

Rosh HaShanah 5781

BS"D, Rosh HaShanah 5781

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

A LETTER TO HASHEM

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

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

The following is my yearly E-mail (Elokim Mail) to report to You 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.

It is a time when seeing in the mirror a few more white hairs does more than just effect a shrug of the shoulders. It's that time of year when we realize our frailty before the heavenly judgements, which 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 whom 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, 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” 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 of course, for the Bet Hamikdash which You had to destroy. Don’t be surprised that we know about Your secret room, in fact its right there in Masechet Chagiga 5a – for all to see.

At this time, I have to confess to an on-going sin, which I was unable to rid myself of until a little light of understanding flickered on. How can I explain? On following the events of human history, I thought to myself that if anyone would run their business the way You run the world, he would be quickly bankrupt.

You created Adam and Chava, placed them in the most perfect setting imaginable, Gan Eden. Within the first three hours of their lives they sinned, were sentenced to die, and were driven out of Paradise. 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.

Then You 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 – Avraham Aveinu.

However, as time goes by, I realize Your infinite “business sense”. You made the “best deal” ever possible, where You always win and never lose!

The goyim, starting from Adam, were never intended to be profit-making merchandise. The first 2000 years of history were the time it took to set up the business when one always loses. The real “sechora” began with Avraham and Sara. From that time on, Your capital and interest have soared to heavenly heights.

Your chosen people, Am Yisrael, no matter what You bring upon us, 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, world anti-Semitism, and more, were never 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 expected from a parent whose children are not well. But, on the other hand, You have every reason to be proud of Your loyal children; they 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. There have not been so many Yeshivot and Batei Knesset in the land probably 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.

The holy army of the future Mashiach – Tzahal – daily brings

the call of Torah to the air and under the waves – places where they never were before. The brave soldiers of David Ha'melech protect Your holy people as has never been done in the last 2000 years. From the young boy in boot camp up to the highest officers, they are all imbued with the feeling that they are Your messengers in establishing Your new-old kingdom in Yerushalayim, and all 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, not on their desire to rebel against Your kingship.

We know that this coming year will be critical for the history of Your world. Terrorism, Iran, Islam, etc. But these are, thank God, Your problems not ours, because You have revealed to the prophets (Yoel 3:5 and Ovadya 1:17) that in Yerushalayim and Tzion "there shall be refuge".

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

While trying to be as impartial as possible, I can say in all frankness:

You have every justification before the many prosecutors of Am Yisrael in the Shamayim:

- To forgive our wrong-doings.
- To ignore our short comings in the light of the love we feel for You and our mesirat nefesh.
- To inscribe Your children in Eretz Yisrael, and those of the nation not yet here, in the Book of Life.
- To bless us with feelings of inadequacies, 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 awaiting the rebuilding of Your Bet HaMikdash.

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