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Lag B'Omer

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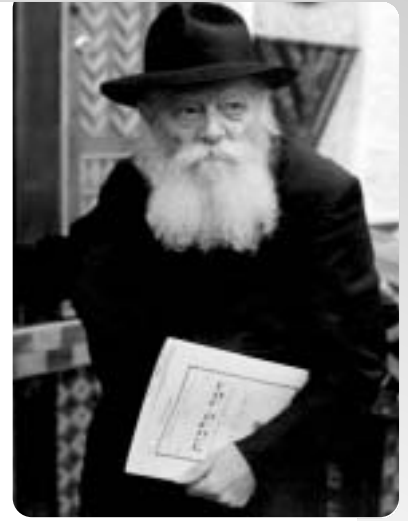
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EACH JEW MUST BECOME A LEADER

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS B'HAR; 15TH DAY OF IYAR, 5749

1. Our Sages declared: "Whoever works Erev Shabbos will eat on Shabbos." Thus, it follows that this is the time to "eat" — i.e., to internalize — the lessons of Pesach Sheni ("the second Pesach") which, this year, fell on Erev Shabbos.

The Previous Rebbe explained that Pesach Sheni teaches us that "Nothing is ever lost. The situation can always be corrected." Even a person who is "impure" or "far removed" (and even if he willingly brought these conditions upon himself) can correct his status. Regardless of how low one has fallen, there is a possibility for rectification.

Originally, Pesach Sheni was instituted for people who were involved in important spiritual tasks (those who carried Yosef's bier or those who buried Aharon's sons). Their impurity did not reflect a lack, but rather was associated with the fulfillment of G-d's will. Nevertheless, though there was nothing lacking in their service, they desired to attain the further heights which could be reached by offering the Pesach sacrifice. Therefore, they demanded,

81. *In particular, this concept only applies according to the opinion in Sukka 25a,b that the people who approached Moshe*

"Why should we be deprived?" Their demand was accepted in heaven and G-d granted a new mitzvah that enabled our people to bring the Pesach Sheni in all the generations which follow.

On a deeper level, this shows that Pesach Sheni allows one to add to one's service even when one does not feel a lack in the present. When a person sees that it is possible to attain a higher level, the fact he has not attained that level as of yet can be considered an inadequacy that must be corrected.

To explain in depth: The question could be asked: Why didn't the people whose demands brought about the institution of the Pesach Sheni sacrifice approach Moshe earlier? Moshe had given the command to offer the Paschal sacrifice previously and they knew that their state of impurity would prevent them from bringing it. If so, why did they wait until Erev Pesach, the day the Paschal sacrifice was being offered to approach Moshe? Why didn't they clarify their situation as soon as the command to bring a Paschal sacrifice was given?

The reason for their delay can be

were those who had buried a person who had no others to tend to him (Meis Mitzvah) and they had no opportunity to

explained within the context of the concept: "A person who is involved in a mitzvah is free of the obligation to perform other mitzvos." This exemption is granted because all the mitzvos are interrelated and each mitzvah includes all the other mitzvos. Therefore, when one is involved in the fulfillment of one mitzvah it is considered as if he was involved in the performance of all the mitzvos.

Accordingly, since the people^[81] who complained to Moshe about having been denied the opportunity to offer the Paschal sacrifice had been involved in the performance of a mitzvah, there was nothing lacking in their status before the Paschal sacrifice was offered. However, when they considered the future and realized that they could reach a higher level, they viewed their present situation as lacking. Therefore, on Pesach eve, when they saw everyone bringing the sacrifice and appreciated the heights they could reach once they regained ritual purity, they felt an inadequacy that compelled them to approach Moshe with these demands.

This concept is reinforced by the

purify themselves beforehand.

halachic definition of Pesach Sheni as a festival in its own right and not merely a chance to compensate for the failure to offer the first Paschal sacrifice. Thus, it adds a new dimension in Torah, not only for those who were impure, but for the entire Jewish people. Even if one offered the first Paschal sacrifice in a complete manner, Pesach Sheni affords him an opportunity to reach an even higher spiritual rung.

[This is implied by the very name of the holiday. Pesach means “leap” or “jump.” Pesach Sheni is thus, a “second jump,” allowing one to reach even higher peaks than the first.]

Thus, Pesach Sheni contains lessons on two opposite extremes: On one hand, it teaches a person that no matter how low his situation, he can always reach a higher peak. Conversely, it also teaches someone whose work is seemingly complete, without any lack, that he can aspire to a higher level, a level that he must “jump” to reach.

2. The above concepts can also be associated with this week’s Torah portion, Parshas B’Har, and the Torah portion which we will begin to read in the Mincha service which follows, Parshas B’Chukosai. Parshas B’Har begins with the mention of Mount Sinai. Mount Sinai is related to the concept of Torah study as implied by the opening statement in Pirkei Avos: “Moshe received the Torah from Sinai.” It is also related to the service of prayer for our Sages stated: “Sinai, this is a ladder” and also teach “prayer is a ladder.”

Thus, it also shares a connection to the Temple — the place where the

Paschal sacrifice would be offered — for the complete state of both these services is related to the Temple. The ark (where the tablets of the law were kept) is associated with the service of Torah and the altar (for “the prayers were instituted in place of the sacrifices”) with prayer.

These two services allow a person to proceed forward as Parshas B’Chukosai states in its opening verse, “If you will walk in My statutes.” Parshas B’Chukosai also contains

***Each Jew must
become a leader for
all the people with
whom he has contact
and teach them the
importance of ahavas
Yisroel and achdus
Yisroel.***

another lesson. The work chok means “engrave” or “hew out.” In this context, the Rebbeim have explained the difference between letters which are written with ink on parchment and letters which are hewed into stone.

When letters are written on parchment, the letters and the parchment are two different entities and it is possible to separate between them. In contrast, when letters are hewed into stone, the letters are not a separate entity, but rather, part of the

stone itself. Therefore, it is impossible to separate between them.

There is a parallel to this concept in our service of G-d. The letters hewed into the tablets represent the essential connection which a Jew shares with G-d. This connection can never be broken (as obvious from the mesirus nefesh shown by the Jews) for essentially, G-d and the Jews are a single entity.

There are two expressions of this concept. Firstly, “nothing is ever lost,” i.e., because of the essential connection a Jew shares with G-d, regardless of the depths to which an individual has fallen, each Jew can correct his situation. Conversely, since this essential connection associates a Jew with G-d as He is unlimited, each Jew, regardless of how high his level, has the potential to increase his service of G-d. These two expressions are related to the two lessons of Pesach Sheni stated above.

Pesach Sheni is also related to the concepts of ahavas Yisroel and achdus Yisroel. The willingness to provide even those who were unable to bring a sacrifice at the first opportunity shows how important each individual is and how much love must be extended to him. Similarly, the fact that the Pesach Sheni offering which was instituted only for certain individuals contains lessons for every Jew, even those on a high level, shows how the entire Jewish people are bound together as a single entity. This is reinforced by the metaphor of letters carved into stone which describes the essential connection to G-d which all Jews share equally.[82]

82. This is related to the concepts discussed in the Sichos of Parshas Tzav which explain that the purification process of the Red Heifer reflects achdus Yisroel. The fact that the Torah commands us to preserve a certain portion of the ashes of the Red Heifer “as a keepsake” to enable a person whose spiritual level is so low that he becomes impure, expresses the importance

of each individual Jew.

Furthermore, since in the process of preparing the Red Heifer, it was customary to mix together with its ashes, the ashes of all the previous Red Heifers including the ashes of the Red Heifer brought by Moshe, a bond is established with the Jewish people of all ages. The ultimate expression of this bond will be in the Messianic age, when the

tenth Red Heifer will be offered. Since at this time, all spiritual matters will reach their highest level of perfection, it can be understood that the ashes of the previous nine Red Heifers will also be available and that they will be combined with the ashes of the Red Heifer to be brought by Moshiach, thus, establishing unity with the Jewish people of all ages.

3. The second Paschal sacrifice can be offered only after undergoing the purification process associated with the Red Heifer. Until that process is completed, it is forbidden to enter the Temple to offer a sacrifice. Thus, there is a connection between the sacrifice of Pesach Sheni and the daily portion of Rambam associated with the present Shabbos, which includes the siyum (conclusion) of Hilchos Klei HaMikdash and the first chapter of Hilchos Bias HaMikdash.

Hilchos Klei HaMikdash concludes as follows:

Though it is found in the statements of the prophets that the priests would wear a linen ephod, this is not a sign that they were High Priests for the ephod of the High Priests was not of linen. Even Levites would wear it... Rather, this ephod would be worn by the disciples of the prophets and those who were fit to have the holy spirit rest upon them. This demonstrated that they had reached a level higher than the High Priest....

This emphasizes how the spirit of prophecy can rest on each and every Jew and thus, elevate him to a level above that of the High Priest.[83] After attaining such a level, his entry into the Beis HaMikdash (Bias HaMikdash) is of a totally different nature. This is further emphasized

This emphasizes how the spirit of prophecy can rest on each and every Jew and thus, elevate him to a level above that of the High Priest.

by the Rambam's statements that, "The Beis HaMikdash was not on flat ground, but on the incline of the mountain." [84] This shows that a Jew who enters the Beis HaMikdash must begin a process of continual ascent, going up level after level until he reaches the Holy of Holies.

4. As mentioned in the previous farbrengen, the counting of the Omer is connected with the service of ahavas Yisroel, compensating for and correcting the failure of Rabbi Akiva's students to show respect to each other. This is also connected with Lag B'Omer which falls in the coming week and is the yahrtzeit of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. He was one of the students of Rabbi Akiva who perpetuated the Torah's teaching after the others died. His character traits reflected those of Rabbi Akiva and thus, he surely

fulfilled Rabbi Akiva's teaching, "Love your fellowman as yourself." This is a great general principle of the Torah."

The expression used by our Sages regarding Rabbi Akiva's students is "Lo nahagu kavod zeh l'zeh" — "They did not treat each other with respect." However, use of the word "nahagu" in this context is somewhat unusual. Its use implies that the manner showing respect to one's colleagues must become a minhag — a custom which has become an integral part of one's behavior, something one is so used to doing that it comes naturally, without effort.[85]

The word nahagu is also related to the word manhig, a leader, a person who influences others. Each Jew must become a leader for all the people with whom he has contact and teach them the importance of ahavas Yisroel and achdus Yisroel.

This is also associated with the two lessons of Pesach Sheni mentioned above: In regard to ahavas Yisroel and the importance of showing proper respect to one's fellow man, if there is an inadequacy in one's service, one must know that "Nothing is ever lost" and it is possible to correct the situation. Conversely, even a person on the highest levels must know that he can always add to his service and reach

83. This is also related to the concepts explained in the siyum of Seifer Zeraim that were discussed in the farbrengen of Parshas Emor.

84. It can be explained that the Rambam included this concept in the Mishneh Torah even though the latter is a text of halacha and not a simple description of the Temple Mount for the following reason. Had he not mentioned this point, one might think that it was a halachic requirement to include all the various steps that existed in the Beis HaMikdash complex. With the inclusion of this statement, the Rambam emphasizes

that this is not so. These steps were included simply as a matter of practicality, because the Beis HaMikdash was situated on a mountain. Note also Likkutei Sichos, Vol. XXIX, pgs. 71-78, which explains this concept differently.

85. Note Likkutei Torah which explains that practices observed because of Jewish custom have certain advantages over those required by Torah law. Though the observance of these practices is "beyond the measure of the law," once they have been accepted among the Jewish people, "Jewish custom is Torah" and must be universally observed.

86. Before a person's Bar Mitzvah, he is not responsible for his actions and hence, there is no need for t'shuva for sins committed then. Nevertheless, the Alter Rebbe (Shulchan Aruch, ch. 343) writes that it is proper to undertake some measure of repentance. Similarly, we find that great Rabbis have repented for inadequacies even during the time they were nursing.

87. Note that the Ramo concludes his notes on Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim by quoting the verse: "A good-hearted person is always celebrating."

even greater peaks of ahavas Yisroel.

These concepts should be publicized in the widest manner possible. Every Jew must realize that Pesach Sheni grants him the potential to correct his past behavior and elevate it to a higher rung. This applies not only to the recent past, but to everything the person has done throughout his life, even to those sins transgressed in childhood.[86] Similarly, parents

and teachers should try to influence their students and teach them to rectify their past behavior. Even if the child has left home or the student is now located in another place, they should still try to use their influence to convey these lessons to him.

These lessons should be conveyed to the public as a group in an atmosphere of joy and happiness, in a Chassidic farbrengen.[87]

Similarly, parades should be organized for Jewish children for Lag B'Omer, stressing the slogan "All Jewish children together." May these efforts hasten the time when all the blessings mentioned in Parshas B'Chukosai will be fulfilled, including the greatest blessing, "And I will place My sanctuary among you," the building of the Third Temple by Moshiach. May it be now, immediately.



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A SOMBER MORNING TURNS BRIGHT FROM THE VOICE OF DIVINE PROPHECY

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

Thirty-six years ago, a few days before the outbreak of the Six Day War, when the entire Jewish world was shrouded by a tense and worrisome “waiting period,” the traditional Lag B’Omer parade took place in front of 770 Eastern Parkway. On this occasion, the Rebbe MH”M gave the well-known sicha in which he foresaw the amazing victory. Among those present was the well-known writer, Rabbi Yehoshua Dubrawsky, who transcribed a touching description of the event, with the ever-present background of the prevailing times, and the change in mood that brought about this special sicha from the Rebbe. This description was edited by the Rebbe MH”M himself, but it was apparently not publicized at the time. Recently, it came to light as a t’shura distributed a few months ago at the Wilschanski-Friedman wedding. The following is a free translation of the article, accompanied by select portions of the Rebbe MH”M’s notations. Presented in connection with the current situation in Eretz Yisroel.



THE LAG B’OMER “PARADE” AT 770 AND IN ERETZ YISROEL

The day started with dark and cloudy skies. The heart was also gloomy inside. During these days (who knows how many times already?), a deep sense of disquiet could be seen in the eyes of Jews. Dark and angry shadows stood ready again (who knows how many times already?) to ambush the small nation – this time in Eretz Yisroel. Slowly, the skies began to clear, and even the heart became a bit lighter. “These days” had come as an encouragement for “this time,” as a great and mournful feeling reigned during this time. Yet, Lag B’Omer would comfort us from our sadness. We wanted to hope – as we Jews are the most experienced of hopeful people – that our skies would brighten, just as the bright and shining faces of the marchers on Lag B’Omer!

Barriers surrounded the entire stretch of Eastern Parkway. The usual noise of motor traffic was missing. An unfamiliar and uncommon sense of tranquility descended upon the street, which made it now seem wider and more

humane. Even the faces of all the police officers lost their serious expression of ever-ready preparedness. Together with dozens of bearded men with the word “*sadran*” emblazoned on their arms, they too were preparing thousands of children for the moment that the Rebbe would greet them. In the upstairs quarters of 770, preparations had already begun since the wee hours of early morning. Giant letters stood out

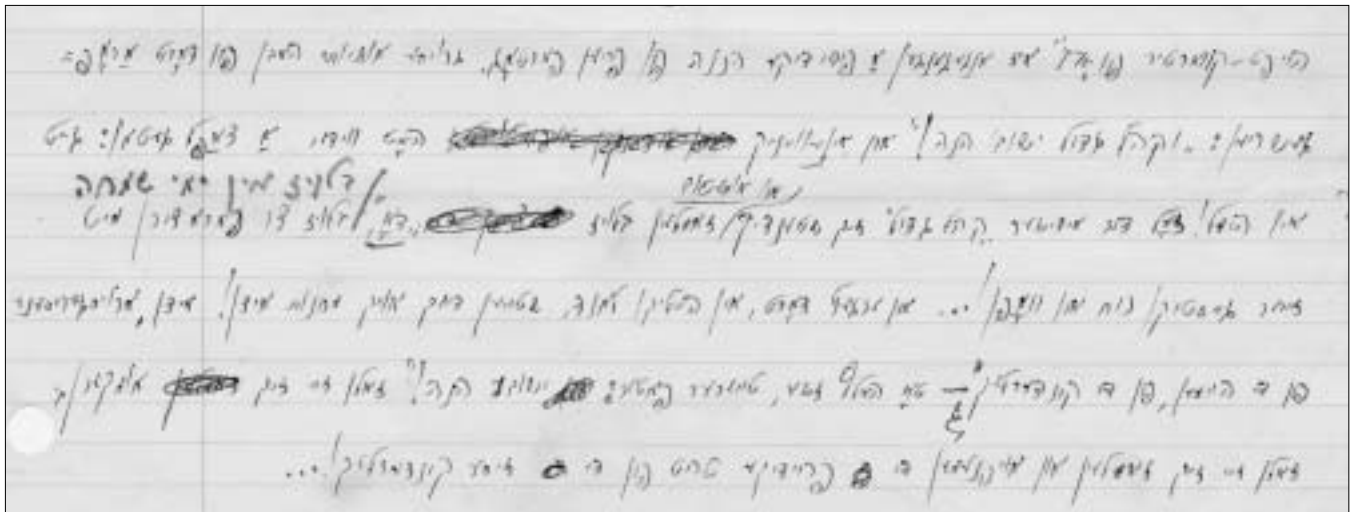
from a huge sign: “And a large assemblage shall return here!” From deep within, the fear seemed to pass. G-d in Heaven! If only the “large assemblage” of the People of Israel would always gather “here,” only on days of *simcha*, only in order to march with all its spiritual power and force!...

And somewhere, in Eretz HaKodesh, there are standing whole hosts of Jews [soldiers]! Separated from their homes, from their

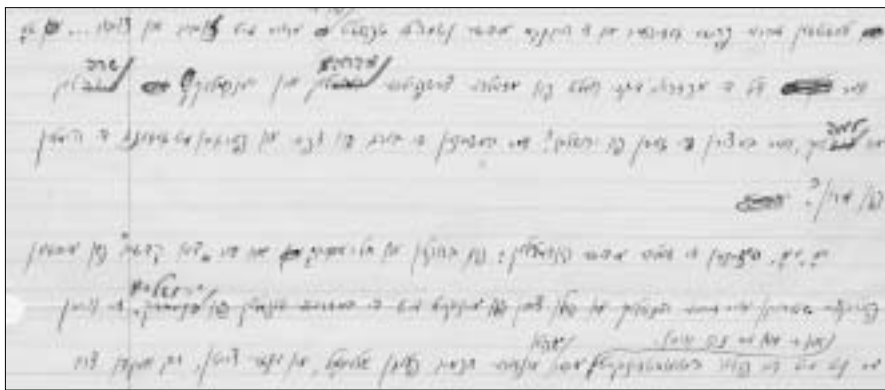
children – please help, dear Father, “they shall return here!” May they merit to return. May they merit to gather together and welcome the happy steps of sweet children!...

Here comes the first bus of children. Then comes the second, and the third, and the tenth, and the thirtieth. The street was bustling from the noise of children, principals, counselors, and the organizers working at full force and with tremendous momentum. The





In the section where the writer describes his prayer that Jews should always gather on good occasions, the Rebbe adds the words “bloiz in y'mei simcha” (only on days of joy)



In the original is written, “what does the cruel world want from these Berelech and Yankelech, Moishelch and Dovidlech.” The Rebbe changes it to “Avremelech and Yankelech, Saralech and Leahlech” (switching the first name from Berelech to Avremelech, and in the last two, he writes names of two girls)

entire place sparkled like a flame with the eyes of hundreds, thousands of shining eyes. Such brightness and vitality had not even a taste of sin. The rays of the sun beat down upon their faces, and their pure Jewish souls reflected their charm... Indeed, what does the cruel world want from these Avremelech and Yankelech, Saralech and Leahlech, adorning the streets of Yerushalayim with their parades? Beautifying the mountains of Tzfas and filling with song the heavens of Miron?

Yes, yes, these very Jewish children from Brooklyn and Tel Aviv; and the “holy flocks” of

Eastern Parkway reaching out their hands in a symbol of total unity with the endangered flocks of Yerushalayim. They don't understand fully – and they don't have to know. However, even our Sages were always accustomed in difficult times to turn to a child and request of him, “Say your *pasuk*.” You, Jewish child, you are the foundation of our people. You bear as your responsibility the seed to our future and our eternity. So, say your *pasuk*, relate it in your true and original way beyond all reason, hidden within you in the depths of your childlike yet ancient Jewish soul.

Hundreds and thousands of Jewish boys and girls said their *pasuk* at Lag B'Omer parades. They displayed it black on white. While they no doubt stood in two separate groups – boys and girls – they said it identically and as one. Here stand two little children, raising high in their hands a giant model of a pair of... *t'fillin*. Nu, this is the irreplaceable ancient Jewish weapon, “and all the peoples of the world will see that the Name of G-d is called upon you, and they will fear you.” “For they are our life and the length of our days” – the letters whip in the wind, waved in the hand of a child. “Keep Shabbos,” “Send Your Children To Torah Education and You Will Be Unbeatable,” “A Jewish Home Must Be Kosher,” “Send Your Boy To Yeshiva” – the Jewish children filled the airspace with their *p'sukim*.

Yes, old Jewish “slogans,” in the hands of the new and coming generations. This is how the connection is made, and so it must continue. There is no other better advice. So the Jewish child foretells with his *pasuk* and alludes with his flag raised high in his hand: “We Have No One Upon Whom To Rely Other Than Our Father In Heaven”...

The enclosed area filled more and more. They came from all over town, Lag B'Omer marchers, from all the *yeshivos* and educational institutions. How sweet it is to soak in such a refreshing and vibrant Jewish multitude. The eyes of all turn to the platform standing on the steps of Lubavitch World Headquarters. The noise is replaced by tense anticipation. Everyone is waiting, and everyone knows that before them sits someone who is waiting for them. His great soul lives with the joys and sorrow of every one of them, of every Jew, whoever he may be. His entire life is devoted and dedicated to *Klal Yisroel*. It is surely worth the wait!

A flow of excitement passed through the crowd. The Rebbe *shlita* stood on the platform, and silence prevailed everywhere. A silence that transmitted a feeling of security.

Thousands of gazes were directed towards one point, from where unseen beacons of light radiated. These were not your average gazes. Not hysterical stares upon a bombastic hero, not the excited look of those addicted to gambling, nor of those who savagely enjoy watching frightful scenes. This was an inner gaze from the depths of the heart and soul of a Jew upon a Divine leader... A look that says: If only we could also obtain encouragement and strength from he who stands there above with his deeply penetrating look on this joyous yet turbulent day.

* * *

The Rebbe *shlita* began to speak. His shining countenance was unusually pale, and he made reference to the storm that troubled his heart. Even his voice was very

hoarse, laden with a flood of emotion. The Rebbe *shlita* spoke – and again, the day of Lag B'Omer became clear. Again, one could feel the G-dly connection and unity of Jews of generations. The Rebbe *shlita* immediately emphasized one of the central themes of Lag B'Omer: From this day on, the conduct of the students of Rabbi Akiva among themselves was founded according to the manner that their teacher emphasized and taught. "Love your fellow as yourself" – to honor, to love, and to be devoted to one another. A second central point of Lag B'Omer: Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, one of Rabbi Akiva's most illustrious students, said that this is the day of his rejoicing, the joyous day when he reached the greatest heights in the study and the path of the Torah. He brought it down to his students for generation after



generation, through which Jews conduct themselves and lead others until the day that Moshiach will shine forth and lead us to Eretz Yisroel, speedily in our days!

Everything is connected to Torah and *mitzvos*. As the Baal Shem Tov says, it is not just something relevant to the past, an event that occurred a long time ago. Every detail connected to this day teaches us today how to conduct ourselves and what we must do in order to be true children of Alm-ghty G-d.

In addition, the Rebbe *shlita* emphasized that every year there is an extra instruction to be derived, above and beyond what was learned in previous years. The current year is a “*Shnas Hakhel*.” This represents the year after the *Shmita* year, at which time the entire people, including small children, gathered in the *Beis HaMikdash*, where they heard the holy words of the Torah and drew Divine vitality for the rest of their lives. The merit of small children in this matter is twofold. They personally heard and learned, and they also brought about an additional and special merit for their parents by the fact that they brought them to the *Beis HaMikdash*.

The *Beis HaMikdash*, which was made out of stone and wood, is presently destroyed, however, the *Beis HaMikdash* that is found in the heart of every Jew is whole! The task that is placed upon each and every one of us is for the *Beis HaMikdash* in the heart to emit light and holiness in a manner of “*Hakhel*,” i.e., that it should encompass his entire life and the life of all those around him.

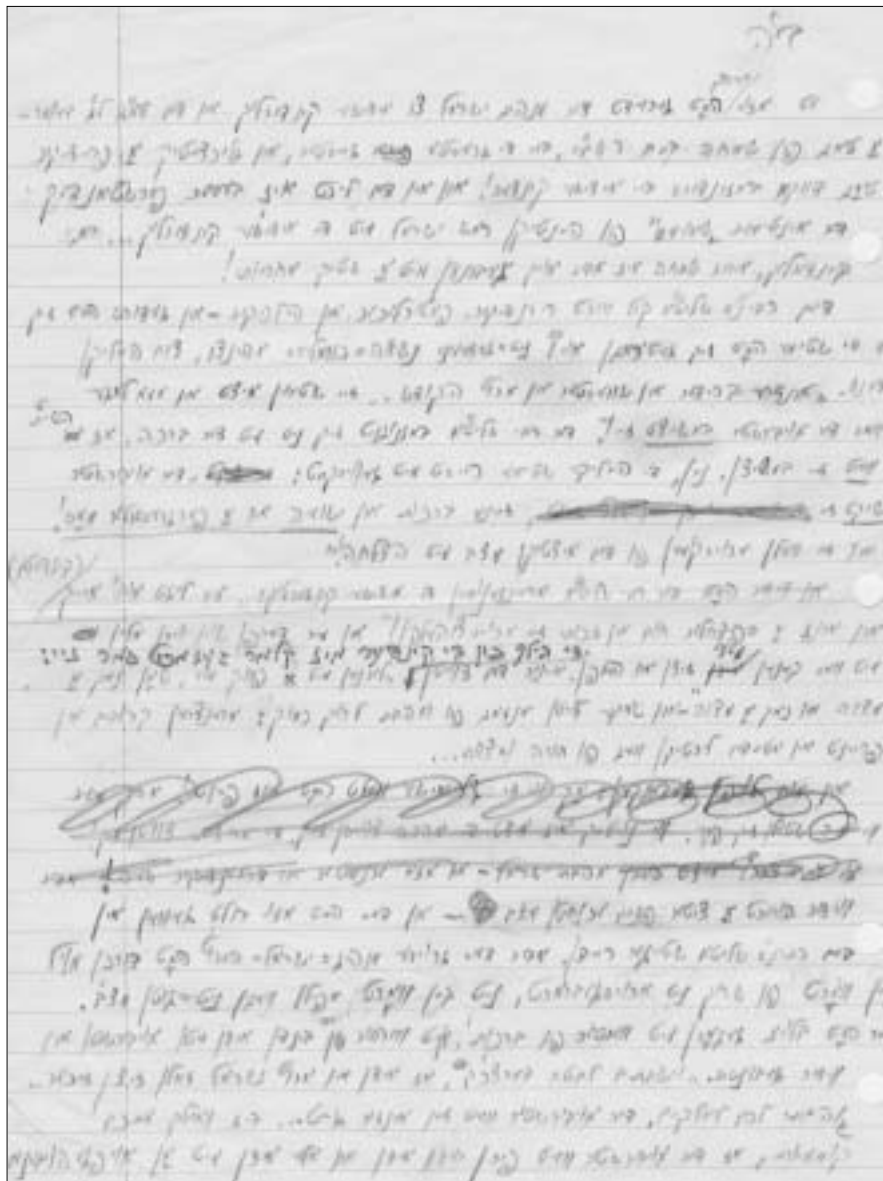
In this current year, “*Shnas Hakhel*,” there is added a special commandment together with a special strength from G-d. Even children, each and every one of them, can build and design their lives on the foundation of Torah and

mitzvos. Similarly, in “*Shnas Hakhel*,” they should gather together their friends and bring them closer to the path of G-d – and even have a positive influence on their parents.

This was the message the leader of the Jewish People told the Jewish children on the day of Lag B’Omer, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai’s day of rejoicing, one of the loftiest and

most joyous days – especially for Jewish children! In this light, the intimate *sicha* of the Jewish leader of our generation with Jewish children will be understood more clearly. Yes, children, your happiness is also connected with a little responsibility!

The Rebbe *shlita*’s voice became emotional, fatherly, and stronger. It



In the original, it is written that the Rebbe explained “in what Jews can protect and help one another.” The Rebbe replaced the word “*Idn*” (Jews) with “*mir*” (we) to make the sentence read, “what we can do to protect and help one another.” The Rebbe then added the sentence “*di helf fun di kinder is klahr gemacht far zei*” (The assistance of the children was spelled out for them).

seemed as if this voice carried a message that spoke to the soul. "Our brothers and sisters in Eretz HaKodesh...are presently in a situation where G-d Alm-ghty is protecting them!" The Rebbe *shlita* did not settle for a *bracha* that G-d will protect them. No, the holy voice established absolutely:

"G-d Alm-ghty sends them his *brachos* and his salvation in the greatest measure! They will get out of this situation with success!"

And the Rebbe *shlita* again turned to the Jewish children: "You [children] have a special obligation and privilege to help them!" We must already know ourselves what we can do to protect and help one another. The assistance of the children was spelled out for them:

"To learn another *pasuk*, to do another *mitzva* and another *mitzva*," and to do so in accordance with the commandment of 'Love your fellow as yourself' – to bring relatives and friends to this shining path of Torah and *mitzvos*."

Another tremor seemed to pass from the serious situation, and this was so evident from the nature of the Rebbe *shlita's* words. Yet, the great heart of the Jewish leader did not reveal a single word of fear from his mouth, not even a word on the dire situation. He only poured words of *bracha* that connected Jews and G-d – and more *brachos*. "And you will dwell in safety in your land.' Jews will dwell in security in Eretz Yisroel.' 'And I will be to you as *Elokim*' – G-d will be to us as

Elokim... until 'I will make you go upright.' That is, G-d will bring every Jew and all Jews erect in stature to the true and complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach, speedily in our days!..."

* * *

Hundreds march, thousands of Jewish children facing the fatherly leader of the Jewish people. They look upon him with adoration and security, with the devotion of children to the one standing on the platform, who literally accompanies every little child, every tender Jewish soul, with such gentle *ahavas Yisroel*, such a fatherly smile, and such a demonstration of confidence in the holiness of every Jewish child!

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VAAD HANACHOS HA'T'MIMIM FROM THE INSIDE TO THE OUTSIDE

INTERVIEW BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ

*When was the Vaad Hanachos HaT'mimim founded and what did the Rebbe have to say about it? Which sichos did the Rebbe edit and which sichos went out in a separate kuntres? What was the chazara system, and what was considered a good chazara? When did they leave out paragraphs and when did they add them? * Rabbi Simon Jacobson, director of Vaad Hanachos HaT'mimim, and one of the main chozrim, in an interview with Beis Moshiach. **

Part 2

At that time, the sichos began being printed in the regular format (as opposed to typewritten pages).

Yes, at that time [5748] the computer revolution had begun and we were one of the first to take advantage of it. Prior to that, I would quickly type up the *sicha*, errors and all. Then I would give the *sicha* to some people to edit it for content and grammar, and then it would be re-typed, painstakingly, in order to eliminate all mistakes. If there were mistakes anyway, or a paragraph was left out, we had to erase paragraphs with whiteout, retype them, and then paste them on manually.

The move to computerizing everything was very expensive.

First of all, the computers themselves cost a fortune, each one costing around \$5000. A good printer was just as expensive. Then we had to construct the proper font. I wrote to the Rebbe that changing over to computers would save us half the work, and I asked for a *bracha*. I quickly found a donor (R' Berel Weiss) who paid for our transition into the world of computers.

Did you see a significant improvement?

Absolutely, but don't think it all went smoothly. We used a dot-matrix printer, and in order for the typeset to appear sharp the printer had to go over each line eight times, which took a very long time.

We would usually set the printer up at night and come back at eight in the morning to get the printout.

Nevertheless, the publication process began to speed up. Until then, the *sichos* were ready on Friday, whereas with our computers, they were ready on Wednesday. The two days we saved enabled us to send the *sichos* to subscribers on Wednesday, and for the first time the *sichos* arrived around the world before Shabbos.

Until then, *shluchim* who wanted to be up-to-date on the Rebbe's *sichos* could listen to *chazara* on the telephone, but they received the actual *sichos* two weeks after they were said.

The number of subscribers grew, until we had two thousand subscribers. We incorporated as a legally recognized organization, and started becoming a well-organized *mosad*.

When did you first start using the fax machine?

I think it was 5747. Just that year, the Rebbe began editing nearly all the *sichos*, and the system for arranging the *sichos* changed. We stopped writing *hanachos* because nearly everything would appear in the edited *sicha*. Those few things that weren't put into an edited *sicha* we published as "*hosafos*."

Shabbos Parshas VaYakhel-P'kudei 5747 was a turning point. On Sunday of that week, R' Zev Cadaner got married. He was a member of the Vaad at that time, and we published a brief summary of the *farbrengen* for the wedding. People loved this new idea, and many *shluchim* wanted a brief summary as quickly as possible. We got a fax machine, which was quite

expensive back then, and began sending out summaries to subscribers.

In those days, typical fax machines couldn't send out faxes to large numbers of subscribers, and we had to buy a special machine that kept the summary in memory and then sent it out to the numbers we programmed in. At first the machine worked with one telephone line. It began sending out faxes Sunday morning and finished the next morning. Later on, we got two phone lines to speed up the process.

We knew the Rebbe had *nachas ruach* from the summary, and we tried to translate it into as many languages as possible so that the Rebbe's words could be understood all over the world. The summaries were translated into up to twelve different languages!

My brother, Yossi, and Chaim Abrahams would sit all Motzaei

Superficially, one might see this as a deviation, because the original goal was to print the Rebbe's sichos, but the real goal was to bring the wellspring "outward." You can print all of the Rebbe's sichos, but if the wellspring doesn't reach "outward," you didn't do the job.

Shabbos until the morning, writing a summary in Lashon HaKodesh. This would be given to be translated, and within a few hours, the Rebbe's words reached the world in twelve languages!

In 5748, we began publishing a special page with lessons and points from the *farbrengens*, as well as the English language pamphlet *Week in Review*, which contained points from the *sicha*. It was one of the Vaad's most successful publications. Some weeks we printed as many as 20,000 copies.

Weren't you veering away from the stated goal of Vaad Hanachos HaT'mimim?

Superficially, one might see this as a deviation, because the original goal was to print the Rebbe's *sichos*, but the real goal was to bring the wellspring "outward." You can print all of the Rebbe's *sichos*, but if the wellspring doesn't reach "outward," you didn't do the job. So when we



were technically able to do so, we began working on developing the tools that would enable the “outside” to receive the wellspring.

Let’s go back to the content of the *sichos*. In the edited *sichos*, sometimes there are notes which

We wrote this note after great deliberation about what the Rebbe meant when he said that the French anthem had changed. The anthem sung today is the same one that was sung before 5734. It was only after we had looked into it further that we discovered that there was a period of time when the rhythm was tempered, and a few bars were changed.

indicate that they were written by those who worked on the *sichos*. That means that the Rebbe did not say these paragraphs when he delivered the *sicha*. What were the rules regarding this? When did you

add notes?

There were some simple rules. For example, in the *sicha* of Parshas VaYeishev 5752 in which the Rebbe spoke about the French Revolution, in one of the notes we quoted what the Rebbetzin said to a *shlucha* from France: “We plowed and sowed, and you need to harvest.” The Rebbe didn’t say this at the *farbrengen*, but we added it with a note saying that this was a note from the publishers.

Another rule: Sometimes there were things the Rebbe did not say, and were not within the framework of the *sicha*, but they were needed to give a full picture. In these instances we indicated that this was our own note. We can use the same *sicha*, VaYeishev 5752, as an example. The Rebbe spoke about the French national anthem. We added the following note: “A few months after they began singing “*HaAderes V’HaEmuna*” in 5734, they changed the rhythm of the *niggun* and softened its tone (out of respect), based on the suggestion of the French leader at that time. And in 5741, the new leader changed it back to the original tune.”

The Rebbe didn’t say this outright at the *farbrengen*, but we added it since it was needed to complete the story. We wrote this note after great deliberation about what the Rebbe meant when he said that the French anthem had changed. The anthem sung today is the same one that was sung before 5734. It was only after we had looked into it further that we discovered that there was a period of time when the rhythm was tempered, and a few bars were changed.

We still asked the Rebbe about it, and we received a shocking answer: “There will be more news

regarding this, *al pi teva* (in a natural way), and it is not their issue to pursue breaking news.” Based on this answer of the Rebbe, I expect the tune to change again, and I’m waiting to see when this prophetic statement of the Rebbe will be realized.

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It’s interesting that France led the opposition to the war in Iraq, and the Rebbe said back during the first Gulf War about some of the *sichos* “*od chazon la’moed*” (the time will yet come).

“TOWARDS A MEANINGFUL LIFE”

After Chaf-Zayin Adar 5752, when the Rebbe stopped saying *sichos*, we didn't even consider closing the *mosad*. It was clear to us that we had to continue, to use the time for *hafatzas ha'chassidus* to various sectors, and that when the Rebbe would resume delivering *sichos*, our work would continue.

I remembered a *sicha* the Rebbe had said two months earlier, on 3 Shevat 5752, that *chassidim* are the Rebbe's mouthpiece, and their job is to bring the Rebbe's teachings to the world, and I knew that this would be my job until the *hisgalus* of the Rebbe once again.

From conversations I had had with *shluchim* and lecturers who were involved in “*hafatzas ha'maayanos chutza*,” I realized that what was sorely lacking was a book that would impart the Rebbe's teachings to the masses.

People come to a Chabad house and hear that the Rebbe was a great Torah teacher, but when they want to learn his Torah they're stuck. Most of the *mekuravim* cannot learn the Rebbe's teachings in the original, because the style (and language) are unfamiliar to them. So I decided to start with a book that would present the Rebbe's teachings on the meaning of life.

I couldn't have written the book if not for working at the Vaad all those years. Week after week of learning the Rebbe's *sichos b'iyun* gave me the ability to distill the Rebbe's views on a wide variety of topics. I also drew upon the answers I had received from the Rebbe over the years with specific guidelines on how to present things.

I knew it was a great responsibility, because something in print lasts for generations, and if a mistake is made, there's no way to correct it. It was difficult for me to decide, since I knew I wouldn't be able to give the material in to edit before publishing it. But I knew that if I made meetings about it, it wouldn't get beyond meetings.

I finally decided to take the enormous responsibility. For months I reviewed all the Rebbe's *sichos* and all the instructions I had received from the Rebbe, and only then did I sit down to write the book.

In recent years we have been continuing along the same lines of spreading the Rebbe's teachings. I can wholeheartedly say that with all the sorrow and pain that we cannot hear the Rebbe himself, we are trying to do the utmost in order to disseminate the Rebbe's teachings to people of all backgrounds, knowing that this hastens the *hisgalus* of the Rebbe *teikef u'miyad mamash*.

At the end of the *farbrengen* the Rebbe motioned that they should whistle. That was the only time the Rebbe did so on Shabbos. In the *sicha* that we gave the Rebbe for editing, we wrote that the Rebbe motioned to them to whistle, and we added a footnote referring to Hemshech 5672, to a *maamer* that was said on Parshas VaYeishev 5675, in which the connection between whistling and *Geula* is explained.

When we got back the edited *sicha*, we noticed something interesting. At first, the Rebbe had drawn through a line in pencil to show that this paragraph should be deleted, but then, perhaps after seeing the note we added, the Rebbe erased the line, thus approving the paragraph for print.

Since we're talking about the *sicha* of VaYeishev 5752, it should be noted that this is a very fundamental *sicha*. The *sicha* is unique – as far as I know – in that the Rebbe maintains that since times have changed, there is now a different approach than that of the Alter Rebbe. As you know, the Alter Rebbe opposed the French, and in this *sicha* the Rebbe is *mechadesh* that through the *avoda* done over the years, we can now be *mevarer* (refine) France!

(To be continued.)



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A BOOK OF ITS OWN

TRANSLATED BY RABBI SHIMON NEUBORT



*Biographical Sketches * From the Sichos of the Rebbe Rayatz in America * Seifer HaSichos – Kayitz 5700 * Festival of Liberation – Yud-Beis Tammuz*

1. (While drinking *l'chaim*, the Rebbe [Rayatz] said): When saying the blessing over a cup of spirits, one says *l'chaim*. By saying *l'chaim* he means to bestow a blessing upon the members of his household. The Alter Rebbe trained the *chassidim* that when they are at a gathering and they say the blessing of *l'chaim* for the family of the *chassidim* and their households, they should also say *l'chaim* for all of the Jewish people, in whatever country they may be. Especially at this time, it is necessary to mention our brethren across the sea, who are drowning in a sea of troubles.

All Jews are collectively one heart, as the Sages said (*Sukka* 45b), "Just as a date palm has only a single heart, so too Israel..." And as we know the *chassidic* commentary on the phrase "Israel is saved by the Lrd...", which is written in the singular form. Therefore, we must keep in mind and remember *Klal Yisroel* who are across the sea. All of us – those who are overseas and we

who are here – form a single entity. Each of us must always remember that the half of our heart that remains across the sea is in real danger. There lies a personal obligation upon each individual Jew to lend a hand in the rescue operation.

There are some public activists who – for their own personal reasons – would have us remain aloof from the rescue work. And to avoid interference with their personal business, they claim that the danger has been exaggerated. But the fact is that *Klal Yisroel* who are across the sea are in real mortal danger.

L'chaim! May G-d strengthen the hearts of our brothers and sisters to enable them to survive the grave mortal jeopardy. May He have mercy upon *Klal Yisroel* and send us the true Redemption; may we merit to go with our righteous Moshiach to the Holy City of Yerushalayim (may it be speedily rebuilt), and

may it be the will of our sweet Father to rebuild the *Beis HaMikdash* speedily in our days, Amen!

2. In the year 5640, the year when I was born, Yud-Beis Tammuz fell on Monday; and so too in the year 5653, the year when I became *bar mitzva*. On that Monday of my *bar mitzva* my saintly father the Rebbe [Rashab] began saying the *maamer* "T'fillin d'Marei Alma...", he continued reciting this *maamer* in serial installments until Shabbos Parshas Balak (which begins, "V'haya Sh'eiris Yaakov..."). Each day after the *maamer* was recited, there was a lengthy *chassidic farbrengen* with a joyful *seudas mitzva*. This joyful sequence of *farbrengens* had already begun on Thursday, 8 Tammuz, when many *chassidim* (including some from Ukraine) arrived for Shabbos Parshas Chukas and the joyful *farbrengens* began. But the main holy *sichos* did not begin until the day of the *bar mitzva*. This is not the place to recount what my saintly father related then, but it is all described explicitly in my diary. I hope, with G-d's help, to allow certain of the narratives to be copied and

published in print for the public benefit. But for now, I will relate one story.

3. In general, the memories of each individual person, remembering all that happened to him, comprises a complete book of its own. This was once told to me by my father, commenting on the verse, “This is the book of the history of Man...” – a person’s history is a book of its own.

4. On Monday, Yud-Beis Tammuz (the day of my *bar mitzva*), after we returned from the holy *Ohel* and after the *maamer* of *chassidus*, there was a *farbrengen*, at which incisive words were spoken, and which lasted for several hours. At about six o’clock we washed our hands for the *seudas mitzva*.

Father was in a very cheerful mood, and he said: “There is a regular custom in the family of the Rebbeim: The Alter Rebbe requested of the Mittlerer Rebbe on the day of his *bar mitzva*, ‘ask me something!’” [Father also related that] when my great-grandfather the Tzemach Tzedek became *bar mitzva*, the Alter Rebbe instructed him at his *bar mitzva* feast on Erev Rosh HaShana that he should ask him something. And the Tzemach Tzedek made a similar request at the *bar mitzva* of my grandfather the Rebbe Maharash, and likewise, my grandfather the Rebbe Maharash requested of my father, the Rebbe, at his *bar mitzva* feast. And in the same style, at my own *bar mitzva* feast, Father addressed me by name and said: “Yosef Yitzchak, ask me something!” So I asked my saintly father the Rebbe the following question:

It is written in the *Siddur [T’hillas Hashem, p. 12]*: “It is proper to say before the prayer, ‘I hereby accept upon myself the positive *mitzva*: You shall love your

fellow Jew as yourself.” So why does this appear specifically before the prayer? If, in fact, *ahavas Yisroel* needs to be the first thing in the morning, it ought to have been placed together with the morning blessings. Father’s answer to me was:

When a father has many children, his chief delight is when there are as one and they have love for one another. In prayer, one petitions for his needs, both his material needs and his spiritual needs. And before offering this

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petition one must do something that gives satisfaction to our Father in Heaven. For that reason, the acceptance of the positive *mitzva* of *ahavas Yisroel* was placed specifically before the beginning of the prayer.

5. The reason I am telling you this story is so that you will understand what sort of guidance and conduct a father should impart (and in fact does impart) to his child on the day of his *bar mitzva*. The idea of *ahavas Yisroel* does not

mean merely giving someone something to eat or providing him an interest-free loan or a place to spend the night. The idea of “you shall love your fellow Jew as yourself” means with your entire being. Someone else’s needs should be more important to a person than his own needs. As is well known, the elder *chassidim* had a saying: “One should love himself as much as [he loves] someone else.”

6. I entertain the wish that when writing a *pidyon* to my holy ancestors, the Rebbeim, I should be able to inform them that the idea of “you shall love your fellow Jew as yourself,” as the holy Rebbeim established it among *chassidim* has been engraved upon *Anash*. And because of this, *Anash* and their families will merit the blessings of our holy ancestors, the Rebbeim, in both the material and spiritual realms.

7. I wish to give a broad blessing to *Klal Yisroel*, and all souls who are hear should respond with *Amen*. But I wish to preface this with a story:

In the year 5640, when I was born, Yud-Beis Tammuz fell on Monday. Shabbos was 17 Tammuz. On Friday night at the *shalom zachor*, and Shabbos afternoon at the *ben zachor* feast, my grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash, was very joyful and he told many stories that are recorded in my saintly father’s handwriting. He mentioned several times that this Shabbos is called “postponed” because the fast of 17 Tammuz is postponed [to Sunday, when it falls] on Shabbos. He concluded: “May it in fact be postponed indefinitely.”

(The Rebbe concluded): A blessing pronounced by a *tzaddik* will be fulfilled. May it be so in actual fact, and may [the fast] become superseded in truth, and be

transformed to gladness and joy. (All those present responded *Amen* with intense fervor and great joy. *Amen, Amen!*)

8. (After the Rebbe recited the *maamer chassidus* beginning “*Kol HaMaarich b’Echad*” he made the following declaration): Everyone who comes from overseas has brought with him his native expressions. In Lubavitch there was an expression “Tambover ice, Vitebsker ice” [i.e., the frigid personalities of the Jews living in Tambov and Vitebsk]; the expression “Vitebsker ice” was more accurate. There is also ice under the surface of the water, meaning “Litvisher ice.” And similarly, each country has its own brand of ice. The chief properties of ice are three:

We must – with G-d’s help – arouse the chassidic warmth so that it can affect the American ice and cause it to melt. Ice that has melted is even kosher for a mikveh.

cold, hard, and solid. Only the warm weather can change the hardness of ice into the fruitfulness

of water.

9. We must – with G-d’s help – arouse the *chassidic* warmth so that it can affect the American ice and cause it to melt. Ice that has melted is even kosher for a *mikveh*.

10. Breaking the spiritual ice is not done with an ax or a pick (the spiritual equivalent is the idea of bitterness), but with the G-dly fire of Torah and *avoda* through joy and gladness of the heart.

11. May G-d grant us success in our difficult task, so that we may be privileged to see the American *chassidic* ice begin to shift. May *Agudas Chabad* enjoy success in both the material and spiritual realms.

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THE WORLD IS READY!

What's the connection between Pesach Sheini, Lag B'Omer, and Moshiach?

Lchaim! Lchaim u'l'vracha!

Many of us heard from the Rebbe that this *particular* Yom Tov never took place before, since each year has a new light which descends during the blowing of the *shofar* on Rosh HaShana. A new light, the likes of which was not seen since the beginning of time.

We are in the midst of S'firas HaOmer, the month of Iyar which is the only month in which we count the *omer* every day. We celebrated Pesach, and Pesach Sheini is approaching.

Pesach Sheini and Lag B'Omer this year, bring out ever more clearly how the world is ready for the revelation of Moshiach and we just need to open our eyes, as the Rebbe emphasized in the *sichos* of 5751-5752.

What is the connection between Pesach Sheini, Lag B'Omer, and Moshiach? In one of the *sichos*, the Rebbe discusses the difference between Pesach and Pesach Sheini. We are forbidden to have *chametz* on Pesach, but on Pesach Sheini one may have both *chametz* and *matza* in one's home (Meseches P'sachim 95a).

What is the difference between the exodus from Mitzrayim in Nissan and the counting of the *omer* in Iyar? The *avoda* of Nissan is expressed as a revelation in a way of *isarusa d'l'eila* (an arousal from Above), as the King of kings revealed Himself to us, whereas the *avoda* of Iyar emphasizes the *avoda* of the *tachton* in an *isarusa d'l'tata* (arousal from below), as we refine the seven *middos*.

It is explained in *chassidus* that the revelation that comes from Above

is higher than the revelation which comes about through our own *avoda*, because man in his *avoda* can only reach his *shoresh* (his root, source), while with an "arousal from Above" one can reach higher levels.

This *avoda* of the month of Iyar is hinted at in the month's nickname Ziv, which is a lower level of illumination ("ziv" as opposed to

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"*haara*" or "*ohr*"). In this month, *noldu zivsavei ha'olam* (Rosh HaShana 11A), the three Avos. This is also the acronym of the name Iyar, which stands for Avrohom, Yitzchok, Yaakov, and Rochel, whose *mitzvos* were in the category of "fragrance" as opposed to "essence."

Although we can achieve higher levels in Nissan, as far as man's *avoda* is concerned the revelation that comes from Above cannot bring about an *is'hafcha* (transformation) within the animal soul, and so the *avoda* is only one of *iskafia*

(overpowering). This is why the Jews fled from Mitzrayim, for they had not transformed themselves. Through man's own efforts during the days of S'fira, one can attain the level of *is'hafcha*.

This is why, explains the Rebbe, the first Pesach is in the month of Nissan and *chametz* is forbidden. Since at that point, man's *middos* are not yet refined, we must beware of evil, of "*chametz*." But on Pesach Sheini in Iyar, while man is in the midst of refining himself, he is permitted to have *chametz* and *matza* in his home. This is so even though by Pesach Sheini man has not yet completed the refinement process, and he still has *middos* to refine.

* * *

I think we ought to say *l'chaim* since twelve years of the refinement process, of "Pesach Sheini," have passed. Twelve years ago on Ko'ach Nissan 5751, the Rebbe shook us up when he said, "I did what I could do; do all that you can..."

For over forty years we were doing the *avoda* of *isarusa d'l'eila*. The Rebbe did everything he could to bring Moshiach. During this period we were quiet about the Rebbe's being Moshiach; we didn't publicize it to the world. It was like the month of Nissan when "*bal yeira'eh u'bal yimatze*" (it shouldn't be seen and it shouldn't be found).

However, from the Nun's on we were allowed to reveal this to the world. The Rebbe said, "We are the last generation of *Galus* and the first generation of *Geula*." This is when the Moshiach Campaign geared up.

Thus we came to the Pesach

Sheini era. “Nothing goes lost.” Even those who were impure and could not do the *korban Pesach* the first time around, were allowed to bring it on Pesach Sheini. The yearning of all generations for Moshiach will be realized in our generation. We are the generation of the “dwarf,” like the “impure” or “those far away,” and we can make up for the missed *korban Pesach*, i.e., we can greet Moshiach.

What lofty revelations we have in our generation that we can have “*chametz* and *matza* with him in the house”! So there’s nothing to fear when it comes to spreading the wellsprings of Moshiach outward. As Rabbi Zilberstein of Montreal told us, the Rebbe said to teach about Moshiach not “if it will be accepted,” “if” being conditional, but “in a way that makes it accepted.”

In other words, the identity of Moshiach in our generation is something that can be accepted by everyone, everywhere, but it has to be explained in a way that makes it accepted by each individual with his own intellect and emotions.

Even if there are Jews and even *chassidim* who are afraid to publicize the proclamation of “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed*,” they shouldn’t forget that we are in Pesach Sheini, after the refinement of the *middos*, and it’s twelve years already since the Rebbe gave it over to us and told us, “do all that you can, and thus our own *avoda* in a way of *isarusa d’l’tata* will bring about *is’hafcha* within us.

An example? Listen to how Professor Branover says “*Yechi*,” and you’ll understand what *emuna* is about. He’s a scientist, an intellectual, and he stands and cries

out “*Yechi...*”

Please! As Lag B’Omer approaches, we must all unite around the Rebbe’s words. Go out to the world, to the street, in America or Russia or Eretz Yisroel, and see how Jews are moved by “*Yechi*,” with the



**A giant sign of the Rebbe in Miron
Lag B’Omer 5760**

kavana that the Lubavitcher Rebbe will arise and redeem us, now!

Here’s a story that happened with women in Tzfas who went on *mitzvaim* two weeks before Pesach. These women go to the hospital in Tzfas every week, usually visiting the

pediatric ward to speak with parents who sit with their children.

Two pairs of women went to the hospital. They divided the territory, “You go upstairs to the women’s section, and we’ll go to the children’s ward.” They went to the third floor and went to the first room they saw, opposite the doorway. There lay a woman who looked very depressed.

When the women entered the room, she asked, “Who are you? Who sent you to me?”

They told her that they were from Chabad and they came every week. “No!” insisted the woman. “Tell me the truth. Who sent you to me?”

Then they told her that the Lubavitcher Rebbe asked them to go on *mitzvaim* in order to spread the wellsprings of *chassidus* and the *b’suras ha’Geula*.

When she heard them mention the Rebbe she grew very emotional, and she told them that just a few minutes before they had come she had cried a great deal and had said to Hashem that she wanted to write a letter to the Lubavitcher Rebbe but she didn’t know where she would obtain a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, and how to write the letter. She remembered a line that Lubavitchers say, which she said too: *Yechi Adoneinu...* Just as she finished saying it, the two Lubavitcher women walked in to her room.

They all felt that something special had just occurred. They sat down for a heart to heart chat, and the woman opened up to them. She was lying in the ward and was very downhearted. They realized that the main thing they had to do was cheer her up. They suggested that she

Speak with a *rav*, and of course they suggested that she join a *chassidus* class and a *farbrenge*n, which would help her attain *simcha*.

She asked them if she could write to the Rebbe. Since the women were prepared with a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, she wrote a letter and then put it in the volume. The answer she opened up to was in volume 20, p. 143: “After a long break ... in which you write about your state of mind, etc., and conclude with the visit to the doctor ... certainly his opinion, like the doctor’s opinion, is based on the instructions of our Torah, *Toras Chayim*, in such cases. And you also know the instructions of our Sages, *maaseh rav*, and you see a number of situations that are similar to yours, when you were in *shidduchim* and then shortly after that marriage... And it has been said a number of times that man’s life is not precise like mathematics ... *yehi ratzon* from Hashem, Who supervises over each person with *hashgacha pratis*, that you will go on your path secure in *hashgacha pratis*, in actuality ... at least this will serve to weaken the depression ... With blessings for good news. P.S. I strongly hope that you participated in a *farbrenge*n for Chag HaGeula .. this literally increases the blessings of Hashem.”

The ladies were so excited to see how the Rebbe referred to the woman’s real issue, her lack of *simcha*. The next morning the woman was released from the hospital and she joined a *farbrenge*n in honor of Yud-Alef Nissan, and she experienced *simcha*.

* * *

There are many stories that illustrate how people experience the revelation of the Rebbe and from the depths of their hearts they cry out, “*Yechi Adoneinu*.” They yearn for Moshiach with all their heart.

Here’s another story that



happened Erev Pesach. The parents of one of the distinguished ladies of Tzfas who learns and teaches *chassidus*, are not religious, but they have a good relationship with their daughter and love their grandchildren.

In order to strengthen their ties, the daughter decided to make her father a surprise birthday party for his 70th birthday, even though it was a few days before Pesach. She invited all his friends from the Palmach, and asked them to come to the dining room of Kibbutz Tzora, where she had arranged kosher catering. Two of his sons took the father for a walk and then suddenly he came upon 120 friends and relatives waiting for him. He was thrilled beyond words.

The daughter from Tzfas was the first to speak. She said she had thought of the idea, and after asking the Rebbe whether to do it, she opened a volume of *Igros Kodesh* and read, “Mazal tov on the birthday...” And she read the letter to them and concluded her speech with “*Yechi*.”

Her words were warmly received, and the party continued until late at night. Before everybody left, the father asked everybody to wait because he wanted to say a few words. He got up and stood on a chair and announced, “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L’olam Va’ed*,” and that is how the birthday *farbrenge*n ended.

The world is ready, even HaShomer HaTza’ir *kibbutzim* have

begun to get it.

This phenomenon is a reflection of what the Rebbe said on Lag B’Omer 5721: “It will soon be the *yom hilula* of the Rashbi, whose *inyan* and work was to draw down to the other Tanaim, etc., the teachings of *p’nimius ha’Torah* ... Not only that but he opened the channel of *p’nimius ha’Torah* to the extent that even small children began revealing secrets of the Torah. The Rashbi himself said that when it will be close to the days of Moshiach, even the ordinary youth will hurry to find the secret wisdom. Thus, this is an auspicious time for spiritual arousal and increased effort in spreading the teachings of *p’nimius ha’Torah* outward, which in our generation has been revealed in the teachings of *chassidus*.”

If, as the Rebbe said in the *sicha*, even little children revealed the secrets of the Torah, and now it is up to us to spread these teachings, then we have to raise a generation of children that will be engaged in the study of *p’nimius ha’Torah* like in the times of the Rashbi.

Therefore, it is so important to include even the littlest children in all the discussions about the Rebbe MH”M, with an emphasis on generating strong feelings of *hiskashrus*, particularly after we have seen that the Rebbe clearly cherished and respected the role of the little children.

(From a *chassidische farbrengen* with Rebbetzin R. Hendel.)

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NOTHING COMPARED TO THE DEPTH OF THE WISDOM IN TORAH

*Yud-Gimmel Iyar marks 51 years since the passing of R' Yisroel Aryeh Leib Schneerson, a"h, brother of the Rebbe MH"M. * The following is his brief biography taken from Toldos Levi Yitzchok, written by the chassidic author, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Gottlieb. * Free Translation.*

R' Yisroel Aryeh Leib, a"h, third and youngest son of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok and Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, a"h, was born close to Shavuos 5666 (1906) in Nikolayev. Apparently he was named after his uncle, his mother's brother, R' Yisroel Leib HaLevi (who died young), and his great-grandfather Rabbi Yisroel Leib HaLevi Yanovsky, who served as *rosh yeshiva* in the township Romanovka in the Cherson district.

While still a child, R' Yisroel Aryeh Leib displayed incredible genius. He was sharp and deep and incredibly assiduous, studying both *nigleh* and *nistar*. As the son of the town *rav* he was given a quality upbringing, and he was renowned throughout the region.

When he was three years old he was already reviewing Mishnayos by heart. One time, in 5672, his father invited Rabbi Nachum Gorelnik, who was a young *bachur* at the time, to visit, saying, "*Ich vil dir bakenen mit maina zin*" (I want you to meet my sons).

When R' Nachum got to the house, the oldest child [the Rebbe MH"M] wasn't at home, but when he was about to leave he noticed that opposite him, on the other side of the table, sat a small child, his hands supporting his head, bent over a

seifer. The child paid no attention whatsoever to him throughout his visit. He didn't raise his eyes from his *seifer* to take a look at him.

When R' Levi Yitzchok noticed the puzzled look on his guest's face, he went over to the child and took the Mishnayos he had been learning. He asked the boy what he had been so engrossed in, and the child explained the Mishna he had been studying.

R' Nachum was absolutely astounded by the child, who was none other than young Leibel.

Aryeh Leib was known to have a phenomenal memory. When he saw something just one time, it was engraved in his mind forever. He was also sharp and deep, with the mind of a genius, to the point that his father testified that he had "the Tzemach Tzedek's head."

He spent most of his youth at home, where he absorbed the *chassidic* atmosphere and acquired a prodigious amount of Torah knowledge.

The *chassid* R' Simcha Gorodetzky, a"h, who spent some time in the Schneerson home related:

"When I stayed with R' Levi Yitzchok it was during the Nine Days. I saw how Aryeh Leib sat up

all night and completed a *masechta*.

"The boy had incredible talent and was sharp and deep. One night the Rebbetzin called me over to show me how deep was her son's concentration. She went to his room (each son had his own room) and called his name.

Leibel didn't answer. She called him once and again, and he didn't respond. She went over to him and pulled his sleeve, and he still didn't respond for he was so absorbed in his learning. 'See how diligent my son, Leibel, is?' she said proudly."

In the summer of 5684 Leibel went to Leningrad, after the Rebbe Rayatz had also moved there. He would eat with the Rebbe and come and go from his house, and lived there for some period of time.

R' Berke Chein, z"l, would relate:

"On more than one occasion, when I entered the *shul* in the *chatzar* of the Rebbe Rayatz, who was *mekarev* him and cherished him, I would see R' Aryeh Leib standing there, surrounded by outstanding *chassidim* who discussed *halacha* or *chassidus* with him. They asked him questions in *nigleh* and *nistar*, and he would listen and respond, question them and answer their questions, fluently and lucidly."

At this time he also registered for university courses in the city and devoted a certain amount of time each day to them. At the same time he was also (at a later point) one of the organizers of a branch of Tiferes Bachurim, whose goal was to organize students and young men, most of them working folk, and to have *shiurim* everyday and be *m'chazek* them in *mitzva* observance.

R' Moshe Dubinsky relates:

“Once after the conclusion of a *maamer* of the Rebbe Rayatz, the *chassidim* sat down to *farbrenge*. When they asked R' Aryeh Leib to join them, he said he was sorry that he could not join them because he was rushing to give a *shiur* in Gemara. This was an ongoing class and he didn't want to miss it and disappoint the attendees.

“After he finished giving the class

“R' Aryeh Leib pointed out the fact that those sitting there had so much *chochma* and so much *bina*, but they were missing *daas*, feeling, the *hiskashrus* to *chassidus* which they studied so much!”

he joined our *farbrenge*. R' Aryeh Leib pointed out the fact that those sitting there had so much *chochma* and so much *bina*, but they were

missing *daas*, feeling, the *hiskashrus* to *chassidus* which they studied so much!”

Rabbi Uri Ben-Shachar who learned in Achei T'mimim in Tel Aviv related a scene he never forgot (as related by R' Tuvia Zilberstrom who heard it from him):

“It was on the Chag HaGeula of Yud-Beis Tammuz 5699 or 5700 (1939-1940) in the Chabad *shul* in Tel Aviv which was on Montefiore Street at that time. After the official *farbrenge* was over, some *chassidim* stayed on to *farbrenge* “unofficially.” I remember that R' Moshe Gurary, R' Nachum Goldschmidt, R' Pinchas Altheus, as well as R' Yisroel Aryeh Leib, were there.

“R' Goldschmidt, who was a very close friend of Leibel, sat near him. After each of them drank a considerable amount of *mashke*, R'



Goldschmidt began talking to him and making demands on Leibel. And Leibel also spoke and made demands on Nachum. The talk was impassioned, each one spoke to the other with words that came from the heart.

“I was just a boy at the time and I didn’t understand what they said, but the scene remains etched in my mind with the minutest details, as though it took place today.”

R’ Leib once dropped into Tomchei T’mimim in Poland, and as the son of R’ Levi Yitzchok, he was immediately surrounded by *talmidim*. He sat down to talk with Rabbi Yehuda Eber, the *rosh yeshiva*, who began lecturing on a complex topic. R’ Leib sat quietly. People must have inferred that he wasn’t following, but after R’ Yehuda finished talking, R’ Leib amazed everyone with his understanding of the difficult topic.

In 5690 (1930) he had to flee from Russia and he went to Berlin. Leibel’s brother, the Rebbe MH”M, lived in Berlin as well, and together they corresponded regularly with their father, exchanging *chiddushei Torah* in *nigleh* and *chassidus*. From time to time, when their father would send them booklets of his *chiddushei Torah*, the brothers would respond with comments and elaborations.

In *Likkutei Levi Yitzchok* (pages 258-267), we can read the letters that their father sent them on 24 Teives 5692, 19 Shevat and 9 Adar 5692.

While R’ Leibel lived in Berlin, he acquired rare manuscripts for the Rebbe Rayatz’s library, as per the Rebbe’s instructions.

In the summer of 5693 he was no longer able to remain in Germany, and he decided to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel. In order to do so, he urgently needed documents from the Nazi authorities, which entailed great

danger.

Despite the danger, the Rebbe offered to undertake the task and to travel from Paris (where he had moved to in the interim) to Germany, to save his brother. However Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka was concerned for her husband, and she decided that *she* would save her brother-in-law. She traveled to the Nazi government offices in the heart of Germany, and thanks to her self-sacrifice, she succeeded in her mission.

In 5694, after all the required papers had been obtained, R’ Leibel emigrated to Eretz Yisroel and settled in Tel Aviv. He worked as a clerk and librarian in the public library in Tel Aviv to support himself.

At the end of the summer 5699 he married his wife, Genia.

At that time R’ Levi Yitzchok was suffering in exile in Kazakhstan where his wife had joined him, thus no family members attended R’ Leibel’s wedding.

LEARNING A HORAA FROM THE NAME “YISROEL ARYEH LEIB”

On Shabbos Parshas Acharei-K’doshim 5745, the Rebbe held a *farbrengen*. Among the things the Rebbe said was:

“...there’s another *inyan* at this *farbrengen*, and not just another *inyan*, but an essential *inyan*. For as far as the *parshas ha’shavua*, not every Shabbos does a *farbrengen* take place in connection with the *yahrtzeit*.”

And even though it’s a personal matter, still, since the matter was publicized, etc., one should learn a lesson in the service of man to G-d.

Since everything is by Divine providence, so too, the fact that the *yahrtzeit* this year falls on Shabbos Parshas Acharei-K’doshim is also by Divine providence. Therefore, we must find the connection and relevance with what was said before with Acharei-K’doshim.

The lesson from the *baal ha’yartzeit* ought to be learned from his name, as understood from that which is explained in *Shaar Yichud V’HaEmuna* at the beginning, regarding the *inyan* of “the name he is called in Lashon HaKodesh.”

The first name of the *baal ha’yartzeit* is “Yisroel,” and his second name is “Aryeh,” and in addition to that there’s also the nickname for Aryeh – “Leib.” And we know that the nickname becomes part of the name, similar to the name “Elokim,” which is a “nickname” for Havaya, the four letter name of G-d (“Elokim” is numerically equivalent to “*kinui*,” nickname), i.e., being that it is lower than the name Havaya, G-d’s ineffable name, His essential name, His special name, it is still one of the holy names that is not to be erased, to the point that it is a *kinui* for the name Havaya.

And so the meaning of these two names (“Yisroel” and “Aryeh Leib”) is similar to the content of the two *inyanim* of “Acharei” and “K’doshim,” and the joining of the two names together so that they become the name of one man, is like the joining of “Acharei-K’doshim.”

“One day,” writes Rebbetzin Chana in her memoirs, “R’ Levi Yitzchok came home with a big smile on his face. ‘We get a *mazal tov!*’ he exclaimed.

“His smiling countenance and his good spirits surprised me since I wasn’t used to it. He showed me a letter he had just received from Mr. Itkin of Krivairog, who wrote that he had gotten news from Eretz Yisroel that our son, Leibel, had gotten married.

“This news was cause for double and redoubled *simcha*. It was the first we had heard of our son, letting us know he was alive, and it was news about his marriage. It was a spark of light which penetrated the darkness of our exile, and a sign of encouragement and hope for the future.”

Despite the hardships of those days, Leibel tried to keep in touch with the Rebbe Rayatz as well as with *Anash* in Eretz Yisroel. He lived near where *Anash* lived, and he would often join them in their *simchos* and *farbrengens*.

He loved to delve into *maamarei chassidus*, especially together with R’ Nachum Goldschmidt, *a”h*, a childhood friend with whom he had regular *shiurim* in *chassidus*. He spent many a long night with his friend and with R’ Moshe Dubinsky, and spoke to them about *inyanei chassidus*. He would explain deep *chassidic* concepts in his unique style and with wondrous clarity.

The friendship between R’ Nachum and R’ Yisroel Aryeh Leib continued for many years after they had learned together in *cheider*. The connection between them developed into an extremely close relationship, especially from 5694 and on, when R’ Yisroel Aryeh Leib arrived in Eretz Yisroel and R’ Nachum followed.

They met frequently, with R’ Nachum usually going to visit R’

Aryeh Leib at his job at the library. There, the two of them would discuss *chassidus* and other topics.

In 5701 (1941) when his brother, the future Rebbe, arrived in the United States, they reestablished contact. The Rebbe would often send him various books and pamphlets that Kehos published. He was often the first in Eretz Yisroel to have the latest publications, and he would show them to the *chassidim*.

When *HaYom Yom* was published

“What interests me is to introduce, with Hashem’s help, the beauty of Shem in the tents of Yafes, to show the Jewish youth who take pride in and yearn for secular knowledge that it is nothing compared to the depth of the wisdom in Torah.”

in 5703, the Rebbe sent Leibel a copy, and when Leibel received it he was extremely impressed, and he said, “My brother sent me his first book!” When he had calmed down, he said dispiritedly, “It’s a pity that the world doesn’t know and doesn’t see what is hidden within this book.”

On another occasion, when he read something from the *HaYom Yom*, he said in amazement, “I always knew that my brother had a good

head, but I didn’t realize to what extent!”

In addition to his Torah knowledge, Leibel was an expert in languages and other branches of knowledge. As a result, in 5708 he received an offer to move to England. Leibel wrote to the Rebbe Rayatz and asked for his *bracha*. In the Rebbe Rayatz’s response it says:

B”H

17 Kislev 5708

Brooklyn

My friend, grandson of my great-uncle, my honored relative by marriage, the great *baal kishron*, *vosik v’chassid*, man who fears G-d, M. Leib *sh’yichyeh*,

Sholom U’bracha!

In response to your letter of 26 MarCheshvan in which you write of your decision to travel to Britain to work there ... and what interests me is to introduce, with Hashem’s help, the beauty of Shem in the tents of Yafes, to show the Jewish youth who take pride in and yearn for secular knowledge that it is nothing compared to the depth of the wisdom in Torah.

I suggest that on this trip you get acquainted with the various great scientists and linguists, and look into translating the works of Chabad – starting with *Tanya* – into English, a free translation with substantive notes as pertains to the understanding of the *inyanim* and their content.

I am also interested in the history of the Baalei Shem, the *mekubalim*, including R’ Adam, our teacher the Baal Shem Tov, his *talmidim*, our teacher R’ Dovber of Mezritch, his *talmidim*, and their *s’farim* and stories about them...

* * *

In 5710, on accounts of his work and studies, Leibel moved to Liverpool in England. He continued

his studies in science, along with mathematics, giving classes and writing some manuscripts on the subject. Some of these were later published and were found to contain some amazing mathematical innovations.

In Iyar 5712 he had a severe heart attack and was hospitalized. A week later, on Thursday the 13th of Iyar, he passed away at the age of 45. As per the Rebbe's instructions and with his intervention, the *aron* was taken to Eretz Yisroel, and many *Anash* participated in the funeral, paying their last respects to a member of the "royal family." R' Yisroel Aryeh Leib was buried in the Chabad section of the cemetery in Tzfas.

Many years after his passing, in 5737, Rabbi Yechezkel Besser had a *yechidus* with the Rebbe. The Rebbe said to him, "R' Yechezkel, you knew my brother well. Tell me something about him."

After R' Yechezkel said something, the Rebbe responded, "He had a good head, a good memory. He died young – a pity."

R' Dovber Junik tells what happened at the Rebbe's house when news of R' Leibel's death arrived, and about the *Shiva*:

"On the morning of 13 Iyar 5712, I was told by phone to go to the Rebbe's home (which was 346 New York Avenue at that time, corner of President St, 4th floor), as per the request of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka...

"The Rebbetzin said at that time that her brother-in-law's condition was critical, "iz *zei'er nit gut*." Then she added that she didn't know how her mother-in-law, Rebbetzin Chana, would react to the news, and she was afraid for her, '*Ich hob moira far der shviger, vi vet zi dos oishalten?* (I am fearful for my Mother-in-law, how will she survive?)"

"The truth is I hadn't fully assessed the situation, and I concluded that it must have been a heart attack or something like that. After a few minutes of thought, the Rebbetzin asked me to call R' Shmuel Levitin. I did as she asked me to, and I came with him immediately.

"She spoke with him for about half an hour, and only then was she willing to tell me the bitter truth ...

"Early in the morning the Rebbetzin had gone to the pastry shop on Nostrand Avenue where she spoke long distance with her sister-in-law's family in London. That's when she was

told the sad news. By the time she got home, the Rebbe had already left for 770.

"After *Shacharis*, R' Shmuel Levitin went to the Rebbe's room and informed him of his brother's passing. The Rebbe asked whether anybody else knew about it, and he asked that all those who knew the news should come to him.

"They called R' Leibel Groner. R' Levitin tore *kria* for the Rebbe. He began, and the Rebbe finished it, R' Groner assisting. Then the Rebbe wrote a letter to his sister-in-law (I assume a letter of consolation) and asked me to send it.

"The Rebbe sat *Shiva* in his room in 770. Rabbi Chadakov led the *davening* at the *amud* during all the *t'fillos* that took place with the small *minyán*. At the end of the *Shiva*, R' Shneur Zalman Duchman continued to *daven* until (and including) the *yahrtzeit*.

"The *minyán* was one of many tactics that were done so that Rebbetzin Chana would not know about the death of her son, news which could affect her health."

B.H

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IN THE MERIT OF BAR YOCHAI...

In recent years the custom of going to Miron with 18 rotel of wine (approximately 54 liters) on Lag B'Omer (which is brought in the Seifer HaMinhagim) has become widespread. This segula can work wonders, as many can attest. We present a few stories that took place in 5760 near the tziyun of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

By L. Halpern

AND BEHOLD THERE WERE TWINS

Many years went by and Rocheli of Rechovot did not have children. She went to the best doctors, had received *brachos* from numerous *rabbanim*, and had attempted various *segulos*, but nothing worked for her.

Her mother found it hard to visit her daughter, and even harder to host her. When in Rocheli's company, family members were careful about what topics they discussed, trying not to discuss children.

One day Rocheli heard of the custom of bringing 18 rotel of wine to the *kever* of R' Shimon bar Yochai on Lag B'Omer. She figured it couldn't hurt and it might help, so she did the *segula* in the finest way possible. Within a year she was expecting twins.

THE HELP OF HASHEM COMES IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE



"Sarah B. left the *tziyun* with faltering steps, nearly falling with every step she took. I went over to her," says Mrs. S. of Kfar Chabad, "and offered her a drink and something to eat. She sat down next to me but didn't manage to take a bite. She kept whispering, 'Oy tzaros, oy tzaros.'"

"I tried to engage her in conversation, but all she said was that she had many *tzaros*. I wondered how I could help her, how I could cheer her up a bit. I put my hand on her shoulder and said, 'Surely you've heard of the *segula* of donating 18 rotel of wine to the people who come to Miron on Lag B'Omer. Give a donation and maybe Hashem will listen to your prayers and your request.' We exchanged phone numbers and said goodbye.

"I arrived home tired and overwrought. I had completely forgotten about Sarah whom I had met at the *kever* of the Rashbi. About half an hour after I had gone to sleep, I heard the phone ringing, as though through a fog. I decided to ignore it, for what could be that important anyway, and I didn't have the strength to say hello, but the phone didn't stop ringing.

"Every few minutes the ring woke me up again. I decided I had no choice, for if I wanted to get some sleep I had better answer the phone."

"Hello! I thought you hadn't gotten home yet!"

"We got home but I have no strength at all. Please call back in the morning."

“I must tell you that my husband’s lawyer called and said the claim against him was dropped. You hear? Dropped completely. You’re the first one I’m calling. I didn’t even tell my husband yet. Poor fellow, it is already five years since they hit him with a tax evasion claim, and he fled the country. Do you understand? It’s been five years already since they froze all the accounts, the furniture... I have nothing. I don’t even have a husband here in the country to share my problems with. Now, after promising to donate 18 rotel to R’ Shimon, the tax authorities decided to close the case!”

GOING TO MIRON WITH A SHEITEL

Esther is a resident of old Miron and a *bat bayit* of the holy *tziyun*. She says, “There’s an older single girl whom I’ve seen over the years coming to Miron to *daven* for a husband. She comes every few months from Petach Tikva to ask for a *yeshua*.”

“Once when I saw her, I told her I had had enough seeing her coming in her own hair and the time had come for her to marry!”

“One morning at 7:00, the phone rang and woke me up. I didn’t know who could be calling me at that hour, so I picked up the phone and said, ‘Who is this calling so early?’

“I’m getting married tomorrow!”

“So get married! What do you want from me at this hour?”

“Well, it’s because of you!”

“Because of me?”

“Yes, you forced me to donate a sum of money for the guests who come to R’ Shimon, and I was helped.”

Esther suddenly realized who she was talking to.

“I’m coming to donate more money as a gift to R’ Shimon,” said

the excited girl.

RASHBI THE SHADCHAN

“Three years ago I went to a wedding in London,” began Sarah. “On the plane I met Malka from Kiryat Malachi, as well as her son, the *chassan*, and the family. The boy was marrying a girl from London.

“I asked her who the *shadchan* was, who knew both sides on different continents. To my surprise she answered, ‘Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.’

“When she saw the incredulous look on my face she explained:

“The *kalla* came to Eretz Yisroel to *daven* at *kivrei tzaddikim*. She went to a relative of mine who lives in Miron, right after *davening* at the *tziyun*. My relative was greatly impressed by the girl and called me up to suggest her as a *shidduch* for my son.

“Afterwards we met and spoke, and I saw that she was perfect for my son. But there was one problem in that her father would not agree to finalize the *shidduch* without seeing the boy, yet he is *makpid* (particular) about not going to Eretz Yisroel. After much discussion and investigation on both sides, he agreed to come for twelve hours to complete the *shidduch*. Now we’re on our way to the wedding in London. In the merit of R’ Shimon bar Yochai we have this wonderful *kalla*, whom we would not have met if not for R’ Shimon.”

THE SHIDDUCH THAT CAME ON TIME

Yosef went from England to Eretz Yisroel on business. He ran from a meeting in Tel Aviv to an exhibit in Yerushalayim, and from there to Cholon and dinner with colleagues in Savyon, etc.

One day, as he relaxed in his hotel room, he thought, “I haven’t been in touch with the London office

in a couple of days. Maybe something of importance has happened? Perhaps someone is urgently looking for me?” Without thinking twice, he dialed the number of his office and listened to his messages.

The first message was: Mister Yosef, hello, this is Sorai. I heard you were going to Eretz Yisroel in the near future and I hope I didn’t miss you. I wanted to send \$100 with you for 18 rotel for Bar Yochai. You know it’s a *segula* for many things, and I need help with a *shidduch*.

The second message: Yosef, oy, you’re not there.

The third message: ...

The seventh message: (in an emotional tone) Mister Yosef, *baruch Hashem!* I found my *chassan!* I just had in mind to donate the 18 rotel to R’ Shimon and I’m already engaged! Oh, sorry, this is Sorai. I bet you heard my messages and donated it for me...

BEGINNING TO SPEAK

Esther: “Do you hear me talking now?”

“Yes.”

Esther: “Do you hear me well?”

“Yes.”

Esther: “Are you sure?”

(In surprise): “Of course!”

Esther: “If you had called last Friday, you wouldn’t have heard me on the telephone because I had lost my voice. You understand? No sounds came out, even the faintest whisper. I tried everything since last Cheshvan: vinegar, ice, salt, hot compresses, cold compresses, lying down, standing up, any other ideas? I bet I tried them, but nothing helped!

“Last Shabbos the children asked me who would organize the collection of donations for the preparation of sandwiches for the

hordes of people who come on Lag B'Omer to Miron, when I couldn't talk and I had been the one in the past who organized it.

"It's been many years now that we take care of the people who come. I once asked for a donation from someone who said, 'Whoever comes should bring along their own food!'

"Since I live near the *tziyun* of R' Shimon, I know that a woman with *tzaros (lo aleinu)* who gets up in the morning and decides to go to the *kever* of R' Shimon, doesn't think about going to the grocery store to buy rolls and prepare sandwiches to take along. Under pressure she'd either forget them at home, or the bag would tear, or they would drop as she searched through her purse to pay the bus-driver. Then, when she has finished *davening* and feels tired and weak, she doesn't have anything to eat...

"For years now, we have prepared food for the guests. We buy it, prepare it, and pack it up, but this year – how could we do it? The discussion among my children continued, and I *davened* in my heart and asked R' Shimon to help me be able to continue taking care of those who come to him.

"You won't believe this, but Shabbos morning I was able to whisper. By the afternoon I could speak quietly, and by Havdala my voice was back! In the *z'chus* of R' Shimon!"



Writing to the Rebbe at the *Igros Kodesh* stand that was set up on Lag B'Omer



Thousands of Jews exposed to the Rebbe's message and miracles at Miron

(Those who need a *yeshua* and want to donate 18 rotel to the *tziyun* of R' Shimon, can call Israel at the following numbers: 03-

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WHAT'S THE CELEBRATION ABOUT?

By Shai Gefen

INDEPENDENCE FOR WHOM?

We just marked 55 years of Israeli independence. The country watched fireworks and celebrated, but did anybody ask the question: What independence are we celebrating? Or as the Rebbe put it in a number of *sichos*, “Oy for such independence...” This is while we are dependent on the kindness of the nations, and we ignore the recommendations of our security advisors, the main thing being to find favor in the eyes of the *goyim*.

The main Independence Day event took place in Sderot, the *yishuv* that has been hit with dozens of Kassam rockets. Sderot is not on the northern border, nor is it an isolated settlement in Gush Katif or the northern Shomron; Sderot is a city in the heart of the country (Sharon's home ranch is on the outskirts of Sderot). Yet Sharon the hero has still not brought an end to the non-stop rockets shot at Sderot. And they call this “independence.” If a sovereign government cannot protect its citizens in the center of the country, it can't pride itself on its independence!

Sharon will be meeting with the new prime minister of the Palestinian people. Everybody knows what they will be talking about. No, not about Israel's independence and security, but the

Palestinian nation's independence within Eretz Yisroel. We all know what that independence means, the destruction of the independence which they just celebrated. How absurd!

So the question is: independence for whom? Have we still not woken up yet from the illusion of independence which is crumbling before our very eyes, when leaders of the country keep talking about “my strength and the might of my hand,” while they themselves destroy the branch they sit on?

THE TRAGEDY OF THE ROADMAP

The Roadmap is the biggest tragedy in a series of tragedies that began with the first Camp David Accords. We all know what will happen if they implement the Roadmap. The problem is not about the residents of this settlement or that one. It's a problem for us all, including those of us who live in the center of the country. The problem is not one in the future. It's immediate. Just two weeks ago we saw how they butchered young people as Israelis announced concessions. The ink wasn't yet dry when the blast could be heard throughout Tel Aviv.

Whoever thought that concessions and not eradicating terrorism for two and a half years

would lead to quiet saw what happened in Tel Aviv, as they witnessed numerous other similar attacks.

In Nissan 5750, when they asked the Rebbe not to oppose Peres' government, the Rebbe said that just discussing concessions causes our enemies to kill us, *r"l*. And now they're going to entrust the security of millions of Jews in the hands of a lowlife, a refugee from '48 who did his doctorate on the topic of Holocaust denial, and was directly involved in the murder of eleven Israeli athletes in Munich and the murder of twenty-two children in Maalot. So who cares if he's more diplomatic than Arafat? That makes him more dangerous! They exposed Arafat earlier, and Abu Mazen they'll expose only when he gets to the Galil, Jerusalem, and Yaffo?

How on earth can they sell this wise nation a murderer in the guise of Abu Mazen the peacemaker? Even normal members of the Left are laughing over the headlines that guarantee us Gan Eden if we just sign on a peace treaty with him.

TELLING IT LIKE IT IS

Amiram Levin, who was the second in command to the director of the Mosad and a well-known security figure, said in an interview the other week that he should have killed Arafat. “He's a terrorist. He



should have been eliminated. He's a methodical killer who murdered hundreds of innocent citizens, including Arabs. He should have been wiped out. He brought terrorism to the political level and he isn't even deserving of standing before a court."

Levin certainly gets credit for saying things that in the past, Moshe Feiglin, director of the Zu Artzeinu movement, nearly got taken to court for publicizing in newspaper ads. It's all well and good, but the questions are: Where was Levin when he served in a key position in the government? Why didn't he say this then? Why did he act like a scaredy-cat and collaborate with that murderer of innocent citizens? Why do we hear all this from various generals only after they remove their uniforms and resign from positions of influence?

We're in a country that for the last ten years has had 1000 of its citizens murdered by terrorists, but nobody has gotten up and said what ought to be done: to stop, once and for all, any and all concessions, to retake the territories, to annihilate the terrorists, and to maintain unlimited control.

If we didn't understand this because we wanted to appear enlightened before the nations of the world, Hashem sent the world's only superpower to our region in order to show us how to deal with terror.

Thanks a lot Amiram Levin for "exposing" Arafat. The question now is, when will you expose Abu Mazen? Only after there will be nothing left to do?

CONQUERING DAMASCUS

In the Yom Kippur War, the Rebbe said that Israel should conquer Damascus, "If Israel went a few more kilometers and conquered the city of Damascus, there wouldn't be all the *tzaros* we have today, and Damascus wouldn't be a kingdom."

Many people reacted in shock to this statement. It sounded unrealistic, but the Rebbe saw the salvation of *Am Yisroel* in this. As with everything the Rebbe says, we see how the Rebbe's prophetic words have been proven true, as Damascus is one of the most dangerous places for us, as it has directed terror against us for two decades, from Lebanon and even from Syria proper. It's no secret that thousands of ballistic rockets have been sent from Damascus towards us. Back then, the Rebbe saw the need to conquer this country. The Rebbe cried out over the fact that Damascus was not conquered because of fear of the *goyim*.

There's no need to go on at length about the situation when we didn't do what we were supposed to do, and of all nations that it's the U.S. that is forcing Damascus to disarm. What we didn't want to do then, we'll have to do now. Even America realizes that in order to wipe out the enemy, you have to conquer its capitol.

THE SAFEST PLACE

Last month we learned a lesson in *emuna* in the Rebbe's prophecy of Eretz Yisroel being the safest place. While they scared those living in Eretz Yisroel about poison gas and unconventional weapons and they supplied us all with gas masks, it is Hong Kong and China where millions of people are going around wearing masks so as not to catch

We're in a country that for the last ten years has had 1000 of its citizens murdered by terrorists, but nobody has gotten up and said what ought to be done: to stop, once and for all, any and all concessions, to retake the territories, to annihilate the terrorists, and to maintain unlimited control. If we didn't understand this because we wanted to appear enlightened before the nations of the world, Hashem sent the world's only superpower to our region in order to show us how to deal with terror.

JEWISH CHILDREN: THE ULTIMATE BLESSING

The HaYom Yom for the 18th of Iyar says that many wonders were seen on Lag B'Omer, most of them involving the blessing of children for childless couples.

THANKS FOR THEM ALL

Rabbi Yosef Carlebach, *shliach* to Rutgers University relates: About eighteen years ago I met a couple who were married eleven years and did not have children. The doctors they consulted told the couple they would not have children and so they sadly began the adoption process.

When I heard their story I suggested that before they went ahead with adoption they should ask the Rebbe for a *bracha*. At first they refused but after I pestered them, they agreed to write. This was around Yud Shevat.

A few months went by but nothing happened. Once again the couple applied for adoption and seeing this, I wrote a letter to the Rebbe on their behalf. I soon received the Rebbe's answer, "*azkir al ha'tziyun.*" The couple decided to give it another chance and they pushed off adopting.

A few months later I met a relative of theirs in New York. He asked me how they were doing and when I said there was no news he said, "I think something's doing. Call them."

He didn't say more than that, but

I realized something was going on, so I rushed to call them. They told me that the day before they had received a letter from the Rebbe which contained *brachos* that Hashem should fulfill their heart's requests for good. The very same day they got the results from the lab that the wife was expecting.

Nearly a year passed and the couple had a baby girl. They were ecstatic. A few months later, during a routine exam, the doctor told the woman that she was expecting triplets, but there was no chance that

they would be born alive, and the mother's life was in danger.

The couple wrote to the Rebbe for a *bracha*, and this time the answer came swiftly: "The pregnancy and birth will be normal."

Nine months later the couple had triplets, a son and two daughters, all healthy.

One Sunday the couple took all the children to thank the Rebbe for his prayers on their behalf. When the woman passed by the Rebbe she said emotionally, "Rebbe, I want to thank you for the children."

"For which child?" asked the Rebbe.

The woman motioned all around her and said, "For all of them!" and the Rebbe smiled broadly.

THE REBBE DOESN'T MAKE MISTAKES!

Mike entered his house with measured steps and greeted his wife. They exchanged small talk about their day and sat down to supper.

"You know," said Mike to Rikki, "today I spoke with Rabbi Yaakov on the phone, and he told me about a Rabbi Schneerson in Brooklyn. This



rabbi is a miracle-worker. Many sick people were healed with his blessings and couples who didn't have children for years had children."

Mike silently observed his wife's face, knowing good and well what she was thinking. They both thought about how they ran around to many doctors. They had been married for many years and still didn't have children. Not one of the doctors they had seen had found a solution to their problem, so how would a rabbi help?

"So what do you say?" asked Mike.

Rikki finally said, "I think we don't have anything to lose. Maybe something will come of it, so why not go?"

Mike nodded his head in agreement.

They and their local Chabad *shliach* went to the Rebbe for "dollars." The line kept moving until finally, Mike and Rikki were standing not far from the Rebbe. Their excitement mounted as only one person remained ahead of them.

Mike was the first to speak. "Rabbi, please bless us. We've been married for many years and we don't have children."

The Rebbe didn't answer. He continued giving dollars to those standing behind them. A cold sweat broke out on Mike's face. Why wasn't the Rebbe answering him? Was it hopeless?

Rikki also passed by the Rebbe, not understanding what was going on. Suddenly the Rebbe turned to them and asked, "Is this your wife?" while pointing at Rikki.

"Yes," stammered Mike.

The Rebbe took another two dollars and gave it to her: "*Dos iz far di kinder vos vellen geboren veren.*" (This is for the children who will be born)



Mike and Rikki went home, still under the spell of their visit to the Rebbe. Rikki was sure that getting two dollars was a mistake. She thought the Rebbe intended on giving them only *one* dollar. She called Yaakov and asked him how to return the extra dollar. "The dollar bills are new and so they stick together, and the Rebbe thought he was giving us just one."

Yaakov smiled and explained that the Rebbe doesn't make mistakes. "If you got two dollars, there's a reason for that. You can always give one back, but it pays to wait."

A few months went by and Rikki was expecting. Tests showed that she was carrying twins. The dollars weren't mistakenly stuck together.

THREEFOLD BLESSING

On a different occasion, the Rebbe was approached by a couple who had been married for many years without children. It was at the distribution of "dollars," and the couple asked for the Rebbe's blessing. The Rebbe handed them three dollars, with a broad smile on his holy countenance.

A few months later they were informed by the doctor that there were triplets on the way. Only then did they understand the significance of the Rebbe's smile.

Ten months after seeing the Rebbe, the couple celebrated the birth of Levi Yitzchok, Golda Ettel, and Yehuda Hillel.

GALA GROUNDBREAKING ON REBBE'S YOM HOLEDSES IN BRAZIL

This past eleventh of Nissan on the day of the Rebbe's 101st Yom Holedes, a gala groundbreaking ceremony took place in Brazil with the participation of well over one thousand people. The groundbreaking was for a new Center for the Rebbe's outreach programs in the city of Iganopolis, a suburb of S. Paulo, Brazil. Kollel Menachem, headed by the successful emissary of the Rebbe, Rabbi Yitzchak Mishan and his program director Rabbi Yerachmiel Belinov, were the ones that organized the groundbreaking.

About a year ago when Jews all over the world celebrated the Rebbe's one hundredth *yom huledes*, Rabbi Mishan decided to buy a piece of land in the expensive area of Iganopolis. He did this as a gift to the Rebbe MH"M on his one-hundredth birthday. Iganopolis is a city with over 18,000 Jews, both Sephardic and Ashkanazic. It is an area known to most big Jewish institutions, as many come to this area from all over the world for fundraising. Unfortunately things are a bit bleaker with the down turn of the economy all over the world, yet this did not stop Rabbi Yitzchak Mishan who has been the Rebbe's emissary in this city for over 18 years. "The Rebbe always told us that we need to set higher goals and what better time then when going into the 101st year, one over 100," Rabbi Mishan said.

Indeed Iganopolis has never seen a groundbreaking as successful

as this one. In addition to the tremendous turnout of all segments of people, many dignitaries also attended. The one most special to mention is the elder *chassid*, Rabbi Chaim Ben Yemini, *rosh yeshiva* of Petropoulos, Brazil, for well over 40 years, in which almost all the leading *rabbanim* of Brazil and beyond have graduated from his famous *yeshiva*. He recited the new *kapital T'hilim* of the Rebbe, 102, with all the assembled. In addition, a special video presentation was shown of the Rebbe at the groundbreaking event for Beis Rabbeinu, Beis Moshiach – 770. Also shown on video was a presentation from Former Israeli Chief Sephardic Rabbi Eliyahu praising the work of the Rebbe the world over and in particular the work of Rabbi Yitzchok Mishan in Brazil.

The building itself, which is planned to have its first stage finished in 15 months, will have six floors. It is located on more than 2000 square meters, which will have one of the biggest synagogues in Brazil. It will also have a separate *beis midresh*, a *mikva* for men and another for women, a large hall for presentations and lectures, a large Jewish library, and a special area for younger people. "Younger people in this area have no real place for their Jewish activities and to be able to become aquatinted with our rich Jewish heritage," said Rabbi Belinov the Program Director for Kollel Menachem. "We plan on changing

this with this new center," he added. Rabbi Mishan made very clear that this center will not overlap any of the other activities now already in place in this city or in S. Paulo, "only add new programs for all segments" he said.

Part of the groundbreaking ceremony included a program for children and adults. Each adult wrote a letter on a Shma Yisroel plaque that will eventually hang on the walls of the new Center and the children were able to paint various stones that brought out the beauty of Chanuka, and the story of Pesach. A special souvenir was given out to all the percipients, which had the Rebbe's picture holding the stone at the groundbreaking in 770 on Chai Elul 5647 and also had the original Hebrew *kapital* 102 of T'hilim and translation into Portuguese, the language spoken in Brazil. The souvenir also had a picture of the new building, as it will eventually be build on this site.

Special stones were flown in from 770, Yerusholayim, Tzfas, Tevaria, Miron and Chevron and these stones were added into the special ceremony at the groundbreaking. The groundbreaking was carried by all Jewish and many non-Jewish newspapers. In fact, the largest non-Jewish newspaper in Brazil carried a large article about the event. The event was a true *kiddush Hashem*.

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TRY TO BECOME SOMEONE NEW – YOU!

By Roiza Weinreich

Machon Chana is a place where people from different places and diverse ways of life gather and become friends. Before class the teacher asked, “Please introduce yourselves and tell us where you live.” No two responses were alike. The participants were from California, Australia, Toronto, Pennsylvania, Boston, Vancouver, Connecticut and Nevada. I was the only one in the circle from Brooklyn, New York. We were different yet we were alike. The ways in which we were alike were what mattered.

We were all coming to learn and

grow. We wanted more than knowledge. Each of us had some very important needs. Machon Chana's supportive atmosphere was suited for both the beginning and advanced student.

People come to Machon Chana to learn about the life of an Observant Jew. They sit at classes and hear about the ideals. However a theoretical lesson is not enough. When a person contemplates a major life change they want to know more than what's written in a book. The question they must answer is, “Do people really live like this?” Machon Chana helps one answer that question because it's more than just a place where lectures occur. Participants have the opportunity to live the life of an observant Jew. The schedule includes prayer groups, challa baking classes, an hour of customized study with a partner, tours of the kitchen and tours of the mikva. In addition a Jewish scribe demonstrates how mezuzos are created. Finally teachers are there to answer questions 24/7 and no one feels afraid to ask. After meeting any of these wonderful teachers one could say, “If I can become like this person it is worthwhile to adopt this lifestyle.”

Although I have lived the life of an observant Jew for 40 years and have studied in religious schools I learned things at Machon Chana that I have never known. I gained a love of the observance that I'm following and a feeling of happiness. Now, I feel happier than I felt before because my life has meaning and purpose.

Machon Chana helped us all access an expanded consciousness. We walked among the trees and flowers and felt closer to God who created this. Machon Chana was comfortable. The food was great. The day camp was fun for the kids. It was like a camp for Mommies. I don't ever recall being able to study under the trees or in a gazebo. Once

when we had a class with Shimona on the large deck a hummingbird flew in and sat for a few seconds on the flowers that hung all around the deck. We all noticed. The lesson paused as we all gazed at this wonderful ethereal visitor together. We felt that Hashem was smiling upon us.

Hashem was definitely smiling upon this place. I don't have the words to say it accurately. When you entered the lobby you saw pairs and clusters of people bending over a Jewish text. This was a place where meaningful conversation surrounded you as you ate lunch. My two year old amazed me. She came home from day camp singing the Modeh Ani. There was a special feeling of closeness to Hashem that I sensed every time I drove up, turned the bend and saw the gazebo. I had arrived at Machon Chana. I just felt that Hashem loves this place. It was a synthesis of the spiritual and the physical in one place.

I know that Machon Chana transformed us all. I gained a feeling of enthusiasm in Jewish observance. It felt great to teach and to be so enthusiastically received. And the friendships last. I have half a dozen Machon Chana friends who I speak with at least twice a month. There are another thirty friends who I keep in touch with via E-Mail. I taught at Machon Chana and I learned there. As a result of that learning my life as an observant Jew is more productive than it was before.

FAQ:

What programs does Machon Chana offer? Live and Learn Program: This program for women of all ages gives students an opportunity to advance in their Torah studies in a highly stimulating yet informal setting. The curriculum includes classes in Parsha, Tanach, Halacha, t'filla, Talmud, Rambam and Jewish home. Chavrusa

and skill classes help students build proficiency in Hebrew and Chumash. Almost every class included texts in Hebrew only or Hebrew and English. There are always two simultaneous Tanya classes-Beginners and advanced.

Women's Kollel: This program is designed for married women already committed to a Torah Lifestyle, seeking in-depth learning. There are advanced classes, programs and evening lectures. This program included deep Chassidic explorations. As one lecturer warned, "Put on your seatbelts and get ready to soar." This program is spiritual bliss.

Men's Kollel: Husbands who want to learn in depth although they have scant prior knowledge have daily classes in Talmud and Chassidus. With prior notice, arrangements can be made for additional private learning. During the weekends there are parallel programs for men and women.

Evening Programs: A variety of programming is scheduled nightly. In addition to Judaica crafts and movements workshops, public speaking and parenting skills are offered. Some of the lecture topics: Science and Torah, the Environment, Jewish Medical Ethics and Life after Death, Dreams, and Israel. I heard a world renowned physicist who was a candidate for the Nobel prize.

Day camp and day care: Machon Chana was a dream come true for mothers. The day camp hours corresponded to the lecture hours so that mothers could attend all classes. Day Camp was more than a babysitting service. The children learned about a different mitzva each day with song and crafts. They had trips and nature walks. Children davened in a group every day. There was a junior *minyán* on Shabbos as well as a Shabbos party.

Shabbos: The best spiritual boost is to spend time growing together as a family. NO matter what the level of observance everyone feels comfortable at the prayers. There is a lot of singing during davening and people are shown what to say. The Torah portion is explained. ON Friday night the women

sit on the porch and sing the Friday night prayers together.

Each Shabbos meal is an extraordinary experience. There are stories, lessons on the Torah portion, singing and even dancing.

There are also classes throughout the Shabbos featuring guest speakers who only can come up for the weekend. During the Seuda Shlishis women share their stories and experiences related to the topic of that particular weekend. Usually this meal ended with everyone learning a chassidic niggun and singing it together.

On Motzaei Shabbos there is a panel discussion followed by a long question and answer session.

What do all the programs have in common? "This is a wonderful place where women can learn how to be empowered as intelligent, modest and fine people." Joyce Buckman

"Getting this intensive taste for learning here gave me the push I needed. You have changed my life." Lori Nacht, Baltimore MD

Is the program suited to the beginning student? "I was not brought up observant, so I am a beginner. I loved the program-couldn't get enough of it-was accepted just the way I am-was not judged. I felt I could ask things without feeling stupid. My interest in Torah was ignited, as has my interest in Tanya. I will definitely be changing my life and putting things into practice back home. This was a real catalyst for me. I feel I have come home. Thank you from the bottom of my heart." Bambi Ward; Sydney Australia

"I came here with many questions and concerns about Chassidus etc. I am very impressed by all the friendly and open people working here. All my questions and concerns were dealt with." Vanessa Rabinowitz; Toronto Canada

"At Machon Chana there is tolerance and acceptance of each and every Jewish soul." Cindy Gold, Great Neck, NY

What about the advanced student?

"Machon Chana meets the needs of every Jewish girl/woman regardless of age or level of Yiddishkeit. I have several grown children and have been frum for a long time yet I gained an invaluable amount of knowledge, intellectual and spiritual. Shabbos was wonderful. The classes were of the highest caliber and I learned ideas that relate to my life."

Mindy Small; Pittsburgh, PA

What is a typical day like?

The schedule begins with two simultaneous classes in Tanya beginner and advanced. Afterwards there is Shacharis. There were four prayer groups offered ranging from no knowledge of Hebrew text to people for whom prayer is second nature. Following a delicious breakfast there was rich morning program of text based classes. There were two lecture slots and frequently three fascinating rabbis teaching at the same time. The main problem people had was that they couldn't be in three places at once.

The lunch always had a main dish a salad two side dishes and desert. It was followed by free time in the afternoon. Hikes, and trips were organized. However one could also simply relax at the pool take a walk in the woods or join an informal discussion.

The afternoon lectures offered a lighter and more practical approach. The focus of these lectures was on understanding how to integrate lofty ideals into daily life. Some topics were – overcoming adversity, steps to success, finding joy, elevating our daily life.

At supper you felt that you were in a restaurant. Finally in the evening there were private classes with a study partner followed by an evening program that featured workshops, discussion groups, and crafts classes.

"This program gave my mind a real workout and broke through my heart!!!" Shulamit Banchik, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

For information or to register for this summer Call Machon Chana at 718 735 0030 or Sara Labkowski at 718 774 4812.