

Bereishit 5778

BS"D Parashat Bereishit 5778

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Rashi in his first commentary on the Torah quotes Midrash Tanchuma which poses the question that since the Torah is the book of mitzvot of the Jewish nation, it should begin with the first mitzva HaShem commanded us – to calculate and declare the new months and years. So why does it begin with the epic of Creation?

And the midrash explains that HaShem began the Torah with the story of creation in order to refute any future claims of the nations that the Jewish people illegally seized Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, the nations shall know that HaShem, as the creator of all that exists, gave Eretz Yisrael exclusively to the Jewish nation.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MR DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Dear Mr. President,

Since we both come from the same town,

you from Queens and I from Brooklyn, we speak the same language.

From the information we glean from the biblical account of the Exodus, one could get the impression that Pharaoh was given a bum rap, bordering on fake news; because, in fact, it would appear the he wasn't such a bad guy if we look at the objective factors.

After giving a direct order to kill every Jewish child without exception, based on the Oracles who predicted that a savior would soon be born who would free the Israelite slaves, his daughter Batya came home from a swim in the Nile carrying an infant Jewish boy.

Pharaoh probably told her to get rid of the baby because there were no exceptions, especially not in the King's own palace. His daughter, who was childless, fell in love with the little

boy in the floating basket and begged her father for permission to keep him. And Pharaoh, despite his best intuition, caved in to his daughter's tears. Eventually Pharaoh came to love the little boy, who was given the Egyptian name Moshe, which means "to draw out of the water". We know this from the fact that when Moshe was sent by God to speak to Pharaoh, he had free access to the palace, and despite the most damaging, critical accusations that Moshe voiced, Pharaoh never laid a hand on him.

Agreed, Pharaoh was a dictator and a tyrant. But that was the accepted norm at the time; that all leaders were despots and all employed slaves. In addition, Pharaoh was not paid to be the king of the Jews, but rather was responsible for the welfare of millions of Egyptian citizens, whose economic and military strength was based on cheap slave labor. In effect, Moshe was demanding that Pharaoh destroy his

society for the sake of the Israelites. Come on!

So where is the evil in Pharaoh who acted in the proper manner under the circumstances? When the plagues befell the nation, the machinery of government was in place. When the water supplies turned to blood, didn't the government issue money to the various regions to purchase pure water from the Israelites? When frogs inundated the land, didn't FEMA distribute cans of noxious material to drive them out of the houses? Lice were dealt with by Homeland Security that sent out teams of technicians to spray the affected areas. So too with the subsequent seven plagues. Pharaoh sought every way to help his people, short of destroying the nation's economy by freeing the slaves.

So where is the evil in Pharaoh that relegates him to be among the most infamous enemies of the Jewish people?

Moshe informed Pharaoh that the God of Israel, creator of all, sent him to free the Israelites. And this God is a resolute entity who created the world with a strategic purpose in which the Israelites were destined to play the major role. Hence, aside from the injustice of slavery, God's intention is to present his Torah to the Israelites, and then bring them to Eretz Yisrael. Moshe explained to Pharaoh that his intransigence was an obstacle to the realization of God's plan for the world. So, God would force Pharaoh to yield, for the price of refusal would be the destruction of Egypt, stage by stage, by use of the ten plagues.

Dear Mr. President, you are a good man with high aspirations to advance the welfare of your nation in every field. But just look around: uncontrollable forest fires in California. Tornadoes in Oklahoma and other states. Devastating hurricanes that are costing the federal,

state, and local governments hundreds of billions of dollars. Oil rigs are down. California is counting the days until the next major earthquake, not to mention New York City, which is built on a geological fault.

Stop for a moment and ask yourself, why are these tragedies happening to your country?

The answer is that like Pharaoh, you, Mr. President are an obstacle to the realization of God's plan for the Jewish nation and hence for the world.

The land of Israel was given to the Jewish nation exclusively and in accordance with the Biblical boundaries of the Euphrates River in the north continuing to the Nile in the south.

Your prohibition on Israel's building in

the areas liberated in the Six Day war are the obstacle to the implementation of God's plan, that the Jewish nation return home, hence your nation is suffering plagues of many kinds.

If this prohibition is United States policy, or even if it is the pressure of certain misguided Jews of all ranks, it is your Christian duty to aid and abet the Jewish people's return to their ancient homeland.

I wish you success in all your endeavors. But remember your success and the success of your nation (and of the world) will be contingent on the manner in which they all relate to the Jewish people's miraculous survival and return to their ancient homeland.

Respectfully,

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Jerusalem – Eternal capital of Israel

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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