Orthodox Jews even then.

After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD, the Jews had no place to sacrifice for the expiation of their sins. As a result, SOME Jewish sects decided to perform a ceremony, Kapparot, usually on the eve of Yom Kippur that is not based upon scripture. In this ritual, the

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sins of a person are symbolically transferred to a fowl (rooster or hen). The desire is that the fowl, the symbol of hope, will take on any misfortune that might otherwise occur to the one who has taken part in the ritual, in punishment for his or her sins.

Christian Zionists should view Chagall's paintings as an opportunity, and even a duty, to witness about Yeshua's Jewishness to those Christians who believe the Church has replaced Israel or to those that are ignorant of the fact that Yeshua came as a Jew and said He will be returning to rule and reign as a Jew, sitting on King David's throne that G-d established forever. He is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (a Jew).

"Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the L-rd of hosts will perform this." (Isaiah 9:7)

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star." (Revelation 22:16)

Like Peter, we also may deny Yeshua; we deny Him every time we deny His Jewishness and seek to separate Him from His people, Israel. God actually called Yeshua 'Israel' (Isaiah 49:1-3). Observant Jews are waiting for Him and Yeshua said that He will NOT return until they [all Israel] acknowledge Him. For Christians, the following scripture should be a driving force to witness to the Jewish people and pray for Israel, G-d's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22) so that both Jew & Gentile will see the return of the L-rd.

"...for I say to you [Israel], you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the L-rd!'" (Matthew 23:39)

"...so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:28)

In these "dark times", can you, like Peter, hear the cock crowing?

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To view Chagall's Crucifixion paintings, click [this link](#)