

# Pekuday

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The war here in Israel is ongoing and I know that many have made a point of helping out financially as much as they can. I would never take away from that, but ask at this time that you still consider contributing to Thirtysix.org, or its Israeli counterpart, Shaarnun Productions. Judging by the feedback, Perceptions and other essays have helped many to deal with the difficulties of our time. Contributing keeps the material flowing.

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If you prefer an alternative, please write me at [pinchasw@thirtysix.org](mailto:pinchasw@thirtysix.org). Thank you in advance and wishing only good news. Pinchas Winston

## Friday Night

SOME OF YOU might have wondered at some point if it is the *parsha* that inspires me to write what I do about the current world situation or, the opposite. The answer is that it depends upon the week, and sometimes it is both at the same time.

For example, I have something to say about the direction of history, and my *parsha* sheet is one of my main venues to do that. But built into this week's *parsha* is something that needs to be addressed, and it has much to say about the current world situation. Hence, my answer:

*Rashi* says:

“*These are the numbers of the Mishkan, the Mishkan of the Testimony. . .*’ (Shemos 38:21): [The word *Mishkan* is written] twice. This alludes to the Temple, which was taken as security (*mashkon*) by the two destructions because of the sins of the

Jewish people.”

The real root of the word *Mishkan* is *lishchon*, which means *to dwell*, because that is what the *Mishkan* was, a dwelling place for the *Shechinah*. The word *mashkon*, which is a surety, has nothing to do with the word *Mishkan*. The *Midrash* that *Rashi* quotes is just making a play on words, a very *gloomy* play on words.

It reminds me of the following comment at the very happy moment when Yosef and Binyomin were finally reunited after he revealed himself to his brothers. *Rashi* says there:

“*And he fell on his brother Binyomin’s neck and wept, and Binyomin wept on his neck*’ (*Bereishis* 45:14): *And he fell on his brother Binyomin’s neck and wept*: for the two temples which were destined to be in *Binyomin’s* territory and would ultimately be destroyed. *And Binyomin wept on his neck*: for the *Mishkan* of Shiloh, which was destined to be in Yosef’s territory and would also ultimately be destroyed.

Can’t we enjoy a happy moment in Jewish history without alluding to destructive ones? I know people like that. They’re called Pessimists. No matter how good a situation looks they downplay it, or worry about the worst. It’s as if they are forbidden by some unwritten law to enjoy a moment and revel in the good that God has given them.

With examples like the ones just mentioned, can anyone really blame the pessimists? If the Torah can’t cope with happy moments without finding allusions to future bad ones, why should we? After all, for all the *Purim* and *Chanukah* happy endings we have known and celebrate, have there not been so many more tragic endings to anti-Semitism? After 3,296 years of Jewish history since entering the Land, how much joy have we known as a people, especially over the last 2,000 years?

## **Shabbos Day**

MAYBE THAT IS why we Jews tend to wish one another, “Much *nachas!*” whenever we can. We know how easy it is *not* to have *nachas* in life, or how quickly it can vanish. In fact, “negative” *Hashgochah Pratis* (Divine Providence) has made more than just a few Jews jump ship over the ages.

It was extreme poverty in places like Russia that helped to fuel the *Haskalah* Movement there at the beginning of the 20th century. Many secular Jews since then seem to have done quite well for themselves, especially in recent times. And even though some *Charedim* (Orthodox Jews) have also done well financially, the Torah world remains poor and struggling to this very day. Not very enticing when it comes

to trying to do outreach and reconnect unaffiliated Jews with their Torah roots.

This has given rise to statements such as, “It’s hard to be a Jew.” Aside from the many *mitzvos* we have to perform on a daily basis, circumstances often make it difficult to do so. Just ask a Jewish businessman who, watching the sun sink toward the horizon out a boardroom window, has to start thinking about finding a *minyan* in time so he can say *Kaddish*. In the meantime, his secular and gentile colleagues go about their business as usual with far less pressure.

Personally, I am always ecstatic when my flight somewhere does not necessitate *dovening* on an airplane. It is uncomfortable for so many reasons, including not being able to pray at breakneck speed. At least we no longer have to *doven* at the back of the plane, next to the bathrooms and with all the smokers.

Then there is the matter of all the outward manifestations of Torah life that make a person stand out. Not only does it call unwanted attention, but it also increases the need to be at your best behavior, even when you feel too tired and worn out to be so. A *Chillul Hashem* is a really, *really* serious sin, and to be avoided at all cost.

Obviously, Judaism is not without its happy moments. On the contrary, we have it quite good today, *thank God*. We have so much more than our ancestors ever did over the last couple of millennia. Not everyone, but a lot of people. But one has to wonder. . . again. . . as the situation around Israel and the world worsens, for how much longer?

In fact, unlike about 20 years ago, so many people today talk about the War of Gog and Magog. They feel it coming. They feel a very uncomfortable level of pressure being heaped upon the Jewish people while watching the nations around them prepare for a larger conflict. Allies who were once loyal are becoming less so. “For how much longer” seems to be answering itself, raising another question that has often been asked, “*Why must history always turn against the Jewish people at some point?*”

### **Seudas Shlishis**

THE 27TH DAY of *Adar Sheni* will be the 98th *yahrzeit* of the *Leshem*, Rabbi Shlomo Elyashiv, *zt”l*, who I have quote often in my *parsha* sheets. Over the last few years, I have also published a couple of volumes of translations of some of his writings so others can benefit from his amazing insights into life and history. Regarding the latter, he says:

“This is why so much time must transpire from Creation until the time of the *tikun*:

all the forces of *Gevuros* are rooted in the six *sefiros*—*Chesed, Gevurah, Tifferes, Netzach, Hod,* and *Yesod*—which are the six days of Creation, and the 6,000 years of history. Within them are the roots of all that will happen from the six days of Creation until the final *tikun*. . . We find that all that transpires is the result of the sparks from the time of *tobu*. . .” (*Drushei Olam HaTobu, Chelek 2, Drush 4, Anaf 18, Siman 6*)

This is a translation that needs a “translation.” A full explanation would take a couple of Perceptions. The gist of the idea is that, even though we have been taught that history does not have to play out until the end, it seems likely to. History is not some river of events randomly meandering through time. It is a program from start to finish with immutable goals, goals that most people, seemingly, have little or no idea about.

If people knew about the goals, they could work together to accomplish them faster. Not knowing about them, Heaven has to work it out through history over time, and that has translated into far less desirable approaches to *tikun* than we would choose for ourselves, like the Holocaust, for example.

Why? What kind of goals necessitate that kind of *tikun*? The rectification of the forces of *Gevuros*. They’re responsible for the constriction of God’s light so that man can use his free will to reveal God. Making choices like that rectifies the *Gevuros* and brings Creation closer to completion.

The problem is when too many *Gevuros* remain unrectified given the timeline of history. Then history has to play catch-up to keep up with the Divine schedule for Creation. That’s when Jewish history tends to go south. . .like it seems to be doing again now.

### **Melave Malkah**

THE WHOLE POINT of exile is to rectify the *Gevuros*, which basically can be done in one of two ways. We can harness them, which we do by disciplining ourselves to live spiritually meaningful lives, learning Torah and performing *mitzvos*. Or, we can fall victim to them through evil, in particular all the anti-Semitism they can potentially “inspire.”

You know those “golden eras” we’ve enjoyed in different exiles? Those weren’t God saying, “I’m going on a break, so have a blast.” They were God saying, “Now’s your chance to rectify the *Gevuros* in a pleasant way. Do a good job and you’ll keep Creation on schedule. Keep Creation on schedule, and exile can end smoothly, what the *Gemora* calls “*Achishbenah*,” hastened.

It's never happened, at least not for the entire nation at one time. We can bring redemption earlier, we are told, and we have to anticipate that *Mosbiach* can come at any moment. And he *can*. We weren't lied to. He just hasn't, so far. Something about elevating every last spark out of the *Klipos*, *just* and fixing up the vessels that "broke" before Creation.

But that doesn't mean that *Mosbiach* isn't here right now in the world. Perhaps he is quietly learning Torah in some out-of-the-way *Bais Midrash*, just waiting for God to tell him, "*Shalom*. You're *Mosbiach*. Now go save the Jewish people and the world! This program called human history has reached its intended conclusion."

More than likely, the War of Gog and Magog will be just to use up the remaining *Gevuros* to end history. That's why every Jewish exile ends the way it does. We won't know how it will impact the masses until after it is over. But individuals will recognize the opportunity, read the writing on the wall, and act on it while there is still time. They certainly won't sink back into the world of those who remain oblivious to the bigger picture of Jewish history. That's what *Mishkan-Mishkan* tells us to avoid. *Chazak!*

For essays on the current situation, go to [www.sbaarnunproductions.org](http://www.sbaarnunproductions.org).

Good *Shabbos*,  
Pinchas Winston