

# CHAPTER FORTY-TWO

*by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin*

## Beginning of Second Book

I hope you have met one or two along the way. What or who am I talking about? I speak of real "Mashiach Yidden," that's who. There are those who live their entirety with a deep belief better yet, call it conviction that Mashiach will arrive any moment. I really mean any and every moment, every second of every day no ifs or buts.

Sure, in times of difficulties we all become enamored with the hope that Mashiach will soon arrive. After all, who else will sort out your particular problem of the day? But once the crisis passes and things seem to get back on track, our wishes for Mashiach's quick arrival seem to come with a proviso. We shrug our shoulders, give a krechtz and say with all due feeling, "Mashiach darf shoy'n kumin, Mashiach has to come immediately." But let's be honest. In the back of our mind is the thought, "Yes, but not until after my vacation in Miami."

No, friends, a "Mashiach Yid" lives with a different mindset. For him, Mashiach's coming is uppermost in his heart. His entire agenda is geared to this hope, and every thought and action happens according to that plan. I had the merit to live with such a Yid, and his faith in Mashiach's eminent arrival was total.

That Yid was my late father-in-law, Harav Shloma Yechiel Grodzinsky, z"l, and I was often dumbfounded by his unsophisticated belief. The shver was no simple fellow. He was a great talmid chacham who learned day and night. I remember always seeing him with a sefer in hand, his studying carrying him into every area. He came from the pre-Holocaust mold, and despite the tragic loss of his entire family, he rebuilt his life in America with all the challenges that entailed. Yet all the tzaros he lived through paled into insignificance because he saw everything as part of a trek that would lead to the ultimate redemption.

How many times I heard him make decisions about the family's future plans based on the understanding that Mashiach would be arriving directly! Even his choice of where he lived and how his apartment should be situated was all decided on with this one understanding. After waiting for over eighty-eight years, he passed on with this belief still on his lips.

I sometimes wonder how lesser beings could relate to such a life. After all, this man had set one great goal before all else. His every act was consecrated for one purpose, and he passed away with

the knowledge that he had not been found worthy of his aspirations. Despite all his positive good, his goal was not achieved. In the business world, they would call him bankrupt. But to think this would be to miss the point entirely.

A Yid who lives for the coming of Mashiach does so by elevating everything about him. His goal is to make this mundane world a place where Mashiach can arrive in dignity. The grace and goodness that drives such a Yid doesn't measure this life as others do. His is an existence that reaches up to the heavens, hoping to draw true holiness down to this realm. Whether he merits seeing this ultimate goal or not is not the point; it's what he does with the time he is allotted that counts.

What about those who are close to such a soul? How do they relate to such an attitude? I can only say that as a witness to such refined holiness, I was touched by his every nuance. To hear firsthand how a Yid should measure his goals was to feel that true belief is possible despite a world that has become crass and hostile. To have dwelled in such a home means to have seen how much certainty and conviction can exist in a human heart.

In kapitel forty-two, we begin the second book of Tehillim. Altogether, ten men contributed to the entirety of Tehillim. The first book was David's own; in the second one, the first eight psalms are attributed to Korach's sons. This may sound strange. After all, Korach was swallowed up by the ground he stood on because of his rebellious actions. His sons were doomed to the same fate, yet here, in this, one of our holiest books, we find them contributing. In fact, Rashi tells us that when the earth opened up, these sons also fell in, but they did teshuva and were saved by landing on a ledge overlooking the fires burning below. From this depth, at the entrance to hell with the flames lapping at their feet, they sang these exalted phrases. And what wondrous words they are! These Yidden had been at the brink, and at this most emotional juncture they spoke of the coming of Mashiach and their thirst to see the holiness of those times.

*As the hart cries out in thirst for springs of water, so my soul cries out in thirst for You, God.* A wild beast of the forest lives by its instincts. Its needs are the basic building blocks of all it does. When a hart feels thirst, it feels it with its entirety. There is no room for compromise or equivocation; the thirst drives its whole being. The Jewish soul cries out for Hashem with just such raw desperation. We too need the basics of existence, but for us that need is for a closeness to Hashem. *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When will I come and appear before God?*

Our Sages tell us that this kapitel speaks of all the exiles we Jews have had to endure. We ask Hashem how long will it be before we can appear before Him once more as in times past. When the Beis Hamikdash still stood, we were at least able to relate to what it meant to live as a Yid with some semblance of wholeness. Now we find ourselves desperately thirsty while surrounded by hostile quarters that make it almost impossible to experience a "living Almighty" that is with us at all times.

*My tears were my bread day and night, while they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"* Our tears are all of one kind, singular in our pain. While others eat food to nourish their bodies, our

thoughts are for greater things. Food is not enough; we seek to feed our souls. In both good times, as symbolized by day, and bad, as represented by night, we know how far we are from where we belong. While others have their "day," during which they callously taunt us, we remain focused on our reality.

*These I will remember and pour out my soul within me, how I passed with the throng, leading them slowly to the House of God, with jubilant song and thanks, a multitude celebrating.* We are told that Korach's sons were granted the gift of prophecy when they stood watching the fires of their father's destruction. They cried out for all future generations, speaking for those yet unborn who would experience their own sense of loss. Their thoughts were of a time when all Yidden would congregate as one and celebrate in true fashion Hashem's holy days.

*Why are you bowed down, my soul, and why do you feel unfulfilled? Await God, for I will yet thank Him for the salvations of His countenance.* Make no mistake, my dear soul. Your pain is nothing compared to what Hashem bears due to our losses. Don't yearn for your own sake. Instead, search for Hashem. That way, you will surely experience deliverance in the fullest manner. A sense of enrichment will fill your soul with the vision of Hashem's sweetness and light.

*My God, my soul is bowed down within me, because I remember You from the land of the Jordan, where the Hermon's peaks rise from lowly mountains.* Hashem, I feel distraught, and I have come to understand anguished You must be. You offered us so much a land rich in attributes, and most of all, a Torah that would bring such glory to this mundane world.

*Deep troubles, flowing from Above, call to each other. All Your pounding surf and rolling waves washed over me.* Rashi explains that this passage indicates that one generation's woe runs into the next's. We heard Hashem's warnings, yet they all went over our heads. We were so immersed in our own feelings that we lost sight of the real causes of affliction.

The kapitel ends, *Why are you bowed down, my soul, and why do you feel unfulfilled? Await God, for I will yet thank Him for the salvations of His countenance, and He is my God.* The "Mashiach Yid" ends his litany of sorrow with true inspiration. He stands at the edge, yet he exclaims that we need never mourn for our soul if only we yearn for Hashem's light. By striving toward that glimmer of hope, all else fades in importance. True menuchas hanefesh, peace of mind, dwells within those who reach out and embrace the world's ultimate goal.

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