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ערב ראש חודש ניסן תש"פ

The last time that we were zoche to daven together on Shabbos Kodesh was on Shabbos Parshas Ki Tisa the 18<sup>th</sup> of Adar which was also the yahrzeit of the Chortkover Rebbe Reb Nuchem Mordechai Friedman zt"l. I would like to repeat here what I said over then in his name during kiddush after davening.

Reb Nuchem Mordechai lived in Vienna, and when the Nazis ym"ts entered into Austria in 1938 all the shuls were closed and Yidden were forbidden to gather together for a minyan. Reb Nuchem Mordechai suffered greatly at their hands until he was able to flee to Eretz Yisroel a year later. On his last shabbos in Vienna, which was Parshas Ki Tisa 1939 his chassidim gathered together one last time with great mesiras nefesh, and the Rebbe spoke a few parting words to them, and this is what he said:

Once, on Rosh Hashonoh, the Berditchever Rov was standing with his shofar in hand ready to blow the tekios. The whole shul was waiting patiently but the Berditchever Rov just stood there. Eventually the Rav turned to his kehilla and explained to them. "Outside is sitting a Yid who was never taught how to daven. When he saw us all davening with such fervor, he became very envious, he longed to also daven to Hashem, but he does not know how. He started to cry and pleaded to Hashem; 'Please Hashem, You know all the tefillos and all the words and meanings that go into them. But I don't know how to daven. All I know is how to say the Aleph Beis. I will say all the letters of the Aleph Beis and You Hashem will form the letters into the correct order to make the right meanings.'

"Now", explained the Berditchever Rov, "Hashem is busy forming all the letters into words and therefore we have to wait!"

"The Chortkover Rebbe wanted to comfort his chasidim that even although they could no longer gather together and daven in the way they used to, despite this they should be

mechazeik themselves that at least Hashem would accept their saying Aleph Beis and convert them into pure tefillos on their behalf.

Boruch Hashem, we are not faced with the terrible situation and suffering that took place during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, but nevertheless we are also facing great and difficult challenges the likes of which we have never experienced, the very fabric of our communal and social life has come to a total halt and all shuls, schools and yeshivos closed. Peoples jobs are also at great risk and no one knows when and how this is going to end.

Despite this, we have to be mechzeik ourselves that although we are unable to learn and daven in the same way as we normally do with a minyan and we are missing the *koach harabim*, Hashem Yisborach knows how to join and link up all the tefillos of Yidden throughout the world and our Alef Beis will all join together in one big pure tefillo as it is written (תהלים נא) "לב נשבר ונרכה ונרכה אלקים לא תבוזה" Hashem does not reject the tefillos that come from a broken and humble heart.

When I spoke yesterday with the Boyaner Rebbe shlita he told me that this concept is also alluded to in the small alef at the beginning of Sefer Vayikra "ויקרא אל משה" in which we learn the halochos of the korbonos. The Korbonos bring kapporah to Klall Yisroel and the start and the introduction to korbonos is the small alef זעירא when one holds himself small and humble, this is what finds favour in Hashem eyes and is a kapporah.

The Boyanner Rebbe shlita also added another devar chizuk. The gemara tells us (Brochos 6:) that any person who comes regularly to shul, and then one day he suddenly doesn't turn up, Hashem enquires why this person didn't come and whats the reason for his absence. If it was due to a dvar mitzva that prevented him from coming Hashem grants the person a special brocha that he should have hatzlocha and he should go from darkness to light. Said the Rebbe shlita, now that we are unable to go to shul because of the mitzva of guarding our health, Hashem enquires after the welfare of every Yid in Klall Yisroel that he should go from darkness to light.

May we all be zoche in these days to see the fulfillment of the possuk (מיכה ז)

"כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות" בב"א.

ידידכם ישראל פרידמן

