



בס"ד

Life is real to those who live it

By Harav Yitzchak Reuven Rubin

We bought a clock. In fact, it's a large clock, white with bold black numbers. Now I am certain every shtiebl has such clocks, but this one is ours and it came with a story. (Seems everything I do becomes a story!) We had another clock, also large with visible numbers. However, it started to lose time, and in a shtiebl time isn't something one wants to lose. The mavinim checked it out-it was radio operated- yet it never kept proper time. It was something related to radio waves and positioning. Whatever the explanation, it was now slow.

So, I took it down because it was driving me to distraction.

**“We all live on so many different levels: confused,
sometimes scared, always perplexed”**

As a man of action, no sooner did it come down than I ordered a new battery-run model, without gimmicks; just a large old-fashioned timekeeper. At the same time a well-meaning anonymous donor bought another model. Where there was once no clock we now had more than we could handle. (I think that unknown generous soul although we didn't get to use it). Things didn't end with this. Once the clock was placed on the wall we realized that the glare from the fluorescent lights hit the glass face and we just couldn't see its numbers. The mavinim sprang into action and soon one of our “in house” experts figured

out a solution. He took off the glass. Voila! No more glare. Now the clock's hands make their rounds throughout the day and night, silently counting out our lives.

The reason for telling this seemingly mundane story is because it brought home to me an important lesson. Time is a precious gift. Once squandered it can't be reclaimed. Yiddishkeit is time sensitive: Shabbos, Yom Tov, Shacharis, Mincha, Maariv and much else are all driven by time. We are now all pressed for time, Pesach is around the corner and heimishe homes are buzzing with the sound of hoovers and the pungent smell of chemical cleaners. Perhaps it would be worthwhile to stop for a moment in the midst of this often stressful time of the year and ask yourself: what is this Pesach Yom Tov all about? In fact, we should ask several greater questions like: are we in Golus now? What am I living for? What am I willing to die for? Do I appreciate what I have? Do I know what I have?

The Seder is created so that questions should be asked. Sadly, If we don't ask questions we won't really be interested in the answers. Too many of us are just coasting along, the hands of the clock sweep past but life isn't being realized. Instead, we waste our time because it actually it has no meaning.

This Golus is unique. We have more material trappings than any other generation, more ability to keep mitzvos, yet, young, and not so young, seem lost, with no direction. Pesach tells us to ask questions, so that we can become connected with the answers. There is a halocho that we don't eat matzo for a period before the Yom Tov. Why? So we can eat them at the Seder with an appetite. Matzo is symbolic of the duality of life: it is the "bread of affliction," yet also "the bread of freedom." We all live on so many different levels: confused, sometimes scared, always perplexed. Perhaps before Pesach we should stop and think about matters that go deeper than chumras and minhagim. First, we should workup an appetite to hear the answers, figure out in our own unique minds what it is we are here for and where we want to go.

As one who can be considered a senior citizen, I can well understand how one can be sucked into the rushing about, and forgetting, or not even thinking about, what this is all about. Reading your children's school Pesach workbooks won't connect them with what they have learned if we, their parents, aren't enthusiastic and willing to think through the personal meaning of this unique Yom Tov.

Techiyas Hameisim, the resurrection of the dead, which will take place at some point during the period of Moshiach's arrival (may it be soon) will take place in the month of Nisan. One of the reasons cited for the white garment known as a kittel being worn at the Pesach Seder is to have a palpable reminder that Techiyas Hameisim will take place on Pesach. This should galvanize your thinking; time is of the essence; it knows no favourites.

Tell your story to your children; we have all had our own moments of redemption. Let them see Hashem's hand in your life. If you don't really see this, then sit down and sort yourself out! The clock is running, and life is real to those who live it.



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