

Vayak'heḥ Pikudei 5780

BS"D Parshiot Vayak'heḥ Pikudei 5780

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

Catastrophe or Redemption?

The present year is 780) ה"ת"ס or 5780) the acrostic of the first two letters reads ה"ת ה"ת (this year shall be), but what about the last letter ס? It can stand for the word por'onoot (catastrophe) or pidyon (redemption). I see por'onoot for the enemies of Am Yisrael and redemption for HaShem's loyal children in Medinat Yisrael.

Three Messages for the: Non-Jews, Jews in Diaspora, Jews in Israel

At this time of world crises, I have three messages: one for the gentile (non-Jewish) world, one for the Jews of the US and one for us in the holy land.

To the Gentiles

Dear World:

HaShem revealed to Noach His intention to destroy mankind if in 120 years they did not change their immoral behavior. The Torah then relates that the Creator revealed the construction

plans for an ark; 300 amot long, 50 wide and 30 high. It was to have three levels, a window, and in the ark's side there was to be a door.

It was a remarkable piece of workmanship. I don't know if these dimensions are seaworthy, but it withstood powerful gales and boiling sulfuric waters. Although I would not recommend going from Haifa to Tel Aviv on such a ship, even in good times.

Look at the contents of your home; the garage with its automatic door that opens when your car turns into the driveway and ingeniously rolls down when you cut the engine, saving you the discomfort of having to push the button. The car's automatic navigational systems connected to satellites 500 kilometers above in space, and of course the greatest inventions of all time – the air conditioner and washing machine. They are the fruit of man's efforts of the last 250 or so years beginning with the industrial revolution and its steam engine, continuing up to the little cell phone and now artificial intelligence.

The time from creation until Noach was over 1000 years. It would be presumptuous to say that we were able to accomplish in 250 years what the ancients could not do in 1000. Therefore, I suggest that they had a 'futuristic' society quite beyond the wildest dreams of our scientists. But in that unimaginable, technological perfect society, God and religion were superfluous.

The present Coronavirus pandemic began in China, a country of one billion seven hundred million people. China and the Chinese government and Communist Party are officially atheist. According to a 2015 Gallup poll, the percentage of convinced atheists in China was 61%, with a further 29% saying that they are not religious. In order to be a member of the Communist Party of China an individual "must accept atheism".

Southeast Asia, as in India, Burma etc., practice forms of religion that are considered by us to be avoda zara – idolatry. Many halachic authorities regard Christianity with its trinity as avoda zara; and Islam with all its outward signs of religiosity use God as a political weapon to gain power. The world is very far away from the Jewish ideal of one world with two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, under one God.

In our times HaShem has become superfluous in most people's lives. But the present crisis is placing man in his proper position. We might be on the verge of realizing the prophetic words of Yeshayahu (2,4):

וְהָיוּ הַחֶבֶר וְהַחֶבֶר וְהַחֶבֶר וְהַחֶבֶר וְהַחֶבֶר

They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.

Because when one is hungry, a potato is more relevant than an F-35 fighter jet.

It's interesting to note that the nations that led in anti-Semitism are the ones now being most affected: Iran, Germany, Italy (Rome), Spain, England, Switzerland, and it's just the beginning. The "Palestinian" authority, and all the Arab countries will soon feel the heavy hand of HaShem.

Most of the nations that comprise the UN will suffer because of the biased unashamed Israel beating that they have meted out to us in these 75 years.

To the Jews in the US

There is much to be said regarding that segment of Am Yisrael, about their religious leaders, the 80% who married out and the American Jewish apathetic and phlegmatic attitude toward the Medina. However, at this moment of midat hadin (quality of harsh judgement) it would be an improper act. But I wish to point out one vital issue: don't ask your sons and daughters to leave Israel and "come home".

The American government and those who are responsible for protecting America's future perceive a clear and present danger. If the present situation turns ugly and chaotic, there will be millions of desperate people taking to the streets. Millions of impoverished have-nots, minorities and immigrants rioting for food, looting shops and breaking into private homes. In order to prevent this, or at least to contain it, the government will increase the nation's security forces, the police and army, and establish an internal civil force trained for these conditions. The draft will be reinstated, and your sons and daughter will fill those ranks.

We are living on a seam of history where no one can say where HaShem is taking humanity. Those who welcomed their children back from Israel have done them an injustice. Israel is the safest place on the planet for any Jew.

For my Brothers and Sisters in Medinat Yisrael:

We are most fortunate of the Jewish people of the last 2000 years. There are issues in our lives that need mending, but for a people who have lived under threat for the past 72 years we are doing very well. We will get out from under the Coronavirus pandemic into a new reality in the land. For us שנה טובה will be a year of pidyon – redemption, or at least a

giant step towards that promised goal.

The medical term for the disease that this virus causes is Covid-19, lets reshape it to read David chapter 19 of Tehillim.

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[illegible]

1 For the conductor of music. A Psalm of David.

2 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the skies proclaim the work of His hands.

3 Day after day they pour forth speech, and night unto night they reveal knowledge.

4 They have no speech, they use no words, no sound is heard from them.

5 Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.

6 It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course.

7 It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.

8 The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD is trustworthy, making wise the simple.

9 The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

10 The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.

11 They are more precious than gold, they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

12 By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

13 But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

14 Keep your servant also from willful sins, may they not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

15 May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in Your sight,

Lord, my Rock, and my Redeemer.

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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