

Noach

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*Y*onah was against telling the people of Nineveh that the end was nigh if they did not repent because he knew they would do *teshuvah* and save themselves. That would have been a good thing had the Jewish people back home responded to his warnings in the same way, but they hadn't. Yonah wanted to avoid having to incriminate his own people, as much as they deserved it.

But Yonah was forced to go anyhow and, true to his concern, the people of Nineveh heeded his warning, did the requisite *teshuvah*, and avoided Divine retribution. Disconcerted, he brooded outside the city where he was told by God:

Now should I not take pity on Nineveh, the great city, in which there are many more than one hundred twenty thousand people who do not know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well? (Yonah 4:11)

But if so, why did the people of Nineveh need to do *teshuvah* in the first place? If they were so "innocent," why were they in danger of destruction had not Yonah warned them? For the same reason that the Flood wiped away all of mankind except for Noach and his family, even though not everyone was culpable of being wiped away. There had certainly been many children who did not "know their right hand from their left" yet.

A lack of foreknowledge of a sin may mitigate a person's culpability before God, but it doesn't necessarily mitigate the sin's impact on Creation. Sins which are only sins when intentionally committed cannot be sins when unintended, which spares Creation of the spiritual impact. But some sins, like a forbidden relationship for example, will still impact Creation even if it occurs by accident.

For example, if a woman was told by witnesses that her husband died and she

remarried, after which the first husband later turned up perfectly alive, she has to divorce both husbands, even though it was only unintentional adultery. If she had a child from the second husband already, it will be, tragically, a *mamzer*. This is why the *Bais Din* is very careful about such situations and, why also tragically some women are unable to remarry.

Likewise, if a person steals accidentally, the person from whom they stole will suffer the same regardless. The “thief” may have done nothing wrong as far as they and God are concerned, but a wrong has occurred, and there is an impact on Creation nevertheless.

And it accumulates. Sinful behavior builds up if not eliminated through *teshuvah* or some kind of Divine rectification. Creation was made by God and is holy. It can only handle so much profanity by nature before it “breaks.” A straw cannot break a camel’s back unless it is on top of a large pile of other straws, even if they were all piled there for a good reason.

Therefore the *Gemora* says that every sixty to seventy years God brings a major calamity on the world to flush out the *mamzerim*, regardless of how they were created. He takes others as well to hide the Divine Providence, but that is the main reason, to rid the world of the spiritual impurity that has accumulated to the point of “breaking” Creation.

Shabbos Day

THUS THE ZOHAR speaks about a nation’s *se’ab*, a Biblical measurement that here is a metaphor for a nation’s fill of evil. Nations can commit evils for generations and not be made to suffer for it. But if their evils continue to accumulate to a point the world cannot tolerate, something will have to happen to restore the balance. Before God will let the world break, He’ll break those who brought it to that point.

That’s why it is a mistake to think that just because you got away with doing something wrong once, twice, three times, whatever, that you always will. You may have been saved by a miracle for one reason or another for the time being, but the spiritual impact of wrong acts has been accumulating. The secular world talks about luck running out. We talk about God deciding that enough is enough and hitting the person or people with Divine judgment to restore spiritual order once again.

There’s another issue as well. Sometimes history on its own becomes dangerous, meaning that God’s master plan for Creation requires certain things to happen that might be dangerous for man. For example, the final redemption has to come, and seemingly after the War of Gog and Magog. Given the prophecies describing it and

Chazal's warnings about it, those living at the time will need *sbemirab*, a level of miraculous Divine protection to survive it.

That will be hard to get if a person has a history of anti-God behavior. And by anti-God we do not mean that they go to war against God like Nimrod and his group did in their time. It can just mean that they didn't bother to find out if God existed and, if He did, why He cared about specific behavior.

It's like a cavity. A cavity doesn't happen overnight and might even take a while to actually show up. Not brushing properly or flossing as recommended may not cause any problems in the short run, but it will in the long run. Each day a person doesn't brush or floss creates a vulnerability in the teeth that, at some time in the future, will show up as a painful cavity.

So, all those times that God did not respond to our negative behavior was not because He was busy or sleeping. If He was busy, it was because He was keeping track of what we were doing, waiting for the time when we reached our fill of such spiritually damaging behavior and needed a hard reboot.

Then there's what is called "The Perfect Storm." Originally it referred to rare weather conditions that cause epic storms when they happen, but it has been borrowed to refer to any disaster that results from rare conditions coinciding. Getting into an accident because of reckless driving is not a rare occurrence. But an accident occurring at night from reckless driving because it happened to rain and the street lights blacked out at the same time is a much rarer happening. Therefore, it is a "perfect storm" of destructive events.

And you have to also factor in *Hashgochab Pratis*—Divine Providence. Everything is Divine Providence, but some things are more obviously Divine Providence than others. In other words, sometimes God will cause a perfect storm to occur for the fulfillment of some aspect of the Divine plan for Creation. We go about our business as if there is no master plan for Creation, but not God. He always sticks to His plan for history, and that can require tweaking something, somewhere, in one form or another.

That's why you can never take a future risk based upon a successful past one, or do something wrong because someone else did it and seemed to get away with it. The conditions are never the same, and you don't know how close you are to God saying "Enough is enough."

This is why the Torah doesn't say that God will throw us out of *Eretz Yisroel* for sinning. It says the land will spit us out, which everyone takes to mean that God is really doing it. He is, but it is a way of telling us that even unintentional sins take a

toll on the land and push the limit of how much it can take. Reach that line and something's gonna break. Something just did.

Seudas Shlishis

THERE ARE TWO ways to look at the destruction caused by the Flood. History, Part 1 failed, and God decided to tear it down and build it up again. Or, History, Part 1 went as far as it was ever going to go, and History, Part 2, was the intended continuation going back to Creation itself.

There is an upside and downside to each possibility. According to the first scenario, History, Part 1 *could* have worked. It just didn't, and so it needed to be rebooted, and was. So far so good? There have been a lot of rainbows over the millennia reminding us that, had God not promised not to flood the world again (with water), He would have done it several times again already.

According to the second take, History, Part 1, was never meant to work more than it did, so it only failed according to our expectations, not God's (even though He *sure* sounded disappointed at the end of *Parashas Bereishis*). Part 2 was always in the works from Day One, and hopefully, and so far, it will take us the final distance to the Messianic Era... though world destruction is awfully close.

Likewise, the modern State. We would have liked to have believed—especially after the Holocaust—that that was it for intense and genocidal anti-Semitism. Now we finally had our own homeland once again, and it seemed to be a place of refuge from our haters. On *Shemini Atzeres* this year we found out otherwise. For those who thought getting back the land in 1948 was the final redemption (and not just a part of it), the illusion was shattered.

But what really is happening is the transition from Final Redemption, Phase 1 to Final Redemption, Phase 2. Whatever the State was supposed to accomplish in the first phase of the redemption process came to an end on the day of the Israeli version of 9/11. We are now moving towards the second and final stage, the one the prophets and *gemora* talked about long before we ever got this far.

Sadness, depression, despair, fear, etc. are all natural reactions to the current situation in Israel which will affect the entire world over the next while. But that's because we thought the previous state of Israeli life would have worked just fine until *Moshiach* came. To our extreme disappointment, it didn't.

It was failing for some time now in increments, and having fellow Israelis tell you that they consider the Arabs their brothers before they do a fellow Jew, was proving

quite a challenge. But the deaths and the atrocities that followed at the hands of who the Leftist call their “bothers” took the failure to a whole other level.

It is clear, or at least *clearer*, that we are a people in transition. But to what?

Ain Od Milvado, Part 69

THE END GAME is, and has always been, “*God will be King over the entire land, and on that day, God will be One, and His Name, One*” (Zechariah 14:9). So, if it is your job to make that happen, given the world today, how would you do it? What script would you follow?

Mind you, we have already been told that God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, and that our ways are not His ways. Nevertheless, if you want to know what *could* be happening next, consider how to make the words of Zechariah *HaNavi* come true tomorrow, if not today. How is the world going to reach the point of *ain od Milvado*?

I think a combination of things will happen, depending on where a person is holding spiritually. People who are essentially good but poorly informed will have their eyes opened, one way or another, so they can realize the truth about God that has evaded them all this time. People who are essentially bad (and some we may not even recognize as such yet), will meet their end, also one way or another. The qualification for surviving into *Yemos HaMoshiach* is the ability to wholeheartedly accept the reality of God and His control over everything.

But don’t expect some Divine surveyor to show up at your front door with clipboard in hand to ask you a few personal questions. The asking has already begun. Things are happening just so to make us react this way or that way. It is this that the Divine “surveyors” are taking note of, and the test may be over before most people even realize it began.

So now’s the time. Don’t just watch the news and evaluate it like you have in the past. Heaven is talking to us through the events of today, and how we answer is already determining our future. *Ain od Milvado*. Make sure you know what it means, and make sure you know how to live by it.

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