

# עדת אש קודש Adass Aish Kodesh

## THE SWEET OF BITTERSWEET

*Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita*

I am a celebrant of a number of family simchas this week. New bekisha's have been bought, shirts ordered, and shoes shined. The anticipation is growing as the family gathers from all points of the globe. Heimisha families often have children living far from their parental homes, and that's usually okay except, well Covid kept us all a bit landlocked for the last year and some celebrations went forward on screens as Ziedy's were left at home tapping their toes to a far off niggun.

Now that travel is once again becoming possible, the anticipation of celebrating simchas has taken on new dimensions. Grandchildren, great grandchildren, who have not been hugged for close to two years will soon be enveloped by what may seem to be strangers for the very first time. Instead of yelling at a screen, I'll be able to hold them to my heart and feel the life-force of the next generation. I am truly blessed, the whole clan will be gathered together for the first time in years, and the kvelling will be off the charts for all of us. Well, except there is a hole in my heart as I realise that the true head of this blessed family is missing. This is the first time the entire family has gathered together in all this time, and I find getting my bearings difficult. The Rebbetzin Chaiky Z'L was the center of everything in the Rubin realm, and her loss is being felt by each of us in ways never before realised.

As the Ziedy I have always been a sort of Master of Ceremonies on such occasions, but the truth was that every eye would turn to Bubby to see if all was well.

I realise that the predominance of our mothers is paramount to all Heimisha Mishpachos and that we all march to the tempo our holy women set.

I write these words because this is "A Rabbis Journal" and as such, I feel it incumbent upon myself to share these thoughts with those who have traveled with me over the

בס"ד



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close to twenty-seven years I have been writing this column. As the excitement has grown, with phone calls going back and forth in anticipation of the various simchos we have gathered to celebrate, there has been a tinge of sadness, that has floated up from my heart at random moments. The heaviness of loss that I feel more sharply now is in the knowledge that this time things are going to be different. I share this with you my loyal readership not so I should garner pity, nor be seen as a victim or such. I write this as a heartfelt ode to all our mothers of Israel, who have formed our very being as family, and created the formula with which we create the next link of our holiness.

As we have sat down at several gatherings of late, I could sense how much Bubby is missed. For me it is perhaps a more edgy sort of pain. Children rightfully mourn their parents, and then turn towards the future in the knowledge of the debt of love they owe their parents. For a widower its different, and although the Torah speaks volumes about the care owing to widows, the stain left with a widower is perhaps too delicate to discuss and must be cradled in the soul of the one bereaved. Be that as it may, I know that the Rebbetzin will be with us at these simchos, and that it is her strength that will carry us all forwards.

You may ask, why throw up all this despondency in the midst of everyone's happiness? Perhaps to give voice to feelings many of us have for those we have lost, especially in these difficult times. And remind ourselves that they are here with us, sharing our happiness and giving of themselves with our memories.

I am truly blessed, and as the children gather together, I kvell with their children and grandchildren. The smiles of the youngsters, bring life to my oft weary soul, and I laugh at their wondrous antics. I know Bubby is proud of them all, her generous neshoma had so much place for love and delight. We speak of our Holy Mothers Sorah, Rivka, Leah and Rochel not as mere historical links in our nation's growth, but pivotal figures to our very being. I well remember a bus trip we took once to "Mama Rochel's" Tomb. We were with a large group of members from our Shul in South Manchester, together with many from Glasgow who were from my son's community. It was a very special trip and most of the attendees were traditional but not yet completely conversant with Torah living. The Rebbetzin took the microphone and gave a long moving explanation of the role of our matriarch Rochel, and all Jewish mothers ever since. The tears shed from those ladies' eyes were the liquid gold that makes up our Jewish future. Bubby spoke from her heart to theirs, and opened up floodgates that often were mired by the secular world they inhabited. This is the power of the Jewish Mother, and as the secular world around us challenges even this the foundation of family life, we can point to those we have been blessed to be touched by and speak of their warmth and understanding. Bubby will hold me up at these simchas, after all she never let me down. May we all celebrate on simchas and be blessed to see the coming of the Moshiach soon.