

Hazon

Every generation has its own tests. I would have liked to believe that having actual prophets of God to tell us what God was thinking and planning to do would be enough to straighten out the crookedness of any generation. But then I read the Prophets and found out that many *nevi'im* had been largely ignored by the people, and that the people even invented false ones to contradict them. If prophets didn't work, then how will looking at the calamities of past generations, as this week's *parsha* tells us to do, make a difference, *especially* today?

You don't even need a verse to instruct us to do that. Who doesn't compare what is going on today to the Jews to what happened to them back in the 1930s? What we need is a verse or two to explain why, despite the obvious comparisons, we don't learn the obvious lessons? People see reason for concern today, but with only a few exceptions, most Jews still throw caution to the wind.

The answer is actually mathematical. There are all these "constants" on the left side of the equal sign, like mortgaged homes, good jobs, large families, high standards of living, lots of good kosher restaurants, etc., in the Diaspora. All of this, of course, is followed by the mathematical symbol that says, "does not equal *aliyah*."

But wait . . . there seems to be this variable in the equation that, during better times, no one seems to pay attention to. It's called Anti-Semitism. When it is minimal, then "does not equal *aliyah*" remains the answer. When it starts to grow, then "does not equal *aliyah*" starts to become less so, and when it grows so much that we start to lose our mortgaged homes, good jobs, etc., (God forbid), then "does not equal *aliyah*" transforms into "must make *aliyah*."

The question a Jew has to ask themselves then is, *how* much Anti-Semitism is *too* much Anti-Semitism?

But wait, it turns out there are other variables that need serious consideration as well. For example, travel arrangements. Today, when a Jew wants to travel, they can arrange almost everything online and within days, perhaps even hours. But when chaos starts its reign, will that still be so?

Today, when a Jew travels in most parts of the world, they do so with minimal fear and interference. Will that still be the case when entire governments have turned against the Jews, as is already happening?

Today, when we want our money from financial institutions, we just ask for it. How much longer will we be able to do that if Jews are divested of their rights (like the Japanese Americans were during World War II after the attack on Pearl Harbor)?

Hyperbole? Actually, *Jewish history*. AI will tell you the same thing.

But wait a moment again. We've left out the most important variable of all that the Torah has been focusing on the last few *parshios*. It's not the Anti-Semites we have to worry about. It's not travel restrictions that we have to worry about. It's not even the losing of our money that we have to be concerned about. There is only one variable that needs to concern us: *Hashgochah Pratis*—Divine Providence, because that is the variable that controls all the others.

If you were paying attention in *Mussaf* on Rosh Hashanah, we included the dramatic prayer, *Unesaneh Tokef*. It's when we intoned how it is God and *only* God Who determines who will live and who will die, when, and how. Everyone else and everything else are just the means at His disposal to carry out His decision for individuals and the nation as a whole. Whether a Jew will have to run and hide is up to Him, and whether or not a Jew will run and hide successfully is His decision, and *only* His decision.

That being the case, the only question we actually need to answer is, why *should* He save us . . . besides our wanting to be saved? That reason alone did not work for so many in the past, so we shouldn't count on it in the future.

Well, how about something we say every weekday morning in *Shacharis*:

God of Hosts, fortunate is the man who trusts in You (Tebillim 84:13). God, deliver [us]; the King will answer us on the day we call" (Tebillim 20:10).

As it says, if you want God to answer on the day you "call," you have to already be one of those people who have trusted in Him for everything until that time.

Easier said than done, especially after so many years of "natural" success. For us, it's like telling someone who doesn't have money, a job, or a degree to get a good one, that if they just go and make a couple of million dollars, they'll be financially secure.

As I said, much easier than it sounds.

There are some people in the world who not only know what trust in God means, they actually have it. And more than likely, they've never been on the cover of a magazine discussing the top 500 companies.

But that's changing. If history goes as it has in the past and is promising to in the future, a Jew's greatest asset will be trust in God. Moshe Rabbeinu, in this week's *parsha*, called Heaven and Earth to bear witness to the fact that perfect trust in God is the be-all and end-all for every Jew. It was the same Heaven that we live under today and the Earth that we walk on all the time. And they're about to step forward one last time with their ancient testimony in modern times about what Jewish life is really about. Are you ready?

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Good *Shabbos* and *Gmar Tov*,

Pinchas Winston

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