

# CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED NINE

*by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin*

The lone cowboy sits astride his trusted mount and surveys his dire predicament. He looks to the right, to the left, front and back, wherever his eyes settle he sees but one vision. Thousands of howling Indians riding ever closer, screaming out for his death. The poor beleaguered fellow turns to his one last ally, his close friend of many years, Little Bear the Indian scout. "Well old trusted friend, you have been with me through thick and thin, but this time I think we have had it." The wizened Indian looks at his companion with a glint in his eye, "What you mean we, white man?"

I get the feeling of that old cowboy when I read the press reports these days. We Jews are surrounded by howling mobs of haters who are screaming for our scalps, we are besieged, and seek at least some sense of hope. We turn to some of our oldest allies and they shrug their shoulders, "What you mean we?"

This siege is not only going on at a political level, but even more so at a moral one. Nothing in this current world seems sacred; no border seems to be left unsullied. The "people of the book" are being overwhelmed by people of no book, and no moral compass. Just today I read in a major British newspaper how one of Britain's most illustrious medical experts has stated that he sees no problem with infanticide if a child is born with a disability. Do you hear this? Pharaoh wasn't crazy after all. Want more? Last week the head of the government's department for fertility stated that, "Fathers are no longer necessary for normative family life." It is not only that this stuff is being said, and by recognized moral leaders at that, but that no one has called for them to be sacked, or at least censored.

I read recently that the sewer system of this fair land is in big trouble. It seems that people have become used to throwing tons of greasy rubbish down their drains, and all this muck is clogging up the system. Let me explain; the greasy stuff gets caught up at a point in the pipe system, slowly the junk builds up, and if left unattended, the unwary will become victim of a sewer backup that will spew filth all over his clean home. There is but one way to solve this dilemma, pour acid into the pipes before it is too late, and then monitor what we throw away in the future.

In moral terms the spewing of filth and dirt has already started, the real tragedy is that the quite moral folk at home have no idea what they can do. The internet goes on, the morals fall, and everyone feels vulnerable.

This affliction strikes even more so into the heart of *Torah Yidden*, for we are raised to be sensitive to

such immorality, and as one allergic to a certain item, we feel like erupting in hives when the filth enters our lives.

We become distraught. How can we survive? The world is rushing over the abyss of immorality, "The Nations" have turned decidedly against us, and it is all so difficult. At an international level, the Jews are being blamed for everything as usual, and our enemies are seen as victims whilst in fact it is their leaders who send human bombs into large shopping centers.

Our Holy Land seems to be in the hands of those who seek to make us unholy! Torah scholars are belittled; large *heimishe* families are in danger of extreme poverty. The jealousy of those who term themselves secular has turned into a vengeful campaign that disregards all basic human rights.

Yes it's a difficult time, and things can sometimes get on top of us.

And then there is *Tehillim*!

Nestled in our hearts and souls, the words of David slide into our conscience, and give us strength. The *Rebbe Reb Bunim* left us this sweet parable: "A man of handsome raiment came into an institution to ask for charity, and was compelled to make considerable explanation as to the reason for his need. Another man, poorly attired, entered, and he was given aid at once. In the same way, a self satisfied man who asks *Hashem* for help needs to do so much entreating. But he who is broken of heart and meek is answered at once." The *Rebbe* then added, "We read: But I am all prayer' (our *kapitel* ... fourth stanza). My broken heart is in itself a prayer, and I hardly am required to entreat You."

We often forget where and to whom these *tzaddikim* were talking. In the times of the *Rebbe Reb Bunim*, the Jewish people were living in utter poverty, the Napoleonic wars were raging all about them and Jews were being displaced constantly. They had no standing as citizens, and counted as mere chattels of absentee noblemen who were about as noble as a dog with rabies.

And who was this *tzaddik*? This wondrous brave soul who gave heart to those desperate *Yidden*? He was no cloistered figure who knew nothing of the world about him; in fact he was a well travelled former business man who held a chemists license and owned a successful pharmacy.

There was no peace, no place to rest ones head; the *Yidden* lived with prayers that were distilled from the pain of their everyday reality. The *Rebbe* articulated their reality, and allowed the *Yidden* to focus their hearts towards redemption.

We cannot begin to understand any of this, *boruch Hashem*; such stark depravity has not been our experience. Yet in that past darkness was born such illuminations that until this day we find warmth from their light. It was the unbridled love of those sages that gave light to the horror chambers of the Holocaust, and now, we must use their light to bring strengthening light into our present situation.

*Lamenatzei'ach LeDavid Mizmor* ... "For the Conductor, by David, a song, O Hashem of my praise, be not silent."

*Ki Fi Rasha ...* "For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful have opened against me, they have spoken to me the language of falsehood."

*Vedivrei Sin'ah Sevavuni ...* "With words of hatred they encircled me, and attacked me without cause."

*Klal Yisrael* asks *Hashem* that those who besiege us with their hate and immorality not be allowed to get away with their lies. The enemies of *Hashem* have chosen His Nation, the Jews, to be the target of their jealousy. Their attacks on us are against *Hashem*, and the only answer to this is *Hashem's* powerful strength.

The "nations" gather about us with hate for our land, and contempt of our values. We are encircled by this noise of wickedness and all that remains is our naked bleeding heart. Our vulnerability has made our very being one shtick prayer to *Hashem*, and it is this *tefila* that will be answered; it always has been.

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