



FINDING REAL HAPPINESS

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“You can’t wait until life isn’t hard anymore before you decide to be happy.” I stumbled over this quote recently and thought it would speak to many of us. This past year has been extremely challenging and I don’t think there is a neshoma that hasn’t been touched to some extent. The Hieliga Tage are here, and somehow, we have to blow away the cobwebs and focus on what the Eibishter seeks from us.

Chazal have written extensively about how difficult these generations before the Moshiach arrives will be. Rav Chaim Vital ZTL writes that his Rebbe, The Ari Hakodosh said that in their generation even the smallest mitzvah a Yied does is considered as holy if not more so, than the avodah that took place in the Bais Hamikdosh. One can only imagine how things are measured in our times, where the golus is so much more complicated and the battle with the yetzai horah so much more difficult. How can we hope to capture some of the exuberance for these holiest of days? Where can we find the key that will allow our distress to dissipate?

Having discussed this situation with chosheve Rabbonim and mechanchim one comes to the realisation that emunah comes very high up on the list of challenges for our times. The wholeheartedness of previous generations allowed Yieden throughout the long golus to hold onto a personal basic faith in Hashem. As for our present situation, well technology has muddied the waters by proposing handy answers to common activities and distracting us from the truth that everything comes from the Eibishter. We seem to be living on two levels, one of ‘Boruch Hashem’ and the other, ‘I did this all on my own.’

In our shtieble I try to talk to the youngsters, we even have a Shabbos gathering only for high school boys and myself. There is no script, and no marks given. Just the old Rav and

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לזכר ולעילוי נשמת
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the children of his chabura shmoozing about their reality. I find time and again that vital discussions of simple understanding of emunah in Hashem doesn't seem to be taking place. Certainly they are learning a lot, and surely they hear about Hashem and His Oneness, yet mention about total Emunah doesn't seem to come easily. We are living in an extremely secular world; our young will have to make their way through life in this environment. We have to give them the clarity of total Emunah in Hashem and a realisation how much joy their mitzvos will bring to Kaveyuchal the Eibishter and their own lives.

Amongst the losses Klall Yisroel have sustained during Covid was a special tzadik, the Pitsburger Rebbe Ztl. He often shared with others a particular event that he personally experienced. He was arriving in America for a visit and was met at the airport by a close supporter of his Mosdos. When entering the fellow's car, he was puzzled to find that there was a steering wheel on both sides of the front seat. He was perplexed, was he meant to co pilot the driver? That could be a problem in that he didn't know how to drive. The Baalabus smiled and explained, "I have a young son who struggles with ADHD. As a result, he can't sit quietly for any length of time when traveling so I installed the steering wheel so he should think he is driving and controlling the car. This way I get on with the real driving, and he stays out of trouble. The Rebbe smiled and said, "it's a lot like so many of us, we think we are in control when it is the Eibishter that is driving and we are just going through the motions."

To return to my opening quote, we can't wait until life isn't hard anymore, that's not in our gift. Hashem is running the world, and everything that happens is His Rotzon. If however we choose to have total Emunass Hashem, and trust that He truly cherishes our performance of His mitzvos, then we can be open to complete happiness, a happiness that is created because we know our Avinu Malkienu is there for us.

This is the true nesoyun for our generation, let us work on it with wholehearted simplicity and through this, give desperately needed tools for our young to face their future.

May we all see a kesivah vechasima tova with kol tov sela.