

# How Did It Happen?

**Rabbi Pinchos Lipschutz**

Once again, we have seen that we are living in historic times. Very rare occurrences are transpiring on a regular basis, dramatically impacting our lives, the world in general, and history. Each event strikes fear into the hearts of men, women, and children as they change the trajectory of modern life.

More so, each event demonstrates to man that he is not in charge of what happens anywhere and anytime, as the only explanation for their occurrence is the Yad Hashem. We can go back to the period of the Covid pandemic, but we don't have to go that far back. We can examine things that took place within the past year.

On Shemini Atzeres, what is referred to as the world's most impregnable border was exposed as anything but. Thousands of terrorists poured over the border between Gaza and Israel, attacking the towns nearby. Over one thousand Israelis were killed in a historically horrific manner, three thousand were wounded, and over 240 were taken hostage. The shock was overwhelming. The ferocity of the attack was shocking.

The simplicity of the attack, which saw backward savages overpowering the most technologically advanced country in the world, was too much to bear for most Israelis. Hundreds who had been attending a musical festival were shot as they ran for their lives. Those who made it to their cars were shot at, dragged out, and tortured as they died. Cars were set aflame with their passengers inside them.

Twenty-three towns were overrun, and horrors were visited upon their inhabitants. Entire families were butchered, as were any police officers and soldiers who happened to be in the way.

It was historic. It changed the trajectory of Israel and sent the country into a war it has not yet won. The war set off waves of anti-Semitism across Western countries, disrupting years of comfortable Jewish life since the Holocaust in European states. In the United States, it unleashed hatred of Jews among prominent Democrat politicians and the media.

If there is one thing secular Israelis believe in, it is their army. They view Tzahal as the most powerful and successful fighting force in the world, yet on that historic day, it failed them. The victims tried in vain to get police and army protection, but none was forthcoming. For seven hours, they were left to die at the hands of Palestinian butchers. On every level, the government failed its people in its most sacred obligation of protecting them from the very things they were experiencing.

People wondered how it could be that the most advanced army, with the most courageous fighters, backed by the world's best intelligence agency and the toughest government in Israel's history, allowed such a catastrophe to happen. It is staggering that thousands of terrorists

participated in the attack, yet nobody noticed. The attackers came by air and by land, crashing through the world's strongest border in eighty places. No alarms went off. Nobody monitoring and guarding the area saw anything. How can it be?

The answer is plainly evident for all to see: The reason it happened is because Hashem wanted it to happen. When Hashem assists Israeli soldiers, they are the strongest in the world, working miracles and fighting like no one else. But when, for whatever reason, Hashem does not help them, things that make no sense happen, and the strongest, mightiest, and brightest are shown to be helpless.

It doesn't take investigations to see that the only reason a calamity of this magnitude did not previously occur is because Hashem prevented it from happening. We see that the amazing Yad Hashem has been there for Am Yisroel all these years, preventing something this atrocious from happening. We can be appreciative that we merited the protection of our Divine Father, and we can pray that we merit again, all across the world, that He continues to protect us from all those who seek our destruction.

It is providential that this occurred on the day that our Israeli brethren began laining Parshas Bereishis and one day before we did so in the Diaspora. Bereishis reminds us that Hashem created the world and maintains control over everything that happens in the world. Nothing happens by itself.

This past Shabbos, we experienced another dramatic, historic event that will change the trajectory of this country and was clearly directed by the Yad Hashem.

Former President Donald Trump was holding a campaign rally in an open field in Butler, Pennsylvania. Tens of thousands of people were in attendance. Suddenly, shots rang out. Trump was hit in his right ear, one person was killed, and others were seriously wounded. As chaos ensued, Donald ducked behind the lectern, and nobody knew if the would-be assassin succeeded. Within seconds, the Secret Service was all over him, and armed security people swarmed the area.

When the all-clear was sounded, the security people began removing Mr. Trump from the area, but he insisted on stopping for a moment. The 78-year-old candidate stood above the security personnel, held his fist in the air, and said, "Fight, fight, fight."

He wanted to show his supporters that he was okay, urging them to fight on despite the huge, potentially destabilizing, shocking event of the evening. He was also signaling to the country's citizens and to world leaders that he would be okay, tamping down any fears that he was seriously hurt. As a true leader, his natural instinct was to think about the people.

And so, the unplanned picture of the bloodied Trump, with determination written all over his face, his fist pumped in the air with an American flag as a backdrop, will be the shot that will be remembered long after the shock over the assassination attempt has settled.

The country and world were instantly abuzz. Someone tried to kill Donald Trump days away from his party's convention and his official crowning as the Republican nominee for president. The leading candidate for the most powerful job in the world was targeted by a would-be assassin.

Once again Trump dominated the airwaves and sucked all the oxygen out of all other news stories. The contrast with his opponent became even more obvious. While his opponent can barely stand, even an assassination attempt wasn't able to suppress Trump. Where his opponent can neither find the right word nor correctly pronounce it, even in a time of chaos with death hanging over him Trump was able to proclaim the right word and pose to reassure his supporters, the nation and the world. The iconic photograph of him doing that should propel him towards a landslide victory.

Then people began watching and rewatching clips of what happened and noticed that there was a complete breakdown of security and communication. The shooter was positioned on a roof within 150 yards of Mr. Trump, with a line of sight to the former president and a clear shot at his body and head. The only way to describe what happened is to say that it represented a total security failure.

It is disconcerting that in this day and age, a someone with an AR-15 gun can get that close to a former president and the leading candidate for president.

How did it happen?

The FBI and the Secret Service were very slow to discuss what occurred, though everyone saw the attack, and much was obvious, including that fact that the roof was left unprotected. The Secret Service director and the director of the FBI were in hiding after their offices almost lost the life of the man most likely to be the next president of these United States. They didn't appear in front of cameras to read statements, answered no questions, and did nothing to calm and allay the fears of the American people.

The FBI will investigate the incident and come back sometime in the future with a long, complicated report which will create more questions than answers. But we all know what happened. The country and the world know what happened. Everyone saw the massive negligence. A man was given a clear shot from 150 yards away.

Nobody trusts the FBI or the other branches of government anymore, and that is a tragedy born out of four years of targeting and going after Trump by different devices of the Justice Department, which oversees the FBI, and the Homeland Security Department, which oversees the Border Guards and the Secret Service.

Even people who aren't conspiracy-minded see connections more insidious than catastrophic incompetence, and it is hard to convince them otherwise.

So, how did it happen?

Once again, it is apparent that the only way that there were so many breakdowns of protocol and common sense was because Hashem planned this and willed it so. And just as Hashem blinded the security teams at the Gaza border on October 7th, He fooled what people consider the world's toughest bodyguards. All the security personnel, with all their plans, their guns and their many precautions, are useless when Hashem decides that He wants something to happen.

There will undoubtedly be people who will come up with other reasons for the breakdown of the protective wall, but nobody will be able to explain why the bullet that was directed at Mr. Trump's lower brain did not hit its target. For had Hashem not turned Mr. Trump's head as the bullet raced towards him, it would have likely hit the brain stem area which regulates heart and lung function and he would have been killed. Hashem had him turn his head seconds before the bullet hit his ear. Had his head not been turned, the man a majority of Americans are supporting for president would have been history. He would have been gone.

Donald Trump is alive today because of a miracle. There is no doubt about it. And Trump, in his statement to supporters Sunday morning, admitted so, saying, "It was G-d alone who prevented the unthinkable from happening."

Once again, we are reminded that while there is such a thing as teva, nature, everything that happens in this world is because Hashem wills it so. This should be comforting to us in these tumultuous times, when we never know what the day will bring. We hear of unspeakable tragedies, of young people losing their lives suddenly, leaving grieving families behind.

Not to equate the two, but people are having a historically difficult time providing for their families. Food, rent, homes, cars, insurance, tuition, and other basic needs have risen so much over the past three years that people are choking and have nowhere to turn for assistance, for help, for a way out of the quagmire they are in.

To be reminded that everything that happens is from Hashem is most comforting and indicates that there is a reason for this and a light at the end of the dark tunnel.

The Chovos Halevavos writes that the person who maintains faith in Hashem has the benefit of calmness, for he knows that everything that happens is from Hashem, and therefore there is no reason for him to be nervous, agitated, or ruffled. Through emunah and bitachon, a person understands that everything that happens to him is from Hashem and He assists those who have proper faith.

The Maharal in Gur Aryeh in last week's parsha takes it a step further and writes that through emunah and bitachon, a person achieves simcha, happiness.

The Chazon Ish states that a person can be experiencing the greatest tragedy and still be in a state of happiness. Perhaps he arrived at this from a study of the Maharal. Someone who has proper emunah and bitachon knows that everything that is happening, whether it appears to be good or not, emanates from a loving Father who cares for him. Therefore, not only is there no reason for sadness, but there is much reason for happiness.

Yes, it is easier said than done, but it is something to strive towards, a goal for us to aim for so that we can be calmer and happier, despite whatever we are experiencing or have experienced in the past. We learn that trauma is not a harsh sentence, but rather a nisayon, a surmountable bump in the road of life.

We get there by studying the classic seforim written to provide support and guide us, such as Chovos Halevavos, Mesilas Yeshorim, and the like. There is an abundance of shiurim and meforshim on these seforim, and we would do ourselves well to use the summer downtime to connect to the inner soul and essence of our being.

Why are we here and what does Hashem want of us?

If all we do is gripe and complain, then we are no different than the Jews in the desert who never missed an opportunity to fret that Hashem took them out of Mitzrayim and brought them to the midbar to kill them, starve them, or cause them to die of thirst. Although they had benefitted greatly from Hashem's kindness, they always found something to complain about, and whenever they thought something had gone wrong, they assumed that their end was near. We learn the parshiyos of Bamidbar and wonder how the people could be so shortsighted and forgetful of all the good in their lives.

We must learn from their lessons to always remember that no matter what is going on in our lives or what went on, Hashem is looking after us and is doing the best for us. It may not always be evident or obvious, but if we look for the good, we will find it. With proper emunah and bitachon, we can be joyful in otherwise stressful situations and overcome tragedy, sadness, bad days, and bad people.

May we all merit the ultimate joy with the coming of Moshiach speedily in our day.