

עדת אש קודש

Adass Aish Kodesh



TWENTY TWO MINUTS OF NOTHING

Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita

"BREXIT!!"

There I've said it, now you must be wondering what that almost toxic word has to do with Shabbos Hagodol? Well, I'll explain soon, meanwhile put a pin in it.

Instead let's start again.

As a young man in New York, the following mantra was heard incessantly, "Give us twenty-two minutes and we will give you the world" and with this pronouncement, New York City's most popular news radio station would do just that, give the news of the world in twenty two minutes. On it would roll, again and again, day in day out, interspersed with adverts of course. It was from this mind numbing source of worldly wisdom that many a Hiemisha Yied first learnt to speak English, and it was the fount of 'der nayis' (the news) which became the sound track of many of our homes. Jews are 'news junkies' we need to know what's happening, all the time, twenty two minutes and more. In the shtieble where I davened in Boro-Park, the shuls oldest member would dip into a small leather wallet immediately after Havdalah and hand his grandson a coin so he could run to the corner shop and purchase the days newspaper. After all, a full twenty five hours had gone by without any inkling of what the world had been up to. One needed only to listen to the chatter over steaming glasses of tea (always glasses, never cups) in those days to learn not only what the world news was, but how all the ills of society could be resolved.

Of course today we have Brexit, (that word again) a subject just ripe for a hiemisha 'expert' to espouse upon, explaining in great detail on how we can resolve all manner of problems. (obviously due to the vagaries of publishing deadlines, these words are being written some time before appearing, hopefully Brexit will have been sorted by the time readers will see these words, although I sadly doubt that) Yes, Yidden love following the news, and every community has its own mavin who has reflected on all aspects of society's knotty questions and carries on his shoulders all the answers.

This unquenchable need to 'be in the know' is systematic of being in golus. We are never at ease, our estrangement from our surroundings makes for a constant sense of unease. News headlines are indicative of this edgy friction, and it is happening at all levels. The world can't be at ease with itself totally, its natural

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state is to be broken, this as a result of man's first sin. Communal strife, family turmoil, and most vital of all, in that murky territory that lies between one's own ears, there is always that frisson of disquiet. As Yidden we are tasked with the goal of fixing all this disquiet. By creating peace in our personal chink of reality, we become a partner in fixing what is lacking and hence bringing closer the goal of total wholeness to the world.

Our desire in life should be to bring stillness into our lives. This comes from developing true bitochen in Hashem and a knowledge that everything is in His hands. Obviously put this way it sounds all so simple, but simplicity is usually the most complicated of states.

Brexit and its kin will come and go, whilst all the time Hashem seeks from us a coming to a state of sholom.

Pesach signifies this level of inner faith and belief. From the chaotic tsunami of impurity that was Mitzrayim, the people of Klall Yisroel emerged with a heartfelt faith in Hashem. Imagine the media of those days, the unbelievable headlines, as unparalleled plagues ate up their very homes. Gloom and doom was eminent, and yet, those strangers, the Yidden were celebrating at a festive meal. The Jews had to become at peace within, endowed with complete faith, acknowledging that everything was in Hashem's hands. Those who couldn't, perished in the plague of darkness.

This growing to that personal place of faith started on Shabbos. It was in Mitzrayim that the Bnei Yisroel celebrated the very first Shabbat Ha-Gadol on the tenth of Nissan, five days before their redemption. On that day, they were given their first mitzvah: 'On the tenth day of this month [Nissan]... each man should take a lamb for the household, a lamb for each home.'

They were taking the symbol of all that the Egyptians held dear, tying it to their beds, hence signifying that the very moors and ideals that the world worshipped would be subsumed by the Yidden who were now invested with a total faith in Hashem.

This sublime moment was the turning point of everything that would follow. Not only then, way back when, but today as well. The Tiferes Shmuel writes:

'Every year on Shabbos Hagadol that sublime faith and belief is reawakened in each Yied. In the merit of that Shabbos, every single one of our ancestors made a truthful evaluation in their hearts about where they stood regarding their connection with Hashem. With this truthful acknowledgement of Hashem's love and totality, they were blessed to see all the miracles that followed. The same is true today, this special Shabbos brings with it that unique merit wherein we can draw closer to Hashem and make an inner assessment with which we can be blessed with miracles and salvations.'

The Chiddushei Harim brings us yet another dynamic to the same point: 'In this Shabbos all the illuminations from all the Shabbosim from the whole year come together and shine forth, this is why we call it Shabbos Hagadol.'

Brexit will be whatever it will be, the world turns on the merit of a different energy. Allow this Shabbos to bring you clarity and purpose, and then the spirit of Kedusha will bring its wondrous sholom within us all.

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