



LEARNING WITH EMUNAH

Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

The Chiddushei Harim Zt"l was strolling in a forest with his gabbai. There was a stillness in the air as the Rebbe walked slowly in deep thought. Suddenly he stopped and looking into his chossid's eyes with a great sadness. "Listen, you should know, there will come a day when things will seem much like they are today. Yes, there will be Rebbe's, there will be Chasidim, there will be gabboim, shamoshim, there will even be a court where the olam will gather for Yom Tov. Everything will appear the way it does now. Only one thing will be missing! Hakodosh Boruch Hu! He won't be included in the entire pageant." Then the Rebbe was quiet and sighed, saying, "even so, Hashem will never desert us, and although we will no longer include Him in our lives, He will never leave us."

The Tzaddik was not talking about a particular group, he was seeing how the entirety of the Torah community could drift into a world where all the props are there but the focus has been lost.

For those of us who were blessed to study under those special Yidden who had survived the Churban, it was a given that they lived with a sense of Hashem's presence that went far beyond mere lip service. They were real, their lives were imbued with a perception of Hashem's hand in their daily lives.

The Belzer Rebbe the Sar Sholom Zt"l used to say that, "there are three types of exile, and each is more severe than the preceding one. The first is when Jews are in exile under a non-Jewish despot. The second is when Jews are in exile amongst Jews; in other words when they are tyrannized by their own brethren. The third and most severe is when a Jew is in exile within himself."

Today so much has become institutionalized that one can

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perhaps glimpse what the Chiddushei Harim was fearful of, this often coupled with what the Sar Sholom spoke of. We all know what is meant when we hear “one walks the walk.” There is so much in our world to celebrate yet in the midst of all this there are many who are just going through the motions with little real intent. Hearts are empty, with the intent for doing Mitzvos blurred.

Recently thousands of Yidden celebrated the siyum of Mesechtas Yavomos in the current cycle of the Daf Yomi. Ask anyone who grew up during those heroic times after the war, if they could have even imagined such worldwide Torah participation and they would shrug their shoulders in disbelief. Yet, those broken souls picked up their Gemoros and started the revolution we celebrate today. It is on their shoulders that we stand. Yet, have we perhaps lost a little of their actual faith along the way? Perhaps those Jews didn't know as much as we pretend to, maybe they weren't gifted with the exacting standards we drive ourselves towards. Yet, they had the ability to live a life suffused with genuine Yiddishkeit. A Friday night Shabbos table was enveloped with a warmth of kedusha and those Yidden davened with heart. Allow me to share a folk saying that carries great poignancy, “there’s a part of me that is unfamiliar to myself, and I keep finding myself there.” With all the huge fanfare we bring to our current lifestyle there is an inner portion of our heart that whines for fulfilment.

Tisha B’Av is about peeling away the layers of dross that often accumulates amidst the tumult of a life lived in the cold. Many a heart is broken because we have lost contact with our real goals. The destruction of the Beis Hamikdosh weeps in our neshomas daily yet for some the cry is silenced by the flashing lights of life lived in the deluge of materialism. We all must visit that place within that is sadly unfamiliar, it is the Pintela Yied that subconsciously beckons especially in these tumultuous days.

The Rebbe stood in that forest of yesteryear and feared a time when people would become players in some sort of holy pantomime; we must strive to make certain we never become part of such a charade.

We are seeing such blessing in our times, with ever more Torah being learnt in ever greater circles. Let us be mindful of the focus of all our learning, that being our connection with The Reboino Shel Olam.

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