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We are living in a generation where the breaches in our behavior are greater than the walls which surround us. There are hardly any walls left at all! Not since the days of our forefathers has such a thing occurred. The Jewish nation is currently at such a low ebb, as well as profoundly misled – from inside and from outside – by ignorant people who mean well, and by people whose souls are not from a Jewish source. They bear the responsibility of having brought concepts which entirely uproot the holiness of the Jewish home into the Jewish community.

The basic facets of Jewish life are so distant from the way they are supposed to be. Every person, according to who he is, according to his level, according to his understanding, must try to imagine from where and from whom we descend. We are the children of Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, the children of Sara, Rivka, Rochel, and Leah. How did our first Forefather and Mother, Avraham and Sara, appear? How did Yitzchak and Rivka appear? And how did Yaakov, Rochel and Leah appear? Does our lifestyle resemble theirs in any way?

Let us imagine a very simple thought: If we will merit that Moshiach will come now, and everyone will go out to greet him, will we be proud to do so in the clothing that we are wearing right now? Will the average man and woman, in the manner that they presently appear, be ready to greet Moshiach? And if one thinks that he is ready to greet Moshiach the way he is now, then his mistake is so great that he has entirely forgotten, or perhaps has never really known, how a Jew is supposed to appear.

If Moshiach would want to visit us at home, what would we remove from our homes before the visit and what would we leave there for Moshiach to see?

We live in a generation where the sense of touch is freely used to touch anything anywhere anytime.

I have no doubt that if one of the great rabbis from the previous generations would come and see our generation, he would faint the second he arrived. If the degradation he would be forced to witness would only be manifest by the nations of the world, it would also be a great heartache and disappointment; but the foreign ideas and lifestyle have begun to penetrate within the Jewish nation, and slowly the concepts are becoming more deeply entrenched.

The problems and misguided views of marriage are apparent from the very beginning, usually at the wedding itself. The ceremony, the clothing, the dancing, and everything else related to the wedding generally express a strong element of falsehood with hardly any truth.

The main question, which can change and vary the direction of the Jewish home, is: What does the

soul really want?

Included in this question are other questions: Why marry? Why build a house? And in general, what is the purpose of life? If one's desire and yearning are for Torah, for *kedushah*, for closeness to Hashem – if this is what he is busy with and these are what his thoughts are occupied with, then he will automatically be building a true Jewish home in the path of our ancestors.

While it is true that we are living in a physical world, clothed within a physical body, with financial worries and pre-occupied with raising the children, and so many other distractions, we can still ask: What is the soul yearning for? What is the soul burning towards? What does the soul desire?

The callousness and apathetic attitude people have towards this important subject can be very disturbing. “Wake up!” we want to shout at them. “Why are you sleeping?! We are Jews, holy souls, whose feet stood by Har Sinai, and our desire then was only G-dliness, only Torah, only to do the will of Hashem *Yisborach*. As we heard the Ten Commandments, our soul departed with each commandment. Our desire and lives were solely to live for G-d.

For five minutes every day, it would be good for everyone to remember and recapture the moment when he stood by Mount Sinai, because every Jewish soul stood by Mount Sinai to receive the Torah; both the souls that were already created, and those not born yet. As it is written:[\[2\]](#) “Remember the day that you stood before Hashem in Chorev (by Mount Sinai).”

What were your desires then? What did you want then? How did the Jewish lifestyle appear during that era? And how does it appear today?

One must find time to think about these things every day, to develop deep yearnings within himself for a life rich with spirituality, purity, and holiness. Afterwards, he should consider how distant he is from these goals, and to feel the yearning and pain of the soul.

Although there are many things in life that one cannot control, we can control our ability to desire and yearn for spirituality. The deep yearning and the tears that come together with the yearning are always possible to attain.

It is incredibly difficult in our generation to develop this deep yearning, because the world is running and burning in the opposite direction. But when a person separates himself slightly from This World, and goes to a private place to be alone with his own thoughts, he can contemplate the greatness of his soul and his true yearnings. He can think about the way he appears now, then he will understand the *Mishna* which teaches:[\[3\]](#) “Against your will you were created, and against your will you live”.

When a Jew understands these truths, then if *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* would ask him whether he wants to remain here in This World or if he would prefer to go to *Gan Eden*, he would want to immediately leave this world.

Rosh HaShanah comes, and everyone shouts that they want to live another year. Why do they want another year? Is it so good here? A person can give lip service to the idea that he wants to be able to live another year so he can keep the *mitzvos* and gain merits. But is that the real reason he wants to live? If so, why doesn't he have these thoughts throughout the year? If his intentions are true, then his lot is fortunate.

Why should one want another year of life? It is definitely worth living another year if he can have a year with Torah, a year with the desires to serve Hashem. For such a life, it is definitely worthwhile to request: “Inscribe me in the book of life.” But to live this year like last year and like the year before that, void of spirituality and spiritual desires – what is the purpose for such a life?

One whose emotions are at least slightly alive and not entirely deadened will occasionally cry over the situation of this world today. If he doesn't cry, it is a sign that his emotions are numb. It doesn't mean that he cannot awaken them, only that his emotions are temporarily out of order. One doesn't need for something drastic and terrible to happen in order to cry. The general situation, the overall degradation which is occurring outside our windows and has begun to penetrate within us as well is sufficient reason for any person who has healthy and open emotions, to cry.

Crying over the situation, shouldn't lead us to despair; rather it should generate feelings of hope. The G-d of Israel always exists, and with His help, one can always extract himself, if he desires, from his dire situation.

In relation to our generation it is said: "When one falls to hell, G-d is there".^[4] This verse isn't only referring to the very last generation, moments before the arrival of Moshiach, when it will be too late to do *teshuvah*. It is referring to our generation, when we are still able to do *teshuvah*. It is up to us to change. As it is written^[5] "One goes down to hell, and then rises." We can improve and change and rise above our situation. But in order to extract ourselves from our situation, we have to change the way that we are living our lives.

When starting out to build a Jewish home, one should be asking himself: Why do I want to get married? So that my life will be easier? So that I can bear beautiful children? Why does he need it all? What is the purpose? If his intentions are proper, that he is getting married for the sake of Torah, *mitzvos*, spirituality, and truth then he will succeed in building a true Jewish home.

If, however, his goals are external, to increase his physical gains in life or pleasure-oriented, then he will not succeed in building his home according to the ways of the Torah.

Everyone has free choice, and one can act differently than the lifestyle of this generation. The lifestyle which is prevalent today does not at all reflect the lives of our forefathers. It certainly is not the lifestyle which is advised by the leaders of our generation. Every individual has free choice to change and extract himself from the lifestyle of the generation he finds himself living in, by setting aside time on a daily basis to think about how he should live with truth, and by asking himself: How did we live in the generation that received the Torah on Mount Sinai? How did the Jews live in the generation of the Beis Hamikdash? How am I living now? What can I do to emulate their ways?

A person may be able to excuse his improper lifestyle by saying, "What should I do? This is the generation that I am living in, and I cannot change the trend, etc. etc." I am not certain whether his claim will be accepted in heaven, or whether he will be punished. But one thing is for sure - even if all his excuses will be accepted, he will never attain the true life and lifestyle of the Jewish nation.

If a person desires something real in his life, he must separate himself from the ways of the generation, and live according to the ways of our forefathers. We are not attempting to create new trends that never existed before, G-d forbid. Rather, we are encouraging a return to the ways of our forefathers - to the way that they lived when they were alone, to the way they dressed, how they lived with their families, and how they lived with holiness and with lofty desires and yearnings.

If a person seeks truth, he should separate himself slightly from this world. Once he does this, he will find that he can connect to a more real, more spiritual world. He doesn't have to 'look to the right or to the left' to copy others. He can do what is correct. He doesn't have to be different and a laughing stock before others either, but privately, and within himself, he must change his lifestyle, and connect himself to the life of Torah, to a life of *tefillah* with truth.

He shouldn't pray with his eyes on the clock, rushing to finish the prayers, rather he should make his

tefillah a time when he feels that he is speaking with Hashem, and that he is connecting with his tefillos to a life that is in a higher place than where he is now.

We have to return to a simple Jewish life, a life where a person goes to sleep and he thinks about why he is alive and what his desires are. As it is written: "*Al mishkavi bleilos bikashti es she'avah nafshi*,^[6] On my bed at night I request that which my soul loves..." He remembers for Whom he is yearning. This is what he thinks about, this is what he speaks about with his friends and to his wife and in this manner he trains his children.

His lifestyle is not a burden upon him; on the contrary, he now merits living a true life. The life that we are living now, in our generation, is a lifestyle that creates confusion for people who do not have peace of mind and do not know where to find the truth.

Hashem should help us that we should all be burning with a desire to search for truth, for holiness and purity, to have true yearnings, to live with the true Torah, a true life for the true G-d and to direct all our thoughts, feelings and actions to always be closer and closer to the will of G-d, and to feel a deep attachment to Him. Amen.

^[1] This drasha was delivered in Sfas in in Meor Chayim's main synagogue

^[2] Devorim 4:10

^[3] Pirkei Avos 4:22

^[4] Tehillim 139:8

^[5] Ibid.

^[6] Shir HaShirim 3:1