



FROM THE DESK OF MOSHE HAUER ZT"L

**ORTHODOX
UNION**
Enhancing Jewish Life



Rabbi Moshe Hauer's zt"l divrei Torah were enthusiastically read each week by tens of thousands of readers of Torah Tidbits. His sudden death this past *Shemini Atzeret* came as a shock to our community and to the Jewish world at large. In the coming weeks and months we will honor Rabbi Hauer's memory by publishing some of his most compelling and thought-provoking divrei Torah. May the study of his exquisite words of Torah be a source of *chizuk* and bring blessing to his memory.

Rebuilding After Destruction

The following message was written two years ago in the immediate aftermath of October 7th. In this piece, he describes the people of Israel running themselves ragged caring for their fellow Jew – a description that would be most fitting of himself. While a lot has changed since then, Rabbi Hauer zt"l's message still resonates deeply and is a charge to us all.

I am writing to you today from Yerushalayim, where since arriving on Wednesday evening and spending time with people it has been so apparent that Israel today is filled with pain and love, regret and determination, faith and hope.

The pain could be seen in the family members at a double shiva house who gathered to see a newly discovered flash of security camera footage providing a barely recognizable view of their loved ones rushing into harm's way in their determination to save others. It is there in the eyes of the displaced who are struggling with the unspeakable trauma of

the hours they lay in fear during the terrorist attack, their harrowing escape while so many dear to them were lost, and their current state of demoralizing homelessness. It is visible in the "before and after" pictures shared by inspiring but suffering pioneers, builders of beautiful communities that now lie in ruins. And it is palpable in the exhaustion of the parents living in torturous limbo, awaiting news of the fate of their children.

The love is everywhere, as everyone seems to just want to do and to demonstrate care for each other. While the large systems of government and the army understandably struggle to meet a sudden and steep rise in needs of services and supplies, individuals and organizations rush to do anything they can possibly think of to benefit those directly affected. This is also visible in America as the Jewish community's desire to give is totally and beautifully out of control. It is even more out of control here, without any boundaries between communities.

Regret - *charata* - is everywhere, but in

the best spirit of teshuva, it is accompanied by determination, - *kabala al ha'atid*. To the army and intelligence, what happened on Shemini Atzeres was an epic failure that has led those same institutions to a steely-eyed commitment to reclaim their superiority and to defeat Hamas decisively. To many in the broader society, the newfound unity in crisis has crystallized the tragic folly of a year spent on the brink of civil war over internal squabbles, what they see now as little things that they will never allow to divide them again. And to others, observant and non-observant, it has led to a reconsideration of our reliance on our power and strength – *kochi v'otzem yadi* – in place of the Almighty.

Most inspiring is how faith and hope prevail. Our capacity for resilience draws on feeling supported by G-d and man and by living with mission and purpose. These are the strengths of the Jewish people, especially in Israel. No one is running away from their land or even from their border community. They may have to be out of harm's way until the situation is resolved, but they are determined to be back and are confident that they will be. And while confidence can sometimes be unnervingly arrogant, here it seems to draw from a strong sense of destiny, of *netzach Yisrael*.

In considering all this, many have invoked Noah and the destruction of the flood. While there are many angles of comparison, allow me to share one.

While the Torah praises Noah effusively, our Sages read between the lines and were somewhat critical of him, comparing Noah unfavorably to both Avraham and Moshe. They went so far as to blame Noah for the flood, classifying this disaster - using the

words of Yeshayahu (54:6) - as the *mei Noach*, the Waters of Noah (see Zohar I:106a), because he had not worked or prayed to avert it. This stands in contrast to Avraham's response to the impending destruction of Sodom and to Moshe's reaction to Hashem's anger at the Jewish people after the Golden Calf. Noah, by contrast, when told of the impending destruction of the world, simply accepted it and built himself the *teivah*.

But Noah does not remain that way. By the time the flood waters subside, what is left is *ach Noach*, a diminished Noah, coughing and spitting blood (Bereishis 7:23). He had just spent a year worrying about everyone but himself, running himself ragged literally 24/7 to make sure each of the world's animals got what it needed to eat when it needed it.

As the world was to come from Noah, G-d needed him to shift from a focus on himself



OHR TORAH STONE MOURNS
THE UNTIMELY PASSING OF

Rabbi Moshe Hauer zt"l

a man of great integrity, leadership and devotion. His wisdom, Torah knowledge, compassion, and clarity of vision will be missed by Klal Yisrael.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, to the Orthodox Union and our people.

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Brander

PRESIDENT AND ROSH HAYESHIVA

and the entire **Ohr Torah Stone** family

to a focus on others. *Olam chesed yibaneh*. The world is built upon kindness (Tehillim 89:3); it cannot come from someone who is self-centered. But because Noach was pressured into this service by the circumstances of the flood and did not embrace that outward focus willingly, he experienced it in a way that weakened him and made him less of himself, *ach Noach*.

The past two weeks have seen Klal Yisrael running themselves ragged 24/7, not because of anything that threatened them personally but only because they have an unquenchable desire to help others who are struggling and in pain and danger. They – like Noach - are exhausted. But they, as children of Avraham and students of Moshe, are not diminished. Quite the opposite. When Klal Yisrael was activated by the tragedy of Shemini Atzeres, they were waiting as they always are for the opportunity to give and to help. Especially after the experience of this past year of division, that desire to give and to love and to heal was overwhelming. As we have watched this powerful response of giving, we are seeing the Jewish people grow in stature rather than shrink as the kindness of Avraham has granted them his descriptive as well, *ha'adam hagadol ba'anakim*, a giant in humanity.

Worlds have been destroyed, but they will be rebuilt by the powerful drive for kindness, the clear-eyed determination born of regret for all the divisions within us, and by a firm faith and hope in *netzach Yisrael*, the eternal Jewish people.

Evidently, both our father Avraham and our teacher Moshe were unable to take comfort in their own physical and spiritual safety, in their own assurance of a promising future, if others would not share that future.

The pain is overwhelming. There has been so much loss experienced here. There are 50-80 funerals being conducted daily of the more than 1500 killed by the horrific acts of Hamas, while the thousands of wounded face the complexities of life-changing injury, treatment and rehabilitation. Many have experienced clusters of loss, including multiple members of their family, army unit, or community. Thousands live in limbo awaiting news of the fate of their relatives, the 203 captives in the inhuman hands of Hamas. Hundreds have seen the homes and communities they built with love and devotion harmed or destroyed, and hundreds of thousands have become refugees within their country. The events of Shemini Atzeres were unspeakably traumatic to those who experienced them firsthand, as well as to the entire country whose sense of security was upended. While throughout Israel's existence tragic loss has been a part of life, these days it is devastatingly commonplace.

The love is overwhelming. ■


**BROTHERS
MOVING CO.**




THE STRONGEST... THE MOST GENTLE

054-216-0087 • brothersmovingisrael@gmail.com

Dr. Eliezer Rosenblum

NYS Licensed and Board Certified

Chiropractor

Offices in Jerusalem, Ramat Beit Shemesh

052-662-4658