

# CHAPTER ONE HUNDRED FORTY-NINE

by Rabbi Yitzchok Rubin

I read in Pirkei Avos that I am now considered to have reached maturity, so perhaps I may be allowed to indulge in a bit of nostalgia. It seems that today's young people speak an entirely different language from the way we spoke when we were young. I firmly believe that they think in uniquely different ways today and have a whole world of different viewpoints. I do not say this to be awkward or to besmirch anyone; I only state a fact.

What was on the agenda when I was young is no longer even considered; there are new problems that cry out for new answers. At first I thought this view was mine alone and that it was the result of my being prone to being a bit wistful. But I once mentioned this to colleagues of my age and found that they, too, felt this way.

I am reminded of the time I was standing on line waiting to enter the private office of a renowned sage. I had come to discuss a matter related to child rearing, and I waited with about a hundred other Yidden for my turn. At the door stood a venerable gabbai who had held this position for forty-odd years. He had seen generations of Yidden standing at this door and had watched the changes that time had wrought. Behind me stood an old-timer, a Yiddel of the old school, who had been a chassid in Poland. This older man looked at the younger folk waiting, and then turned to the gabbai with a bemused smile, as if to say, Look at these youngsters. They, too, are chassidim. The gabbai shrugged and sighed, "Listen, my friend, this is what they send us these days..."

Yes, time stands still for no one, and the face and mind of each generation is different.

There will be those who will argue that for the Torah Jew everything should be the same and that true devotion precludes any encroachment from outside forces. This is true to an extent; nevertheless, there are nuances of life that seep in, and to pretend otherwise would be counterproductive. No one can say that an *Amerikaner bachur* from our current generation is no different from the young men who lived in Poland before the war. What we have today isn't what we had yesterday. I do not say that it is better or worse; it's just different. And to this different generation, new ways must be sought, new approaches made with new understandings. If not, we could lose everything we have worked so hard to obtain.

All this is nothing new. It has always been so. Reading sefarim from past generations will show you that many of the problems they had were the same, yet the way these problems present themselves changes with each generation's circumstances. One can pick up a *Chovas Hatalmidim*

written by the Piaseczner Rebbe, zy"a, and read how he cried out that the children of his generation needed a different approach from those who had been raised a generation earlier. Should we despair? Never, for this was all foreseen and addressed.

King David shows us this in the penultimate kapitel of his huge and all-inclusive work.

*Halleluyah! Sing a new song to Hashem. May His praise be given in a congregation of the pious.* Every generation has a new song to sing to Hashem. Yet David tells us that each new song will be seen as praise and will always be sung by a congregation of pious Yidden. We shouldn't believe that the new generation isn't pious. True, the previous generations were giants of the spirit, and we pale in comparison. But Hashem knows each generation and its trials, and in His eyes we will always have pious souls. Therefore, we should sing, and we should not fear if the niggun seems to be a new one.

*May Yisrael rejoice in their Maker; may the people of Zion be gladdened with their King.* Parents fear for their children. We do so much for them, yet if we are honest, we must admit that we don't really understand all that they are living through. Their trials are not those we experienced or so we think. Yet the psalmist tells us that they, too, will rejoice in their Maker.

The Bobover Rebbe, Reb Shloime, zy"a, once spoke to a group of Holocaust survivors in Eretz Yisrael. This was in the early sixties, and the community of survivors was first getting its bearings. He reminded those Yidden of their parents, of how their mothers would cry when they kindled the Friday night candles: "*Ribbono shel Olam*, let my children always be Yidden..." At these words everyone in the audience started sobbing. He was reminding them that although the world they were now in was light-years away from where they were born, their goals should be the same as those of their parents.

Yes, their children would grow up in that new world, with new sights and sounds, yet they, too, would be connected with what came before them. This is the song that David gave us; it is the psalm of hope.

*They should praise His name with a flute; they should play for Him on a drum and a harp.* The future generations will dance and sing their praises to Hashem, just as those before them did. Their dances and songs may not be the same, but they will be focused on the same Father in Heaven.

*Hashem desires His nation; He glorifies the humble with salvation.* This is an enormous concept. Hashem desires us, and so, even as the generations seem threatened with new winds of change, Hashem will glorify His children with Divine deliverance. We may feel humbled when placed beside those who never had to face the forces arrayed against us, yet it is the will of Hashem that we be saved.

*May the pious be exuberant for having the honor of singing on [even] after they are laid to rest.* The *frume Yiddel* will always rejoice in Hashem. He feels safe in his joy, knowing that Hashem is with him even in his private domain.

*The accolades of God are in their throats, while double-edged swords are in their hands.* Each generation will sing praises to Hashem from deep within their hearts and souls. This creates a double-edged sword, warding off enemies from without and depression from within.

These verses are amazing to me. David has sung to us and given us so much in the way of expressing our needs and desires. Here, in these last few pages of his monumental work, he looks to the future and gives hope and, yes, credibility, to what will be new and likely challenging times.

---

Text Copyright © 2011 by **Torah.org**. You can contact the author at [Rabbi@theinformalproject.com](mailto:Rabbi@theinformalproject.com).