



God's Time Versus Human Time (Balak) By Rabbi Ben Tzion Spitz



It is only in appearance that time is a river. It is rather a vast landscape and it is the eye of the beholder that moves. - Thornton Wilder

In the Torah reading of Balak, the anti-hero, the sorcerer Bilaam, famously sets out to curse the nation of Israel. Bilaam also famously fails, but his failure created some of the most beautiful and poetic blessings to

be bestowed upon Israel. Out of his flowery language, the Meshech Chochma on Numbers 23:21 teases out a profound understanding of time, both from a human as well as from a divine perspective.

In our current “scientific” linear thinking, when we think about the passing of time, we typically think in terms of Past, Present, and Future. First is what came before, then we reach our present time and finally, time leads us into the unknown future. However, there are some common patterns in the description of events which can be found in biblical verses that differ from our modern way of thinking about time. One pattern can be described as “Present, Past, and Future.” For example, the verse “God rules, God ruled, God will rule.” First, we see the present, then we look back at the past and only at the end do we look forward to the future.

The Meshech Chochma explains that according to human nature, we first deal with what’s in front of us, the present. After that, we examine our memories of the past, a record of which we may find in our minds. Finally, we may look to the future, a hazy and unclear vision that our imagination might conjure. The progression is from firm sensing to memory to tenuous imaginings.

However, God’s perspective on time vis-à-vis humans is

entirely different. God created Time. God is beyond Time. It is ultimately incomprehensible to try to describe Time from God’s point of view. Nonetheless, the prophets, when they deliver God’s messages, are attempting just that, and their description of God’s time is indeed different. One example is from Isaiah 44:6: “I am First (Past), I am Last (Future), and besides Me, there is no god (Present).” God’s time refers to the Past first, the Future second, and the Present third. The Meshech Chochma describes that for God, Time is one tapestry. He sees in one glimpse, if you will, a timeline that for us mortals stretches into eternity in both directions. God mentions the Past first, which stretches backward into infinity. He then moves on to the future, which ventures forwards into infinity. Finally, He mentions the Present, that infinitesimal slice of reality suspended between the two poles of eternity. May we, mere mortals, seize the present, appreciate the past, and look forward to the future. May we gain a deeper appreciation for what holiness, “kodesh,” means.

Peace by Piece by Shmuel Sackett



A lot is being written about the “Trump Peace Plan” and experts, on both sides of the political fence, are giving their side of what they think. It reminds me of a multiple-choice test: A) I like the plan B) I do not like the plan C) I am somewhere in the middle D) None of the above. My answer is simple. It is a definite, positive “D” – “None of the

above”. Let me explain.

The *Land* of Israel belongs to the *Nation* of Israel. The overwhelming majority of the world believes that! The problem, however, is **with our own people**. Most Jews agree that Eretz Yisrael is ours but they say that we need to be *realistic* and not just *idealistic*. “Yes, this is the land of our fathers... of course it was given to us as an eternal inheritance... but we are now part of the family of nations... we can’t operate alone... we dare not make any decisions without approval of the USA...” These are daily quotes said by Jewish leaders and their puppet followers and *this* is what drives me nuts...

Dearest friends; when the Zionist movement started 120+ years ago, we had rights to the Land of Israel on paper only. We had the Bible, we had the deed to the land and we had the unbreakable chain of 2,000 years of prayers, hopes and tears... but we did not have the “keys” to the house. *That* was when we needed the help of the nations of the world, so Hashem orchestrated a wonderful plan; Balfour declaration (1917), San Remo conference (1920), League of Nations vote (1947) – all so that His children could, once again, establish a Jewish State on His holy soil. For many years after the founding of the state, we were young and still needed the world’s help, as a child taking his/her first steps. However, those early, weak and feeble days are gone and today, the Jewish Nation can proudly stand on its own. Our IDF is strong, our economy is stable and – thanks to our Father and King – **the world needs us a lot more than we need them.**

What’s all this have to do with the Trump Peace Plan? Simply this; that even today, Israeli leaders and most Jews around the world believe that Israel cannot move a muscle without permission of the United States. Don’t get me wrong, I love America, I really do. My father, of blessed memory, fought for America in WWII and his brother was awarded a Purple Heart. An uncle of mine was a cop in the NYPD for 25 years, another uncle was a NYC judge and an aunt of mine was Labor Commissioner of NY State. All those people are now gone, but I listed them to show you how my family not only *lived* America, we *loved* – and *bled* – America. Therefore, my criticism is not at America nor at

President Trump (who I support). Rather, my criticism is to all those who insist on keeping this relationship as one-sided, forcing Israel to get White House approval before we build a town or fire a bullet.

What independent and strong country worries so much about world opinion? Why does Israel have low self-esteem and a national inferiority complex? I wasn’t exaggerating when I wrote that the world needs us more than we need them. Need I remind you that Israel is always the first country to respond to the international community in times of tragedy? Who was the first country to send teams of doctors after earthquakes in Kashmir (2005), Haiti (2010) and Japan (2011)? Remember the tsunami in 2004? Israel sent 60 tons of aid to Indonesia and 82 tons of relief to Sri Lanka. We can do all these things but can’t declare “*Zo Artzeinu*” (This is our land) without approval from the UN, EU and USA?

This is what bothers me most about the peace process... that we made it into a “*process*”! Of course we should annex the land, declare sovereignty and make the entire country exactly the same. There’s no difference between Jerusalem and Jenin, Hebron and Herziliya or Ramallah and Ramle. Every inch of the Chosen Land belongs to the Chosen People but we lose that feeling – for ourselves and with the entire world - when we allow foreign governments to negotiate away parts of our country. It makes no difference what their intentions are... it is totally irrelevant. The fact that we allow the world to make demands – or else! – proves that we, ourselves, do not believe the land is truly ours.

Now you understand why, when asked about the “Trump Peace Plan”, my answer is “none of the above”. I don’t support it, I don’t oppose it and I am also not in the middle. To me, it is totally irrelevant because the *only* peace plan to consider is this one; “If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them... **I will provide peace in the land**, and you will lie down with none to frighten you... You will pursue your enemies and they will fall before you... I will walk among you, I will be G-d unto you and you

will be a Nation unto Me” (Va’yikra 26:3-12 – Stone Chumash)

That is the peace plan I support and will work hard to achieve. When that happens... when we come closer to each other, to the Torah and to Hashem Himself - everyone doing his/her *piece* – then we will have the true and everlasting *peace* we yearn for.

Am Yisrael Chai!!

Get the Aliyah APP by Shmuel Sackett



Today, if you don't have an "APP", you can't function. I pay my parking with PANGO, open my garage door with OXS, know when to daven thanks to CAL-J, pay bills with BIT, order taxis with GETT and communicate with my kids on WhatsApp. And now, for all those still not living in Israel, you can get the official, newly released Aliyah APP. It has no name yet, so email me your suggestions, and the best one WINS! (What's the prize? When you make Aliyah, I will treat you to cheesecake at the Israeli café of your choice! Trust me, it's a great prize!)

Let me tell you about this APP, because it's not what you think. It is not your usual "press-one-button- and-everything-is-done" APP. This APP is an acronym and it stands for the 3 things you need for your Aliyah to be successful and everlasting. "A" Attitude + "P" Planning + "P" Prayer = APP. Let me explain.

The first thing you need is a rock-solid attitude. Let's be honest. Making Aliyah is a life-changing experience and it will be the best thing you ever do... but it's not easy.

This week – July 4th – will mark the day my wife and I made Aliyah back in 1990. We had 4 little kids and life was comfortable in Woodmere, Long Island. I had a great job in Manhattan and 2 of the 4 kids were in the local Yeshivot. We loved being near family and enjoyed community life. In addition to my job, I started a kiruv program near Wall Street and was changing the lives of many young professionals. Yet, we felt that our Jewish souls were broken. We were happy in NY, but not complete Jews, so we uprooted everything and made the life-changing move.

Was it easy to leave both *my* parents and my *wife's* parents? No, it was not. Was it easy to leave a great job and go to a foreign country with *no* job? No, it was not. Was it easy to leave the Kiruv program I started at a time when many of my students were just *beginning* their journey towards a Torah life? No, it was not. Yet, my wife and I did exactly that – 30 years ago – and we never regretted it for a second because we made Aliyah with **an unbreakable attitude**. We went with the mindset that this would not fail and any obstacle or challenge that came our way would be overcome. Simply put, we wanted to live in Israel more than anything else. Our oldest child was getting ready to enter 3rd grade and we wanted to raise her, and the other children, in our *own* country. We wanted the kids to speak Hebrew fluently and, as crazy as it sounds, I wanted my son (who was 5 at the time) to be a combat soldier in the IDF (which, Baruch Hashem, he did!)

Therefore, my suggestion is this: The first thing to do in the Aliyah process – even before you call Nefesh b'Nefesh – is to make sure you have **a positive attitude for this amazing journey**. Here's a free tip: Think about Moshe Rabbenu. What would he have done to enter Israel? I told this to my wife before we left... that this would be my secret "*Calm down, Shmuel*" formula and it worked. I remember once, standing on line for hours in one of the local offices to get some paper stamped for the 14th time, and I was ready to scream, when all of a sudden my wife said, "Shmuel, take a deep breath. Think of Moshe Rabbenu. We're doing something he was not allowed to do. He would have *loved* to get that 14th stamp... and even a 15th!" I know it sounds nuts, but it worked. I went from angry to happy and when the guy stamped my paper, I asked,

“Are you sure nobody *else* wants to stamp it? Come on, there must be some guy in Beesheba who needs to approve this!” He thought I was crazy...

The next thing you need for your Aliyah to be successful is *planning*... lots of it. This doesn't mean that you have to figure out everything to the last detail, but you definitely need a plan. Remember the expression: *If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail*. Therefore, use the time it takes between opening your Aliyah file in Nefesh b'Nefesh and actually flying to Israel, to plan as much as possible. Rent a nice apartment so you – and your family – will be comfortable. In all likelihood, this will not be your final destination, so don't worry too much about it, but make sure to secure a nice place in a good neighborhood. Our first year was in Netanya and we moved there without knowing a soul... literally, not one person! At the time, there was a lot of new construction in Netanya and we found an apartment in a brand-new building. We were just the third family in a building of 10 floors! It was a lovely 4-bedroom apartment and it was a great way to start our new life.

Planning also means doing your best to find a job but be prepared to go even before you have one. My thought process was simple; By moving to Israel, I am doing exactly what Hashem wants **so He will not let me fail!** Some may call this *naïve* and others *irresponsible* but I call it “living a life of Emunah”. If you wait for all the pieces of the puzzle to perfectly come together and only *afterwards* act on what Hashem wants... where is the Emunah? This is not just advice I am giving my readers, it is how I live my life... and how I made Aliyah. When my parents and friends asked me how I was going to support a wife and 4 kids (plus 2 more that Hashem blessed me with in Israel) I simply told them that **Hashem will help me in Israel the same way He helped me in New York!** Who helped me land the job in Manhattan? Who helped a 20-year-old kid get married to a beautiful girl and start a family? I was working in a kosher appetizing store on Main St at the time and many, many people told me to wait... get a “real” job... put away some money... and Baruch Hashem I did **not** listen to them! I have always believed that when a Jew does the right thing for the right reason, Hashem will *always* help that person succeed! So,

definitely plan – as best as you can – but leave something for Hashem to do...

Which leads me to the third and final part of this APP. You have the Attitude, you have the Plan so all that's left is the Prayer. This might be the most important part of all – to daven to Hashem that your Aliyah be successful. Don't wait for a problem to arise... talk to Hashem now! Don't wait for the “I told you so” people... make that call today! Hashem is our Father so **he wants you to be happy!** He wants you to succeed and fulfill the dream of returning to Zion. Think about it. We daven for this 3 times a day so when you actually do it... make those prayers 10 times a day! Ask Hashem to guide you, to hold your hand and to make your Aliyah dream a reality.

This is the APP you need; Attitude + Planning + Prayer which will bring you home and keep you here to welcome Moshiach himself. Let's make it happen!

