

CHAPTER NINETY-NINE

by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin

As a youth I learned the humble yet vital art of life saving. I don't mean I was a doctor or even a paramedic, no my life saving was practiced by the poolside. As the oldest *bachur* in our group, and the only one who knew how to swim, I was elected to learn the arcane art of being a life guard so that we could all go swimming during the summer months. Off I went to lifeguard classes, where I learned a lot more than just how to schlep someone to safety.

One great lesson was the insight taught into the psychology of someone in danger. When a person gets into trouble in the water he is apt to strike out in panic at anyone who comes near him. You may feel that you are attempting to save the poor fellow, but to him you are seen as a danger. He may try to grab hold of you in sheer desperation, often as not, schlepping you into the depths as well. No, the lifesaver has to do so with stealth, never allowing the drowning soul even to see him.

Today the entire world seems to be drowning in the sea of senseless greed. People flounder in the waves, and are frightened even when they are offered help. When I was in school, I vaguely remember being taught something about the economics of a consumer society. I think the gist of what was said was that the more you make, the higher your material aspirations become, and hence the more you spend. Making more money would never make you satisfied because you would want even more stuff as you worked yourself up the greasy pole of success.

This sort of mass brainwashing has caused an entire world to be at war with itself. People are never allowed to feel satisfied; to be so would spell the end of all global financial growth.

This all started with the industrial revolution, when folk who were used to working the land suddenly found themselves making stuff in factories that supplied stuff for others. Since that day no one is happy, and we are all suffering because of it.

Heimishe families see both parents working, often each holding down two different jobs. We were once thought of being middle class, but in fact today we are all working class, and doing so all day and night!

Pundits speak of many different wars, the class war, the war on want, on obesity and even on litter. Everything is a war, and we are the poor combatants. The use of such descriptive words is not accidental, because this generation has turned everything into a battle. No one is permitted to rest; to do so is to be considered a shirker. Mankind is at war all right, and truth be said the war is against ourselves.

A recent study suggests that in Britain today over ten million men are discontented with their jobs and their life. People are becoming disillusioned with the long hours and office back stabbing that goes along with their bigger homes and flashier cars. The cycle of consume and spend has eaten a hole into society's heart. The secular religion of materialism has not made the world any better; in fact we are stressed and torn by its effects. People are told never to be happy with what they have, there is no such thing as enough. Someone once said, "It is not about not having what you want, it's about wanting what you've got."

So, where will it all end? Will we actually see ourselves getting more and more sucked into the quagmire, until we are lost down the vortex of desperate greed? Or will the world wake up and begin to accept that mankind was created for bigger and better things? It is like that drowning fellow, (the one I never, *baruch Hashem*, needed to save), if we can get him to safety he will see how his redemption was there for the taking. This *kapitel* speaks of that day, and by so doing allows us to remain faithful to the knowledge it contains.

Hashem Malach Yirgizu Amim ... "When *Hashem* is [universally accepted as] King, peoples will tremble, [before Him Who is] enthroned on Cherubim, the earth will quake." The only way out of this madness is the universal acceptance of *Hashem's* Will. Our sages tell us that this *kapitel* is dedicated to those times in the future when after the war of Gog and *Magog*, all nations will see this eternal truth. We are living through such a war now, where evil sets the agenda and creates battles within each heart. However, the psalmist tells us that we should never give into despair, for in the final analysis, *Hashem's* Word will be heard.

Hashem Betzion Gadol ... "Hashem is great in Zion, and is high above all the peoples."

An American politician wrote an amazing article. He shows historically that no matter what the non-Jewish world says or does, the Jewish nation will stand strong and will overcome all adversity. The article points out the futility of resisting this truth, and accepts that such resistance is down to anti-Semitism based on jealousy. Well we do not really need anyone to tell us this; the fact is that by our continued Torah growth, we are living proof of *Hashem's* continuous connection with His people. However in the war zone that is today's insanity, it is a promising sign when those in leadership positions begin to speak in such terms.

Yodu Shimcha Gadol ... "They will pay homage to Your Name, saying, great and awesome, it is holy."

This will be no small feat. The world believes in the god of money and wealth. For them to turn about and accept *Hashem's* Kingship will be an about face in their thinking. They thrash about in their self imposed storm, yet they really don't want to even contenance the truth. Imagine what it will take for the peoples of the world to admit to their monumental folly, how difficult this will be. For the first time the entire world will understand what real Holiness is.

Be'amud Anan Yedaber Aleihem ... "In a pillar of cloud He spoke to them; they preserved His testimonies and the statute which he gave them."

Our teachers, *Moshe and Aharon* heard from *Hashem* His word. Even in today's clouds of misinformation and deceit, we, their offspring, have kept these testimonies. This is our heartfelt truth, carried throughout all the world's wars with love.

Romemu Hashem Elokeinu ... "Exalt *Hashem*, our G-d, and prostrate yourselves at His holy mountain; for *Hashem*, our G-d, is holy."

Yes, mad, bad, world, you will have to accept the truth. There is nothing that is greater than the safety given by *Hashem*, everything else is a fiction. It may take wars and misery until this is seen, but seen it will be.

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