



BEING TRUE TO OURSELVES

Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

The long line weaved its way from the large door through the long lobby. The Rebbe's gabbai stood by the door, opening it for each new supplicant and sharing a word with those who were exiting. Going in to see the Beis Yisroel zt"l was a unique experience. Those in line would stand with their kvittel (written requests) with a special ardour, or grasped a book of Tehillim as they davened that Hashem grant them hatzlacha. The Beis Yisroel was a fount of spiritual energy, never predictable, always delving deep into each visitor's soul. The Rebbe had the amazing ability to give that which each petitioner needed for his spiritual growth. All this was done in mere moments; you entered and soon found all your woes dissipate into the air of holiness that permeated the room. The Rebbe would look into your soul and with a few sharfa, loved-soaked words, open up your deep-seated pain. At those doors swirled miracles and hope, generously given with Ahavas Yisroel and real concern.

Once, a venerable "old timer" came into the hall and stared at the waiting line of young Chassidim. This special Yid had lived through the Churban without ever losing his original roots. For all it mattered, he was still living in Ger near Warsaw, with all the fire and devotion that made those "original" Chassidim the great lights they were. The older Chossid walked back and forth, staring with concentration at the young generation that stood in line. Suddenly he turned to one of the "Fritzlach" (young marrieds) and barked, "ich bin der nisht mekanah of dos vus di viest! "I am not jealous of that which you know!" The loud proclamation caused all to turn in wonder. What was the older Chossid talking about? He went over to the gabbai and explained. "These young men know things we never heard of, I am not jealous of their knowledge.



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I prefer the simple reality I have lived with.” In these few words, that special Yidel spoke of truths that trouble us with each passing day.

I shared this moving episode some years ago. That was before Covid marched into our lives ripping all certainties apart. Lockdowns, home schooling, the insurgence of technology where it had never been invited before, became part of our new normalcy as we tried to maneuver our way forward. The weeks grew into months, and then to over a year, we all learnt about medical innovations, and the need to be careful.

However, many of us became deaf to a deeper need, the need to wake up to Hashem’s call to change within ourselves, to find new ways to connect with Reb Klall Yisroel despite all the handicaps that stood in the way.

As the threat of COVID started to recede we all sought a moment so we could catch our breath, yet more tragedy arrived. Meron that sacred space of pure simcha and avodah came crashing into our reality in the most tragic of ways. We all turned to one another in painful disbelief. How? Why? Whilst emotionally clothing our hearts in sackcloth, we hoped Hashem would grant us some relief only to encounter yet another chapter of our bitter golus. Calamity once more visited an already bereaved Bnei Yisroel. Sweet Yieden in Karlin Stolin, in the middle of their holy tfilos came plunging down, with yet more precious lives lost.

This onslaught of pain is speaking to us in searing terms, we must make amends in our lives. This was not only Karlin, nor was it Meron that lost holy souls, this was all of Klall Yesroil. We are all broken and need to repair ourselves.

That holy Yied from Ger would certainly not be jealous of what we have had to learn of and experience in our present golus. But that’s not really the point. It is us who have been born to these challenges, no one else. This is from whence the measure of our tikun will be measured.

Each generation has its challenge, and each neshomah is placed in the moment in history specific to his spiritual fulfilment. Yes, we are broken, but we all can grow. The Eibishter sends us messages, sometimes they seem too harsh, but that is never the case. Belief in Hashem entails our total understanding that everything comes From Hashem and is somehow for the good.

Yes, we need chizuk now, and our Gedolim are giving us so much of it. Let us embrace their words, and create an atmosphere of sholom between each other. Finger pointing and listening to wild accusations is no road to hope, nor shifting blame on others. No, each Reb Klall Yisroel must shoulder responsibility and better themselves in matter only they know in their hearts.

Let us daven to the Eibishter for His rachmonus, and allow us to see sholom and menucha.