



RABBI 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.

Alone but Not Lonely

Written in the aftermath of October 7th, this piece, like so many others by Rabbi Hauer zt"l, provides hope and direction in a time of despair.

Jews should be feeling quite lonely these days. Antisemitism, an increasingly visible and unsettling feature of American Jewish life since the Tree of Life attack exactly five years ago, has spiked since the brutal Hamas massacre of October 7th. On the Israeli side, we

have shifted from focusing on what seemed to be the growing circle of peace and friendship surrounding the Jewish state to consider instead its enemies poised to attack from all fronts. We fume at the callous and vicious hostility of the United Nations and watch with astonishment as the progressive champions of human rights leading, teaching, and studying in our universities salute and excuse monstrous butchers. And we celebrate any expression of support from American and other political leaders even as we anxiously parse their every phrase to identify possible cracks in that support.

We should feel desperately lonely, but we are not. A Jew is always alone but never lonely. Earlier this week, on a visit to Israel, I began to understand why.

In the wake of the recent horrors, I had the privilege to meet a wide variety of Israelis who had experienced or observed unspeakable tragedy and were bearing it with dignity and grace. It is always both humbling and inspiring to see from up close the kind of *emunah*, deep-rooted faith, that seems to grow bountifully in Israel and is rarely seen elsewhere. It is there in the eyes of people who project a crystal-clear sense of purpose and the faith-based conviction that they are part of the great march forward of

In loving memory of
our daughter and sister

Judy Yellin a"h

יהודית מאשה בת אליעזר ע"ה
on her 31st Yahrtzeit - ט' מרחשון

May the Torah learned
from this issue be in her merit

The Yellin and Weingarten families

the magnificent story of the Jewish people. It derives both from the mystical feeling of G-d's guiding hand and from the mindset of the faithful who choose their path in life consistent with G-d and his Torah.

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for You are with me." "Were my father and mother to abandon me, G-d would take me in." King David was surrounded by frightening enemies and forsaken by erstwhile friends. It did not matter. His faith in God ensured that he was never alone. His Emunah was neither a slogan nor an abstraction. And it is similarly tangible to these understated Jews who viewed their life-changing experiences as a journey G-d was leading them on and they were choosing to take. Instead of feeling lost and abandoned, they have a clear sense of connection and direction.

These humbling Jews are not alone because G-d is with them. But they are also not alone because people are with them.

So much has been said – and enough can never be said – about the incredible outpouring of kindness and caring that is sweeping through the land. We may be attacked by our enemies and abandoned by friends, but the Jewish family is hanging together across oceans and communities. Those who have suffered loss are being embraced by Klal Yisrael.

But the real healing of that loneliness is experienced by giving. A friend told me how his daughter went to a neighborhood market on Erev Shabbat and encountered a woman collecting foodstuffs for the neighborhood poor. She had never seen her doing this before, and it seemed especially odd as people were raising funds and goods for the current causes of the displaced, the bereaved, and the soldiers. She later learned that this woman's son had been taken captive by Hamas. She was in so much

pain that her pain was all she could focus on, leaving her completely wrapped up in herself and very lonely so she chose to go out to the corner market to do something for others who needed it. She was not alone because she cared, she gave, she saw others, and she made them less lonely.

The original Jew, Avraham, was known as an *Ivri*, completely isolated, "the entire world on one side and he on the other." This was not just an individual characteristic of Avraham; it originated what would become the collective fate of his descendants, "the nation that dwells alone." It began the moment G-d chose Avraham, when he instructed him to leave his land, his birthplace, and his father's house, to disconnect from every part of his human support system and follow G-d into the unknown.

Avraham was alone. But was he lonely? How could he be lonely when the Creator Himself would accompany him and show him his path-way forward?! One who walks with G-d is never lonely. And he could not be lonely because everywhere he went, he noticed others and addressed their needs.

We are a nation that dwells alone but does not feel alone. Carried by *emunah* and committed to *chesed*, we will live and move on with G-d before us and with our hearts and hands extended to each other. ■

לעלוי נשמת

Howard Israel z"l
חיים ישראל פינחס
בן משה אהרון א"ה
on his 13th yahrtzeit
12 MarCheshvan

In loving memory
Susan Israel and Family