

The following story, brought down in the sefer חיים שיש בהם for the ימים נוראים, was said over by the famous מגיד R' Sholom Schwadron, which he heard from one of the people who learned in Radin as a youth.

Every Friday night between קבלת שבת and מעריב, the חפץ חיים had a מנהג to say a שיחה, to give a דרשה to whoever was interested. Usually a number of the תלמידים of the ישיבה would come to listen. One time after the דרשה, the חפץ חיים said, "I have a tremendous יסוד and a tremendous סוד. I have something that's quite important, which is a secret, and I would like to reveal it to you. However, I cannot give it to you now in a regular, in a regular shmooze. If anyone's interested to hear it, you have to come back tonight at 3:00 in the morning, and I will tell you the secret."

Once the word came out that the חפץ חיים had a secret which he wants to reveal to the people and specifically at 3:00 in the morning, the word went out like wildfire and all of a sudden everybody wanted to come. The whole town of Radin wanted to come, the entire סביבה wanted to come. People didn't sleep that whole night waiting to hear what the רבי was going to say to them. 3:00 came, and the house of the חפץ חיים was packed. The yard outside was packed. Each and every person was sitting there quietly, waiting to hear the secret of the חפץ חיים.

The חפץ חיים began to speak: "אֱלֹהֵי נֶשְׁמָה שְׁנָתָה בִּי טְהוּרָה הִיא." He stopped, translated each word into Yiddish, and then continued: "וְאַתָּה עֲתִיד לְטָלָה מִמֶּנִּי וְלַהֲחִיזָרָהּ בִּי וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְרָה בְּקֶרְבִּי וְאַתָּה עֲתִיד לְטָלָה מִמֶּנִּי." He repeated two words בִּי וְלַהֲחִיזָרָהּ. And he repeated it. He emphasized those two words, בִּי וְלַהֲחִיזָרָהּ. Every person was waiting breathlessly to hear what words were going to come out from this תפילה, which we all say each and every day. Each and every person knows this; we could say it by heart. What's the חידוש? What could the חפץ חיים possibly mean by repeating the words בִּי וְלַהֲחִיזָרָהּ? After a small pause, the חפץ חיים continued and said over his secret. "It doesn't say וְאַתָּה עֲתִיד לְטָלָה מִמֶּנִּי. It doesn't say here that you can take my נשמה away and in the future you'll give it you'll give me back a נשמה. It says בִּי וְלַהֲחִיזָרָהּ." and he now said it emphasizing the מפיך ה. "That נשמה that you Hashem took out from me at the end of my days, that is the one that you're going to give back to me לעתיד לבוא, in exactly the same מצב, in exactly the same condition, with exactly the same characteristics that it had when you took it from me. A נשמה מלוכלכת, חס ושלום, a נשמה טהורה will come back טהורה. A נשמה טהורה will come back in exactly the same way, torn up, torn up and brought back in a very poor condition."

"Oy oy oy", he cried out, "וְלַהֲחִיזָרָהּ!" מפיך ה. The way you took it from me, that's what you're going to give me back. חס ושלום, a נשמה that's שמוציג? A נשמה that's torn? We all are waiting for תחיית המתים. We have to remember that that נשמה that הוא הקדוש ברוך הוא takes away from us in עולם הזה is the one we're going to get back. "Oy oy, what kind of embarrassment will be? We're all going to get up at תחיית המתים. All of them will come back to life with their glorious, shining, brilliant נשמות with all their זכותים and טהרה. And I'm going to come back with my נשמה שמוציקע בִּי?" וְלַהֲחִיזָרָהּ, he repeated it over and over again. He repeated it and emphasized it, "That נשמה that they're taking from us, that's the נשמה that we're getting back." He fell silent after these words.

After a moment, he said "This סוד, which was said at 3:00 in the morning to wake up the people, how beautiful this is for every day of the year. Certainly at ראש השנה time. Certainly at the onset of ימים נוראים, when we need tremendous דשמיא. We have the power with הקדוש ברוך הוא's help to do tremendous things. We can cleanse our נשמות. We can make them טהור from all of the שמוציקייט, from all of the פגמים, from all of the בלאטלאך, and to clean it up and be able to stand before הקדוש ברוך הוא with a טהורה, and that's the kind of נשמה that we want to get back when we come back to עולם הזה."



It's within our grasp to take these days and to do our cleanup job, and not to waste them, to realize what opportunity we have. If we would stop and think about it that little תפילה that we rattle off every day because we're in a hurry to get to ברכות, the חפץ חיים is teaching us a tremendous, געוואלדיקע lesson. Let's wake up and do the right thing. A כתיבה וחתימה טובה to each and everybody. בעזרת השם, we should get together for a good year, a year of טובה, of ברכה, of פרנסה, of געזונט, געזונט, געזונט. We should hear only בשורות טובות.

