

CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED TWELVE

by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin

Let me share a piece of "*Rubinmobelia*" with you. When I was a youngster there was a fad where people were building their own radios. These contraptions came in kits and "all you had to do" was follow the instructions to create your very own receiver. Now, I accept that this was not the particular norm for the very *heimishe* homes in Brooklyn, but I went to school in Queens and we had an overzealous science teacher who thought this would be a great way to get "his *fruma*" students to understand the world. So came the day, and a half dozen of us went home with these kits.

That night, I immediately did what all Jewish kids do when faced with such a task, I called my father *z"l* in to help. My father was very handy (this means he could change a light bulb without calling a gentile neighbor), and so I had visions of getting a high mark for my project with a minimum amount of exertion. The instructions told us that we were meant to attach different tubes and diodes to create the circuit. The thing was that each such piece of gear was a different color, and the instructions guided you by explaining which color to match to what.

This sounds very simple except for one small matter; both my father and I were color blind! I cannot tell blue from purple, green from brown, pink from white, and a whole raft of shades in between. This problem is hereditary, and if anything my father was even worse. (Just for your information, none of my children have received this particular gift from me) We were a sturdy clan, not given to giving up without a fight. My father called in my sister; she would be the color maven (my mother *a"h* didn't want any part in this boys' club disaster).

For two nights we sat huddled together, attaching wires by color as per the *psak* of my sister. Finally the day arrived and it was time to plug the new radio into the electrical socket. Everyone was called into the room; the Rubins were going on air. Father plugged in the set, I turned the new dial ... silence ... we stared at the box ... total silence, and then ... smoke. The radio promptly caught fire, and the entire enterprise melted in front of our very eyes!

It was then that we realized that despite all odds, my sister was color blind as well. I share this tale of woe with you for a reason, and that is to illustrate that for anything to work right, one must follow the instructions. There are many who come home with new electrical goods and promptly throw the instructions out; they do so at their own peril, because they will put the kit together and always find odd bits and pieces left out. You may think the thing will work, but sooner or later it will fail. Dear friend, if you want to get something right, you have to follow the manufacturer's instructions. This is the case in every phase of life, to get it right you have to follow the directions. For the Torah Yid

there is but one set of such guidelines, the Torah, and without them you will burn out, you will melt into a glob of uselessness.

The previous *kapitel* ended with: *Reishis Chachma Yiras Hashem*, "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of *Hashem*. " When the *Yidden* stood at Mount Sinai we are told that the entire mountain hovered over them. They were told - accept the Torah or this mountain will fall upon you! *Gutte Yidden* explain that what is meant here is that the Jews were being told a simple fact of life. If you accept this Torah, all will be well, and the world will have its purpose. However, if you decide not to, then the mountains will tumble - all will cease to exist, for the world cannot go on without *Hashem's* children fulfilling His will.

And when we do follow those sweet instructions, what then?

Ashrei Ish Yarei Es Hashem ... "Praiseworthy is the man who fears *Hashem*, who greatly desires His commandments."

It is for such a man that this whole world was created. The more such a man cleaves to *Hashem*, the more he realizes his fear of Him. This leads to wanting to do more and more for His Glory.

Gibor Ba'aretz Yihey ... "Mighty in the land will his offspring be, a generation of the upright who shall be blessed."

There have been moments in our history when we lost sight of all this. Our fear, our attachment slackened, and we became lost. The nations have no regard for ersatz Jews, Jews who have no real attachment to their holiness. We think we can become loved by the world if we but dispense with our differences in faith. The truth is clear, we are mighty and upright when we stay true to our calling, and only then will we be blessed .

Zarach Bachoshech Ohr ... "Even in the darkness a light shines for the upright; He is compassionate, merciful, and righteous."

The world may well be in darkness, their enjoyment is superficial and transient. But when a *Yid* caresses his *tzitzis*, when a *Yiddishe* mother says a blessing with her child, there is light and gentle compassion. The greatest mercy *Hashem* has given us is the support a Torah life holds for us despite the vacuous thinking of those who surround us.

Mishemu'a Ra Lo Yira ... "Of evil tidings he will have no fear; his heart is firm, confident in *Hashem*."

When you think as a Jew, with the awe of *Hashem* resting in your heart, then there is no room for anything else. You are solid in your knowledge of what is first in your life, and everything else is seen in a different light.

Rasha Yir'eh Vecha'as ... "The wicked man shall see and be angered, he will gnash his teeth and melt away, the ambition of the wicked will perish."

As I said before, a life led without the proper instructions will end in nothingness. The kit will not work, the set will melt away, and the fool will be left gnashing his teeth. They may well be angry, but it will be their own folly that they will despise. The greatest idiocy of all is the living of a life without the focus of *Hashem* in one's heart. It's just such a sad waste, sad and meaningless.

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