

BS”D Parashat Vayera 5783

Memories – KRISTALLNACHT

On November 9-10, 1938 (83 years ago today on the 16th of Cheshvan 5639), the Germans unleashed a series of pogroms against the Jews in Germany and recently incorporated territories. This event came to be called Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass) because of the shattered glass that littered the streets after the vandalism and destruction. Jews were murdered; rioters destroyed 267 synagogues throughout Germany, Austria and the Sudetenland. Over 7,000 Jewish businesses were damaged or destroyed, and 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and incarcerated in concentration camps.

There is a custom in many batei kneset here in Israel to leave the lights burning all this night to proclaim DON'T FORGET – DON'T FORGIVE.

One of the lowest levels a Jew can sink to is to live in Germany. Even worse than Lot who chose to live in Sodom.

The Elections in Israel

There are two adjacent pictures over my desk which I cut out from a publication whose name I forgot.

To the left is the heart-breaking picture of a young Jewish boy, perhaps eight or nine, being removed by the Germans from a building in Warsaw. His hands are high in the air, as a German soldier points his rifle at this “enemy” of the Third Reich. To the right is a photo of an Israeli soldier with talit and tefillin sitting atop a tank. The caption under the

picture of the little boy reads “good Jewish boy”, the caption under the Israeli soldier is “bad Jewish boy”.

This is the essence of how the Christian descendants of Aisav and the Moslem descendants of Yishmael view us. When we are downtrodden and turned into ashes, we are the “good Jewish boy”, but when HaShem permits us to flex our iron fist we are the “bad Jewish boy”.

This is also the essence of Israel’s recent elections.

When an Arab puts a knife into the back of an unarmed Israeli walking in the street, or when they throw rocks to kill drivers on the road, or when they shoot at innocent people, and we react by weeping and quietly counting our dead and saying kaddish, we are the “good Jewish boy,” but when we punish the perpetrators, we are the “bad Jewish boy”.

This holds true even when a Jew voices the explicit truth of the Torah that the lands of this region, from the Euphrates in the east, beginning in Turkey, and flowing into the Gulf waters, until the Mediterranean Sea to the far west, belong to the Jews as an inheritance of the gift presented by the Creator to our father Avraham, and repeated by HaShem to Yitzchak, and for the third time to our father Ya’akov.

The very thought that HaShem chose the Jewish nation over all others is anathema to the anti-Semites of the world, beginning with the NY Times, and causing them to stand on their hind legs and bark at the “bully on the block”.

Three of the four parties that comprise our new government are Torah true, halacha observers. The message is that we will begin asserting our rightful sovereignty, beginning with the area between the ocean and the Jordan river. For example: major terrorists will be executed; less violent ones and their families will be banished forever from the land after serving their time in prison; all the illegal Arab buildings in Judea and Samaria will be demolished or repossessed by the

government; any act that endangers a Jew will immediately cancel the perpetrator's citizenship; and the tens of thousands of illegal infiltrators from Africa and Europe will be expelled from our land. This is just the "coming attractions" of our asserting Jewish sovereignty after an "unfortunate" 2000-year interruption in the ongoing flow of our eternal history.

These policies could materialize if our political leaders are assertive and consistent when confronting the massive political and economic pressures which the gentile nations are planning.

Global Warming

Israeli President Isaac Herzog departed Monday morning for Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, where he led the Israeli delegation to the 2022 U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP27).

What is the problem?

The climate of an area determines its seasons and when they come and go. This, in turn, affects the type of vegetation that grows, and which animals survive. The species and places we love depend on an intricate ecosystem, and even small changes in the climate can disrupt nature's delicate balance.

As humans, every aspect of our life depends on the natural environment. This includes the food we eat, the air we breathe, the water we drink and the clothes we wear. A healthy and stable climate is our most precious natural resource.

What changes to the climate are we humans causing through global warming?

The Earth's temperature has already warmed by 1 degree Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. This temperature rise may seem small, but small rises in temperature translate into big changes for the world's climate; since the amount of extra

energy needed to increase the world's temperature, even by a little, is massive.

In the past few years, records have been broken for the longest heatwaves, and the Bureau of Meteorology has added purple and magenta to the forecast map for temperatures up to 54 Celsius!

Increased ocean temperatures are melting glaciers and ice caps. Melted ice increases the volume of water in our oceans. Warmer temperatures also result in the expansion of the water's mass, which causes sea levels to rise, threatening low-lying islands and coastal cities.

Extreme weather events like bush fires, cyclones, droughts and floods are becoming more frequent and more intense as a result of global warming.

The oceans have absorbed most of the extra heat and carbon dioxide (CO₂) so far, more than the air, making the seas both warmer and more acidic. Warming waters are driving stronger storms. Intensely burnt forests, resulting in complete loss of vegetation structure.

One in six species is at risk of extinction because of climate change! To survive, plants, animals and birds confronted with climate change have two options: relocate or adapt. With the speed of climate change we are experiencing already, it's often impossible for a species to adapt quickly enough to keep up with its changing environment. And with the amount of habitat destruction, moving is becoming increasingly difficult.

Changes to rainfall patterns, increasingly severe drought, more frequent heat waves, flooding and extreme weather make it more difficult for farmers to graze livestock and grow produce, reducing food availability and making it more expensive to buy. Reduced rainfall and increasingly severe droughts will lead to water shortages. Increasingly severe and

frequent heatwaves lead to death and illness, especially among the elderly.

Interesting that this conference on the state of our planet comes following the parsha of Noach's flood that decimated all mankind, except for his family and certain animal life. In parshat Noach, HaShem announces that He will never again bring a flood, or by extension, a God-initiated calamity to destroy all life. Perhaps HaShem was alluding that He will not destroy humanity and the planet but will leave the task to man to accomplish through his evil, egotistic intentions and acts.

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 97a) quotes the sayings of various rabbis regarding the end game of this world: Rabbi Katina says that this world as we know it will function for 6000 years, followed by its destruction, lasting another 1000 years, until HaShem will restore life on this planet. The Amora Abayai says that the period of destruction will last 2000 years.

As things stand today, we are in the year 5783, that is late in the afternoon of the Friday of the world (each 1000 years stands for one day of creation) with only 217 years left until the year 6000.

The current warming trend is clearly the result of human activities since the mid-1800s and is proceeding at a rate not seen over many millennia. It is undeniable that human activities have produced the atmospheric gases that have trapped more of the sun's energy in the earth's system. This extra energy has warmed the atmosphere, ocean, and land, and widespread and rapid changes in the atmosphere, ocean, cryosphere, and biosphere have occurred.

The undeniable fact is that whatever chazal (our rabbis) have stated, based on traditions passed on to them, they have never been wrong.

On this background, in the 217 years yet before us, there is so much to be done. The Mashiach has to reveal himself, the

Bet Hamikdash has to be rebuilt, the nation has to return to a Torah life, the war initiated by Gog, King of Magog; and the list takes the breath out of us.

But dear reader – don't get nervous.

I recall one of my rabbis in Yeshivat Rabbeinu Ya'akov Yosef in New York, who was discussing this issue of six thousand years and said, "what will happen when Rosh Hashana ushers in the year 6000 and nothing dramatic happens? The planet will still revolve around itself and around the sun, birds will still chirp, and goyim will still say 'dirty Jew': the world will not be very different than Rosh Hashana of the year 5000."

And then the Rabbi continued, "The next morning we will arise from a night's sleep, drink a cup of coffee, and take our tefillin to shul; because HaShem has seen reason to permit the quality of mercy to over-ride the quality of strict justice.

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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