

Timing is Everything  
By Rabbi Manes Kogan

Dear Friends of Hillcrest Jewish Center,

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,  
a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,  
a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,  
a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,  
a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,  
a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,  
a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

...I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. God has made everything beautiful in its time...

I hope you are familiar with above verse 3 in the Book of Ecclesiastes (Chapter 3). If you aren't, you should be. It is a classic and even Pete Seeger composed a song based on it (Turn, Turn, Turn).

The words of Ecclesiastes, attributed by Jewish tradition to King Solomon, have been quoted again and again, so that most of us understand -at least logically- that there is a time for everything.

The challenge, however, is not to know that there is a time for everything, but when that time is. For example, we know that there is a time to be silent and a time to speak, but when is the time to be silent and when is it to speak? When is the time to keep embracing, and when is the time to let go? When is the time to tear and when is the time to mend? When is the time for war and when is the time for peace?

In life, in the decisive moments in life, timing is everything. Our sages teach us that peace is the greatest of all blessings. In fact, peace was a pre-condition for the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai when we became a people united by Torah. Only those who demonstrated a love of peace were worthy to receive the Torah. Indeed, peace is the Torah's highest priority, as it is written in our prayer book, "The whole Torah exists only to establish peace." According to *Pirkei Avot, The Sayings of our Ancestors*, peace is one of the three pillars that enable the world to endure. And it was one of our greatest sages, Hillel, who said, "the more Torah, the more life; the more justice, the more peace."

Peace is indeed one of the highest values in Judaism, to the extent, that Shalom – Peace – is one of the names of God. And yet, Ecclesiastes teaches us that there is a time for peace and a time for war.

The corollary of Ecclesiastes' teaching is that only fools propose peace when war is called for.

Israel is at war: at war with Hamas, at war with Hezbollah, at war with countless duplicitous antisemites across the globe. Israel is at war and must

win the war! For Israel's allies, to try to impose peace at a time when war is called for, is reckless. For Israel, it could be -God forbid- suicidal.

Wars are never pretty; in wars people die, people suffer, and families are shattered. Israel and the Jewish people didn't ask for this war, but nevertheless, we will fight it.

Psalms 29:11 reads: *Hashem will give oz (strength) unto His people; Hashem will bless His people with peace (shalom).*

Strength is a precondition for peace. Now is the time for a show of strength. A time for peace, b'ezrat Hashem, will follow.

*May Hashem give strength unto His people; may Hashem bless His people with peace.*

*From my heart,      Rabbi Manes Kogan*