

## Remember the days of old/world history, study the generational epochs. (32:7)

Remember the days of old to incorporate their lessons into the present. Traditionally, following a major collective tragedy *Rabbanim yirei Shomayim*, G-d-fearing scholars, have authored *Sefarim* which portray events that occurred as being part of our history and demonstrating Hashem's Divine Hand in conducting these events. When the Jews were expelled from Spain following the *Tach v'Tat* pogroms, this was the case. Following *Churban Europa*, many articles and *sefarim* were written to depict the Divine Hand manipulating events. I write this because the further in time that we are removed from these events, the easier it is to fall into the abyss created by the secular stream who would want us to believe that these were isolated events. These secularists would have us ignore the chain of events, portents and warnings issued by the greatest Torah scholars, and the self-evident Divine imprint on these events, so that we view the cataclysmic destruction of European Jewry (as an example) as if it were no more than the history of one of the ancient nations, with its religious aspect only one of many relevant factors. Thus, it is no wonder that the secularists contend that the Holocaust was not religious persecution, not a prime example of the ugly head of antisemitism in the guise of Amalakean hatred toward the Jew/Eisav versus Yaakov. They similarly assert that the Jews did not sacrifice themselves in the Name of Hashem, i.e., *Kiddush Shem Shomayim*, giving their lives for their faith.

*Horav Yitzchak Hutner, zl*, asks (The Jewish Observer/translation of a *shmuess, mussar* talk), "Is the term *Shoah* acceptable? The answer is that clearly it is not. The word *shoah* in Hebrew, Holocaust in English, implies an isolated catastrophe, unrelated to anything before or after it, such as an earthquake or tidal wave. As we have seen, this approach is far from the Torah view of Jewish history. The *Churban* of European Jewry is an integral part of our history, and we dare not isolate it and deprive it of the monumental significance it has for us."

The Holocaust was the nadir, the ugly culmination of a long process of persecution and murder that has accompanied us throughout our bleak *galus*, exile. I am not going to point fingers, because we do not do that. We must each focus on our own *avodas ha'kodesh*, service to the Almighty, to better our relationship with Him and with His children – our family of co-religionists. There definitely was reciprocity in this, as well as every other collective tragedy that has befallen us. *Middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure, is Hashem's way of acting with us. It is all about reciprocity. I think the Torah might be alluding to this in the words of the *pasuk*, *Binu sh'nos dor vador*, which we translate as: "Study the generational epochs." *Sh'nos* also means to review, to go over, or, perhaps, to reciprocate. You do for/to me, I pay back. *Binu sh'nos dor vador*, consider the reciprocity that ensues throughout the generations, or as the *Kelmer Maggid, zl*, foreshadowed seventy years prior to the Nuremburg Laws and Holocaust, "For the sin of the *Shulchan Aruch* (New Code of Jewish Law), innovated by Abraham Geiger, there will arise from Germany a new code of Jewish law against the Jewish People in which it will be stated: The best Jews should be killed!" There is also a positive reciprocity that, when we perform *mitzvos*, Hashem rewards us.

This is the true recompense that we seek.