



A NEW DAY

HARAV Y. REUVEN RUBIN SHLITA

Look out the window, do you see it? That piercing light that almost blinds you, yes, it's the sun. Today is the first day of Spring, Yippee, throw open the windows, life blooms afresh and Pesach is around the corner. I go outside and open the door to my car. I detect a patina of orange dust that has somehow rested over the whole vehicle. It's then that I remember reading about a storm in the Sahara that was so fierce it was blowing dust all the way to Britain. Imagine, a fine covering of Sahara sand had come to leave its footprint on my car. Yes the sun is shining yet here on the ground we still experience a film of obstruction.

Yieden, we have been stuck in this Covid 19 Golus for over a year, and we have all been affected one way or another. Warily we slog along, day leads to day, with the sameness dragging us down emotionally. Yieden lose patience and put themselves in danger because of a feeling of despair. The film of grime rests on our hearts and we all seek ways to wash it away.

This then is the nisoyon of our generation! We must find the eternal nekuda within that can kindle our inner fire. The warmth of the sun of kedusha is there even when the world seems cloudy. All this effects our young the most. Our children look to us to formulate their future, the challenge is are we ready to teach them.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l once commented that parents are more than simply mechanchim, educators; they are mashpiim, influencers. The word mashpia stems from the root shipua, referring to an incline or slope. The function of a parent is quite the same. The subliminal messages transmitted to one's



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children on a daily basis form expectation which they seek to live up to. Our expressed thoughts and actions are like an inclined slope, which mold the way our children act and react. Any uninspired bleakness we harbour spills over to our young, and we owe it to them to strengthen our inner resolve.

Pesach is about leaving our personal golus, those things that tighten around our hearts and keep our spirits down. We sometimes fill our space with a dullness and have difficulty in experiencing the core joy that it is being a yied.

The Egyptian redemption didn't occur in a one-off vacuum of time; it's happening today as well. Every neshomah experiences moments of bondage; but if we keep our focus, we can discover personal deliverance.

The first step is to calm down and catch one's breath. There is a cacophony of noise that sometimes monopolises our minds. We can't think straight, the challenges of our circumstances seem overpowering. All this builds up, we lose the words to articulate our situation and often as not, we fear to burden those we love. The intensity of the disquiet grabs our soul, and there is a searing sense of despair that rushes over us. But there is a gift from Hashem, a window of simcha which offers us hope.

Guta Yiden point out that Klall Yisroel were rebuked for, as the Torah tells us, "Having forgotten Hashem, who formed you" (Devorim 32:18). This forgetfulness is the principle factor that distances a person from the Eibishter. It is this distancing that grasps away the joy of being close to Hashem, and it is often born from the difficulties that Golus present.

Now, today, at the hopefully tail end of this pandemic, we must strengthen our resolve and create the tools needed for tomorrow. There will be many grieving over loved ones, others over fractured hopes. Children will have to be given the support so they can resettle back into a world of regular schooling without mumbled rumours of tragedies or muffled simchas.

More than anything we each must be prepared for whatever the "new normal" brings. Lessons must be learnt, new understandings internalised. This then is the open window that can let in new horizons of positive spiritual growth.

Pesach beckons with its lessons of freshness and new promise. As we scrub away the grime of yesterday, let us see the brightness that lays beneath. The Eibishter knows where we are, and has given us the tools to not merely weather the difficulties but to grow thru them. We truly are a chosen people, and Pesach is a reminder of for eternity. Let us all share in its essence.