

Fascinating INSIGHTS

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Unexpected Excitement

Many people expect situations to turn out a certain way and therefore may not appreciate the outcome. The father of a newborn baby girl once asked R' Shach if he should make a Kidush. R' Shach's reply was if you finally had a baby after 8 years of waiting, you surely would make a Kidush. So now that Hashem saved you from all that pain, shouldn't you make a Kidush?!

Here is a story contrary to the one just mentioned. A person that went to visit an elderly man in a nursing home asked the man how he feels when he wakes up in the morning. The old man replied, "surprised!" The visitor took that as a life lesson: Don't take life for granted.¹

A Baal Teshuva named Dov who once worked in an orphanage in Sri Lanka observed that the orphans there were happier than most of his friends back in England because they appreciated every little thing. His friends constantly felt they needed a better car, bigger house and the like. They thought that the more you have, the happier you'll be. These orphans generally would share one pencil for every five children. One time, Dov bought each child a pencil. The feeling each child had was indescribable, as they each felt they were handed an enormous sum of money!

¹ There is an expression, "Life is full of 'Give and Take': Give thanks and Take nothing for granted!"

In late March 2020, just before Pesach, R' Boruch Rabinowitz related what two of his sons asked during the onset of the coronavirus: What would *zaide*—R' Akiva Eiger Schlusel² (1927-2011)—say about what we are living through (the coronavirus where tens of thousands died and hundreds of thousands were infected) such as the closing of schools, shuls, stores and staying in our homes? R' Rabinowitz's wife contemplated and said this is what her father would say: You are restricted where to go and how many people could congregate but you can stay at home and be in your own bed. No bunker, ghetto or sleeping with animals in a barn. You can go to sleep tonight and expect yourself and your family to be in the same place in the morning. In regards to food: You have enough food in your homes for weeks to survive. You have a Costco! You don't have to ration a few grains of barley per person daily. You have water. I can't believe it! Fresh water without limit and you don't have to boil it first. You go into a bathroom and flush and don't need to use a pail in a corner with other people around. You can go outside to get food and there is food to be gotten. You can go outside to get food without fear of being shot if you're discovered. You can take a shower or bath with soap and shampoo along with warm water. You have Tallis and Tefillin and you can Daven as long and as loud as you want without having to be afraid of being discovered by the Nazis who would shoot you. You can gather on your own porches and sing Kabbalas Shabbos. You can have a Shabbos Seuda with real chicken soup and not a little salt and water leaving the rest to the imagination. Real fresh fish on Shabbos! Chulent! Challa: Soft and chewy bread and not hard moldy coarse bread. You can get more than one slice in a day without needing to hide it from other people looking to steal every extra morsel... Heat: You can feel your fingers and toes when you wake up each morning. You have air conditioning in your homes and you therefore don't suffer from the heat and the stench. You have shoes without holes and more than one pair! You have Sefarim to learn from, and all types of Sefarim so that you can be locked up for weeks and months and you won't die of boredom. You have access to Shiurim via the internet, phone³ and computer. You have access to the outside world and at least know there is an outside world. You can know what's happening out there. You can be in touch with family and check in to see how they are doing and never think that you are from the last ones alive. If you need medicine, you can get them from a pharmacy. You plan on making a seder with real wine and Matza and you have a choice of Matza—Regular, whole wheat, spelt and oat. You have enough *kzaisim* for whatever Shiur you desire—Chazon Ish, R' Chaim Naeh—and enough for each person. You have Maror prechecked and enough for each person. You

² His grandfather, R' Dovid Schlusel was the Rosh Av Beis Din of the Minchas Elazar's Beis Din in Munkatch before the Holocaust.

³ The first phone book came to be in February 1878 and it was nothing other than a sheet of cardboard with 50 names of those who had a telephone.

