

Reva Mann

Chanukah and global warming

It's hard to believe that Chanukah is upon us with the sunny days and blue skies we're having. Where is the cold that usually accompanies the festival season? I'm concerned how Santa Claus is going to manage riding his sledge around Bethlehem without any snow, and more important, how to cuddle up cosy eating latkes and doughnuts with the spring weather outside.

Maybe these weather conditions are due to global warming. The universe is definitely getting hotter and according to Senator Al Gore in his remarkable documentary film 'An Inconvenient Truth,' temperatures are on the rise.

Al Gore thinks we are putting too much focus on our survival by trying to combat terrorism. In his opinion, there is a greater threat on the horizon that Muslim fundamentalism. He explains that the earth is surrounded by the atmosphere. Sun rays radiate down to earth and bounce off. But some infrared rays stay in between the atmosphere and earth, warming the planet. Today, the atmosphere is getting thicker due to excess carbon dioxide pollution and this phenomenon traps more of the sun's rays causing global warming. Al Gore believes we are damaging our planet, heading towards a dark age of destruction.

To get away from this gloomy prophecy and prepare myself for the holiday, I open the Rabbi of Slonim's book *Netivot Shalom*. He explains there that the Greeks tried to change our spiritual climate by causing God's light to be extinguished. They knew that they couldn't totally get rid of the Jewish people and were aware that we had God on our side, so they tried to annihilate us spiritually through bringing darkness to our souls, by getting rid of the foundation of our belief, wiping out Rosh Chodesh, Brit Mila and the Sabbath day, mitzvot that bring light unto Israel. They were the global warmers of the Jewish world, I think, as I continue with the text.

The very purpose of creation is to see the light of God. In the beginning the world was null and void. It was in a state of 'Tohu Vevohu.' There was darkness all around and everything was fragmented. God said "Let there be light," the direct solution for the state of Tohu Vevohu, causing illumination for us to see clearly that all things emanate from the divine.

I wonder if Al Gore is saying that we are destroying the original light, bringing back the world to a physical state of null and void, of chaos, disrespecting creation by our actions of polluting the earth, causing global warming which in turn causes nature to shift gears and the entire system to change.

Since the planet is getting warmer, spring comes earlier. So the baby birds hatch earlier than synchronized in the celestial plan and don't coincide with the abundance of caterpillars crawling around to feed them prior to weaving their cocoons. Thus the chicks have nothing to eat. Also, higher temperatures are causing glaciers to melt. Within half a century the melted glaciers will cause such an excess of water that we will be seeing floods all over the world rendering millions of people homeless and many cities destroyed.

The Greeks tried to steer us into the dark, but they didn't know that they could never bring about a total blackout as some of the original light, *vayehi ohr*, was saved for

the righteous in the world to come. Whatever measures they took to cloud us in a heavy fog were foiled as that very first light is accessible to each and every Jew once a year on Chanukah.

I intend to lower the power on my heater, drive less and recycle more to keep our planet cool. But I am glad to say this Chanukah we can all warm ourselves without jeopardizing our globe, by looking into the flames, basking in the sacred glow of the candles and accessing the Ohr Haganuz, the highest Godly light of all.