



## WHAT THE BISHOP DIDN'T SAY

*Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita*

The times were turbulent, Yidden were being trampled upon by enemies near and far. Within our ranks there was also much dissension, with many a family being torn asunder. Then a shining figure came upon the scene, a special Tzadik that took his wandering stick in hand and traveled from village to village showering the broken masses with Hashem's love. This Tzadik was the Baal Shem Tov ZTL, and as we sit here over three hundred years later, his powerful message of ahavah and chesed still reverberates in our hearts. The Rebbe would visit all the villages in his area, which now encompasses the Ukraine and parts of Poland, all except for one category. If any village or city did not have a church, the Tzadik would not enter. His closest students were surprised, what did it matter if some dusty village sported a church spire or not? The Baal Shem Tov explained, if a place has no house of worship, then it is populated by G-dless natives, and such a place is extremely dangerous.

I wonder what the Tzadik would say about our current place of habitation, a place where houses of worship are falling into disrepair and the population now worship in the temples of commerce. I'm a foreigner, born and raised in a far-off land, yet I have resided and served here for more years than I lived in America. Having sadly witnessed this turn from the spiritual, I often wonder if we have yet reached that tipping point of which the Baal Shem Tov feared. Interestingly, I once shared this story of the Baal Shem Tov with the Bishop of Manchester, (don't ask) I can't say he was impressed, yet he had no rejoinder.

Recently yet another spoke in the wheel of this lack of soul in society came to my attention. A new company has undertaken a major advertising campaign and seems to have met with great success. Targeting the elderly, it offers a package deal: For a fee, they will pick up the customers mortal remains from wherever he or she dies, cremate them, and deliver an urn with their ashes to the home of their nearest family. No fuss, no bother, just like an Amazon shopping experience. As noted, this gruesome product is being sold basically to elderly folk, who seek to prearrange their departure from this mortal coil with a minimum disturbance to their loving kith and kin. Imagine, no service, no clergy, no memorial gathering, nothing! Here today gone tomorrow, dear old granny, she was so kind she didn't want us to fret... children can just get on with their lives without any pause over the passing of their parents. How sad, how unG-dly, how tragic.

בס"ד



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כ"ק מרן אדמו"ר מפיאסצנה  
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**לזכר ולעילוי נשמת**  
הרבנית הצדקנית  
חיה שרה בת הרב שלמה  
יחיאל רובין ז"ל



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This is the golus we find ourselves in, where the mere mention of a Creator, is frowned upon, and has no real place in the wider circles of society. Poor elderly people, are asked to pay for the right to disappear with minimal disturbance to their offspring, after all we don't want them to miss their football or whatever.

So, what can we do to keep our spiritual sanity in this sea of materialism? We must redouble our efforts to connect with the Eibishter in our daily reality. There is too much of our lives being lived on spiritual auto pilot. Too many holy neshomahs just walking the walk with no real connection.

I'm a tzitzis fanatic, sorry but that's just one of my things. I love the fact that almost all the 'chevra' wear their tzitzis dangling out. Sadly, many of those lovely white strings are unraveling, making said garment, posul. I find myself diplomatically telling people that they have to fix their tzitzis, only to see their faces crumble. I hate being the bearer of such tidings, after all, these strings are worn with pride. The problem is we don't feel what they are meant to be for us, an actual real time reminder of Hashem's connection with our daily existence. We have to be mindful of what they represent, keeping them in good order is a step towards wearing them with meaning. I could write whole screeds about my feelings concerning this particular mitzvah, but this is not a halacha column and I know my readership all have worthy Rabbonim who will guide them. I just want to use this as an example of how we must endeavour to bring Hashem into our consciousness in this world of arid spirituality. It's not just a uniform we wear, but a mantle of kedushah that dangles in our eyes in a world where all sorts of material danger takes up our landscape.

My main point is to challenge each of us to take our daily activities and embellish them with real meaning. We are drowning in a sea of vacuity, bringing The Eibishter into our reality is basic to our future.

We are blessed with so much, yet for so many, there is a crushing vacuum that tears at the very seam of who we are. May Hashem bring us the blessings of total Redemption, and may it be soon in our day. Amain!

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