

Korach 5779

BS"D Parashat Korach 5779

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

A Letter to HaShem

From my forthcoming book "Reflections From Yerushalayim"

It's that time of year HaShem (the approach of Roah Hashana), when Your children withdraw a bit from the distractions of this life in order to introspect on what they have or have not done properly in the past year.

I will skip the formalities of asking how You are, because You are total perfection.

The following is my yearly e-mail (Elokim Mail) to report on the state of Your people as perceived from this virtual world, which of course is quite different from what is perceived from Your world of absolute truth.

There are two points I humbly wish to raise; but since You know my thoughts even before I, You know that they are in fact one point.

It is a time when seeing a few more white hairs in the mirror does more than just effect a shrug of the shoulders. It's that time of year when we realize our frailty as we await the heavenly judgments that will be meted out in a few short days. Who shall live in this world and who will be taken away to

another dimension; who will rise and who will fall; who will smile and who will weep?

It is a time when life is not taken for granted, and the "I" of each person becomes the most essential thing for us who are insecure in the knowledge that our futures are being determined by forces over which we have no control.

But, Father in Heaven, there are people who, in addition to their pains and longings, are very much aware that You, as the Judge of all things, are not exempt from pain. Of course, You put up an impressive show of strength and glory before the myriad of angels and other creatures ever present in the seven heavens.

However, we know all about that very secret room called "mistarin" (hidden) into which You enter every day alone to cry for the glory of Am Yisrael and Your glory, which was lost to the goyim, and the glory of the Bet Hamikdash, which You had to destroy. Don't be surprised that we know about Your secret room. In fact, it's right there in Masechet Chagiga 5a for all to see.

At this time, I have to confess to an ongoing sin, which I was unable to get rid of until a little light of understanding flickered within me. How can I explain? Upon following the events of human history, I thought that if anyone would run their business the way You run the world, he would quickly go bankrupt.

You created Adam and Chava and placed them in the Garden of Eden – the most perfect setting imaginable. Within the first three hours of their lives, they sinned, were sentenced to die and were driven out of the Garden. The next generation was even worse. Kayin killed his brother Hevel. Ten generations down the line, You destroyed all living things except for a small remnant enclosed in a floating pea pod.

You then destroyed the five cultural centers of the world:

Sodom, Amora, Adma, Tzivoyim and Tzoar.

Indeed, it took 1948 years for the first person to be born who was capable of acknowledging You, our forefather Avraham.

However, as time goes by, I have come to get an inkling of Your infinite "business sense". You made the "best deal" ever where You always win and never lose!

Starting from Adam, the goyim were never intended to be a profit-making endeavor. The first 2000 years of history was the time needed to set up the business when one always loses. The real "sechora" (merchandise) began with Avraham and Sarah. From that time on, Your capital and interest have soared to heavenly heights.

No matter what You bring upon Your chosen people, Am Yisrael, we always come back for more. Our loyalty to You is not dependent on Your actions towards us. The destruction of two Temples, 2000 years of Galut, inquisitions, crusades, pogroms, concentration camps and unceasing world anti-Semitism have never been able to extinguish the flame. Who else is capable of making such a perfect business choice?!

On the one hand, I can understand Your need to retire to the "room" in anguish over our suffering – as a parent does when the children are not well. On the other hand, You have every reason to be proud of Your loyal children who are the source of Your joy.

Just observe us at any given moment. We have returned to Your holy soil from which the world was created. Your children in Eretz Yisrael cling to every available meter of land, building and restoring it to its former glory, before it was devastated by the now extinct Romans.

Your children are bringing the voice of Torah to all parts of the land, and indeed to the world. There have not been so many yeshivot and batei kneset in the land since the time of

Hillel and Shamai. The agricultural mitzvot, for which Your servant Moshe so much wanted to enter the land, have come alive: shmita, truma, ma'aser, etc.

Tzahal, the holy army of the future Mashiach, brings the call of Torah every day to the air and under the waves – places where they never had been before. The brave soldiers of King David protect Your holy people as has never been done in the last 2000 years. The youngest boys in boot camp to the highest officers are all imbued with the feeling that they are Your messengers in establishing Your new-old kingdom in Yerushalayim and in all of Eretz Yisrael – from the River Prat to the “great river of Egypt”.

The knowledge that we are surrounded by hundreds of millions of enemies does not deter Your children from fulfilling Your wish that the Holy Land be rebuilt as the spiritual center of the world.

In the fleeting second of my existence in this world, and the limitations You have imposed on my ability to comprehend, I can still discern the wondrous qualities of the people You have chosen.

Father in Heaven, You have every reason in the universe to be delighted with Your choice of the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. We, in Eretz Yisrael, will be eternally loyal to You, no matter what You in Your infinite wisdom deem proper and necessary to mete out to us. If there are signs of weakness or frailty in parts of our nation, it can be blamed on the difficult nature of our existence and not on their desire to rebel against Your kingship.

I know that this coming year will be critical for the history of Your world. I am thankful that the problems of terrorism, Iran, Islam, etc. are Your problems and not ours, because You have revealed to the prophets (Yoel 3:5 and Ovadya 1:17) that “there shall be refuge in Yerushalayim and Tzion.”

So, this Rosh Hashana, when You open the books of our lives, remember what the Gemara in Ketuvot declares, "Whoever resides in Eretz Yisrael is in a state of non-sinning (sharuy belo avon)."

While trying to be as impartial as possible, I can say in all frankness that You have every justification before the many prosecutors of Am Yisrael in the Shamayim:

- To forgive our wrong-doings
- To ignore our shortcomings in light of the love we feel for You and our mesirat nefesh (self-sacrifice).
- To inscribe Your children in Eretz Yisrael, and those not yet here, in the Book of Life.
- To bless us with feelings of inadequacy so that we should constantly strive for perfection in the performance of Your Torah.
- To open our hearts and eyes to see the positive qualities in every person, as stated by the great Hillel, as being the essence of the Torah.

So, our omnipotent Father and King in Heaven, have a great Eternity.

Signed:

Nachman, son of Harav Yechezkel Shraga HaKohen of Tzfat and Sarah Chana of D'vinsk, zichronam livracha, presently unemployed (as a kohen) but optimistically and anxiously awaiting the rebuilding of Your Bet HaMikdash.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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