

March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## Running out of Fuel

Shalom from Israel!

I may just be rambling, but I have some things I've been pondering in my heart lately that I would like to put down on paper (electronically that is) and share with you, in hopes that, perhaps these ramblings may help someone else as well.

Today, the village where I live on the top of a mountain in Israel was shrouded in a thick, deep fog. You couldn't really see a thing! As I was waiting with Avi at the bus stop, we couldn't even see the school bus approaching – all we could see were its headlights.

Sometimes it feels like we're walking around in a fog. I think they even have a term for it now – “brain fog.” But really, in today's complex and speed-driven world, the sheer mass of information overload and endless choices and demands of daily life can leave us feeling like we are trapped in a thick fog of confusion. We peer intently through the heavy mist, but cannot quite discern the next step to take, even if it's right there in front of our face. Have you ever felt like this?

It seems to me that our only hope to get through the fog is to keep watching and waiting for the headlights – that which will be a lamp at our feet and a light to our path. Yeshua said “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but in the light of life.” (John 8:12)

Some of us are not necessarily walking in pitch black darkness but more of a grayish misty fog. For my life and for yours, may the true Light guide our paths into truth, clarity, wisdom and righteousness.

In my last e-mail, I wrote to you about running out of fuel to heat the house and how it got me thinking about the parable of the ten virgins, which I had just written about in the parashah (Tetzaveh) with regards to the anointing oil. I asked the Lord how I may be walking in foolishness? We have to be careful what we ask the Lord, because He is so faithful to give us an answer to our questions.

And just in case I hadn't quite got the point about running out of fuel, when I lit the burner on my gas stove, guess what happened? That's right – nothing. No more gas left in the tank to light the stove. I wasn't worried, though, because we have two gas tanks outside the house – one to use and one for reserve. We just switch to the reserve tank when the first one is used up. But for some reason, even the reserve tank was also empty. Oye vey!



So we sat. No fuel for heat. No fuel to cook. Outside was a storm complete with hail and snow! I could see my breath *inside* the house and it is the first time I have actually heard a dog's teeth chatter! 😊 And I had to admit that these things happened because I didn't make sure I had enough fuel on hand.

I wonder if sometimes we keep driving ourselves beyond our limits, running on reserve energy – that 'second wind'. This may be acceptable occasionally, but what about when we use caffeine, stimulants, and sheer will power to push ourselves even when we desperately need to slow down and be renewed.

The Good Shepherd promises to **makes us lie down in green pastures; to lead us beside quiet waters, and to refresh our soul** (Psalm 23). He will bring refreshing and restoration, but sometimes He has to make us lie down first.

When I woke up on Shabbat morning, I simply couldn't move. It was like nothing in my body wanted to function. I have become accustomed to living with chronic pain, fatigue, and inflammation, but this was beyond anything I had experienced. It was a total shut down – a body gone on strike.

The day prior had been very stressful, emotionally and physically, but then not really so different from many other days. I wrote in my journal, *"It feels like my fuel has just completely run out."* I prayed, "God I need a miracle!"

As part of my devotional time that morning, I read a chapter out of a Christian author, Dr. James B. Richards' book, the anatomy of a miracle. In this chapter, he wrote about living according to the laws of harmony and the consequences of breaking those natural laws upon which God created the universe.

I was particularly touched by what Dr. Richards wrote about in this chapter about living in harmony. In the Old Testament, even the land needed a rest and the people were forbidden to plant or harvest on the land every seven years. As human beings, we are also commanded by our Creator to take one full day of rest out of every seven and to observe the Sabbath.

I will quote some of Dr. Richard's writing, since he says it a lot better than how I'm trying to explain it.

*"Since we don't get energy from our much needed restful nourishment, we have chronic fatigue, heart disease and a host of other diseases that come from pushing our bodies into extreme acidic inflammation...."*

*"If we refuse to harmonize, we exhaust our energy. When we can't push ourselves any further, we collapse into the total inability to function...It is not a judgment from an angry God...It is what happens when our force runs out..."*

What I like about Dr. Richards' writing, is that he not only explains the problem so accurately, he also gives us the God prescription for healing.

*"An innumerable host of modern diseases simply would disappear if we only took more vacations, relaxed more often and learned how to play."*

How does this relate to Yeshua's parable of the five wise and five foolish virgins? I had always interpreted this parable in a spiritual sense – that I must stay filled with enough 'anointing'. This still holds true, but perhaps there is another level of interpretation. Through these recent experiences I have had with running out of fuel, I am seeing this parable in a new way.

I feel the Lord is warning me about the way I have been living, pushing my body beyond its limits on a continual basis, allowing myself to get stressed and upset over little things, refusing to relax or have fun or play because of all the work and pressing demands of my life. This is just plain foolish! And if I continue to run off reserve fumes, this too will one day run out, just like the gas tanks for my stove.

If we refuse to heed the Lord's counsel and make some changes to our stressful lifestyle, then just as it happened for the five foolish virgins, one day we may find ourselves out of fuel, out in the cold, and unfortunately by this time it may be too late for anyone to do anything about it.

Dr. Richards goes on to write that we cannot keep repeating our same mistakes, which creates the same problems, which requires seeking a supernatural deliverance through miracles. ***"That is the way of the foolish! No! We harmonize our lifestyles with the laws of the miraculous and live an entirely different quality of life."***

As I think about this, I think about my parents. Surely they are not perfect people, but when I look at their lives, I see that they lived according to laws of harmony and wisdom. Today, they are both still alive and in relatively good health, PTL!. My Dad is 82 years old, Baruch Hashem (praise the Name) and still drives his car, does the shopping, travels, cuts his own lawn, gardens and stays active in a number of good works. My Mom will be 80 this coming summer, PTL and still going strong – that faithful helpmeet she has been to my Dad for over 50 years.

I also have this childhood memory of my Dad of sitting back in his recliner every Shabbat afternoon, after coming home from the synagogue and having enjoyed a nice, home cooked meal. He would put on his favorite music (usually opera or classical which we intensely disliked) but nevertheless, he would close his eyes, listen to his music and just relax. In fact, almost every day, he would purposefully take time to consciously relax in his 'easy chair'.

My parents made consistent right choices that have guided them in paths of peace and prosperity. My Dad worked hard in school and chose a profession that would allow him to come home each day at 5:00 P.M. for supper and to be home with his wife and family every weekend. They chose their marriage partner wisely as a godly person from a reputable family who would be faithful and loving and honest.

Together, they cooperated and considered one another, endeavoring to keep the peace in our home. They each worked hard, but they rested every Shabbat. They took vacations as a couple and together as a family – often just relaxing in the summer months at the local pool.

They gave generously to the poor, to charitable causes and to the synagogue where they faithfully attended and participated. Although generous givers, they also saved and invested wisely for the future.

They were stable, living in the same house that they built and where they raised their family for the next 50 years. They often met with family to celebrate life and had a solid social network. They kept their priorities straight. They lived according to wisdom, with balance, goodness, honesty and integrity. And today, in their eighties, they are reaping the benefits of peace, health, and prosperity.

The Torah says this:

**“Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding, for she is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold. She is more precious than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her; those who hold her fast will be blessed.”** (Proverbs 3:13—17)

We may have made some foolish choices, not following the path of wisdom in some areas and are suffering the consequences. But today is a new day. There is yet hope for us. Just as a doctor is not for the healthy, but the sick; Yeshua did not come for the righteous but for sinners. There is yet time to make changes. We can choose to heed the word of our ‘Wonderful counselor’, to slow down and take time to ‘smell the roses’, to see more sunsets, and to take more walks in the park.

We can spend time just hanging out with the people we love to strengthen those relationships, and take time to engage in the things we enjoy doing, even if completely non-productive. We can take that vacation we’ve been putting off for a more ‘favorable time’. And we can sit back in our comfy chair, put the earphones on, listen to our favorite music, and just relax.

The inbox will wait and so will the housework. I promise.

Yeshua said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy but **I have come that you may have life and life more abundantly.**” (John 10:10)

### **L’CHAIM (TO LIFE)!**

Shalom and Blessings from Zion,

Love Hannah

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Hannah in her winter parka in the snow in Israel

