



HOT SOUP FOR A COLD HEART

Harav Y. Reuven Rubín Shlita

The following idea came to me without attribution. Its message is so poignant for our times that I wanted to share it with you.

"The moment the hot soup touched my lips, I felt the warmth spread through the core of my body. I then shuddered, shooing away the cold. I turned to my friends and said "wow, it's so weird, before I started eating the hot soup, I was fine, but after starting eating it, I suddenly realised that I was cold.!"

This strange incongruence is not merely some quaint quirk of nature. Allow me to bring this dynamic into our own lives as Yidden who strive to be connected with Hashem.

The "artificial heat" that is constantly being generated around us through the pressures of our modern lifestyles drives us to distraction, and causes us to ignore how cold our lives really are. Phones ping, lights flash, new trends are born and we find ourselves floundering in a sea of icy floodwaters.

It's only at those times when we are lucky enough to taste "hot soup", when we inject some Torah warmth inside us, such as on hearing an inspiring drosha or when learning something that makes us smile, that we are conscious of the temperature.

We all have to look for spiritual soup, for things to keep our souls warm. We need inspiration, and we need to act on it.

The warmth that should be the natural sometimes gets smothered by the clouds of the material world around us. The times demand fire, but instead we are giving ourselves frozen mimicry.

In the sefer Tzav VeZiruz from the Kodesh the Piasnetza Rebbe ztl writes:

"The human soul relishes sensation, not only if it is a pleasant feeling but for the very experience of stimulation. Rather sadness or deep pain than the boredom of non-stimulation. People will watch distressing scenes and listen to heartrending stories just to get stimulation. Such is human nature and a need of the soul, just like its other needs and predispositions. So he who is clever will fulfil this need with

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passionate prayer and Torah learning. But the soul whose Divine service is without emotion will have to find its stimulation elsewhere. It will either be driven to cheap, even forbidden sensations or it will become emotionally ill from lack of stimulation.”

We are living in times that prove the points the Rebbe made. We see youngsters who are lost to us because they have never been truly stimulated by Torah life. They may have gone to the right schools and their fathers certainly davened in a suitable shul, yet their souls were left in the cold.

The outside world thrives on instant gratification; its whole essence is quick fixes or what passes for entertainment. Some of our young become trapped in the web of this demoralising mire and allow the bright lights of the imagery surrounding it to capture their souls.

I often explain to bewildered and troubled parents that they must offer their young ones true and vibrant Torah experiences. Kids need to see Gutta Yidden, stay up all night learning with a true Godol, visit Holy places and immerse in the frozen waters of the Ari Hakodosh's mikveh in Tsefas. We need to fill them with a love for vibrant Torah living. They should be immersed in the sights and sounds of lebedika Jewish life. Such actions would instill in their hearts a Yiddishkiet built on a world of emotional fire. Even at a young age our youth must witness firedika Yiddishkiet in action. The davening they see must be real, not sleepwalked through so that kiddush can be served as soon as possible. Parents must live their Torah with a bren or else their young will seek fulfilment elsewhere.

As the Rebbe said, it's in the very nature of the neshoma to need stimulation; our responsibility is to offer the proper kind.

Reb Mierel Premishlana asked, "How will we face Hashem our Father in 120 years if we haven't done our best for the gift, He gave us, our sweet children? The Angels will ask, "You were given a soul, we entrusted you with a shtick Himmel, what did you do?"

If we don't warm ourselves with the hot soup of a living Yiddishkiet, not only will we remain frozen, but our young will become ever more isolated. Parents and teachers should not be afraid of offering a taste of warmth; after all, it's the mainstay of our neshomas. Our children are begging for this warmth and they will reciprocate with nachas in the future if we only respond.

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