

20 years ago this evening, on 28 'BIN of '5772, our good friends in '121 '78 gave us a send off party in the Shul's ~~the~~ social hall, as we prepared for our Aliyah a few days later.

20 years of living in the Holy Land does not make us experts on what is going on there. But coming as it does after a few years in '121 '78 and a few more years in my parents' home in Fredericton, I hope you will permit me to share with you an observation or two on the Israeli scene as my dear wife Barbara and I see it.

Before proceeding, allow me to relay the warm wishes of my in-laws Mr. & Mrs. ^{Evly} Segan, to all of you - and they are more than eager to be host to you in their home in Beer-Sheva as indeed are we. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my father-in-law as it is thru his wish that I became a member of this distinguished club. And a warm thank you to the Rabbi and Mr. Howie Wolfe who have consented to have me speak a few ~~of~~ words today.

Just over 20 years ago, the present Chief Rabbi of Israel, HaRav Ian, came to America for the first time. He was sitting in Shul Shabbos morning when the Rabbi of the Shul introduced him and called on him to speak. Just before ^{he} got up, the gentleman sitting behind him tapped him on the shoulder and said to Rav Ian - I knew from the way you looked and how you carried yourself that you must be someone important from Israel. But what I didn't know is what did you come to collect for?

Rav Ian turned to him with a beam in his eye and said - I didn't come to collect for. I came to collect the Jewish soul.

It is indeed about the Jewish soul that I have asked to speak to you today. The Jewish people - both in Israel and here in the

Dispersion are searching for their soul - for their true Jewish identity.

The story is told of a nomadic community in the middle of the desert whose custom it was to go to the distant wells each morning, fill up their ~~cisterns~~ ^{skins} with water and schlep them on the backs of their donkeys to the village for their daily use. This was the procedure they followed day after day, year after year, generation after generation. One day, a delegation of community notables journeyed to the big city, and their eyes took in many wonders of modern civilisation. One of these was a little invention called the water tap. They were astonished to see that there wasn't a home or a building in the city that did not have a tap - and all they had to do was turn it on, and out came clean, delicious, cool running water. When they realised that this was a dream come true - no more schlepping with the mules - they ~~ordered~~ ^{purchased} dozens of these water taps and, with great excitement, headed back to their village.

The chief of the tribe gathered everyone together for a big general meeting - ~~tribe~~ ^{tribe} and reported to the members of all that they had seen in the big metropolis. The water tap, of course, received the most attention, and, after explaining to everyone how ~~it~~ it worked & how to install it, each ~~tribe~~ ^{person} took one home to his tent and stuck the water tap into the wall. ~~everyone~~ ^{everyone} proceeded

The magic moment arrived and they ~~were~~ all ~~ordered~~ ^{ordered} to turn on their taps. I have no need to tell you how shocked and upset they were when they saw that --- nothing happened. NOT a single drop of water came out of their taps.

The chief ~~immediately~~ makes contact with the big "nunche" - expert - in the city to come and explain to them what is wrong with their taps.

Well, the expert comes - sees for himself what the situation is,

and bursts out laughing.

The tap, he explains, is just the end of a long pipe connecting you to the source of water and the pump which pumps it thru the pipe.

The fathers of modern political Zionism, ~~about 120 years ago~~, thought that you can build a Jewish state by sticking a tap in the wall. No need to be connected, they thought. Now, more than 100 years down the road, we - the Jewish people - are slowly waking up to the realization that if we don't look up again to the water - in our case, the Torah - our source of life - we are going to look as silly and dried out as those nomads in the desert.

We started on 1738 y'le ^{once more} ~~again~~ to say the prayer:
 פּ.ר.י.ן אֲנִי הָיִתִּי אֶתְּנֶה לְךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

Normally, we understand that to mean - Please God, cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall.

But there are other interpretations - one which I would like to share with you is the following:

אֶתְּנֶה לְךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ - bring back the spirit of life that is truly that ~~it~~ which infuses the Jewish people, and
 פּ.ר.י.ן אֲנִי הָיִתִּי - take away the ~~prayer~~ - the materialism - the materialism that so overwhelmingly pervades Jewish Society today.
 in Dvinsk

The 1738 y'le, who lived into the 20th century, was not considered a modern Zionist. but yet everytime a new community was established in what was then Palestine, he would get very excited. His followers were perplexed at ~~his~~ this behaviour, and one day asked him to explain. Everyone knows, they told him that many of those reviving the Jewish community in the Holy Land

Are סוֹסְרָיִט - Jews who have forsaken Torah values and everything it stands for. How can you be glad & happy at such a phenomenon?

The answer explained the סוֹסְרָיִט Jew, can be found in the prayer ל'יג which, unfortunately, I have just stumbled saying for my father י'י. The first two words, he said, are לְבָרְכֶךָ לְשַׁבְּחֶךָ - normally translated as: "May it be magnified and sanctified." But it may also be translated, more simply, as: It will grow large and it will grow holy.

This is the key, said the סוֹסְרָיִט Jew - In the natural course of things ~~the~~ growth must come first - the body must grow become robust. But equally true is that growth for its own sake is not healthy. The body must be infused with spirit וְרוּחַ וְיָדָה וְנָתַן - and God filled his nostrils - referring to Adam Hakishon - with a living soul. Says the סוֹסְרָיִט Jew - the one follows the other as surely as day follows night. We must, then, be glad as we see Israel and the Jewish community growing. But we must be equally concerned that the soul gets connected - that the body is filled with a spirit - that that water tap doesn't just sit in the wall of the Jewish nation but gets connected with its source, with the Holy Torah - our fountain of life. ⇒ לְבָרְכֶךָ לְשַׁבְּחֶךָ

וְיָדָה וְנָתַן - love your neighbor as yourself. But how can you love your neighbour if you don't love yourself first? If you don't cherish that Jewish soul? If you don't try and help the nation of Jews become a Jewish nation?

Two weeks ago I was prevented from doing וְיָדָה when I was an עוֹבֵד - יְהוָה יְהוָה. It is a situation I have never been in since becoming וְיָדָה - וְיָדָה and it heightened my awareness and joy at the privilege of being able & permitted to carry out י'י's will. There is a וְיָדָה out there awaiting to be fulfilled - it is called

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Helping the Jewish people find its soul - none of us are prevented from performing this mitzvah - and none of us are exempt from doing so.

We will find it - we will get turned on to Yiddishkeit again - this is what will save the Jewish nation, this is what will re-constitute the Jewish nation.

How am I so sure? Not just from the reassuring words of ^{לבי} ^{לבי} ^{לבי}, there is a more concrete way each of you can ^{feel} this faith [in a concrete way].

Tonight on ^{אל} ^{אל} ^{אל}, as you light the ^{אל} ^{אל} ^{אל} candle, take a look at the match in the first few seconds after you light it. The head of the match flows with flame, immediately behind the flame - on the matchstick - is a tiny drop of water. You can only see it for 3 or 4 seconds. This drop of water that comes on the heel of the flame is a living real proof right here, right now that the ^{לבי} ^{לבי} ^{לבי} - the ~~finding~~ ^{re-connection} of the Jewish people to its Jewish soul will follow the ^{אל} ^{אל} ^{אל} - the ^{physical} ^{rebirth} of the nation - as surely as day follows night, as water follows the fire.

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