

## **Face to Face With the Truth**

### **Rabbi Pinchos Lipschutz**

For some time now, it has been evident that we are living through historic days. Choose any starting point. Take the Covid pandemic, for instance. A virus that emerged in China swiftly swept across the globe, infecting millions, claiming countless lives, and leaving lingering scars – physical, emotional, and societal. The pandemic wasn't just a medical crisis. It rattled the foundations of the global economy. In the United States and beyond, businesses shuttered, industries transformed, and livelihoods vanished. The world was forced to adapt to a new, altered reality.

But the devastation went beyond illness and economics. In some places, politicians, drunk on power and driven by agendas, took aim at shuls and yeshivos, weaponizing "science" to shut them for months. In the name of science, they closed stores, banned gatherings, confined people to their homes, and injected millions with vaccines developed in haste, under the banner of urgency. They forced us to wear masks, telling us that they prevented the disease from spreading. Anyone who didn't wear them while on an airplane was ridiculed and thrown off, unless they were eating, for while eating, the disease wouldn't spread, even if the mask was off.

Covid toppled governments and governors alike, dancing hand in hand with the Malach Hamovess, until Hashem decided that His message had been sent that we are not in control. Despite humanity's towering achievements in medicine, science, and technology, man remains powerless in Hashem's world. It is He who rules, He who decides who shall live and who shall not, who shall rise to power and who shall fall, who should lead and who should follow, how the world turns- and when it stops.

We can turn back to Shemini Atzeres of 5783, a day that shocked Israel and the world. In a brutal and historic surprise attack, Hamas terrorists breached Israel's borders. Within hours, 1,200 people were murdered, thousands were wounded, and 251 were taken hostage. The vaunted Israeli army and police, long revered for their readiness and strength, were of no help. For nearly seven hours, bloodthirsty savages rampaged with impunity, torturing and slaughtering men, women, children, and even infants.

The questions came quickly and painfully. How could it be? How could Israel – the most surveilled, protected state in the world – be blindsided? How could its famously secure border be torn open by a band of terrorists? Where were the defenders of Israel, the celebrated heroes of the IDF, praised for their bravery and vigilance? On the day they were needed most, they were absent. Some had been killed in the first wave. Others were cut off, communications severed. And as desperate civilians dialed for help, there was no answer. The lines were dead. The operators themselves had been murdered. It would take hours before rescue arrived, and it was far too late for many.

How could such horror unfold? Some have tried to offer answers. Others continue searching. But for many, the truth is clear: This was not merely a failure of intelligence or security. It was a decree from Heaven. When Hashem ordains something, no force on earth – not even the strongest army – can stand in its way. He does it for reasons that are beyond our human comprehension. Sometimes it takes decades or longer to see Hashem's plan unfold, and sometimes it only takes a couple of years, as we are seeing now.

Because of the Hamas declaration of war on Israel and due to the terrible tragedy they caused, Israel immediately went to war to destroy and dislodge Hamas from Gaza. While opponents of the Israeli government, internally and externally, including President Biden and his administration, condemned Prime Minister Netanyahu for the war he was waging, he continued fighting a historic battle.

Israel eliminated the entire leadership of Hamas and tens of thousands of its fighters. Its rocket arsenal was destroyed, along with the threat it posed to Israel. One of Iran's proxies had been removed from the chessboard. Their Lebanese proxy, which had threatened Israel for decades from its northern border, joined the war, bombarding Israel repeatedly with Iranian-supplied rockets. Finally, Israel eliminated their heads, their generals, and their leaders, and the threat they represented was done away with. Iran lost another proxy they had spent decades and billions of dollars building. It was historic.

In the aftermath of Hezbollah's weakening, another Iranian proxy fell, this time in Syria. The longtime dictator, once feared and entrenched, suddenly found himself unable to hold back the rebels who had challenged him for years.

One historic event after another unfolded, and all were set in motion by the tragedy of October 7th, a day of darkness that Hashem brought upon His people for reasons only He knows. What is clear, and what remains clear to this day, is the unmistakable presence of the Yad Hashem, guiding every step, seen and unseen.

And now we are living through another historic event that people will be reading about and discussing for years to come. After decades of warnings about the threat Iran posed to Israel's existence, Prime Minister Binyomin Netanyahu ordered a surprise attack on Iran – its capital, Tehran, its nuclear infrastructure, and the leaders who directed it.

Miraculously, the Israeli armed forces succeeded beyond anyone's wildest imagination. The small country that had fallen victim to an Iranian proxy two-and-a-half years earlier was enabled by Hashem to achieve superiority over Iran, conducting hundreds of unimpeded sorties across its skies, dropping bombs on strategic targets at will.

The Hand of Hashem was evident, and the existential nuclear threat was methodically dismantled. The country that had threatened the Western world, the Arab world, and Israel for so long was eviscerated by Mivtza Am K'lavi.

But the threat wasn't yet fully neutralized. That happened on Shabbos Kodesh, Parshas Shelach, when we read how Yehoshua told the nation, "Hashem itanu al tira'um – Hashem is with us; you need not fear our enemies" (Bamidbar 14:9). The Ramban (ibid.) explains that Yehoshua was telling them that they bear witness to the many miracles that Hashem performs for them on a regular basis and should know that they have nothing to fear.

It was on that day that President Donald Trump ordered the total destruction of Iran's three main nuclear facilities, previously believed to be impregnable. In a historic act, bombers flew directly from

the United States and, without being detected, destroyed the feared sites with perfect coordination and precision.

American presidents had promised for years that Iran would not be permitted to obtain a nuclear weapon, but they never did anything beyond issuing statements at best, and, at worst, they enabled Iran to continue its dangerous march.

European leaders were also no help, and the UN is now busy criticizing the United States for removing the threat.

It was President Trump, criticized and mocked ever since he declared his candidacy for president in 2016, who demonstrated what leadership is. With moral clarity, he understood that there is good and there is evil, but there is no moral equivalence. After thoroughly reviewing every necessary component and warning Iran and the world that if they would not surrender, he would end their nuclear ambition, he followed through on his threat, proving that the fake news and Democrat lies about him being all bluster were just that: lies.

Those who wondered how Trump could have been elected in 2016 and then reelected in 2024 – with the entirety of the mainstream media and political establishment lined up against him, along with nonstop allegations and court cases – were once again shown unmistakably that *lev melochim v'sorim b'Yad Hashem*. He was placed in that position by Hashem for good reason.

When President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu took to the airwaves to inform their nations of what had just occurred, they both made a point of thanking G-d for making it happen.

When we see Netanyahu, who once took credit for everything, now including Hashem in his public remarks and telling his generals, commanders, and citizens that the main component in victory is *siyata diShmaya*, we know that something has changed.

Living in historic times has its downsides, but it has upsides as well, and seeing the Yad Hashem guiding the world is a major plus.

Each historic event, no matter how far apart in time or geography, seems to echo a shared theme: We are being shaken awake. Covid silenced cities. October 7th shattered illusions. Taking out Iran's nuclear weapons brought a hush to the world. That quiet wasn't empty. It was filled with a message. Hashem is speaking, not in whispers but in roars.

We plan, prepare, and protect, but He overrides it all. Our schedules, our systems, our assumptions, they shatter like glass when His will moves against them. It is not punishment alone. It is a reminder. A world too reliant on itself forgets its Source. We chase progress and call it purpose. But Hashem has always been the One turning the pages of history.

And now, He's turning them faster and more clearly. He is bringing us to the ultimate *geulah*, if we only cooperate.

We believed in our systems. We trusted the strongest army in the Middle East. But in these last few years, each pillar we leaned on has trembled.

Hospitals – overwhelmed. Governments – unsure. Armies – unprepared. How quickly the mighty are made small. How easily the “secure” becomes shattered. We saw the border breach and realized that there is no wall high enough to keep out a decree from Heaven.

But what did not falter? What remained untouched by virus, terror, or fear? The Torah did not collapse. The truth did not shift. Amid the chaos, Hashem remained constant. And for those who looked upward, emunah became firmer than any wall of stone.

In moments like these, people ask, “Where was Hashem?” But the deeper soul asks something else: “Where were we?”

Where were we when He gave us quiet mornings, healthy children, and parnassah without panic? Did we notice Him then? Did we thank Him? Or do we only notice when He reminds us through temporary pain that He never left?

Still, even in darkness, emunah lives. We saw it in the people who ran toward the rockets with tallis and tefillin. In the voices singing Acheinu while sirens screamed overhead. In the unity, the tefillah, the return. Bitachon didn’t die in the rocket fire. It burned brighter.

My dear friend, Rav Avrohom Zeivald, who directs Lev L’Achim, told me that the search among the secular community for a connection to Hashem and for learning Torah is now stronger than he has seen in the thirty years he’s been involved in kiruv.

A nation scattered across the world has been shaken into reality. Jews who hadn’t opened a siddur in years are now whispering Tehillim. Secular hands hold onto tzitzis. Bat Yam and Bnei Brak cry together. A nation is turning – slowly, painfully, but unmistakably – back to its Source.

We are being summoned to rediscover our soul. Teshuvah is no longer a theoretical concept. It is our lifeline. Hashem is not distant. He is reaching for us, and thankfully, we are reaching back.

That is what these historic times are meant to do. They strip away the noise, the illusions, and the layers we’ve wrapped around ourselves until we are left face to face with the truth we’ve always known – that we are in Hashem’s Hands.

Not in theory, not in a drosha, but in the stillness after the sirens, in the helplessness of the unanswered call, in the cry of a nation that knows no one else can save us. Those who pay close attention can hear, in the sounds of the sirens and the falling bombs, the resonances of a shofar and the footsteps of Moshiach fast approaching.

We do not understand the cheshbonos. We do not know why so many had to suffer. But we must know that this is the final refining, that the world is being hollowed to make room for eternal brachos.

We, who merit to live in the time of ikvesa d'Meshicha, know that the cracks in the world are not signs of destruction, but labor pangs before rebirth.

There is pain. But there is also awakening. There is tragedy. But there is also clarity. We are watching a world unravel, not randomly, but precisely and purposefully, preparing for something greater.

Don't be influenced by the naysayers or the media. The present chaos is not the end. It is the beginning. We are being prevented from traveling to Eretz Yisroel, and those who are there are being held back from their regular routines, but know that very soon, all of Klal Yisroel will be brought to Eretz Yisroel on kanfei neshorim and will live lives of incomparable bliss.