



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.

Ensuring the United States Remains a Kingdom of Kindness

Written less than a month after October 7th, Rabbi Hauer zt'l gave voice to the shock that we all experienced during those dark weeks, a shock that still reverberates today. But he was not content with pointing fingers. Drawing on the lessons of our parsha, Rabbi Hauer zt"l left us with marching orders to help stem the tide of antisemitism.

There are events and moments that force us to reconsider our fundamental assumptions and relationships. This is true of the

tsunami of antisemitism that has surged in America in the aftermath of the Simchat Torah pogrom.

For decades, the Jewish community has experienced life in the United States virtually free of antisemitism. This was completely in character for a country that sought to create a "great society" that cared for its most vulnerable citizens and was fiercely committed to the protection of the rights of all people to live free from discrimination. It led the great rabbis of America to describe this country as a *malchut shel chessed*, a kingdom of kindness.

In this context, much of our Jewish government advocacy work focused on getting our fair share of that kindness. As taxpayers, we sought government support for our secular education, as a faith community we pursued government partnership in our social programs, and as observant Jews we required

Dedicated L'iluy Nishmat

חיה בת ר' יצחק הכהן ע"ה

Helen Schiffmiller א"ה

whose 7th Yahrtzeit is on כ"ו מרחשון

protection of our religious liberty.

That dynamic has shifted. The schools and the streets of the *malchut shel chessed* do not feel exceptionally kind right now. While our elected officials have been steadfast in their support of Israel and their unequivocal condemnation of Hamas and of antisemitism, they have thus far been unable to curb the antisemitic bile that is exploding from a coalition of the vicious and the confused. The zealous protection of the right of free speech has enabled an environment in universities, schools, and streets, where the hateful are free to intimidate, demonize, and threaten without fear of consequence. Jewish students in the universities have discovered that higher education can be taught without basic values. All of us have been shocked to witness previously unimaginable expressions of Jew-hatred in the streets of the United States. In meeting after meeting in which we join with other Jewish organizational leaders to engage with government officials in pursuit of solutions, genuine tears are shed by officials who recognize the problem but have not yet found the solution. They, as we, feel that there are areas in the land of liberty where things are spiraling out of control, parts of American society where there is neither greatness nor goodness.

This change compels us to shift our own focus from pursuing our fair share of the country's kindness to ensuring that it endures as a kingdom of kindness. Instead

of considering only what our country can do for us, we need to use our presence, our values, and our voice to uplift our country and help it find its way.

In our parsha, we read of Avraham approaching the local authorities for his fair share as a resident and citizen, seeking a simple burial plot for his beloved wife Sarah. He was lobbying the government for something that he needed, but they did not respond to him as someone making a pitch. Avraham's life was defined by giving and generosity to others. They addressed him as *nesi Elokim*, a G-dly prince, a person whose presence in their midst uplifted them and brought out the divine image within themselves. Avraham elevated the society around him in a way that ultimately encouraged and elicited their kindness towards him as well.

That is where we need to be today. Our country needs more from us than we need from it. In our efforts for the foreseeable future, our task is not limited to protecting ourselves or to getting our fair share. We will do our part to uplift our country, to ensure the continuity of America as a truly great society and a kingdom of kindness. ■

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**May the learning from this issue
of Torah Tidbits
be in loving memory of our father,
grandfather, great-grandfather**

Alfred S. Cohen ז"ל
אבא שלום אהרון הכהן ז"ל
on his 17th yearzeit - כ"ד מרחשון

*by his daughters:
Janice Weinreb, Barbara Yasgur,
Benay Devorah Cohen-Nesher
and families*