



OUR GREATEST WEAPON

Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

The lone cowboy sits astride his trusted mount and surveys his dire predicament. He looks to the right, to the left, front and back, wherever his eyes settle he sees but one vision. Thousands of howling Indians riding ever closer, screaming out for his death. The poor beleaguered fellow turns to his one last ally, his close friend of many years, Little Bear the Indian scout. "Well old trusted friend, you have been with me through thick and thin, but this time I think we have had it." The wizened Indian looks at his companion with a glint in his eye, "What you mean we, white man?"

I get the feeling of that old cowboy when I read the press reports these days. We Jews are surrounded by howling mobs of haters who are screaming for our scalps, we are besieged, and seek at least some sense of hope. We turn to some of our oldest allies and they shrug their shoulders, "What you mean we?"

As the Irish writer Conor Cruise O'Brien once wrote: "Anti Semitism is a light sleeper", and with a horrific crash it has been shaken out of its slumber. The foundations of civility are being plowed under by the immoral creators of a brave new world called Woke which denies much of what we know is wholesome and good.

Nothing in this current moment of Golus seems sacred; no border seems to be left unsullied. The "people of the book" are being overwhelmed by people of no book, and no moral compass.

I was born in the week the Second World War ended. Ours was a generation tasked with rebuilding that which had been scarred and ripped asunder. The Jewish Nation was barely able to limp into the post war world, yet with the faith inherent in the Yiddisha Neshomah and Gedolie HaTorah with hearts brimming with love, we were blessed to give birth to a thriving Torah community. We all heard the stories, listened to witnesses of acts of horror that went beyond anything we could imagine. However, we were living in a civilised world now, where anti semitism was something left in the attic of our yesterdays.

Then came the infamous Simchas Torah, and before we could catch our breath, all trust in others was ripped from us. Hundreds of thousands of civilians marched in our cities, baying for our blood. The police cowered behind the gates as Jew hatred found a new voice.

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Comparisons are now made with the dreaded days of the late 1930's. With astounding deftness, the most vociferous of "The Nations" have turned decidedly against us. Once more as per usual the Jews are being blamed for everything, and our enemies are seen as victims whilst in fact it is their leaders who emboldened and bank rolled the recent atrocities.

Yes, it's a difficult time, and things can sometimes get on top of us. We are all fearful, it's in the air, everyone has a sense of tense pain.

But the Yied is eternal, The Eibishter loves us and it is this love that keeps us going.

Oh yes, and then there is the gift of our sacred Tehillim!

Nestled in our hearts and souls, the words of David slide into our conscience, and give us strength. The Rebbe Reb Bunim left us this sweet parable: "A man of handsome raiment came into an institution to ask for charity, and was compelled to make considerable explanation as to the reason for his need. Another man, poorly attired, entered, and he was given aid at once. In the same way, a self-satisfied man who asks Hashem for help needs to do so much entreating. But he who is broken of heart and meek is answered at once." The Rebbe then added, "We read: 'But I am all prayer - My broken heart is in itself a prayer, and I hardly am required to entreat You.'" (Kapital 109)

We often forget where and to whom these tzaddikim were talking. In the times of the Rebbe Reb Bunim, the Jewish people were living in utter poverty, the Napoleonic wars were raging all about them and Jews were being displaced constantly. They had no standing as citizens, and counted as mere chattels of absentee noblemen who were about as noble as a dog with rabies.

And who was this tzaddik? This wondrous brave soul who gave heart to those desperate Yidden? He was no cloistered figure who knew nothing of the world about him; in fact, he was a well-travelled former business man who held a chemist's license and owned a successful pharmacy.

There was no peace, no place to rest one's head; the Yidden lived with prayers that were distilled from the pain of their everyday reality. The Rebbe articulated their reality, and allowed the Yidden to focus their hearts towards redemption.

We cannot begin to understand any of this, boruch Hashem; such stark depravity has not been our experience. Yet in that past darkness was born such illuminations that until this day we find warmth from their light. It was the unbridled love of those sages that gave light to the horror chambers of the Holocaust, and now, we must use their light to bring strengthening light into our present situation.

We have a weapon it is our tehillimel, and with it I know Hashem will give us strength and see us to the Final Redemption. May the Moshiach come soon, and may all our broken hearts be healed in His illumination.

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