



WARNING: ACTORS ON THE WORLD STAGE! *Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita*

As Klall Yisroel is once more embroiled in a war not of its making, and world leaders' posture before the cameras, please allow me to share a few snippets of my personal experiences with "newsmakers and shakers".

Somewhere stuck at the bottom of a drawer in my home are letters from United States Senators, New York City Mayors and, yes, even a few sporting the Presidential Seal. These were sent to me when I wore a younger man's clothing and attested to a career in community askonsus. Back in those days I held the voluntary position of founding vice-president of the Council of Jewish Organizations of Boro Park, Brooklyn. To the uninitiated, this was the first local orthodox Jewish organization in New York City that was created as an umbrella group to represent the Orthodox community. Its constituents were yeshivas, kehillos, and the full gamut of shtieblech and voluntary self-help groups. It was my honour to represent what was then a fledgling community that was seeking to gain a foothold in America. As a Yankee-born, English-speaking chasidische menahel of a local mosod, I found myself becoming a spokesman for a community that desperately needed to tap into the corridors of power, both in the city and further afield. Hence, the letters and pictures. I met with many elected officials and sat at meetings all the way up to the White House.

I share this piece of ancient history with you for a purpose: not to announce my candidacy for some high position, but rather to bear witness that the whole pageant is nothing but vapour and falseness. As the secular calendar turns its page to a new year, and a fresh election cycle is rushing to the fore, much is being spoken concerning new directions and unproven leaders. The coffee rooms of shuls are filled with sage discussions of the merits of this fellow, that party etc, so let this weathered veteran clue you in: it's all a facade. It is Hashem's stage direction that is moving the pieces on the chess board of world events, and all the posturing won't ever change that. Whoever takes up the reins of power is just a walk-on player in the drama that is called history, and although we are meant to participate, we must never lose sight of this one ultimate truth: Hashem runs the world, and all what we see is His plan.

I can regale you with tales of broken promises and skullduggery, of back stabbing and plain old anti-Semitic disregard of the truth. Those

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לזכר ולעילוי נשמת
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glory days of catching shuttle planes to Washington to meet up with a totally inebriated Senator so as to plead the case for some part of our community is part of my CV. I often look back and wonder what it was all about? Why did I have to live in that particular “Mitzrayim” and serve in that position? Truth be told, I too was part of the stage which Hashem manages, and I played the role given me, hopefully to the best of my ability.

It's has been over forty-five years since I hung up my political hat, and I thank Hashem daily that the same plan allowed for me to serve in the rabbonus here in England. I brush off these old memories because I feel particularly well-placed to tell anyone listening that no matter who sits in whichever office of power, it's all play acting. Hashem has His plan, and all these players are just that: actors on a stage.

The most important thing we as Yidden must always be aware of is that Hashem is the Only One, and His Will is for us to keep His mitzvos and create a Kiddush Hashem. In the Haftorah of this week's parsha, Vayechi, we see Dovid Hamelech telling his son Shlomo that there can be no deviation from Torah truth. These are his dying words and he wants them to be inscribed on his wise son's heart.

“I go the way of the earth; be strong and become a man. Safeguard the charge of Hashem, your G-d, to walk in His ways, to observe His decrees, commandments, ordinances, and the testimonies as written in the Torah of Moshe, so that you will succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn.”

The first point Dovid Hamelech makes is that there is no other path than that of Hashem, and this can be found in any place one turns. “Wherever you turn,” means just that. In every situation the Torah will speak to those that seek to listen.

We are in Golus, and as such, we must do our shtadlonus. This may mean representing the Jewish nation in front of the secular powers of the time. No matter where or to whom, “wherever we turn”, we must speak of Torah truths, and reaffirm our connection to Hashem. In the parsha itself, there is a moving scene as Yaakov bids farewell to his sons at his last moments. He doesn't hold back, but tells them of their weaknesses and how to safeguard themselves from self-inflicted harm. Why? Why not finish Yaakov's life with sweet words and calm goodbyes? Because although that may play well to the gallery, it is not the truth that Yaakov knew he must speak.

Golus is a dangerous place, and the future of Klal Yisroel needed direction from the last of its founding fathers. In the darkness into which they were entering, there would be a need sometimes to seek favour in the eyes of those in power. It may not always be clear to us what is real and what is just a mirage. Yaakov's final words to his sons were geared to give them hope for the future.

His holy words drifted from his lips and his sons rallied together with spontaneous acclamation: Shema Yisroel, Listen Father Jacob.... Hashem Elokienu, Hashem Echod! Hashem your G-d, Is our G-d, we are one with you Father in our faith! No matter what the future will serve up, we will always know the one great truth, that this is all Hashem's will and we serve this will for Eternity.

Yaakov falls back on his pillow and says, “Boruch Shem kavod....” Thank You Hashem for this zechus.....Thank You for allowing me to know that I have faithfully given this diverse family its true role and focus.

This is all we need to get through the Golus. Let Presidents make their speeches, Party leaders create their plans. It is all a shpiel, my friends. We must never lose sight of our real focus: the coming of the Moshiach soon.

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