



## A Place to Rest

*Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita*

The New Jersey wind coldly cuts thru the air as we get out of the car. We gaze across the cemetery. It is a comparatively new one, created by the Bobover Kehillah, it's only as old as the survivor generation that founded it. Names, all those names. I knew most of these holy Jews, and as I wander thru the neat lines of stones I am taken aback by how many have been niftar in the forty odd years I have been away. My son notes something else, the main stones are upright, yet the foot stones that cover the kever have names as well, these are the names of family members who died al kiddush Hashem in the churban. They have no known place of rest, and so their nearest and dearest have placed their sacred names on their own stones so that they will never be forgotten. Looming largest in this quiet scene is a large building, wherein are the kevorim of the two Kedoshei Elyon who rebuilt Bobov and kept all those names alive. The Bobover Rebbe's Harav Shlomo Ztl, and Harav Naftali Ztl lay side by side, their physical work done, their final resting places have become the center point of thousands of prayers by Yidden who seek their merit to intercede for kith and kin. I enter the large room, a wall of flickering candles is to the right, one's eye is taken up by the large matzeivos of the Rebbes. I draw a deep breath, many memories jostle as I walk closer, my eyes tear up, my vision blurs, as those holy yesterday's envelope my consciousness.

Memories are often a fogged out landscape where occasional reminders appear like isolated trees. At this moment I want to caress all those special times, the ones that shaped who I am.

Let me share just such a memory, one I wrote about many years ago but rushes forward every Parshas Yisro:

"A quiet would descend upon the huge crowd. The hour would be late; the assemblage had already sat in rapt attention, listening to the Rebbe say wondrous Torah thoughts. It would be then, just after the last lechaim, when the Rebbe would ask for his special zemiros, his songbook. He



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would turn the well-worn pages until he reached the spot he sought. Everyone would hold his breath, time would seem to come to a standstill, and then the voice of the tzadik would ring out with the descriptive words of the song “Yom Shabboson” (The Day of Shabbos). This was a nigan sung only twice a year in Bobov — on the Shabbos of parshas Noach and that of parshas Yisro.

It speaks of the dove that flew out of Noach’s ark to find peace. According to the Zohar, it found dry ground on which to rest just before Shabbos. The Yidden are likened to the dove, for we, too, seek peace and tranquility in the chaos of the storms that surround us. We, too, find it on the Shabbos day, the time of true serenity.

The other motif of the song is the giving of the Torah at Har Sinai. At that time we called out, Na’aseh v’nishmah, “We will do and we will listen,” and with this we opened our hearts to the possibility of true peace.

The singing of this nigan in Bobov was always a highlight, for the Rebbe, Rav Shlomo Ztl would lead it with such dynamic warmth that one could actually envision the sweet dove flying about in its search for safety. His was not an operatic voice, and yet his song stirred the soul with each word. He did not just sing a nigan; he actually became the words. His voice would soar, and he would fling out his arms; his head would sway with emotion, and his eyes seemed to be connecting with the heavens above.

Even today, many years later, that tune of poignant beseeching is still burned into my heart. The Rebbe would sing over and over again the words Yona motzoh vo mano’ach vesham yanuchu yegi’ei ko’ach, “On it the dove found rest; there shall rest exhausted ones.” These words are so poignant, yet filled with such hope.

We all seek to alight upon an oasis of calm, and that can only be found in our Torah. But there are storms that blow us off course. Our times are particularly difficult, but not unique. We read about young children rebelling, becoming lost in the jaws of the newest source of moral destruction, the unfiltered Internet. Sadly, this is only the newest in a long line of corrupting forces. This is the price of golus and for some of our young, the dove flies and never finds a place to settle its feet. The Shabbos table becomes a battleground, parents can’t cope, and the storm clouds never seem to disappear.

I worked with “at-risk” teenagers before the term became popular, some forty-five years ago. Time and again we found that if we could get parents to accept their child for who they are, the heat would be turned down and the anger would dissipate.”

The dove flies above the stormy waters, seeking its small foothold. The Torah home must be a place where a person can be at ease. Shabbos should be a light in a world grown cold and dark. Sing its songs and cherish the gifts Hashem has bestowed on you! Speak to your young of your own personal flight, how the Torah has become your safe place. Let them know that you are trying to understand their fears, their needs.

The Rebbe sang about the dove circling the sky, finding its foothold, finding the true Shabbos. Let us consider together what we can do for our own doves and give them a foothold in the Torah that they can make their own.

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