

CHAPTER NINETY-ONE

by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin

I woke up this morning gagging for breath. Don't worry; it's nothing I can't handle. You see I suffer from allergies, and anything floating in the air can become an irritant to my delicate yet prominent nose. Once awake I went and took two little pills and, wonders of wonders, the gagging soon passed and Rubin was back to fighting condition.

Where does this allergy stuff come from? Why is it most can sleep with feather pillows whilst yours truly would become a sneezing, nose running mess at just the thought of such? Most doctors will tell you it's inherited. Something in my gene pool took a disliking to foreign airborne bodies, and for generations, Rubins have been sneezing. I don't fret about all this; I take my pill and thank Hashem for having them. Given that I could have inherited worse stuff, I must count myself lucky. Besides, this inherited business isn't all that bad, after all I have inherited my being a Jew as well. The genes that I carry have in them thousands of years of tradition and loyalty to Hashem, so I guess the odd pill or two is but a small price to pay for the particular package that makes up who I am.

One of life's most intriguing possibilities is our ability to delve into our roots and realize the great potential that is ours. The Bobover Rebbe, *zt"l* was unique in many ways. One aspect that may not have been noticed by many was his innate ability to understand people in all their complexities. He could immediately tell from whence they came and what their core abilities were. I remember more than once sitting in his presence and hearing hints of this talent. He would say to a *bachur*, "Why do you imitate your grandfather; you never knew him?" This was intended as a great compliment. He meant that the young boy was actually walking, or talking as his grandfather had. The Rebbe had known the previous generation. He had known that grandfather who tragically was destined to become a *kodesh*. Here the Rebbe was noting that the following generation actually had the same characteristics.

We are all the product of previous acts and merits of those who came before us. This is called *zechus avos*, and it explains a lot about why our nation has been able to survive spiritually despite all the horrors we have had to face. We stand on the shoulders of generations of *tzadikim*, and in our souls are all their hopes and aspirations.

I have often come across young people who have become totally committed to a Torah life despite the fact that they were raised in a non committed family. Often as not, they will be able to tell you about some great grandfather who was *frum*. They never knew this ancestor, and if he was ever spoken about in the home, it was probably in terms that were not all that complimentary. Yet, here is

the young man, a *ben Torah*, married with a few children, living a Torah life, and giving bountiful nachas to the parents who thought their son had gone mad. Some of these young people can trace their antecedents to great *tzadikim*, but no matter what, these souls have been brought back to Torah in the merit of special Yidden of some bygone day. We live on the interest owing by past deeds of goodness. Our Bubbas cried for us, our *Zeidas* prayed.

This *kapital* was written by Moshe *Rebbeinu* in honour of the tribe of Levi. It speaks of their particular closeness to Hashem, and the role they must play in *Klal Yisrael*. *Guttes Yidden* have said that in our times, after the *churban*, every Yid is a *shtikale Levi*, "part of Levi," for each of us carry a portion of that tribe's closeness with Hashem. This is no simple matter, for with such *yichus* comes responsibility.

YOSHEV BESEISER ELYON., "He who dwells in the shelter of the Supreme One, under the protection of Hashem, he will abide."

The *Leviim* of old lived in close proximity to Hashem's essence. They worked in the Sanctuary and lived in its holy environment. Those of us today who seek to dwell in Hashem's shelter, His Torah life, will find true protection. Just as the *Leviim* were sensitized by working in an environment of *kedusha*, so too are those who bring holiness into their daily lives.

OMAR LAHASHEM, MACHSI UMETZUDASI., "I say of Hashem, He is my refuge and my stronghold, my G-d in whom I trust."

If we are cognizant of all the rivers of tears we carry within ourselves, all the trials that our forefathers weathered, then we will realize that only Hashem can be our stronghold. This inner knowledge gives us the feeling of safety we desire in times of stress. It's rather a wondrous thought; here we are small and inconsequential, but we have this *zechus* from our ancestors, and with it we can be protected.

BE'EVRASO YASECH LACH., "With His wings He will cover you and beneath His wings, you will find refuge; His truth is a shield, a full shield."

There are many ways of seeking safety. You can run here, you can run there, but in the final analysis, there is but one safety zone and that is Hashem. There is a difference between vaguely accepting this concept, and truly living it.

It is told that when the Rebbe Reb *Leibele Eiger* came home after visiting the Kotzker Rebbe, his father, Reb Shlomele Eiger asked him why he had run off to study with "those Chassidim." What could they teach him that he didn't have at home? "In Kotzk I learned that there is a *Ribono Shel Olam*, and that He runs the world." "What? Everyone knows that there is a G-d; just ask the young girl who cleans the house here." With this the elder Rabbi called in the orphaned girl who helped in the household. "Tell me," he asked, "Who runs the world?" The young child answered immediately, "Hashem of course." The Rabbi looked up to his errant son, "You see even she says so." Reb Lebele

smiled, "She says it, I now know it!"

The full shield spoken of in our *kapital* comes only with a full acceptance of Hashem's Oneness.

LO SIRA MIPACHAD LAIYLA., "You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day."

In the night of our *galus*, our only hope has been in Hashem. Even when we thought all was well, there have always been slings and arrows shot at us. This has been our lot. But think for a moment; all those times of stress have been weathered, and the merit imbedded in us. I was raised in a community of Holocaust survivors; every Rebbe in our Yeshiva had a number burnt into his arm. Yet, they were all sweet and special Jews. How? How could this be possible? Where did they get the strength, the ability to overcome such pain?

KI VI CHASHAK VAAFALTEIHU., "Because he clings to Me with desire, I will save him; I will strengthen him, for he knows My name."

There are times that Jews have to look into history to understand how Jews have survived. We need just look at our parents, our *Rebbes*, to comprehend this mystery. The Jewish soul clings with an all encompassing desire, this is our strength, and it is ours forever, imbedded in our very essence.

Yidden have so much in them, so very much.

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