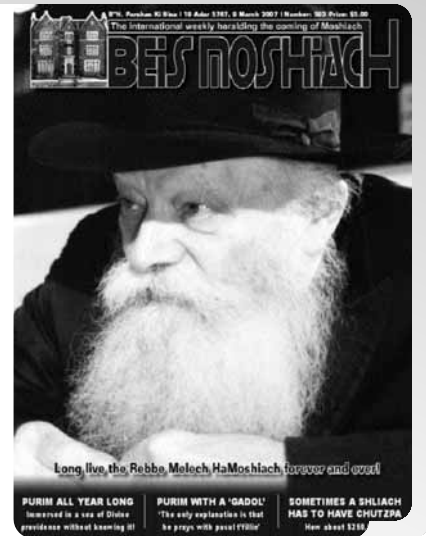


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The international weekly heralding the coming of Moshiach
BEIS MOSHIACH

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Beis Moshiah (USPS 012-542) ISSN 1082-0272 is published weekly, except Jewish holidays (only once in April and October) for \$130.00 in Crown Heights, \$140.00 in the USA & Canada, all others for \$150.00 per year (45 issues), by Beis Moshiah, 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY and additional offices. Postmaster: send address changes to Beis Moshiah 744 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409.

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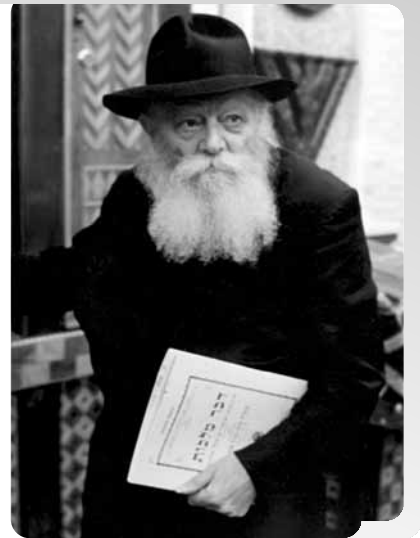
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THE PLEASURE OF PREPARING FOR PESACH

LIKKUTEI SICHOS VOL. 16, PG. 122-128
TRANSLATED BY BORUCH MERKUR



Concerning the commandment, “They shall eat...on this night...matzos” [Parshas Bo 12:8] – that on the night of the fifteenth of Nissan, while still in Egypt, the Jewish people were required to eat matza – we find a wondrous thing. For at first glance:

Regarding the commandment (in Parshas R’ei [16:3]) of eating matzos that applies throughout the generations, the Torah says: “seven days you shall eat matzos, bread of affliction (*lechem oni*), because you left Egypt in haste.” From this it is learned [Gemara P’sachim – see Footnote 3 in original] that the matza must be specifically “bread of affliction,” not rich matza (*matza ashira* [i.e., matza whose dough is made with ingredients such as wine, oil, honey (P’sachim 35a), or fruit juice]). And since regarding the Pesach celebrated in Egypt mentioned in our Torah portion [i.e., Parshas Bo] “bread of affliction” is not mentioned, the implication is that the Jews could then fulfill the obligation of eating matza also with rich matza.

Accordingly it is understood that, although the observance of Pesach throughout the generations requires that the matza must be specifically “bread of affliction,” regarding the redemption from Egypt itself there was also the possibility of using rich matza. However, this was the case only **before** the Exodus (and as a preparation for it), not at the time of actually **leaving** Egypt (for then the Jews ate “bread of affliction” [see FN 6]).

2. The Pesach that was celebrated in Egypt is the source and root for the Pesach celebrated (and the matza eaten) in future generations. It is, therefore, understood that the concept mentioned above regarding the Pesach celebrated in Egypt (that as a preparation for the Exodus from Egypt, there was room for the possibility of rich matza) must be (represented) also in the Pesach celebrated throughout the

generations.

It says in Mordechai [FN 7: End of P’sachim, discussing the laws of the seider, citing Rabbeinu Meir; contrary to the ruling of Rambam in Laws of Leaven and Matza, Ch. 8] that “in the time of the Holy Temple they would perform the entire seider after the meal and they would only eat matzos to fulfill the Mitzva after their bellies were full, etc.,” and “in their days, they would eat rich matza for their meal” [ibid, end of the Tractate (119b)] (in order that the blessing of HaMotzi (...Who Brings Forth Bread, etc.) said for the meal should not be said upon a matza which would later – during the seider – be used to fulfill the Mitzva of Eating Matza).

In fact, there is a sort of **semblance** of this law that is also found in present times (although we conduct the seider **before** the meal): The law is that on the Eve of Pesach (before the tenth hour of the day), although we may not eat matza [see FN 10], it is, however, “permissible to eat rich matza” [Tur *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chaim 471:2; *Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe*, ibid 471:4]. We may assert that the fact that *Shulchan Aruch* (Torah) literally permits, from the outset, the eating of rich matza then (when we prepare for Pesach and the Exodus from Egypt) indicates that on the **Eve** of Pesach the Torah gives room for the possibility of rich matza.

3. Regarding the directive of eating **bread of affliction** (mentioned above), the verse explains the reason for the directive: “because you left Egypt in haste” (and of consequence, “the dough did not have time to rise” [Rashi on this verse]).

And since “bread of affliction” excludes not only **leaven** [see FN 14] but also rich matza (as mentioned above), it follows logically that “because you left Egypt in haste” is also the reason why we cannot fulfill our obligation with rich

matza.

We must understand: How is “because you left Egypt in haste” a reason for the fact that we do not fulfill our obligation with rich matza?

4. From the same verse mentioned above (from its beginning), “Do not eat leaven with it; seven days shall you eat matzos with it (because you left Egypt in haste),” we learn that one can fulfill his obligation of eating matza only with [matza made of] “ingredients that ferment” [when they are used to make matza —Rashi ibid]. [FN 15: P’sachim 35a; Rambam ibid, 6:4; *Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe* Orach Chaim section 453, beg.]

(The connection of “because you left Egypt in haste” to **this** law and the manner by which it serves as a reason for it can simply be expressed as follows: Since, regarding the Pesach observed in Egypt, the dough was such that it **could** have become leaven and **only** on account of the “haste” “did [it] not **have time** to rise,” therefore, also the matza that we eat as a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt must be from “ingredients that ferment”; there must be due cause for this to be prevented. [FN 16: As it is said: “You shall guard the matzos.” See *Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe* Orach Chaim section 453:14; see later in the text as well as FN 20.] **We must watch out** to prevent leavening, as a remembrance of the Exodus of Egypt, remembering the circumstance of, “you left Egypt **in haste**.”)

Since regarding these two legal classifications – a) rich matza and b) ingredients that don’t ferment – the Torah applies the same reason (“because you left Egypt in haste”), it is, therefore, understood that the latter two categories of matza, in general, have the **same** deficiency with respect to using them to fulfill the obligation of eating matza.

On the other hand [there is a subtle distinction, as follows]: The law of rich matza is first mentioned in the context of the Pesach celebrated throughout the generations [i.e., it did not apply to Pesach in Egypt] (as discussed above in Section 1). However, also with regard to Pesach in Egypt there was the law (in the general sense) that the matza of the night of Pesach must be (made of such a dough that) “can come to be fermented.” [FN 17: Wording of the Alter Rebbe, *Shulchan Aruch* 462:1, end. That is, not only does the **grain** need to be of “ingredients that ferment” (for that is learned from, “Do not eat leaven with it,” as mentioned above in the

text), but also the **dough** must be of the type that can come to be fermented and that requires guarding, as it is explained at length in the *Pesach Hagada: With a Collection of Reasons, Customs, and Explanations* (Kehos 5746-7), pg. 397 ff. (and there the matter is elucidated).] This law is derived (in the Yerushalmi [P’sachim 2:4]) from the verse, “You shall guard the matzos” [FN 19: In our Torah portion [i.e., Parshas Bo] 12:17. (I.e., they were commanded in that regard while still in Egypt.)] – that we fulfill our obligation only with “matza that requires guarding” [see FN 20]. Although regarding the Pesach celebrated in Egypt the obligation to eat matza could have been fulfilled with rich matza, nevertheless, it had to have been of the type that “requires guarding.” (For example, by mixing water into the fruit juice, which brings the dough to ferment. In fact, it speeds up the fermentations

process. [FN 21: See in this regard *Tur Shulchan Aruch* Orach Chaim 462:2; *Shulchan Aruch of the Alter Rebbe* Orach Chaim 462:3.]

5. The explanation of all of this (according to the inner dimension of the matters discussed) will be understood through elaborating on the distinction between “bread of affliction” and rich matza, in terms of Divine service:

“Bread of affliction” is made from a dough that is composed only of flour and water. Water has no (and does not contribute any) taste. Rich matza, on the other hand, is made from a dough kneaded with wine, oil, honey [P’sachim 35a] (or other fruit juices [see FN 23]), ingredients which give flavor to the dough.

The significance with respect to Divine service: “Bread of affliction” signifies the service of receiving upon oneself the yoke of Heaven (not on

account of “*geshmak*” [i.e., because it is perceived as being “tasty” or pleasurable]). Although one may have no rationale in his mind in matters pertaining to G-dliness, and (of consequence) no *geshmak* in them, nevertheless he serves G-d with obedience. Whereas, “rich matza” represents the service spawned from reason and knowledge – the fact that one perceives in his service of G-d a “*taam*” (a “taste” or reason), a *geshmak*.

When the service of a Jew is only done with obedience, lacking the “*taam*” of intellect and emotions, he is in a state whereby, with respect to his intellect and emotions, **there is room for the possibility** that he will not do it, a possibility for evil. It is only on account of the power of obedience that he suppresses the evil (which is the Divine service known as

Although the matza of Pesach must be specifically “bread of affliction,” the Torah permits eating rich matza on the Eve of Pesach (when we prepare for Pesach), indicating that the Torah gives room for the possibility of rich matza.

“iskafia,” suppression) and he serves G-d. However, when the service is done with reason and knowledge (in its most complete expression), the intellect and emotions **negate** the possibility to do the opposite of the Supernal Will; there is no evil (which defines the service called “is’hafcha,” transformation or sublimation).

And this is the connection with the two types of matza (rich matza and matza made from ingredients that don’t ferment): In terms of the inner significance of the matters discussed, one aspect is a result of the other. Namely, service that is in a manner of “rich matza” (in its most complete expression) – stemming from the intellect and emotions – **automatically** negates the possibility of leaven and evil [see FN 25] (like rich matza in the literal sense, which (ordinarily [i.e., when no water is mixed in, fruit juice (alone) will not cause fermentation (P’sachim 35b, beg.) – see FN 26]) **cannot** become leaven).

It is specifically (the Divine service of) “bread of affliction,” obedience, that lends itself to the possibility of leaven and evil (“can come to be fermented”). However, the evil is suppressed; we do not permit the expansion of rising and leavening. This is accomplished through [the Divine service of] “You shall guard,” work and involvement [i.e., a hands-on involvement to prevent the expression of evil].

6. These two manners of Divine service find expression, in a general sense, also in the two general manifestations of redemption: the redemption from Egypt and the future redemption.

Regarding the Exodus from Egypt it says [B’Shalach 14:5], “for the nation fled” (haste), reason being that “the evil in the souls of the Jewish people was still **in its strength**” [Tanya Ch. 31; see FN 31]. Thus, we had to run away from evil (“the defilement of Egypt” [ibid]) Indeed, this is the concept of “bread of affliction,” the Divine service of suppression. Whereas, in the Future to Come it will be, “not in haste shall you go” [Yeshayahu 52:12], “the spirit of defilement I will remove from the land” [Zecharia 13:2], [symbolizing] a state of sublimation, “rich matza.”

And this is the explanation of how “because you left Egypt in haste” is the reason why the matza of the night of Pesach cannot be rich matza (and not matza made of ingredients that do not ferment). Namely, since “you left Egypt **in haste**,” being that the evil was still in its strength (as mentioned above), it demanded the service of obedience and suppression, specifically “bread of affliction.”

7. The fact that we cannot fulfill our obligation on Pesach with rich matza is not only because what it represents does not **resemble** the redemption from Egypt, which was in a manner of, “the nation **fled**” (obedience and suppression, as mentioned above), but also on account of the fact that “bread of affliction” (and likewise, the redemption from Egypt) has an advantage over rich matza (and the redemption of the Future to Come):

Although in the case of sublimation (rich matza) the evil is entirely nullified, there is still an advantage in suppression. Namely, the fact that specifically **this** service is connected with the **toil** of the person, battling with opposition and overpowering the evil.

In different terms: The concept of sublimation expresses how the person becomes **united** with G-dliness, through the

fact that he is purified, to the extent that his being does not permit any room for evil. Suppression, on the other hand, expresses **nullification** and submission to G-dliness – that although with respect to the person’s intellect and emotion there is room for evil, he forces himself to do the opposite of what **his** being demands and instead fulfills the Supernal Will.

This is one of the explanations of the fact that also in the future redemption there will be the remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt [FN 34: Mishna Brachos Ch. 1, end. And it is said, “As in the days of your departure from the land of Egypt, I will show him wonders” (Micha 7:15), “As there was for the Jewish people on the day of their ascent from the land of Egypt” (Yeshayahu 11:16).], for the ultimate intent is that there should be **both** advantages. Namely,

even when a person has achieved sublimation – the complete purification of his being, to the extent that there is absolutely no place for evil – there should also be the advantage of suppression [see FN 35] (which is associated with the redemption from Egypt), the **nullification** of the person, which is expressed in work and toil.

8. The Alter Rebbe explains in *Torah Or* [Shmos, beg.] that the fact that it says regarding the **redemption from Egypt**, “I shall bring you up, also ascend” [FN 37: VaYigash 46:4. And in *Torah Or* mentioned above: So too in Shmos Ch. 3, verse 14, G-d told Moshe about the final redemption, etc.] – two elevations – comes to include a second ascent, which will occur with the future redemption.

It is, therefore, understood that (precisely as the concept of the redemption from Egypt will be “mentioned” – it will

When the service of a Jew is only done with obedience, lacking the “taam” of intellect and emotions, he is in a state whereby, with respect to his intellect and emotions, there is room for the possibility that he will not do it, a possibility for evil.

be efficacious – in the future redemption, so too in the converse, also) with regard to the redemption from Egypt there must be perceived and felt (the promise and **speech** [FN 38: which is considered an action (B'Reishis Rabba 44:22, among others)] of the Holy One Blessed Be He pertaining to the) the future redemption.

The explanation of the matter: How can one effect in himself that also when the evil is in its strength (and even **after** breaking himself, the evil still remains in its strength (just like regarding the Exodus from Egypt, which had to be, “the nation fled”)) he should have the power to wage war with the evil (and to be victorious over it)? It helps to have the recognition and perception that ultimately, the service of suppression will lead to sublimation.

Thus, even before the onset of the redemption from Egypt, there was the mention and proclamation concerning **both** elevations: “I shall bring you up, also ascend,” [i.e., there was mention of] also the future redemption.

9. The fact that we mention the future redemption in the context of the redemption from Egypt means not only that we proclaim a concept that will be **in the future**, but also that it is a source of strength to be translated into a person's Divine **service** in present times – that immediately in the beginning of service (the exile of Egypt) there should be a semblance of the future redemption.

At first glance one can ask: Since we are still at the initial stages of the service of G-d and the evil is still in its **strength**, how can there be (even) a semblance of the future redemption, which is characterized by sublimation (that there is **no** evil)?

The response: Although in the beginning of the service of G-d there is not the concept of **nullification** of (the existence) of evil, for which reason the service is in a way of waging war and obedience (as mentioned above in Section 5), the nullification and obedience must not be (only) in a way of forcing. Rather, the nullification itself must be connected with the person's “**being**”; his intellect and emotions should also consent to the nullification and obedience. Then, one's service of obedience is with a *geshmak*.

That is, the future redemption as it is expressed in the redemption from Egypt is not the service of intellect and emotions unto themselves (which would eventually lead to sublimation, as mentioned in Section 5), but an aspect of the service of suppression (associated with the redemption from Egypt) – that the service of obedience is with pleasure.

(Similarly, the concept of the redemption from Egypt, which will be mentioned in the Future to Come, is an aspect of the future redemption: The primary ascent of the future is the purification of the person's being (sublimation), but the purification will not be measured and limited only to the amount of purification that **he** accomplishes (corresponding to his being), but surpassing the capacity of his being (the advantage of nullification).)

10. This also explains why the matza that the Jews ate in Egypt (as a preparation to the Exodus from Egypt) could have been rich matza [see FN 39], but on the other hand, it had to be “matza that requires guarding”:

In light of the integration of the future redemption with the redemption from Egypt, there is the possibility for rich matza also while **in** Egypt. However, the fact that in Egypt there can be a semblance of the future is only with regard to

the detail of “rich” – that the **obedience** itself should be with a *geshmak* – but not with regard to the concept of “it cannot ‘come to be fermented’” (sublimation); this cannot be when the evil is still in its strength.

11. This [point regarding rich matzos], however, is only applicable when we are still in Egypt, before the redemption. But departing from Egypt, after the redemption (so too with regard to the matza that we eat on the night of Pesach, a remembrance of the **Exodus** from Egypt), must be specifically “bread of affliction.” [See FN 40.]

The explanation of the matter: The Exodus from Egypt accomplished that the Jews no longer were “the servants of Pharaoh” and they became “the servants of G-d.” That is, they were

then holding by **accepting His kingship**, may He be blessed, which precedes the obedience of fulfilling G-d's **commandants** (as the Sages say, “One should first receive upon himself the yoke of the kingship of Heaven and thereafter he should receive upon himself the yoke of Mitzvos [Mishna Brachos 2:2. See Mechilta Yisro 20:3 among others]).

In **this**, a person mustn't mix in the concept of his being, as the Sages say: the punishment of one who gestures before the king is the opposite of life [Chagiga 5b. See *Likkutei Sichos* Vol. 4 pg. 1050 and FN 13 there]. And therefore, in this, there cannot be the “*taam*” and *geshmak* of rich matza, because receiving the kingship of the Holy One Blessed Be He (**becoming** servants of G-d) is only through “bread of affliction,” **absolute** nullification.

(From the addresses of Acharon Shel Pesach and Shabbos Parshas Shmini 5726)

The nullification itself must be connected with the person's “being”; his intellect and emotions should also consent to the nullification and obedience. Then, one's service of obedience is with a geshmak.

A DAILY DOSE OF MOSHIACH & GEULA: 19 ADAR – 25 ADAR

*Selected daily pearls of wisdom from the Rebbe MH”M
on Moshiach and the Redemption.*

COLLECTED AND ARRANGED BY RABBI PINCHAS MAMAN, SHLIACH, RISHON L'TZION, ERETZ YISROEL
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

19 ADAR I: THE EXILE IS PART (THE BEGINNING) OF THE ASCENT

The purpose of the Exile is the spiritual elevation of the Jewish People to a level higher than in the times of the Beis HaMikdash.

It is, therefore, understood that the descent into Exile is the beginning and part of the ascent that follows.

(Likutei Sichos, Vol. 5, p. 62)

19 ADAR II: THE ULTIMATE PERFECTION OF MOSHIACH

“What is Moshiach’s name? The Sages say that his name is Chivra D’Beis Rabbi (“Chivra” means “Metzora” (leper) —Rashi), as is said, ‘He has borne our sicknesses and endured our pains, yet, we deemed him stricken, smitten by G-d, and afflicted.’” (Sanhedrin 98b)

Metzora is the name of Moshiach in the time of Exile, and even if he is the culmination of perfection from his standpoint, as is written, “Behold My servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and uplifted, and he shall be very lofty,” nevertheless, he personally suffers and endures the pain and affliction of the Exile.

(Shabbos Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5751)

20 ADAR I: WHEN THE DARKNESS OF THE EXILE DOUBLES – THE REVELATION OF THE REDEMPTION ALSO DOUBLES

Even when the darkness of the Exile grows more intense, a Jew must not be affected by it – quite the contrary:

Knowing that the descent of the Exile is a descent for the

purpose of an ascent, one increases in his avoda with greater fortitude and greater strength, and adds in the candle of mitzva and the light of Torah in order to nullify and transform the darkness of the Exile.

Furthermore, it is specifically the intensity of the descent of Exile that brings the greatest elevation. In fact, the greater the darkness of the Exile, the greater the intensity of the elevation in the Future to Come, and when the darkness is doubled, this shows that the light and revelation of the Future to Come will also be doubled.

(Shabbos Parshas VaYitztei 5742, bilti muga)

20 ADAR II: TZADDIKIM IN THE FUTURE WILL BE CALLED HOLY

Our Sages, of blessed memory, have said (Bava Basra 75b): “In the future, they will say ‘Holy’ before the tzaddikim, in the way they say before G-d.”

And behold, it is known that all the revelations of the Future depend upon our actions and our avoda throughout the time of Exile.

...the revelation of the Future, that “in the future...tzaddikim,” etc. (referring to all Jews, as is written, “and Your people are all righteous”) will come as a result of the avoda in the time of the Exile in the fulfillment of the command of “And you shall sanctify yourselves and be holy” – sanctify yourself in what is permissible to you. Even that which is permissible to you, optional matters, must be sanctified, as is written (Mishlei

3:6), “Know Him in all your ways.”

(Seifer HaSichos 5751, Vol. 1, from p. 72)

21 ADAR I: TWO STAGES AND LEVELS IN THE FULFILLMENT OF MAN IN THE FUTURE TO COME (A)

This world is a time of war between good and evil, “and one nation shall be stronger than the other” – sometimes the good will prevail and sometimes the evil.

In the days of Moshiach, when the Jewish People will complete the war and they will purify the good from the evil, and the evil will be removed from the good and they shall go out from the Exile, they will reach man’s level of perfection as it was prior to the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, when Israel will not be under the domination of “the Tree of Good and Evil,” but there is still [domination] of the evil forces in the world within the mixed multitude.

(T’shuvos U’Biurim 11)

21 ADAR II: MOSHIACH AND THE TORAH

“If a king will arise from the House of Dovid who is learned in Torah...and will compel all Israel...and fight the wars of G-d...” (Rambam, Hilchos Melachim 11:4)

The task of Moshiach is the restoration of the laws of the Torah in full measure. The test to verify this is derived from the matter itself, in three details:

Learned in Torah – he is personally devoted and dedicated to Torah and its fulfillment. **Compel all Israel** – he achieves this level of perfection among the entire Jewish People. **Fights the wars of G-d** – he removes all barriers to the fulfillment of the Torah placed by the nations of the world, such that “they will be available for Torah and its wisdom, and they will have neither oppressor nor abolisher.”

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 18, p. 81)

22 ADAR I: TWO STAGES AND LEVELS IN THE FULFILLMENT OF MAN IN THE FUTURE TO COME (B)

This is in addition to the World of Resurrection, when the spirit of impurity will be removed from the earth and there will be neither sin nor death in the world, for G-d will slaughter the evil inclination (Sukka 52), the angel of death. Then there will be the ultimate perfection of man – not only according to the degree of his avoda and its compensation, but [also] what he receives as a gift from

Above: “tzaddikim dwell with their crowns upon their heads, taking pleasure from the radiance of the Sh’china” (Brachos 17). After man reaches his ultimate level of perfection, he receives the highest reward, inconceivable to us.

Furthermore, this reward is received below, specifically a soul within a body, for then there will be the ultimate perfection of the purpose for which the world was creation from the outset: to be a dwelling place for Him in the lower realms.

(T’shuvos U’Biurim 11)

22 ADAR II: MOSHIACH WILL CORRECT THE WHOLE WORLD AND BRING THEM TO SERVE G-D TOGETHER

In addition to the perfection of Moshiach himself, “Behold My servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and uplifted, and he shall be very lofty,” Moshiach will “correct the whole world to serve G-d together,” as is said, “For then I shall turn unto the nations, etc., to call all of them by the Name of G-d,” at the True and Complete Redemption, immediately, mamash.

(Likkutei Sichos, Parshas Balak 5751)

23 ADAR I: WE NEED SELF-SACRIFICE TO BRING MOSHIACH

There is a recently reprinted letter of the “Minchas Eliezer,” where he writes explicitly and unambiguously that we need self-sacrifice for Moshiach Tzidkeinu to come, and this self-sacrifice is derived from the self-sacrifice for the three matters regarding which it is said, “Be killed and do not transgress.”

(Shabbos Parshas Mikeitz 5744)

23 ADAR II: EVERYTHING DEPENDS UPON US

The obligation has been placed upon our generation to complete the elevation process of the Heels of Moshiach and to continue drawing the revelation of Moshiach below into this physical world.

Even with a brief contemplation on these matters, it should grip a person with fear and trembling that all the awesome matters mentioned in the words of the Sages, of blessed memory, on the subject of Moshiach and the revelation that will be then, all depend upon our avoda.

(Likkutei Sichos, Vol. 23, p. 458)

It should grip a person with fear and trembling that all the awesome matters mentioned in the words of the Sages, of blessed memory, on the subject of Moshiach and the revelation that will be then, all depend upon our avoda.

24 ADAR I: THERE WILL BE A CONTINUATION IN THE REDEMPTION TO WHAT WAS DECIDED IN THESE TIMES

Even after Moshiach comes, there will remain a continuation from the Torah and Divine service (and the good resolutions) in the time of the Exile, as is known in the explanations of the saying of our Sages, of blessed memory (P'sachim 50a), "Fortunate is he who comes here and his learning is in his hand." The preparation and tool for the revelations and the avoda in Gan Eden, and subsequently in the Redemption, is through, "his learning is in his hand," the majority of which is connected with the time and place of the Exile. Thus, we take the Torah into Gan Eden and the Future to Come (even though Gan Eden and certainly the Redemption are the opposite of the Exile).

Similarly, we find regarding the overall service in these times: "this ultimate perfection of the days of Moshiach and the Resurrection of the Dead, etc., depends upon our actions and avoda throughout the Exile" (Tanya, beg. of Chapter 37).

(Shabbos Parshas D'varim 5751)

24 ADAR II: USING CHUTZPA IN HOLINESS

"On the Heels of Moshiach, chutzpa will increase" (Sota, end of Chapter 9).

This "chutzpa" should be used for the side of good, to request and claim from G-d, to the point of the greatest "chutzpa" and demand that Moshiach Tzidkeinu should come in actual deed. Surely G-d will be satisfied by this claim and demand, and in fact, He will fulfill it.

(Adar Sheni 27, 5746)

25 ADAR I: AN "INSINCERE" STUDENT CAN NOT ENTER THE BEIS MIDRASH

The Gemara relates (Brachos 28a) that on the day that

The righteous women of our generation, in whose merit we shall be redeemed, are the righteous women in whose merit we were redeemed from Egypt.

Rabbi Eliezer ben Azarya became the nasi, they removed the guard at the entrance and gave permission to the students to enter, for Rabban Gamliel had proclaimed and said that any student who was insincere (literally, whose inside was not as his outside) could not enter the beis midrash, and on that day, many benches were added (four hundred or seven hundred).

Rabban Gamliel's order of conduct resembled the Future to Come, when "I will make pass the spirit of impurity from the earth," "no insincere student can enter the beis midrash," for from the aspect of the level of holiness in the Future to Come, there is no room for a concept to the contrary (according to Rabbi Shammai's conduct of "self-appraisal").

(Shabbos Parshas Shmos 5752)

25 ADAR II – BIRTHDAY OF THE REBBETZIN CHAYA MUSHKA: IN THE MERIT OF THE RIGHTEOUS WOMEN IN THAT GENERATION

In relation to the Future Redemption, it is said, "As in the days of your going out of Egypt, I will show you wonders," i.e., this Redemption will be in the merit of the righteous women of the generation, as in the sayings of the Sages, of blessed memory (Midrash Zuta Rut): "The generations are only redeemed in the reward of the righteous women of the generation," and particularly according to what is explained in the writings of the Arizal – that the generation of the Future Redemption is a reincarnation of the generation that went out from Egypt.

Accordingly, the righteous women of our generation, in whose merit we shall be redeemed, are the righteous women in whose merit we were redeemed from Egypt.

(Parshas Bo, Parshas B'Shalach 5752)



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SMALL MIRACLES: IT'S PURIM ALL YEAR LONG!

BY ARYEH GOTFRYD, PH.D.

Surely the Divine providence we do detect is but a pale glimmer of the immense and diverse Divine providence we don't. Like the hundreds of radio waves in which we are invisibly bathed, we are immersed in a sea of Divine providence without even knowing it!

PART I: SERENDIPITY

"Wow. To bump into you now after all these years, just when I was thinking of you!"

"Meanwhile, quite independently, another scientist had just discovered the same thing, half way round the world."

"And after all that, where did the waste happen to land when Haman's daughter dumped it out the window? On her father's head, of course!"

Why do things like this happen? They seem too fluky to be accidental. Yet there is no apparent cause. Some people call it luck. Some call it Divine providence. Perhaps science has an explanation.

For example, take the first case – just as you think about someone, they call. What are the possibilities? Let's propose three: (a) absolute

randomness, no cause; (b) G-d did it; (c) Natural causes, e.g., maybe one person's energy field preceded him, making an impression on the first person's consciousness.

Let's take a closer look at these three options: (a) On the surface at least, the dumb luck argument makes some sense, (assuming of course that something that's dumb can be smart). Let's say every person has some 300 friends and acquaintances they could bump into. There are only so many places to go and everybody's going somewhere sometime, and having had things in common in the past, you might wind up with a similar travel itinerary once in a while and.. Bingo! a chance occurrence that looks meaningful.

(b) The Hand of G-d argument makes sense too. Two friends who lost touch, little nobodies in a big world of

billions reunite in a faraway place, and just when one was thinking of the other? Who could have organized that except for a Being with control of all the details and a bit of a sense of humor to boot?

(c) The aura argument has some merit too. There are a host of related phenomena, Kirillian photographs, mind over matter experiments, thought transference, remote viewing. All these fringe phenomena seem to have something to them and now even a well-grounded theoretical framework (See the book, *Zero Point Field* by Lynne McTaggart) to make sense of it all.

While they all make sense, each type of argument has its downside.

(a) Since dumb luck really is dumb, it can't do anything except describe the range of possibilities that have been created by something else – a something else that is anything but dumb – a creative entity that generated the possibilities that the mathematics of randomness merely describes.

Once the possibilities are on the table, chance only measures the likelihood of the outcomes. But as for the details of what exactly happens to whom when? Chance has nothing to do with that. Moreover, there is absolutely nothing in statistics or

probability to deny the very real possibility of some intelligent agent operating on individual events, manipulating details while leaving overall patterns unaffected.

So the dumb luck argument is no explanation at all. It is as unscientific as it is unsatisfying, because for the scientist, the very existence of a phenomenon – in our case the serendipitous meeting of friends – is proof of some cause that could explain it. “Caused by chance” is not only unscientific, it is an oxymoron.

(b) On the other hand, to say simply that G-d did it, an answer that by definition will apply to pretty much everything, does not tell you much about what is going on or why. This is one of the things that bugs the anti-intelligent-design lobby (I always wonder where I should put the hyphen... anti-intelligent? or anti-design?). Their concern is that ascribing all cause to Heaven leaves us with nothing more to understand. As such, they claim, the “G-d did it” argument has nothing to do with science.

They could have been right except for a few small points. (i) Cause-and-effect reasoning leads inexorably to the necessity of a First Being, therefore the “G-d did it” argument has *everything* to do with science; (ii) Analyzing the positive and negative properties of that First Being in a philosophical manner yields a treasure trove of information about man and nature and how they do indeed work; (iii) The Torah tells us how to look at coincidences, namely, as messages from the Creator to suggest how we can improve our ways.

(c) The scientific approach has its disadvantage, too. As important and interesting as it is to understand the mechanics of natural and social interactions, it leaves a big hole in our

picture of what’s going on: The explanation. Science adds level upon level to our *descriptions* of things but takes us no further to understand the *purpose* of things.

In our first example above, why did one friend sense the other before they met? It wasn’t *because* of the aura, it was *by means of* it. Why did they happen to meet just there and then? Science will never know. *Why* is just not a scientific question. Even if we were to trace each friend’s path in life all the way back to birth, we would not be able to figure out the reason, only *how* it came about.

Our last example above, the



daughter dump on Haman’s head, is even more poignant. This was but one in a long chain of low probability events that had all combined for a unified purpose: To save the Jews in a most beautiful way. We see Divine justice, both punitive and rewarding, in full regalia and glorious detail, despite no hint of any supernatural event, nor even passing mention of G-d’s name.

Consider: A bona fide miracle of Biblical proportions without even rippling the fabric of nature. If that’s what happened during Purim, what’s going on today? Surely the Divine providence we do detect is but a pale

glimmer of the immense and diverse Divine providence we don’t. Like the hundreds of radio waves in which we are invisibly bathed, we are immersed in a sea of Divine providence without even knowing it!

Divine Providence: Chance processes conceal it, the Hand of G-d dispenses it, and the details of how it all works inspires us. But at the end of the day, it’s Divine providence operating constantly, and that gives us enough joy to make it Purim all year long.

PART II: CHUMASH, MEGILLA, AND IGROS KODESH.

The Sages teach that in the Days of Moshiach, all the Prophets and Writings of Tanach will be nullified except for the Scroll of Esther. Why is the *Megilla* so special? Chassidus explains that the common factor between Moshiach and Purim is *atzmus*, the very essence of G-d. Moshiach has a soul of that level, and the Purim miracle expresses G-dliness at that level as well.

It sounds very futuristic and theoretical, but the fact is that small-

scale Purim-like miracles are already happening daily, and by the thousand. Whenever someone needs the Rebbe’s advice or assistance in any matter, be it spiritual or physical, the Rebbe is available to respond, even more than before.

What strikes me as most Purimesque about corresponding with the Rebbe is that little moment between reading the Rebbe your letter, and reading the Rebbe’s reply. The moment I am referring to is the moment you open the book.

Imagine. Fifty years ago, someone wrote to the Rebbe about something. Then the Rebbe wrote him back. A

copy of the letter was put on file. Then some twenty years ago, the Rebbe chose some thousands of these responses to publish in dozens of volumes, *Igros Kodesh*. You buy these volumes and they sit on the shelf.

Now it's you that has a problem. You know the Rebbe is here, aware, attentive, and helpful as before even though you cannot see him. You prepare yourself spiritually and emotionally for this moment of connection. You write him a letter, confident that he sees and understands exactly what's going on with you. Perhaps you picture yourself before the Rebbe, handing him your note. Maybe you read it to him out loud. You take your letter and approach the bookshelf, hopeful that you will merit a reply, some clarity, a blessing.

Which volume should I pick? Does it really matter? You know it doesn't, that there is something much bigger than you going on and all you really need to do is empty yourself of ego. Just don't get in the way; be a channel for Divine blessings. You take a volume and hold it in your hands.

Who will push my fingers to the right place? How do I know the Rebbe's letter is really for me in my situation? Will he answer me? What will I do if he doesn't? Does no answer mean don't do it? Or do as you see fit? What about my mashpia? Should he interpret it for me? Do I read all the letters, even those that start or end pages earlier or later? And how much is relevant? Just what relates to my question? Or other things too?

What's really going on when you open the book? HaKadosh Baruch Hu is guiding you, not to the inch, not the centimeter, but to the millimeter! He knows what's on your mind and he has prepared for this moment decades ago. The letter is waiting for its next reader and it's author knows what he wants to tell you.

We believe that the letter we 'receive' in this way is the Rebbe's answer to us personally, even though

the Rebbe is not physically before us, and he did not tell us which volume to choose, nor to which page number we should turn. And most remarkably the letter is not even addressed to us.

The key notion for a Chassid is this: The Rebbe will find a way to answer. He will not forsake his Chassidim. Whatever his methods are is *his* business. If he needs to 'employ' Hashem to make it work, so be it. We know that a Rebbe has 'keys' to health, success, fertility, and so on. Why not the key to specific Divine providence as well?

All of these functions are really Hashem's. But the tzaddik is trusted by Hashem yet serves the people, so he has access to Hashem's treasury of blessing and Divine power, helping us the best he can.

As strange as it all seems, it's not a new idea. We read in Parshas Tetzaveh about the Urim v'Tumim, the responses encoded by the High Priest's breastplate. Our Sages explain that the letters on its jewels would light up thereby spelling out advice regarding issues of national security and justice. As one Chassidishe Rav put it, the *Igros Kodesh* is our Urim v'Tumim.

To give but one example, about seven years ago, I had just finished giving a *Tanya* class for a few students, and one of them asked me if I could help him write to the Rebbe. He wrote his heartfelt concerns, chose a volume of *Igros Kodesh*, inserted it randomly within and then asked me to translate the Rebbe's response into English.

The Rebbe's letter took me aback. He wrote to the effect that "Regarding the proposed sale of shares which you possess. As this would involve a loss, it would be better to wait until the share price goes up and then sell so you could make a profit."

As I was reading the letter to my student, I had no reason to expect any instruction to me from the Rebbe, but this was unmistakable. For as it happened, in my entire life up to that point, this was the one and only day

that I owned stock. Not only that, I had already given the order to sell that very day and the sale was to be effected first thing in the morning.

The story was that I had written a book called *Living in the Age of Moshiach* (available at Merkaz Stam) and had found a donor to pay the costs of publication. Stocks were donated to a charitable organization for the purpose and I had ordered them liquidated to use the proceeds as planned. The Rebbe's instruction came as a complete surprise.

I asked my student, "Do you own any stock?"

"No," came the answer.

"Are you planning to sell any properties or assets?"

"No, Aryeh. That part of the Rebbe's answer had nothing to do with me. If it suits you, get used to it!"

I called the donor right away, even though it was getting late and said, "I want you to call your broker right away and stop the sale of the shares."

"Why?" came the bewildered response.

"The Rebbe said so." I said simply, knowing the donor to be a staunch believer.

"Okay."

That very day, the donated stocks of Eriksson shot up about 15% due to a telecommunications deal of some sort that they had made, which instantly earned the project \$2,000, enough to include the color photo section in the middle of the book that we were previously planning to forego due to limited funds.

I guess the Rebbe wanted not only the words, but the pictures, too. It underscores the fact that the Rebbe's Kabbalas P'nei Moshiach Campaign is not only about ideas, it's about the man that embodies them, too.

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MO'OS CHITIM

To All Anash and Temimim שי

Sholom U'vrocho!

Throughout the years, during the Rebbe's Purim Farbrengen ("Thirty days before the Chag (Pesach)"), the Rebbe would customarily remind and urge everyone concerning the importance of contributing Tzedakah for "Mo'os Chitim."

It is well known that "Kupas Rabbeinu" endeavors to continue implementing all of the holy projects and activities which the Rebbe has established. Amongst these activities is the Rebbe's practice to extend financial aid to those families in need of their various Pesach necessities.

Accordingly, we are at this time urging and requesting each and every Anash member and Tomim שיחי to contribute generously to "Kupas Rabbeinu," in order to enable the administration to provide for these families and thus afford them with the opportunity to celebrate Pesach with contentment and joy.

Regarding this Mitzvah it is stated: "Whoever increases (in giving) is praiseworthy."

Unfortunately, the amount of families in need of this financial assistance is more than generally assumed. As such, the more generous your contribution to "Kupas Rabbeinu," the greater the number of families receiving assistance will be.

And since, with regard to all Mitzvahs we are instructed to act with Simcha and zest, it is all the more pertinent with regard to the aforementioned, as it is of paramount importance that the funds be received and distributed as soon as possible.

In the merit of Tzedakah which hastens the Geula, may we merit the true Geula Shlaimah, with the revelation of Melech HaMashiach - The Rebbe Nasi Doreinu, immediately, Mamash.

Chag HaPesach Kosher V'Sameach

Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu

P.S. 1) The traditional "Magvis Yud Shevat, Purim" can also be sent at this time, as well as all other Magvios.

2) All funds should be sent to the following address only; Donations are tax deductible

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INNER REDEMPTION THROUGH THE INNER DIMENSION OF THE TORAH

BY BORUCH MERKUR

*What exactly is Chassidus and how is it specifically geared towards refining – and even transforming – the Animal Soul? * Part 4 in the series Warrior Within.*

[Continued from issue 591]

CHASSIDUS IS THE YECHIDA, THE ESSENCE

As opposed to representing a distinct dimension of the Torah, Chassidus, the essence of the Torah, having no form of its own, is expressed through the four dimensions of the Torah and adds vitality and insight to them. The underlying principle operating here is described in *On the Essence of Chassidus* as follows: “As a result of the revelation of the essence, all the lower levels are elevated.”

In the same manner, the essence of the soul (Yechida) channels life into the four lower aspects of the soul (NaRaNaCH):

The level of Yechida, being that it is an essence, does not negate the four lower aspects of the soul. On the contrary, it is the essence of all individual levels. (For this is one of the distinction between “revelation” and “essence.” Namely, “revelation” is something particular. Therefore, those things that are not a revelation (of it [i.e., the particular revelation] – they are not it, and being that it is revealed and expressed), it negates them [i.e., all other expressions], which is not the case with regard to an “essence”; it is the essence of every single thing [i.e., every

particular expression, and certainly not a contradiction to its existence]). Therefore, one of the principle emphases of Chassidus is the unification of the particular expressions with the essence [from which they derive].

Chassidus shows how all the particular forms of expression – the four aspects of the soul, the four dimensions of Torah (Pardes), the particular effects of Chassidus, the four lower worlds, etc. – are bound with the Yechida, the essence. (This is discussed and exemplified at length in *On the Essence of Chassidus*, but is beyond the scope of this series.) In so doing, the essence itself is revealed in the particular form.

On this basis, the Rebbe explains how the qualities mentioned above stem from the essential point of Chassidus:

All the innovations ascribed to Chassidus – in Torah (including bringing its Mystical dimension to be revealed⁴), in the Divine service of man (conduct that is beyond the letter of the law and changing the nature of one’s character traits,⁵ in the world at large (arousal from a state of faint⁶) – are not innovations that occur independently. Rather, Chassidus is a new vitality, essential vitality from the aspect of Yechida, and when this new vitality of Chassidus was drawn into the world...all aspects of the world began to live with a new vitality, an essential vitality, and of consequence, many new manifestations resulted.

Thus, the abstract, elusive quality of Chassidus has very practical implications, rejuvenating and revolutionizing every area through which it finds expression.

THE ULTIMATE WEAPON AGAINST THE EVIL INCLINATION

For our purposes, in the discussion of how Chassidus is particularly suited to arm the Warrior with the ultimate

weapon against his Evil Inclination, it is now clear how Chassidus, the essence of the Torah, achieves this goal, for the impact of the essence is most pronounced specifically in the lowest form of expression:

According to the principle that “their beginning is wedged specially in their end,”⁷ to whatever extent Chassidus is drawn down to lower levels – to the extent that it transforms the nature of the Animal Soul (the “outside” that exists within a person, and even lower, refining one’s portion in the world, the “outside” that is external to the person) – this expresses to a greater degree its essential quality.

Actually, all dimensions of the Torah have this effect of refining, but it is most prominent in Chassidus, as the following passage explains in detail:

*Just as the aspect of Infinite that exists in Chassidus is **in a general manner** in all the dimensions of the Torah (as above, Section 3), so too with regard to the manifestation of the Infinite through its being channeled downward to the ultimate low, transforming it too and making it a vessel for G-dliness – this principle applies also to Torah in general (though the concept is primarily apparent in Chassidus).*

Thus, our Sages say, “I have created the Evil Inclination; I have created for it Torah, [to be for it as] spices.”⁸ For at first glance, this is extremely puzzling: Of all the worlds, this world is the lowest, there is none lower than it.”⁹ And in this world itself, the Evil Inclination, [of which it is said] “The Holy One Blessed Be He regrets having created it.”¹⁰ And since even the higher worlds are of no consequence compared to Torah...how much more so then, at first glance, is there no basis for saying that the creation of Torah is in order to be spices for the Evil Inclination?

*But according to the above explanation it is understood: The essence of Torah, which is united with the essence of G-d, may He be blessed, finds expression specifically in the fact that it is **spices** for the Evil Inclination, being that the power to spice the **Evil Inclination** and transform it to **good**¹¹ is derived specifically from the essence of G-d, may He be blessed.*

The explanation of this is that all revelations, even the most lofty, being that they are restricted to the boundary of light and revelation, then the existence of evil – the opposite of light – opposes them. Of consequence, they don’t have the power to transform it to good (except to battle it, until it is utterly destroyed). Only the essence of G-d, may He be blessed, which is perfect in its simplicity in the ultimate sense, negating all forms, and also to which there is no concept of opposition to it – of consequence, it has the power to change it and transform it to good.

It is true that it is no small mission the Warrior is charged with in battling and transforming the Evil Inclination. The advent of Chassidus, the ability to channel the very essence of the omnipotent G-d to even the lowest possible levels, including and especially the Evil Inclination, was therefore,

vital in enabling us to succeed in this challenge.

NOTES:

⁴ Footnote 40 in the original: for only with respect to the natural order (Seider Hishtalshelus) of the Torah is there this limitation – that the Torah’s dimensions of Literal, Allusion, Homily should be revealed, whereas the Mystical dimension remains concealed. However, with respect to the **essential nature** of Torah, the level of Yechida, there is no distinction between its Mystical dimension and the other dimensions; also the Mystical dimension is able to be revealed.

⁵ Footnote 41 in the original: with respect to the four lower aspects of the soul (NaRaNaCH), the person maintains a sense of his own existence, which, however, is devoted to serving his Creator. Nevertheless, since he maintains a sense of self, the intent of his service is: 1) for the sake of revelations [i.e., reward] (which in general is conduct according to the letter of the law, as explained in the discourse “Pada V’Sshalom,” s’if 376, mentioned above) ... 2) not in order to change the **nature** of his character traits; it is, rather, just that he reserves his character traits for the service of G-d and etc. Whereas, with respect to the Yechida, he has utterly nullified any sense of self. Thus, 1) there is nothing he wishes in return for his service – conduct beyond the letter of the law; 2) also the **nature** of his character traits are transformed (from Severity to Kindness and from Kindness to Severity and etc. [as required of the person to serve G-d properly]).

⁶ For being in a faint only relates to the revealed [aspects of the soul], not the essence of the soul, the aspect of Yechida, for which reason it can be revived.

⁷ Seifer Yetzira 1:7

⁸ Kiddushin 30b

⁹ Tanya Ch. 36, beg.

¹⁰ Sukka 52b

¹¹ Footnote 114 in the original: According to what is written inside the text, the phrase, “I have created the Evil Inclination; I have created for it Torah, [to be for it as] **spices**,” is understood. For at first glance, one would suppose that the Evil Inclination should be **nullified** (which is indeed also accomplished through the Torah, as our Sages say (Kiddushin ibid), “draw it to the **study hall** – if it is a stone it will **dissolve**, if it is iron it will **explode**”). Whereas, spices do not destroy the dish. Rather, **on the contrary**, they enhance it and make it tasty.

Regarding the need to destroy it – this applies when “this lowlife met up with you – [meaning] the Evil Inclination **incites** you.” However, the essence of the Evil Inclination, which is the power of desire in its essence [i.e., prior to it being attached to any specific object] (see *Likkutei Torah* Chukas 56d, Rosh HaShana 61d), needs to be **spiced** and transformed to good, as inside the text.

And that is why they said, “**I have created** for it Torah, [to be for it as] **spices**,” for “I have created...spices” refers to the **essence** of the Torah, which is the purpose for which it was created [i.e., to spice and transform the Evil Inclination so that it can be utilized for good]. Indeed, the essence of Torah is expressed (not in annihilating the Evil Inclination, but) in transforming it to good, as discussed above inside.

PURIM WITH THE 'GADOL HA'DOR'

Part 6 in the series "Stories from the Chabad House"

BY RABBI YAAKOV SHMUELEVITZ, MENAHEL OF THE CHABAD HOUSE IN BEIT SHAAN

As I drank on Purim and while fulfilling "ad d'lo yada," I was reminded of the Chazal, "the descendents of Haman learned Torah in B'nei Brak," and of two stories that happened in Beit Shaan and B'nei Brak in connection with Purim and in connection with Torah study, which "they fulfilled and accepted."



A few years ago Beit Shaan was blitzed with Mivtza Mezusa. Every Motzaei Shabbos, ten T'mimim from Tomchei T'mimim of Migdal HaEmek volunteered to come to Beit Shaan. They split up into pairs and went from house to house and (literally) from door to door taking mezuzos to be checked. They would return them the following week after they were checked, voluntarily, by Rabbi Zecharia Guri of Taanach.

When they would finish their work, at about ten in the evening, the bachurim would come back to my house for Melaveh Malka at the conclusion of which they returned to yeshiva in Migdal HaEmek.

On one occasion, at one of those meals which took place before Purim that year, I told the T'mimim, "Ten T'mimim are sitting around the table. Going around the

table, I request that each of you take a turn and say a brief thought, just two or three sentences, from a sicha or maamer of the Rebbe about Purim."

They did so. Each one took a turn and said a Chassidische idea that no one had said before him. We all heard a summary of ten inyanim of Purim.

A RABBI WHO OPPOSED THE REBBE AND MIVTZAIM

Why did I ask them to do this? The answer is more interesting than the question.

Not too many years ago, there lived in B'nei Brak a certain rosh yeshiva who, for reasons unknown, regularly opposed Chassidus in general and Chabad in particular. He even dared to publicly protest against the Rebbe's holy campaigns.

He opposed the Lag B'Omer parades and he expressed himself in terms that are not appropriate in the world of Torah and Judaism.

What was especially disturbing about all this was that this rosh yeshiva was admired by a certain broad segment of the public and there were (and are) many who refer to him as a "gadol," "gadol ha'dor," etc. He publicly addressed political issues and his perspective and words were quoted in the media and were discussed and debated in Eretz Yisroel and the world over.

The Rebbe referred to what this rosh yeshiva said in a few sichos. One time (Erev Shavuot 5740) the Rebbe wondered how "a son of Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov could speak that way" against Lag B'Omer parades. The Rebbe said

that the only explanation is that he prayed with *pasul t'fillin*.

On another occasion (Shabbos Parshas Tzav 5750) the Rebbe sadly protested the rosh yeshiva's calling non-observant Jews "those who eat rabbits." The Rebbe said that every Jew is "this nation I formed for Me, My praise they will say."

During this period of time the Chassidic and Misnagdic newspapers in Eretz Yisroel debated and discussed the rosh yeshiva's opposition to Chassidus, Chabad, and the Rebbe, and this was the talk of the day.

A SPECIAL HOBBY

It was at this time that I developed a special hobby. Whenever I drove, I tried to take hitchhikers who needed a ride in the direction I was going. Occasionally I took bachurim or men who belonged to that group that pledged allegiance to that rosh yeshiva and considered him a "gadol ha'dor."

Naturally, since I am a Lubavitcher and they were "Misnagdim," we would get to talking about the views of their gadol. At that point I would ask the bachur or man whether he could tell me a d'var Torah from his gadol. You might be surprised to hear this, but I did this dozens of times and *nobody could repeat a d'var Torah in his name*.

As time went by I perfected my approach. When I saw that they had nothing to say I would emphasize that it made no difference to me what topic they picked, they should just say a d'var Torah in his name. It could be on the parsha, on Gemara, Halacha, Agada, whatever they liked, but it should be a d'var Torah, not *hashkafa* (ideology) or

politics.

When that approach produced no results I began to promise my poor hitchhiker that if he could tell me a d'var Torah in his gadol's name, I would take him directly to his yeshiva. That didn't help. My luck ... I couldn't find a single person who could repeat a d'var Torah of his.

One time, and you won't believe this story, three bachurim who learned in the yeshiva of that rosh yeshiva in B'nei Brak, got into my



Rabbi Shmuelewitz at a Purim seuda

car. We had a long ride ahead of us and I began my questioning. Nu, I said to them, you are students of that gadol ha'dor, so could you tell me a d'var Torah of his? I've been trying for a long time now but haven't heard a single one, maybe you can help me out?

Poor them. They tried to encourage one another to come up with something but didn't find a thing to say. They got out of the car ashamed and upset.

There's a continuation to this story:

A few days later I met a friend from that yeshiva (we had met the previous Nissan when a group came from the yeshiva to Beit Shaan for the organization Pe'ilim and they stayed at the Chabad house for an "oneg Shabbos" till the wee hours of the night). I told him about my encounter with three of his friends, about my hobby, and the results (or lack thereof).

He found out who the three bachurim were and a few weeks later he told me that these bachurim had made a firm commitment. Since they could experience the same thing again – that someone might ask them to repeat a d'var Torah from their gadol and they wouldn't have anything to say – they would **make up** a d'var Torah, as though their gadol had said it. Then they would have something to say.

Did you hear that, dear readers? Three bachurim who sit and learn in the yeshiva of that gadol ha'dor, are afraid that someone will ask them something and instead of going to their teachers and asking, they choose to invent something.

One day I was driving in B'nei Brak and a student of the rosh yeshiva got in for a ride. I immediately asked him my question and got the usual result.

The man then asked me whether I would say a d'var Torah from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The truth is that for half a second I was speechless. I was never asked this question in return, but I quickly recovered and said: You want a d'var Torah from the Rebbe? Fine. Just tell me what topic, what parsha, what masechta

(tractate) would you like, on which mitzva? Whatever you choose – I'll tell you amazing insights from the Rebbe.

And don't think I'm a genius who learned an exceptional amount of the Rebbe's teachings. I'm not! It's just that whatever we have from the Rebbe is divrei Torah. The Rebbe came to a farbrengen, and spoke for four, five, six, seven hours. What did he talk about? Only divrei Torah! On the parsha, on an upcoming Yom Tov, on a siyum of a masechta, on the Rambam, Rashi, Nigleh, Chassidus, Kabbala, just divrei Torah. All that we have from the Rebbe, even timely subjects, all begin and end with divrei Torah. There are Torah sources, quotes, it's all divrei Torah. So whatever topic you pick, I will immediately tell you a d'var Torah from the Rebbe.

The Rebbe wondered how "a son of Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov could speak that way" against Lag B'Omer parades. The Rebbe said that the only explanation is that he prayed with pasul t'fillin.

He actually chose a topic and I said what I said, and we said goodbye.

Now, back to our Melaveh Malka. As I sat together with the ten T'mimim, I wanted to check and see whether each of them was in fact fluent with inyanei Torah and Chassidus from the Rebbe. Baruch Hashem, each of them proved what I knew ahead of time, that with us, the Rebbe is truly the gadol ha'dor, and there is significance to this phrase for every Chassid who is connected with the Rebbe and learns his Torah, Maamarim, Sichos, and Igros Kodesh.

Let us continue to base our outlooks and way of life and ways of living on the Rebbe, on the hundreds of s'farim that have been written of his teachings. May we very soon learn Torah from Moshiach Tzidkeinu, with the revelation of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach!

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THE SENSE OF SMELL

BY RABBI YOSEF KARASIK, DISTRICT RAV BEIT CHEFER – EMEK CHEFER

*Why will Moshiach judge with his sense of smell? How does the sense of smell differ from the other senses? Why is smell associated with the powers of the soul and not the powers of the body? How is the nose different from the other parts of the body? * This and more in the following article about the sense of smell and the K'tores which is described in Parshas Ki Sisa * A fascinating look at the parsha from the perspective of Chazal, Kabbala, and Chabad Chassidus.*

BURNING THE INCENSE

The mitzva of K'tores (incense) in this week's parsha is one of the central services in the Mikdash. The Midrash says, "G-d said to the Jewish people: of all the sacrifices you offer to Me, nothing is as beloved as the K'tores." It says in the Zohar that although all the sacrifices give pleasure to G-d, He has no greater pleasure than from the K'tores, which is the loftiest service of all. As soon as the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, he brought the K'tores.

The K'tores has many properties: 1) it prevents epidemics, illness and negative occurrences, 2) it wards off the punishment of exile, 3) it wards off the punishment of Gehinom (Purgatory), 4) it brings blessing and salvation to man. To understand why the K'tores is so special let us first study the sense of smell and its properties.

AN AMAZING STORY OF THE YENUKA AND BAR KOCHVA

The Yenuka was a young child and a wondrous and exceptional figure who was admired by the kabbalists, the students of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, the inner circle of the holy Zohar. His father, Rav Hamnuna Sabba, was a holy and distinguished man who walked the pathways of Heaven. After he passed away, two of the senior kabbalists, Rabbi Yitzchok and Rabbi Yehuda, went to visit his widow.

She wanted her orphaned son to be blessed by these two sages and was surprised when her son refused, saying, "I will not be blessed by someone who did not recite the Shema on time this morning!" (They did not recite it because they were involved in an urgent mitzva and "one who is involved in a mitzva is exempt from a mitzva.")

When his mother asked him how he knew this, he said, to their

amazement, "I smell and know which mitzvos you did and which you didn't do!"

This answer shook up these two tzaddikim and they kissed him with great love and wonder. Although the Yenuka did not officially join the group of kabbalists of the Zohar, his teachings and sayings appear in the Zohar. About him it is said that he was an "angel of G-d," "G-d protects him with His wings," and that his teachings were so lofty that the likes of them were not heard since the day the world was created!

It is also said of the Arizal that he had an unusual sense of smell and knew people's spiritual state.

Regarding Moshiach it says that he will have a special sense of smell and will judge with it and not with what he sees or hears. The sense of smell is a deciding factor with regard to Moshiach to the point that the Sages concluded that Bar Kochva was not the true Moshiach since he could not judge with the sense of smell!

Bar Kochva led the great rebellion against the Romans, who ruled Israel years after the destruction of the second Mikdash. At first he succeeded in expelling the Romans from large parts of Eretz Yisroel and he ruled in Yerushalayim for more than two years. He was about to rebuild the Beis HaMikdash and it reached the point that the great Tanna, Rabbi Akiva, thought he was Moshiach!

At a later point, some of the Sages decided that Bar Kochva was not Moshiach and therefore they considered him a *rodef* (one who attempts to kill or cause the death of another) and he was killed by the

Romans. Their proof that he wasn't Moshiach was that, among other things, he could not judge with his sense of smell.

THE SENSE OF SMELL CONTRASTED WITH THE OTHER SENSES

At first glance, the sense of smell might be thought to be not as important as the other senses, for a person without the sense of smell is not considered handicapped. He can live and experience a normal life, but someone who lacks the sense of sight or hearing is handicapped and experiences many difficulties in daily life.

Furthermore, eating and drinking are vital to life. We cannot live without them. But the sense of smell is not mandatory for life and one can live without it. If a person just smells pleasant fragrances and does not eat and drink, he cannot live, because scent alone is not enough to sustain life. Only food can supply the energy that we need to live.

(The ability of food to give life to the body is derived from its G-dly power, since the soul is higher than the body, the soul being spiritual and the body physical. In order to connect the two, a higher, G-dly force is necessary. Food provides that power, for food contains within it G-dly sparks, "the utterance of the word of G-d which is within the bread," and this has the power to preserve the connection between body and soul for a good, healthy life. The sense of smell by contrast, which does not supply energy and life – for one who only smells a fragrance cannot live – is seemingly lacking in G-dly power.)

However, in many places we find the sense of smell being of enormous importance: 1) A pleasant aroma is calming, as the Maharsha says: fragrance dissipates worry and pain. 2) A sharp smell can rouse someone from a faint, whereas food cannot. (Although food supplies energy and

life and preserves the connection between body and soul, it cannot restore that part of the soul that departed the body in a faint. Only smell can restore the soul to the body.) 3) A sharp smell can arouse someone from sleep, whereas food does not. On the contrary, too much eating brings on tiredness.

So the effect of smells in joining opposites, body and soul, is stronger than food. Whereas food can only preserve the status quo (that the soul continue to give life to the body), smell can recreate a connection when there has been a break (so that the soul that departed, returns to the body).

The ability to join two things requires greater strength than that which is necessary to maintain the status quo, for only a higher power than the soul can "rule" over it and draw it back down to the body. From this we see that the G-dly force in smell is stronger than that in food.

4) The body enjoys food; the soul enjoys fragrance, as the Gemara states, "What is it that the soul takes pleasure from and the body does not enjoy? Fragrance." Furthermore, the neshama enters the body through the nose, as it says, "And He breathed the soul of life into his nostrils." The soul resides in the nose, as it says, "the soul of the spirit of life – in his nostrils," "soul in his nostrils," and the Sages say, "man's primary life force is in his nostrils." The neshama exits through the nose, as Rabbeinu Bachayai says, "The nose is the vessel for the soul, from where it enters and from where it exits."

5) The first sin, and the source for sin in the world, was the sin of the Tree of Knowledge. It was committed with only four senses: sight (as it says, "and the woman saw"), touch (as it says, "and she took of its fruit"), taste (as it says, "and she ate it"), and sound (as it says "because you listened"). Of all the senses, only the sense of smell wasn't involved in the sin.

Therefore, these four senses were affected and they absorbed impurity

and cannot bond with the soul; only the sense of smell remained pure and can connect to the holy soul. This is why the word for smell – "*rei'ach*," from the root "*ruach*" – expresses the idea of *ruchnius*, spirituality, because the sense of smell is associated with the spiritual soul, for as noted before, only the soul enjoys fragrance and not the body, because of its purity.

From all this we see that the sense of smell is unique and extremely important. The Gemara sums this up in two words, "*reicha milsa*," smell is significant.

THE "SOUL" OF SCENT

In Kabbala it explains that smell is connected to the higher powers of the soul. Being that the spiritual soul is immeasurably higher than the material body, only some of the soul's powers reside in the body. The rest of its powers remain outside the body.

Food affects the soul powers within the body so that they retain their connection with the body, but smell reaches the higher levels of the soul ("*atzmus ha'nefesh mamash*," which is called "*yechida*").

When we smell something, we connect the higher soul powers to the body. As Chassidus puts it, fragrance lifts a person upward to the higher soul faculties where they are renewed and draw from the power of the soul, new and powerful energies. Then they return and are revealed within the body.

This is why smell does not nourish the body. It's not because smell is lower but because it's higher! Since smell is connected with the higher soul powers, which do not reside within the body, it cannot supply life and energy to the body. Since food affects the lower soul powers, which are within the body, it can supply energy and strength to the body and preserves the connection between these soul powers and the body.

(Spices have meager nutritional value but many medicines are made

from herbs, and so, to a certain extent, there is some comparison between them: an illness occurs due to an interference in the soul's influence on the body. In other words, the soul was "distanced" a bit from the body and so the body became weak and became sick. Therefore, "food will not help the ill person. On the contrary, it will make things worse," because food only connects the soul powers within the body, but medicine draws down "light and life...that is higher," from the most distant soul powers. It is curative because it draws closer and restores to the body those soul powers that moved away from it. In this sense, spices and herbs are like medicine.)

Someone who lacks a sense of smell is not considered handicapped because his deficiency exists only in connection with the soul powers beyond his body. The body and soul within him are fine. However, when someone lacks one of the other senses like vision or hearing, the deficiency is in a part of the body, which is why he is considered handicapped.

THE QUALITIES OF SMELL

Smell seems to have two opposing qualities. On the one hand, the sense of smell has less of an influence on a person in comparison to the sense of sight or hearing, for seeing or hearing something nice thrills a person and energizes him, and makes him forget his physical needs – "he can focus on something for a day or two and not feel hungry or thirsty; his heart does not weaken and does not bother him." Yet with a fragrance, no matter how wonderful it is, a person does not become absorbed in it and he still feels his physical needs. "He will be hungry and be bothered by it, and his heart will be weak and he will desire to eat and drink." This means that the sense of smell is less connected to a person than the sense of sight or hearing.

On the other hand, we find that the sense of smell has a greater impact on a person than sight or hearing for an unpleasant smell is intolerable, but a

person can see or hear something "unfitting and improper." A person can see a corpse but cannot bear its smell.

Yet these two things come from one source, that smell is connected with the soul powers that are not contained within the body. Therefore smell, as pleasant as it might be, cannot make a person forget his body's needs for it gives pleasure to his soul and not to his body. Therefore the body is not caught up in the pleasure of smell and the body does not forget its needs, but pleasant sights and sounds are pleasurable to the body and when a person is involved with them he can forget other bodily needs.

It is because aromas reach the soul, which is more refined than the body, that a person cannot tolerate bad odors, whereas unpleasant sights and sounds are more readily tolerated.

"What is it that the soul takes pleasure in but the body does not enjoy?"

THE EFFECTS OF SMELL

Based on this we can understand some details about smell: 1) a good fragrance is calming – because one is elevated to the higher soul powers and draws down to the body refreshing powers. As Chassidus puts it, through the smell that the soul perceives, the supernal powers emerge from hiding and renew man's strength and he becomes relaxed.

2) A strong smell arouses a person from a faint – when a person faints, some of the soul powers leave the body and join the higher soul powers which hover about the body, which is why a person loses consciousness. In order to arouse him, those powers need to be returned to the body. Fragrance connects to those higher soul powers that surround the body

and restores them to the body and the person is revived.

3) A sharp smell arouses a person from sleep while eating causes tiredness – because when a person sleeps, some of the soul powers within the body rise up and smell restores them: "the intellectual faculties in the head depart because of sleep, and through strong smell, they rise up to the source of intellect and draw it back to the brain." Food necessitates additional strength and effort to digest it which is why it causes tiredness.

4) The soul comes to the body through the nose and that is where it resides and from there it departs. For being that it is incomparably higher and elevated than the body, the place that is closest, relatively speaking, to its lofty source and its true place, is the nose, for that is where the sense of smell is located.

5) Therefore the K'tores is more important than sacrifices (the food of G-d) because sacrifices are associated with the G-dly powers that dwell in the world (like food is connected with the soul powers of the body) and smell is associated with the G-dly powers that are above the world (like smell is connected with the soul powers that are above the body), to the point that it says in the Zohar that G-d is called "Baal HaChotem" (literally, Master of the Nose) because smell is associated with G-d Himself.

This is why, "K'tores removes death and anger so that they do not prevail in the world," because it draws down a power "from the Source of Life, and His bountiful kindness."

6) Moshiach will judge with the sense of smell through which he will discern and know the truth about men, because "smell affects the essence of the soul and for Moshiach, the essence of the soul of every Jew is revealed. Therefore, judgment will take place through his sense of smell in a way that he will be able to perceive the essence of every individual."

Sources: as sourced in the book HaShabbos L'Kabbalas U'B'Chassidus, vol. 2, p. 677

INCREASING IN JOY THROUGHOUT ADAR

*The Rebbe instructed us, based on the rule that “one must increase in holiness,” to increase in joy each progressive day of the month(s) of Adar. That means that the days following Purim must be filled with even greater joy than on Purim itself! * A compilation of Chassidic sayings and aphorism regarding the importance of increasing in joy throughout the year, and particularly in the month(s) of Adar.*

THE MONTH OF JOY

Why do the Sages instruct us that “When Adar comes in, we increase in joy?” Shouldn’t the rejoicing begin from the 13th of Adar, when the miracle took place?

The explanation for this is that in the month of Adar there is a doubling of the miracles and salvations, and this is also because there is a “meritorious day” in this month, namely, the 7th of Adar, when Moshe Rabbeinu, the savior of Israel, was born.

This is the meaning of the verse, “And the month that was turned over for them from suffering to joy.” Since the miracle of Purim did not begin on the 13th of Adar, but already at the beginning of the decree, the miracle was already

prepared for them through the casting of the lots falling out on the month of Adar, which has in it a “meritorious day.”

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 16)

WHEN DOES THE JOY BEGIN?

“When Adar comes in, we increase in joy.” Already from the entrance into the month of Adar, we need to draw the strength to increase in all matters of joy, by way of each individual taking on positive resolutions and putting them into practice – to expend effort to add and increase in all things that bring joy.

The joy must already be in place from the first day of Rosh Chodesh, which is still connected to the

month of Shvat, and even from Shabbos Mevarchim...

(Sicha Truma 5751)

HOW DOES ONE ATTAIN JOY?

In a yechidus on the 15th of MarCheshvan 5716/1955, the Rebbe was asked, “How does one attain joy?”

The Rebbe answered (among other points):

Constantly, at all times, a person must be joyful. This is because either way, when he is fulfilling what Hashem asks of him, he should have the satisfaction of fulfilling a mitzva, and if he transgressed and he begins to feel regret, he should feel the satisfaction of being able to do t’shuvah and correcting what he did wrong.

(Seifer HaYechidus – Glitzenstein p. 232-233)

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

The joy of Purim is linked with matters of Torah and Mitzvos, as it is written, “The Jews had *Ora* (light), and *Simcha* (joy), and *Sasson* (elation) and *Yekar* (prestige).” The Sages say that “*Ora* is Torah...and *Yekar* are the T’fillin.”

From this we draw joy in Torah and Mitzvos throughout the entire year, up to the greatest level of joy, “Yisroel rejoices in his Maker.”

(Toras Menachem – Hisvaaduyos 5711 vol. 1 p. 310-311)



IT AFFECTS ME

The Rebbe wrote the following in a letter to Rabbi Moshe Yitzchok Hecht a"h:

Many times I have requested and agitated that in general, and particularly now, you need to be joyful, etc. It is understood that if anyone of those connected to me is joyful, it also affects me (and from the positive – you can infer, etc.). Whoever is more connected – and especially through concrete action and on a daily basis – then the aforementioned is with greater force, etc. And suddenly, I was informed that you are not joyful (all that much) etc.?

(Seifer Zikaron of Rabbi M. Y. Hecht)

EASIER AND MORE LUMINOUS

In another letter to Rabbi Hecht, the Rebbe wrote:

I rejoiced to receive your letter that you have no depression at all! ...And may it be the will of Hashem, the Omnipotent One that you remain strong in your disposition for the coming days and years. That is to say that you should accept upon yourself the path that the Baal Shem Tov, and after him all the Nesiei Chabad, paved for us all. That is the path of "Serve Hashem with joy," and this path is much more joyful and therefore easier and more luminous, materially and spiritually.

(ibid p. 128)

YOUR JOY HELPS ME

In the many *yechiduyos* (private meetings with the Rebbe) of Rabbi Reuven Dunin a"h, the Rebbe addressed the topic of joy. On one occasion, the Rebbe said:

The matters that you carry out with joy and gladness of heart – since you are bound up with me, you are also helping me with this. When there is joy, this adds joy in

the surrounding environment in which you are and adds success in those things done in that environment, because joy breaks through boundaries.

(Mikdash Melech vol. 2)

I AM TELLING YOU TO BE HAPPY

In another yechidus, the Rebbe said to Rabbi Dunin:

What about joy? Why are you lacking in peace of mind? What is the cause? I am telling you to be happy, and if you don't comply, you are not fulfilling my request and the result is that you are not carrying out in your affairs those matters of mine ... You need to be happy, because the one being commanded needs to act in accordance with the instructions of the commander.

On another occasion, the Rebbe said:

What about joy? Have I still not accomplished this with you? You need to work in my affairs – with joy! May your trip be in a state of joy, like the joy of Motzaei Simchas Torah.

(Ibid)

*Even though
regarding the reading
of the Megilla, they
said it cannot be read
past the 15th of the
month, the directive
to increase in joy is
pertinent to all the
days of the month.*

THERE CAN BE NO JOY WITHOUT CHASSIDUS!

In a yechidus, the Rebbe said to Rabbi Yosef Sheinberger, one of the leaders of the Eida HaChareidis:

It is certain that the joy of a mitzva is impossible without Chassidus [the inner dimension and soul of the Torah].

(Cited in Mikdash Melech vol. 4)

JOY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

On the 10th of Adar, during the distribution of dollars, Rabbi Simcha Elberg a"h, chairman of Agudas HaRabbanim passed by. The Rebbe said to him, alluding to his name [Simcha, meaning joy]:

Now your holiday is approaching, as Purim is the idea of simcha ... May there be simcha throughout the entire year!

(Zoreia Tz'dakos)

JOY THROUGHOUT THE MONTH

Even though regarding the reading of the Megilla, they said it cannot be read past the 15th of the month, the directive to increase in joy is pertinent to all the days of the month, as the Sages say, "When Adar comes in, etc.," and as alluded to in the verse, "And the month that was turned over for them from suffering to joy." In that case, if the joy is in the same measure as the previous days, without addition and increase, it is not the ultimate joy; it has become stale.

(Likkutei Sichos vol. 3)

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SOMETIMES A SHLIACH HAS TO HAVE CHUTZPA

BY CHANIE NUSSBAUM

Mrs. Leah Lipszyc and her husband R' Yitzchok Meir arrived in Simferopol, the capitol of Crimea, after the fall of communism. The story of their shlichus is comprised of numerous stories of trials and tribulations along with miracles and successes.



Above: Rabbi Lipszyc
Left: The school in Simferopol



Mrs. Leah Lipszyc was in trouble. It was shortly before the opening of her summer camp. The student with whom she was going to run the camp had to leave the city. How would she manage?

Rabbi Yitzchok Meir Lipszyc was in trouble. The school was about to close. The cost of the project which he wanted to run was very high. What should he do? Allow the school to close?

CHALAV YISROEL AND A PROPER SHIDDUCH

The Lipszyc family is a model of shlichus which requires tremendous mesirus nefesh. However, it seems that the greater the difficulties, the greater the miracles.

Mrs. Leah Lipszyc was born and raised in New Jersey. She attended Stern College, where Rabbi Alter

Metzger taught and was mekarev many of the girls to Chabad.

"That's how I came to Chabad and to the Rebbe and Crown Heights, where I met my husband."

Her husband comes from a Chassidishe family that emigrated from France to America. Rabbi Lipszyc's father knew the Rebbe Rayatz while in France. When the family came to the United States, he was offered a position of shochet in California. He first consulted with the Rebbe Rayatz. Due to the Rebbe's health he was not allowed to visit the Rebbe but when the Rebbe Rayatz found out that he was there, he sent the secretary to look for him and he was able to have a yechidus.

He asked the Rebbe whether to take the job in California and asked about chinuch for his children there. The Rebbe told him to take

the job, and as far as chinuch – to send the older ones to New York and to have his wife teach the younger ones at home.

After a few months, Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim opened in New York and all the children became Chabad Chassidim, including Yitzchok Meir. Time passed and Yitzchok Meir also studied sh'chita. Before he married he asked the Rebbe whether he should work in sh'chita or run a (non-Chabad) camp.

The Rebbe's answer was: check the kashrus in the camp. The kashrus was fine except they were not particular about chalav Yisroel. R' Yitzchok Meir reported to Rabbi Chadakov, who instructed him: tell them about the importance of chalav Yisroel.

R' Yitzchok Meir did so and as a

result, even the ice cream was brought from New York. In the end, the mashgiach of the kitchen made the shidduch between R' Yitzchok Meir and his wife. "Actually, even our meeting was in a shlichus situation," said Mrs. Lipszyc with a smile.

TRAVELS

"For a few years after we married, my husband taught in Oholei Torah in Crown Heights. We began our shlichus in 5730/1970 in Michigan. Among other things, we had the first Mivtza'im tank that traveled throughout the state.

"In 5742/1982, we moved to shlichus in Alabama, which is near Florida, upon the request of the mashpia R' Mendel Futerfas a"h. After a while we brought out the Posner family, while we moved temporarily to Florida to help a friend establish his shlichus there. Then my husband learned in kollel, as the Rebbe told him to do, in preparation for the next shlichus.

"After perestroika in the CIS, Ezras Achim began sending shluchim there. In 5752/1992 we

were asked to go on shlichus to one of those cities. We began in Cherson, Ukraine. When we arrived there, there were two bachurim – Rabbis Eliyahu Wolf and Dovid Mondshine – who were already on their way to establishing a permanent shlichus. My husband asked R' Moshe Slonim a"h to give them this shlichus while we went elsewhere.

"R' Shimon Karotke a"h, the head of the Simferopol community in the capitol city of Crimea in Ukraine, was looking for a Chabad shliach for his city. After negotiating we took the shlichus position in Simferopol with the approval of Ezras Achim.

"R' Shimon loved my husband, but since the two of them came from completely different worlds, their views were not in sync. My American husband thought that everything was possible and there was no reason to fear anything, whereas R' Shimon, who was raised under communism, thought nothing was certain and you needed to be cautious and be careful not to start up with the non-Jews. This is why our big projects were done as Chabad while the quieter programs were done as part of the official Jewish community. That is how we managed to navigate and deal with all the difficulties that cropped up there."

WHAT A MIRACLE!

"Our first project was a camp. I asked one of the students who had already gotten involved in Judaism to organize the camp with me. Together we arranged everything that needed to be taken care of to make the camp run. However, shortly before the beginning of camp, she informed me that she had to leave the city for family reasons.

"I was left alone with the entire burden of the camp on my shoulders and knowing hardly any Russian. My husband was in

America at the time, fundraising, and he told me over the phone in his typically optimistic way, 'Thank Hashem, because at least now you will be very busy...'

"I didn't despair. By Divine Providence, the Tamim Yehuda Holtzberg came to our city just at that time. He knew Russian and he helped me a lot in running the camp.

"We advertised in the newspapers, radio, and television about the camp and prayed that people would be interested and would register. The first to register were two members of the community, who registered their grandchildren. Another two joined them, so we had four children.

"In my thoughts I addressed the Rebbe and said: Rebbe, we need more children. We can't have one child per counselor. Then suddenly, with no logical explanation, ten children were registered every day. We had fifty children and Holtzberg said we should end registration because we had no more room. But I, a stubborn shlucha, figured I'd continue the registration until we reached sixty.

"In the meantime another problem cropped up. I asked other shluchim about whether it was a problem to have boys and girls together in camp. Most of them said there was no problem under the age of bar mitzva, but the counselors who had come from New York asked that the boys aged nine and older be in a separate group.

"I asked the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh* and the letter I opened to said, 'I was happy to hear about the opening of the camp...I am sure that just as it is in quantity, so it will be in quality.' The Rebbe went on to write many brachos of success.

"I found the answer clear – there had to be quality, which meant



A giant menorah that Rabbi Lipszyc put in the center of the financial district

separating the boys and the girls. At the last minute we brought bachurim to separately run a boys' program. We ended up with 87 children! We surely gave the Rebbe a lot of nachas with that camp, both in quantity and quality.

"Some of the campers began to keep Torah and mitzvos on a regular basis. We did a number of circumcisions thanks to the camp's influence. One camper who was very influenced by the camp wrote to the Rebbe that in his city there was no school that was run in the spirit of the camp (he wanted to continue his Jewish education throughout the year). As a result, the school Beis Menachem was opened.

"Some children began to keep kosher. One of the times I invited a camper to my house for a Yom Tov meal, I noticed that he wasn't touching the meat. I asked him whether he wasn't hungry or whether he didn't like meat! I was shocked by his answer. He said, 'I like meat and I'm hungry but I can't eat meat now since I always drink milk before going to sleep and it's late and I won't be able to wait six hours.' This was a child who did not receive a Jewish education! I don't think there's any greater nachas for the Rebbe than this."

* * *

The Lipszyces are not fazed by difficulties and they have enjoyed much success in their work. It began back on their first Shabbos in the Ukraine. At first they didn't invite anyone to their Friday night meal since they had heard it was dangerous to walk in the street at night, but contrary to the predictions, fifteen people came to the meal. The next week, twenty-five people came.

This gave them much encouragement and on the third Shabbos they had forty-five guests!



A group of children in camp in SimferopolA group of children in camp in Simferopol

At a certain point they hosted a hundred people every Shabbos!

"Till this day," says Leah with a smile, "when I'm asked how we fed 45 people with one of the chickens we brought from New York, and all left satisfied from soup and some pieces of chicken, the answer is that it's only because of the Rebbe. Today, baruch Hashem, there's no problem because we can get kosher meat in the Ukraine.

"I began giving classes to women. These classes took place every day between 5 and 7. I didn't know that there was a problem in that the electricity would stop every evening at five o'clock for a while (sometimes it stopped several times during the day, which is common in the Ukraine).

"Till this day I don't understand how those shiurim were given, but the fact is, despite the many technical difficulties, they were very successful. Thanks to those classes some families began to keep kashrus even though fifteen years ago this required dedication and a strong desire to do so.

"I remember one of the girls who was about to make aliya, who had

sold everything she owned. She was left with only a table. I asked how I could help her and she was ashamed to tell me that she had hardly anything to eat because what she had, she didn't eat. 'I don't want to eat treif,' she said.

"She had started keeping kosher thanks to the classes. Of course I helped her out and that's when I knew that despite the difficulties, those shiurim had an impact."

A MIRACLE BECAUSE OF KASHRUS

"Like many places in the CIS, there is a great thirst for Judaism after decades when Judaism was nearly obliterated. The Jews here accept everything wholeheartedly. For example, when they heard that the Rebbe said that every Jew has to cry out, 'ad masai' (until when will we be in Exile?), they immediately asked me, 'How many times a day?'

"Assimilation is an enormous problem. Like in many other areas of Russia, it's hard to know who is Jewish and who is not. There are people who think they are not Jewish but it turns out that they are. We had two boys who thought they

“My husband remembered that the Rebbe once said that sometimes a shliach had to have chutzpa and so he said, ‘I have an idea. Maybe, instead of donating \$50,000 you can donate \$250,000’”

weren't Jewish but then they told me that have a little Jewish blood and explained that their mother's mother was Jewish ... After verifying what they said, we informed them that they were 100% Jewish.

“On the other hand, there are people who are sure they are Jewish but they can't prove it. There was a girl who was accepted to our Jewish school. She had documents that said she was Jewish because her grandmother was Jewish but after looking into it we found out that it was her father's mother who was Jewish. This girl was serious about Judaism and underwent a halachic conversion and married in Kfar Chabad. Sadly, the stories don't all end this way.

“In general, many people lost or changed their documents because they were afraid and therefore there is no clear proof to their being Jewish. The only way to accept them is through conversion.

“Our main shlichus is to deal with many Jews who know nothing about Judaism thanks to the religious oppression under decades of communist rule. One of the women in our community, in her

sixties, was married to a non-Jew who was a very nice man. One day, a spiritual awakening began in that family.

“At a Chanuka party eight years ago, her daughter told me she was pregnant. Shortly afterwards, she gave birth to a son, and she wanted him to be circumcised. We were happy to help out and because the mohel came, dozens of other Jews were circumcised too.

“A tragedy occurred and the baby died four and a half months later. To my great surprise, the mother and daughter became even more interested in Judaism and began coming to shul every Shabbos. The story doesn't end here...

“After a while I noticed that the mother had become very thin. I asked her if she was all right and after exerting some pressure she finally told me she had cancer, but she didn't want her daughter to know because her daughter was expecting a child again.

“I suggested that she write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. I also suggested that she commit to a mitzva that would be a vessel for the Rebbe's bracha. She agreed with one small change. First she would write the letter and later on she would commit to a mitzva.

“All my attempts at explaining to her how she should do it failed. So we wrote to the Rebbe and in the answer she opened to the Rebbe wrote to a group of doctors and told them that there are certain mitzvos that positively affect a Jew not only spiritually but physically too, like kashrus.

“I was amazed. I said to her, ‘I thought of suggesting a lighter mitzva, but the Rebbe wants you to commit to kashrus!’

“Despite the tremendous difficulties involved, she agreed. I

wanted to know how serious she was about it and I asked her how she would go about it. She said she was going to get a new kitchen soon, which would make it easier for her. I was happy to hear that and told her that we would help her in any way we could. She promised to be in touch as soon as the new kitchen was installed.

“I waited but didn't hear from her. I called her and she told me that she hadn't been in touch as promised because her gentile husband did not want a kosher kitchen.

“A few weeks later she called me and said, ‘Okay, my husband agrees to have a kosher kitchen and if he wants to eat non-kosher he'll eat it out of the house.’ Of course I was very happy and since I had some bachurim who had come to help out with the winter camp, I asked them to kasher the women's kitchen.

“The bachurim as well as my son and another guest went to kasher her kitchen. First they kashered all the little things but when they began koshering the oven, everything went up in flames. They all got out safely, baruch Hashem. Amazingly, no damage was incurred to the new kitchen aside from the corner of a counter. The woman was flabbergasted by the miracle and immediately called to ask them to finish kashering the kitchen. My husband went the next day and finished the job.

“The following week, when she went for tests, they said the cancer had disappeared. The three doctors who had diagnosed the illness were dumbstruck. It was truly a miracle. A short while later her daughter gave birth to a girl, to the joy of the family. The family is continuing to make progress in their religious observance. This is just one story of many.”

“PERHAPS YOU WILL DONATE A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS?”

“As I mentioned earlier, we started a Jewish school here and many Jewish children attend it. About three years ago we thought the school would close since we owed thousands of dollars. Some people wanted to take the building away from us. Losing the school would mean losing Jewish education in the city and losing all we had achieved thus far.

“My husband had no idea how he could obtain money for a building and he said, ‘Master of the universe, I’ve done what I can, and now it’s Your turn, because I don’t even have the ‘vessels.’ How could I possibly get the money I need for the school?’

“As a loyal soldier, my husband began to think what he could do and he suddenly remembered that five years earlier he had started working on a project to build a large shul but had dropped it in order to build a school, which was needed more urgently.

“At that time a philanthropist in Florida had promised to give \$50,000 towards the shul. My husband called back the architect and told him that he wanted to get the project going again. The

“Believe me, if not for budgetary problems, the school would have triple the number of students.”

architect said that in the interim, everything had gotten more expensive. My husband said, ‘Okay, let’s start with the first floor in the meantime.’ Then my husband went off to Florida to meet with the philanthropist.

“On his way there, about three hours from Florida, the architect called him on his cell phone and said, ‘Rabbi, I must tell you that I made a mistake and the costs of the building will be over a million dollars. \$900,000 is needed for the first floor alone.’

“My husband was taken aback. What could he tell the philanthropist in a few hours? But what was done, was done, and he had to meet with the man.

“My husband met him and updated him and the donor asked, ‘Did anybody else promise to donate money towards the project?’ My husband said No.

“Then the donor suggested, ‘Maybe take the \$50,000 I promised you and put a name on the building of someone else who will agree to give you more?’

“My husband remembered that the Rebbe once said that sometimes a shliach had to have chutzpa and so he said, ‘I have an idea. Maybe, instead of donating \$50,000 you can donate \$250,000 and that will be for the school which is about to close.’ My husband couldn’t believe his own nerve but he felt that from Above, he was being guided to say what he said.

“To his surprise, the man looked at him and said, ‘Okay Rabbi, I’ll give you the amount you need for the school.’

“Believe me, if not for budgetary problems, the school would have triple the number of students.”

Mrs. Leah Lipszyc says, “Our school is the only one in Russia that is not subsidized. My husband has to take care of the fundraising, which takes away so much time from spreading Judaism and Chassidus.

“In times of crisis we have gotten many answers about trusting in Hashem and that salvation will come. We are waiting for donors to help us. Maybe this article will help!”

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WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?!

A touching story about a shiur that took place with mesirus nefesh.

BY P. ZARCHI

There have always been shiurei Torah and Chassidus, though in our generation, the seventh generation, this was greatly expanded under the slogan of "U'faratzta," as shluchim set up shop in various places around the world. In addition to regular shiurim in Chabad shuls, Chabad houses began to spring up and these also offered shiurim. There are also *Tanya* classes in various yeshivos. Many of Anash became Lubavitch as bachurim thanks to these *Tanya* shiurim.

On Shabbos Parshas BaMidbar 5734 the Rebbe turned the familiar shiurim that always existed into a full-scale campaign: **Mivtza Torah**.

From that point on, shiurim were in a different, more urgent category. It was no longer just an inyan of Torah study but another component in the campaigns of "protection," as the Rebbe quoted many times, "Torah protects and defends!"

The Rebbe asked that every Jew have a daily study commitment, and in those years we started a *Tanya* class for women. The shiur rotated from house to house and in addition to the learning, all the women became friends.

Over the years the shiurim had their ups and downs depending on

my family situation. When I was due to give birth, the shiurim were on hold and after I recovered and rested the shiurim resumed, until...

From that point on, shiurim were in a different, more urgent category. It was no longer just an inyan of Torah study but another component in the campaigns of "protection," as the Rebbe quoted many times, "Torah protects and defends!"

**5752 SHNAS NIFLAOS
BA'KOL**

One of the ongoing shiurim that took place in the local shul was moved to a private home upon the request of two of the women, Chana and Aliza. The two women, sisters-in-law as well as neighbors, found it

hard getting out in the evening. Their husbands worked in the evenings and they didn't have anybody to watch their children.

Although it was more comfortable for me to teach in a neutral place, I went along with their request and the shiur was moved to their homes, alternating each time, one week in Chana's home and one week in Aliza's home. This way, the sisters-in-law, who lived right next door to each other, didn't miss a single shiur.

KISLEV 5752, 770

Heaven on earth. I put everything out of my mind and immersed myself in the atmosphere. If I would have been asked my name and address, I don't know if I would have remembered what they were ... Nothing was important except for absorbing more and more, another sicha, another dollar ... and the Rebbe showered us with abundance.

One fine day I was called to the phone by my hostess. It was a call from home. Oh, right, home. There was a place like that overseas ... so far from my present reality. One of my daughters was on the line. She told me that Chana, one of the women in whose house the shiur took place, had given birth to a boy.

The bris had already taken place and the baby was named “Menachem Mendel.”

That was definitely good news and I was very happy to hear it. I felt that my shiur had borne fruit, that what I taught, which was actually what the Rebbe taught, had penetrated. At the shiur we already had some “Chaya Mushkas” in several variations but this was the first Menachem Mendel.

In my next letter I wrote the news to the Rebbe for bracha and hatzlacha, materially and spiritually, and that they merit to raise the child along with all their children to Torah, chuppa, and good deeds, with the main thing being to give nachas to the Rebbe.

I came down to reality and thought that if Chana had a son and I was in the US, then I should buy a baby gift. Crown Heights had a big selection of appropriate gifts but I was unable to select a gift that was both suitable and inexpensive. I hadn’t counted on purchasing a gift and my budget was limited.

I finally came up with an idea. What better gift could I bring my neighbor than a dollar from the Rebbe! That was it. Chana deserved a dollar from the Rebbe. She put so much effort into hosting the shiur and had made many changes in her personal life and had even named her son Menachem Mendel. I was sure that her relatives had laughed at her “old-fashioned” choice of a name and I thought that a dollar from the Rebbe was a great idea.

* * *

I landed in Eretz Yisroel on Sunday night. The weekly shiur would be taking place Tuesday night after a three-week break. I knew that the shiur would also be a farbrengen this time, with greetings from Beis Chayeinu. That afternoon my daughter put the dollar in a

special case.

Then I received a phone call from Aliza. She was thrilled that the shiur was starting up again. She was calling to inform me that the shiur would be hosted by her because Chana had just given birth.

I got on the bus and headed for the building where Chana and Aliza lived. I went up the dark stairs and when I got to the floor I wanted, light was pouring out of the two apartments. Their doors were open, as usual, to enable the children to

On shlichus, your words are your most important asset. You always have to be ready with the right thing to say at the right time: greetings, responses, Chassidic sayings, quotes from the Rebbe. To tell you the truth, I felt at a loss...

go from house to house. The mothers also went in and out, especially when the shiur took place at one of the sisters-in-law as the other one went to check on her sleeping children.

Instead of entering the door on the right, to Chana’s apartment, I turned left, to Aliza’s apartment. Chana, who heard me coming up the steps, came out for a hearty hug. After we calmed down from our warm greeting I gave her the gift,

which she was very happy to receive. This was something all the participants wanted – a dollar from the Rebbe.

In the meantime, Aliza sat on an armchair in the living room, watching the scene, the reunion, the hugs, and ... the dollar. She didn’t say a word, just watched.

I knew that both Chana and Aliza were due around the same time. I asked Aliza, who was dressed up for the farbrengen, shoes and all, even though the shiur was taking place in her own living room, how she had been and about the impending birth. Aliza answered briefly, with a bombshell: “I gave birth already!”

On shlichus, your words are your most important asset. You always have to be ready with the right thing to say at the right time: greetings, responses, Chassidic sayings, quotes from the Rebbe. To tell you the truth, I felt at a loss.

“You don’t believe me? Come and see!”

Aliza got up and began walking to the bedroom and there was an infant! Yes, Aliza had given birth. I left the bedroom still in shock. We did the hugging and kissing routine again and then I asked, “When did you give birth?”

Aliza answered, “Two days ago.”

“And when did you come back from the hospital?”

“This afternoon!” She hadn’t even changed into slippers. She had put the baby down, prepared supper and arranged the living room for the shiur.

“Why didn’t you tell me on the phone that you had given birth?”

“Because I knew that you wouldn’t agree to have the shiur here, and then Chana and I would lose out!”

THEATER ON A DIFFERENT LEVEL

BY H. BEN-YISHAI

*She knows how to touch the soul of each of the women or girls that she works with, and to draw out from them abilities and talents they didn't know they had. She even heals hidden psychic wounds. Through them, she conveys to the audience deep messages that revolve around man's mission in this world; the illumination of his neshama and his responsibility as a Jew to be better, to care more, and through his personal Geula to hasten the Geula of us all. * She is a talented actress who has been successful on a worldwide level, but you will never see her onstage. * Sonya Sudari is a special woman who taps the light and truth within the people she reaches.*

Sonya Sudari is an artist, talented musician, exceptional pianist, actress, producer and director. She was born in Algiers to a warm and loving family. Her entire family is involved in music and led little Sonya in this direction, but she was drawn to the world of theater from a very young age.

"Hashem enabled me, at the age of 4-5, to discover my talent and He directed me towards my destiny. I knew how to recite entire stories by heart and to act them out while glancing at the book. They all thought I was a genius who learned to read on her own but to me it was important to find the message in each story and to convey it to whoever was willing to



listen to me."

Why were you so drawn to acting?

"The goal of all artistic endeavor, be it music, painting, writing and theater, is to convey messages to the viewer in an experiential, sensory, and powerful way. In a roundabout way, the viewer absorbs far more and is far more influenced than through a direct approach. Theater is particularly powerful since it combines sound, talk, movement, color, lighting, scenery, etc. All these join together and drive home the message and the experience.

"In ancient Greece the citizens had to attend theater because the government was aware of its enormous influence on the masses. A good actor creates a relationship with the audience and conveys messages in a way that generate emotional

experiences which accompany the viewer long after the performance.”

When Sonya was 11 her family moved to France. The move was hard for her because she sensed the anti-Semitism and felt out of place. In high school she continued to study at the academy for music and theater and from there she went on to study drama at the Grenoble University according to the method of Grotovsky. This was different than the academy which taught Stanislavsky's approach.

When I raised an eyebrow over the names and methods which are so foreign to me, Sonya laughed and explained:

“There is a big difference between the two approaches. Stanislavsky's approach is more technical, along the lines of copying and imitation. The other approach is more open and creative – the actor studies the person he is supposed to play and then creates for himself the text and the portrayal. He has far more freedom of movement and the results are more genuine.

“In my work today I combine both approaches, which helps a lot to develop the imagination as well as the girls' personalities. For example, I never give them a script because if I do, it's a recitation and not acting and the results are phony. Instead, I explain to each girl what her role is and then they act in a way that is surprising, inventing new things that I hadn't thought of.

“Their creativity develops astonishingly and the feedback I get from the teachers is, ‘The girl changed completely. She has self-confidence and has discovered hidden talent.’ It's therapeutic!

“The approach I favor can be used with any age child with no prior experience, as opposed to, for example, those who teach music which can only be learned in a certain age range. Imagination can also be developed at an older age. Someone

who is artistically talented can express herself in various ways.”

What is required of an actor?

“A good actor needs to live the person he plays; he has to be one with the part while simultaneously being in full control of the subject matter; to be completely within the role while remaining outside it. He has to see what he's doing and to also look at himself objectively as an outsider. This duality is not easy. To achieve it one has to study for many years and acquire life experience. An actor needs to manipulate the audience because otherwise, he undermines the whole effort. A good actor knows how to get an audience to cry when he wants or to laugh.”

When Sonya finished university, she was accepted to the national theater of France where she worked with the greatest producers, she began to teach people older than her at the academy, and she was an assistant producer. She enjoyed dizzying success which only few her age achieve.

However, as her success grew, she experienced greater pain over her awareness of the falsehood in the world of the theater, the hypocrisy and corruption which she couldn't make her peace with. At the peak of her success, Sonya found herself on a painful search which she couldn't stop.

“I kept searching for the truth which I wanted to achieve through my profession. Whenever I attained a new height and I thought – now, I've found the truth – I was disappointed. I enjoyed enormous satisfaction in my work but the suffering and pain were there too. I began to understand that this whole world is a lie. I knew that despite the success I could not act against my conscience and use deceitful ways to achieve my goal like my colleagues ... I sought the truth through various means. I tried to deny my Judaism, but the Jewish

spark, the sense of truth that I felt, didn't let me.

“One day, I went into a store, and saw a book called *The Talmud*. I bought the book and went home and didn't emerge for three days until I had digested it. My conclusion was: I am Jewish! The truth is Torah and I belong to it!”

Sonya began keeping Shabbos. “The first Shabbos I kept I felt that I had waited for this all my life. The next step was quick – kashrus, immersing all my utensils. On Shavuot I went to 770 to see the Rebbe.”

Then Sonya married. “When we asked the Rebbe for his consent to the shidduch, we immediately received a positive answer, ‘bracha v'hatzlacha.’ We decided to have the wedding near the Rebbe and we were fortunate in that the Rebbe participated in our wedding. That day the Rebbe left the Ohel earlier than usual and he stopped near us and answered ‘amen’ to all the brachos.”

After a few years in France, the Sudaris moved to Eretz Yisroel. For ten years Sonya did not work in theater at all, assuming that this profession no longer suited her as a religious woman; she was occupied, rather, in building a home

“One day a friend came to me and asked me to run a drama group for women. I wrote to the Rebbe in order to obtain permission and received an amazing answer and many brachos. The Rebbe blessed me to continue to go higher and higher and he wrote this avoda was supernatural and something very lofty. Whoever saw this answer was amazed. From that point on I returned to theater, to my second career, but from a different angle altogether. I realized I had a shlichus and a responsibility.”

Is there such a thing as “holy theater?”

“As I said, every art form has a message and idea and it usually has to

do with emotions like loneliness, humor or politics. In theater that is done according to halacha and k'dusha, there is a responsibility to convey messages that will inspire people. There has to be a strong, clear spiritual message that arouses the Jewish spark and helps bring Moshiach."

Sonya began putting women on the stage. She took many women out of the kitchen and laundry room and put them to work, bringing out their ability to act. There were many difficulties and opposition too but the Rebbe continued to bless and encourage her. She was successful and her mind was bursting with ideas. Sonya's imagination wrote, dramatized and produced many plays.

How did your work change the second time around?

"First of all, the messages changed and became Jewish ones. Second, and no less important, the main goal today is to build people up and the process is more important to me than the result. It used to be important to me to express myself. Today I empower women and girls and encourage full participation from all of them. I think I got this approach from the Rebbe.

"Likewise, there is a learning process taking place here which is also therapeutic. By understanding and internalizing the message, each one learns how to convey it further, to the audience. Theater must be an educational medium through which we convey a message.

"Third, since it's important to me to build up girls and women, the entire process must be positive, joyous, because how can you empower people without simcha? Then it's successful and even if the final results are who-knows-what, we still profited because the main thing is the actor.

"Fourth, my sense of priorities changed. In the past I could be

devoted and sweep my entire household along with me. Today it's important to me to take care of my home first. It's not that my talents diminished; on the contrary, I've progressed.

"Today I can produce a big play in two weeks and I take pleasure in my work, but without the dedication I had previously. There is a certain distance between me and art; it's no longer the center of my life. Today I don't care about honor and applause and even if they bring me flowers I

I wrote to the Rebbe in order to obtain permission and received an amazing answer and many brachos. The Rebbe blessed me to continue to go higher and higher and he wrote this avoda was supernatural and something very lofty.

don't go out onstage."

Describe your work for us.

"Generally speaking, if I am invited to put on a performance, at the end of the year for example, the first thing, I do is sit down with the girls and ask them what they want to do. We come up with an idea and the girls really connect to it since it's coming from them. I construct a play based on the level and interest of the girls and class and only then do I put myself into it.

"For example, I was once invited

by a government-religious school to put on a performance and the teacher felt helpless since the girls wanted to do something very inexpensive and they weren't willing to relinquish their idea. We decided to sit down with the girls and analyze with them what they like and why and we came to the conclusion that they feel inferior because of their origin.

"We took the idea and I constructed something that they really liked, about a girl who suffered from the same background as them, and she went out to see the world and in the end, after all her searching, she found what she was looking for within.

"We went with this idea and something funny and moving resulted and the girls were absolutely delighted. I am inspired by things I see and read and then ideas start to flow. I work very quickly, writing the scenes myself and innovating constantly. After a year or two I have critiques on what I did and then I make improvements. It's important to me that the girls internalize the messages while doing the work and then it comes from their hearts and enters the hearts of the audience."

How does your work differ from the usual Israeli style?

"Unfortunately, the accepted style in Eretz Yisroel is very elegant and intellectual and tries to impress the audience, and it makes me sad. This is not the expression of an artist. The level is not professional and the stage design here is just decoration which isn't right.

"In my opinion, stage design must be very, very limited. If there is no need for a plant, you don't put one there. The stage design must serve the idea as does everything else: the costumes, the stage, the lighting; even the actor, because the main thing is the idea.

"The stage design also needs to be appropriate for our generation, light

and concrete and not heavy and realistic. I usually draw what I want on a small paper and bring it to the girls or to professionals who build the scenery for me.

“With other art forms as well, take painting for example, there are people who sell pictures without being involved with art for art’s sake but for business. These pictures, even if they are considered exclusive and well-done, will not enter my house, not even for free.

“The same is true for music, not all composers seek art in music. Real art is an expression of the artist who conveys a message for the purpose of giving the viewer an inner experience that will touch his heart and not in order to be popular.

“That’s my rule of thumb with plays: that the audience finds itself within the performance, crying, laughing, rejoicing. Instead of trying to be superficial, maudlin or intellectual, I direct them to take something from your heart, that bothers you, and then as waters reflect, every member of the audience feels the pain in her heart.”

You speak with such sorrow, why?

“Because if you teach girls art the wrong way, it destroys them; it doesn’t enable them to build the proper tools and it misses the point.”

How do you approach the girls that you work with?

“I nearly always work with the ‘right side’ of chesed, with brachos and love; not to break them. I work with intuition but professional intuition that was shaped after many years of experience. By the way, intuition is a wonderful tool for work but only along with knowledge and professional experience. When the profession is in your blood, then these two things – professionalism and intuition – produce the desired result.

“You may not destroy when there are no tools with which to build anew

“What is a Chassid? It’s avoda on one’s middos. In every play there is a message of Geula because this is the ultimate goal. Art is a medium by which to hasten the Geula as it enables a person to change because of his personal accounting.”

and therefore if I rule out something, the person I’m dealing with accepts it because I have the tools to build them up again. I don’t get stressed out and the work is pleasant and fun and the girls feel it because the main thing is building up the girls and the creativity in each one of them is important to me. They are the ones who are running the production, not me.

“They are the main structure and I’m just the director and I give them all the credit. However the work isn’t always easy because I demand a lot from them. There are many rehearsals and each time with reappraisal and new insights since the time before, but I do it all with love, the main thing being not to break the girl because of some imaginary point of honor.”

Can you give us a specific example?

“I will tell you something that happened although it was a rare occurrence. There was a fifteen-year-old girl who kept on defying me and making faces during the planning and rehearsals, until one time I gave it to her and put her in her place. She was offended and began to cry. One of the girls said, ‘Sonya, you exaggerated,’ but I felt justified in what I had said.

“The next scene had an orchestra with each girl ‘playing’ on an instrument and I noticed the insulted girl standing on the side, frozen, a pathetic sight. Without thinking, I

took her and said, ‘You will be the conductor,’ and I put her with her back to the audience. From that point on she acted so well that she transformed the entire play into something very special, I could cry it was so nice.

“A week later her mother called me and said, ‘You don’t know what you did to my daughter.’ I said, ‘Yes, I’m sorry, but I had no choice, but since then she has improved.’ The mother went on, ‘I want to tell you what you did to my daughter. She had a certain very serious problem and we didn’t know what to do about it and from that day on the problem was solved!’

“What happened was this girl lived a lie her whole life and she reacted superficially to everything. I made her face herself and the lie collapsed. The girl changed completely.”

What happens right before the curtain goes up?

“The day of the play there is a real solidification among us all, real achdus, total support. In the dark, before they go up on stage, I kiss them all and bless them. After the play I always overlook any flaws, because even if I have some criticism, how would it help at that point? If it can be corrected, I correct it, but if it’s a one-time performance, why ruin the spirit?

“I’ve gotten so many insights from learning Chassidus, especially Tanya

"I thank Hashem for the z'chus He gave me to do my work and to convey messages of Geula through plays and through my work with girls and women."

and the Rebbe's sichos, and I feel that it affects my work today, in that each has a part in the play and all the parts unite as in a puzzle because of the Chassidic idea that each person has a place and destiny in the world and it is all woven into one all-inclusive unity.

Tell us about one of the plays you produced.

"At Beis Chana of Tzfas we put on *HaMelech*. The story goes like this: Two people came from another country to seek the king and became lost. They ask passersby where the king is and the reactions are: king? What king? Ah, yes, I once heard when I was a little boy ... Yes, there's a palace but I don't know the way now ... They are sent from one to another.

"They continue to search for the king and on the way they experience adventures and much danger like a minefield, shooting and earthquakes, to the point that as they get close to the end one of them doesn't want to continue and he falls to the ground. His friend doesn't want to leave him

and drags him further. Suddenly it is very dark and they cry out bitterly and then they see the palace. The place is very beautiful and full of servants in uniform of red and gold, all frozen in various poses: one with a tray, one with a broom, a beautiful and frightening scene.

"The two friends, covered with dust, try to wake them but are unsuccessful. Then they discover the king's throne. The king isn't there but on the throne is a book: the five books of the Torah and a shofar. One of them grasps the shofar and blows it and all the servants are aroused and begin to work and to call out, 'The king is coming,' and the entire palace fills up with people who come from all over the country. The girls go out from the audience and the audience doesn't know whether to get up or not and they are all on the stage and calling out, 'The king has come, but where is he? Where is the king? Did we come just for this?'

"Then a huge crown descends from heaven and lands on the king's throne and that's the end.

"It's very abstract without much of a plot but a lot of content. The analogue is, of course, that we are all sleeping so very close to the revelation of Moshiach, or Hashem, which ultimately is one and the same.

What feedback do you get from the plays?

"The reactions are strong. Some people tell me that they can't sleep properly for three or four days after a play. They continue thinking about it, it shakes them up. The teachers are so impressed and they say that the girls change completely, have attained self-confidence, the ability to learn, and better marks."

How would you define the part you contribute towards hastening the Geula?

"I recently made a story about an inanimate object, plant life, animal life, human and a Jew, with each one saying a story about Ahavas Yisroel and each one fixes itself until the level of human who has to fix his middos. In everything I try to insert the idea that man has to reach a certain shleimus for who will do the work if not us?

"What is a Chassid? It's avoda on one's middos. In every play there is a message of Geula because this is the ultimate goal. Art is a medium by which to hasten the Geula as it enables a person to change because of his personal accounting. I thank Hashem for the z'chus He gave me to do my work and to convey messages of Geula through plays and through my work with girls and women."

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EYEWITNESS TO A MIRACLE

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK GINSBURG

We were told that publicizing the miracles that Hashem does in our time, affects the coming of the true and complete Geula. Let us not waste this opportunity but share the miracle stories we know!

Since we were told (sicha VaYeishev 5752) to publicize the miracles that happen in our days, knowing that this is connected with the true and complete Redemption, I will tell you a story that I was personally involved in.

I give a *Tanya* class every Tuesday in the *Kinyon HaZahav* (a mall) in Rishon L'Tziyon at R' Ilan Chiyoun's Chabad house. On Tuesday, the fifth night of Chanuka, the class began with the lighting of the Menorah in the course of which I spoke about the inner significance of Chanuka. I explained how we light all our soul powers from a jug of oil sealed by the High Priest, internalizing and living with faith which is above reason, especially in connection with the eternal life of the Nasi HaDor, who said that our generation goes to true and complete Redemption without interruption.

Suddenly, with no prior warning, one of the participants, Mr. Leon Aryeh Sabach collapsed unconscious and stopped breathing. Leon is a mekurav of the Chabad house and is 65. He has

already spent two Tishreis with the Rebbe in 770 together with Ilan. Another participant tried to take his pulse and saw that there was none. He began to shout: Ilan, he's dead!

"Don't say such stupid things," yelled Ilan and he called Magen Dovid Adom for an ambulance, as he asked, "Does anybody know how to give CPR?"

They placed Leon on the floor and tried to resuscitate him but were unsuccessful. Those working on him despaired and wanted to stop but Ilan kept yelling, "Continue!" and to me he shouted, "Open the *Igros Kodesh*! Ask the Rebbe!"

I immediately opened a volume of *Igros Kodesh* and saw many blessings but no direct reference to health. Ilan panicked and put on his gartel and stood in front of the Rebbe's picture and pleaded that Leon live and be well, proclaiming: Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed! Then he opened a volume of *Igros Kodesh* and again there were blessings.

You can just imagine the scene. Ilan kept urging the attempts at resuscitation while yelling, "You'll yet see him healthy! He will come and join the classes!" but as he said this, it seemed a denial of the reality.

The ambulance team came thirteen precious minutes later and they began trying to revive Leon. When I saw that I could not be of help, and I knew that people were waiting for my class in D'var Malchus in Shikun Chabad – Lud, I sadly parted from R' Ilan. The pulse had not returned.

I called Ilan on my cell phone as I traveled to ask what was going on. "Baruch Hashem, his pulse returned," Ilan exclaimed. "The Rebbe gave him life as a gift!"

Then Ilan told me that the medical team had wanted to give up, saying it was all over. His brain had not received oxygen for thirteen minutes and it was hopeless, they said. But Ilan insisted that they give him an electric shock as a last resort. The miracle took place and to everyone's surprise the pulse returned though Leon was still unconscious.

Leon was taken to the emergency room, attached to various machines, where he lay for a few days hanging between life and death.

Every Thursday night there is a farbrengen at the Chabad house for the mekuravim and this time I also attended. Yisroel, Leon's son was present. I spoke a lot about Chanuka

and we told miracle stories of the Rebbe with Ilan telling everyone about the great miracle that happened on Tuesday to Leon. "The Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach gave him life as a gift," he announced. "You will see that he comes back here and will join the classes and all the activities."

Leon's son mumbled, "If only...but in the meantime he is unconscious and the doctors say..."

"We have already seen," said Ilan, "how the Rebbe brought him back to life after what happened. Believe in G-d and in the Rebbe's blessing and with G-d's help we will all soon see the great miracle that he comes back here, alive and well."

We all said l'chaim and blessed Leon with a speedy recovery as each person made a positive commitment. Then Ilan began a song which could be heard all over the mall. The farbrengen was a joyous one and around one o'clock at night people left for home.

A few hours later, around five in the morning, Leon opened his eyes! The doctors were certain that irreversible damage had been sustained by his brain and that he would need a lengthy rehab period. His brain was without oxygen for thirteen minutes, they said, and there's no way he remained unaffected by this. They made arrangements with one of the rehab centers so he could be transferred there, but G-d had other plans.

Leon was transferred from the ICU to a regular ward. When the doctors ran tests to see what damage he had sustained, they were amazed to see that he was fine. He was weak and had

to rest a lot and refrain from excessive exertion, but he was allowed to return home.

Leon went to a hotel for a few days and then returned home. The following Tuesday, two weeks since his collapse, he was back at the *Tanya* shiur with everybody hugging and kissing him in delight.

"You received your life as a gift," said Ilan affectionately to him. "You must begin putting on t'fillin regularly, each weekday."

* * *

There are so many miracles taking place these days that the Rebbe says it has reached the point than when a person is asked, "What was the last miracle you saw?" he says, "What do you mean 'the last'? There are and will be so many miracles!"

I don't think there has ever been a time of so many miracles as our times, as the Rebbe guides, answers, and does open miracles for thousands of Jews, no exaggeration! This goes on every day with Jews of all backgrounds who ask for the Rebbe's advice and blessing, and through the *Igros Kodesh* or other ways, they receive amazing responses to their questions.

These stories aren't only published in Lubavitch publications but appear in secular newspapers as well. They are written by not-yet-observant Jews who emphasize that you can't argue with the facts.

Whatever has been publicized up until now is just a drop in the bucket of the thousands of answers that the Rebbe gives to those who ask, and even to those who don't ask, because

most of the time these are personal questions that people do not publicize.

When we are witness to an abundance of miracles and we were told to publicize the miracles that Hashem does in our time because this affects the bringing of the Geula, we cannot squander the opportunity. We need to publicize the miracles so every Jew hears about them and knows that it pertains to him personally, so that he too can and must turn to the Rebbe. He too can receive wondrous answers from the Rebbe.

Surely someone who received an answer from the Rebbe in this way once or twice and experienced salvation and success will be connected to the Rebbe thereby. He will come closer to Torah and mitzvos in general and to the study of Chassidus and its ways in particular, and to the fulfillment of the Rebbe's enactments.

Since Gimmel Tammuz there are people who think there is no Rebbe and there is no one to turn to, while hundreds and thousands of Jews are being helped thanks to the Rebbe's brachos, advice, and answers. When you see these miracles happening time and again, it is your holy obligation to publicize them so that more Jews know that the Rebbe is a Man of G-d who is not bound by the laws of nature. This will lead to the acceptance of the Rebbe's malchus (kingship) which is "the only thing left in the avoda of shlichus – actually accepting Moshiach Tzidkeinu so he can fulfill his mission and take the Jewish people out of exile," immediately.

Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam Va'ed!



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