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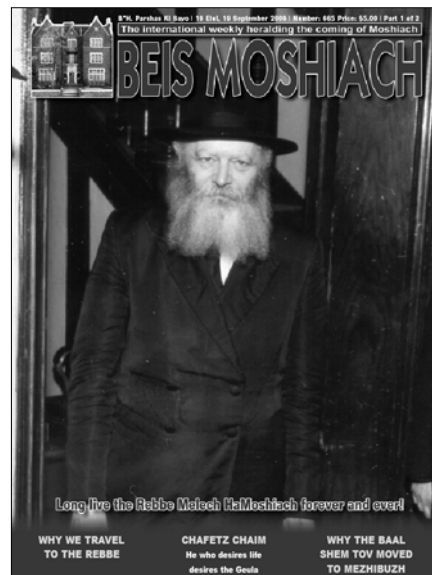
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USA

744 Eastern Parkway
Brooklyn, NY 11213-3409
Tel: (718) 778-8000
Fax: (718) 778-0800
admin@beismoshiach.org
www.beismoshiach.org

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
M.M. Hendel

ENGLISH EDITOR:
Boruch Merkur
ed@beismoshiach.org

ASSISTANT EDITOR:
Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd

HEBREW EDITOR:
Rabbi Sholom Yaakov Chazan
editorH@beismoshiach.org

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AN END TO EXILE

Translated and adapted by Dovid Yisroel Ber Kaufmann

Exile is the primary punishment. But there will be Redemption. Although exile is painful to live through, its ultimate purpose and result is beneficial. Why, then, does the Babylonian Talmud say G-d regretted creating exile? The Jerusalem Talmud, when listing the things G-d regretted creating, does not include exile. The Jerusalem Talmud is more general and speaks in a more condensed language than the Babylonian Talmud, which is more specific and explicit. Exile derives from the evil inclination. Of the things G-d regrets, only exile is a direct result of the actions of the Jewish people. The Babylonian Talmud emphasizes that the things G-d regrets lack enduring value. The Jerusalem Talmud emphasizes the element of good in the otherwise regrettable creations. It does not include exile because there is absolutely nothing good about exile.

In this week's Torah reading, Moses forewarns the children of Israel that if they disobey G-d's commandments, G-d will exact retribution. The general punishment, and source for all other hardships,

is exile. However, the central message of the rebuke is that, although the Jewish people will suffer greatly, there will be an end to their exile. There will be Redemption.

Given the place of exile in Jewish history, and its centrality to this week's Torah reading, it seems appropriate to discuss the nature of exile. Clearly, G-d did not send the Jewish people into exile simply to punish them for their disobedience. Rather, the afflictions purify the Jewish people, establishing them before G-d. (We may compare this to a child who has disobeyed his father. After making restitution and being punished, he has a closer relationship with, and a deeper respect for, his parent. Indeed, since there is a greater understanding between them, the experience actually makes him more trustworthy.)

Thus, although it is painful to live through exile, its ultimate purpose and result is beneficial. From this we see that there are two aspects to exile: the immediate, undesirable, negative afflictions and the ultimate, anticipated, beneficial result. Given that the ultimate result of exile is advantageous to the Jewish people, we would expect that, in the final analysis, exile occurred in accordance with G-d's Will.

Yet the Talmud makes the following declaration. "G-d regretted creating four things: exile, the Kasdim, the Ishmaelites, and the evil inclination." This seems to

negate any good exile might produce. After all, G-d has many agents – many ways He can punish, instruct or test the Jewish people. If G-d regrets having created

exile, this seems to mean, at the very least, that it is not the best agent for the job.

Actually, there are two versions of the statement. The Babylonian Talmud says that G-d regretted creating four things. The Jerusalem Talmud, completed over a hundred years earlier, says that G-d created three things, then regretted it. In the Jerusalem Talmud's version, exile is not included in the list.

Both versions present a problem. Elsewhere we are told that "Everything G-d created in His world was created only for His honor." This means that even the things He supposedly "regrets" were also created for a positive purpose. So how is it possible for G-d to "regret" any part of creation?

We thus have before us the following questions: Why is there a difference in the versions of the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud? Why does the Babylonian Talmud include exile among the things G-d regrets, while the Jerusalem Talmud does not? Since everything was created for a positive

inclination, exile, is regrettable.

What, then, does the Babylonian Talmud gain by including exile among the things G-d regrets? The answer tells us something important about the nature of exile. For, unlike the other three regrettable creations, exile comes into existence only as a consequence of our actions. Neither the evil inclination, nor the nations, exist because of what the Jewish people do. In fact, they came first! But exile is the consequence of the actions – the sins – of the Jewish people.

Since G-d has many agents, however, the Babylonian Talmud declares that G-d regrets using this particular agent, exile, as the means to reprove the Jewish people.

By comparing what the Babylonian Talmud emphasizes with what the Jerusalem Talmud emphasizes, we can discern what each teaches us about our Divine service.

The Babylonian Talmud states that G-d regrets creating four things. G-d "regrets" creating them because, on an inner level, they do not conform to G-d's Will. Since they don't comply with G-d's true desire, obviously they can have no real or enduring existence. Those things or relationships that are true, that have real value, we want to endure. When something lacks permanence, even if it serves a useful function temporarily, ultimately it never had validity. Hence, the term "regret" doesn't mean that G-d had a

change of heart; rather it is an expression that suggests the thing "regretted" is not an enduring creation. The Babylonian Talmud thus emphasizes that these four things are "regrettable" – they are negative and will not endure.

The Jerusalem Talmud, on the other hand, lists only three things. It also uses a different phrasing, stating that "G-d created three things, and regretted it." This emphasizes that, since G-d created them, the three things have some good, some enduring value. That G-d regretted creating them means that the negative part is temporary and will eventually be null and void. Thus, the nations of the world, represented by the Kasdim and Ishmaelites, will no longer harm the Jews. Just the opposite, they will assist and support the children of Israel. Similarly, the evil inclination will no longer lead people astray; rather, the strength and enthusiasm it supplies will be applied to matters of Torah and holiness.

Further, knowing that exile is temporary, we should not become depressed at its length. Especially now, in the footsteps of Moshiach, we must remember that exile has no real substance, and act accordingly.

purpose – G-d's honor – what does it mean that G-d "regrets" part of creation? Finally, what does this teach us about the nature of exile and our responsibility to bring the Redemption?

To answer the first question: The Jerusalem Talmud speaks in a more general manner, while the Babylonian Talmud explains things in more detail. That which comes earlier uses more abbreviated expressions; for the Jerusalem Talmud, a hint suffices. That which comes later explores and makes explicit the implications of the earlier statement; for the Babylonian Talmud, the logic and reason must be brought into the open.

Exile derives from the evil inclination. We are exiled "because of our sins." Therefore, when the Jerusalem Talmud lists the things G-d regrets creating, it does not need to mention exile. Having stated that G-d regrets creating the evil inclination, the Jerusalem Talmud understands automatically that the result of the evil

This explains why the Babylonian Talmud includes exile and the Jerusalem Talmud does not: there is nothing good about exile. It is the opposite of Redemption and G-d's Will, and in the times of Moshiach will cease to exist. The result of exile is a higher level of holiness; but exile itself is wholly negative and will be wholly annihilated.

The difference of emphasis reflects a difference of perspective. The Babylonian Talmud emphasizes the current situation, things as they are now. Hence, it focuses on the negative circumstances we find ourselves in, primarily exile. And it stresses the negation of those things that obstruct G-d's Will. The Jerusalem Talmud, on the other hand, looks toward the future. While acknowledging the current situation, that there are things G-d "regrets," it also recognizes that things will change, that in the future only the good will remain. Now, the regrettable is foremost; in the times of Moshiach, what will be evident is the G-dliness within all of creation.

What practical lesson can we derive from the above discussion? First, we learn that exile is only a tool, a punishment for our sins – as explained in the Torah

reading. G-d does not want us to be in exile. Knowing this, we ourselves should not be satisfied with the situation. And since exile is not an appropriate condition for the Jewish people, we cannot become comfortable or complacent. Indeed, especially when the outward hardships have been removed, we should increase our efforts in and enthusiasm for Torah and mitzvos.

Further, knowing that exile is temporary, we should not become depressed at its length. Especially now, in the footsteps of Moshiach, we must remember that exile has no real substance, and act accordingly.

This means, among other things, not to be affected by the hostility, skepticism or customs of the non-Jewish world. Indeed, with the coming of Moshiach, the non-Jews will assist and support the Jewish people. They will recognize the truth of Torah. Far from opposing the study of Torah and observance of mitzvos, the nations of the world will demand and expect us to be a "nation of priests" and "a light unto the nations."

(Based on Likkutei Sichos 24, pp. 167-176)

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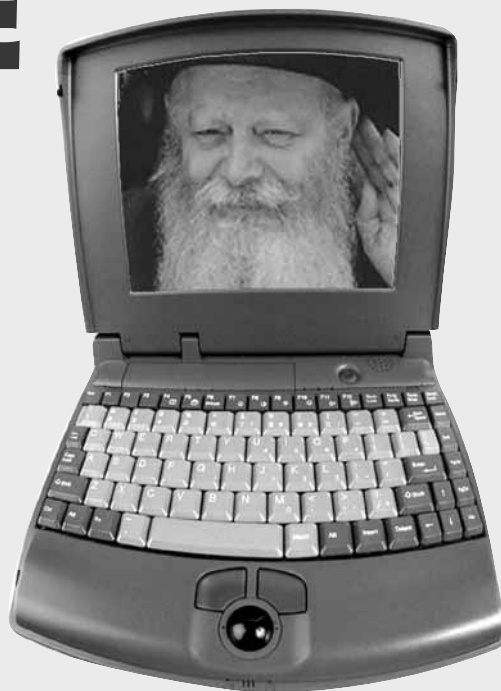
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WHY THE BAAL SHEM TOV MOVED TO MEZHIBUZH

By Menachem Ziegelboim

Our holy master, Rabbi Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, son of Rabbi Eliezer, was born on Chai Elul in the year NaCHaS (Tav-Nun-Ches/5458/1698) in the town of Okup in Podalia. In his youth he wandered from place to place. He lived in a hut between the towns of Kosov and Kitov and spent the day learning Nigleh and Nistar, alone with his Maker in the mountains. In the year 5494/1734, the Baal Shem Tov returned to Tlust near Brody and his reputation began to spread as a holy man and miracle worker.

Rabbi Yoske of Mezhibuzh, son of the tzaddik Rabbi Dovid'l, son of Rabbi Moshe Chaim Efraim of Sadilkov, author of *Degel Machane Efraim*, grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, explained why the Baal Shem Tov lived in Mezhibuzh. R' Yoske enjoyed the full trust of the Chassidim of Mezhibuzh since he was a Torah scholar and a learned man, a truthful and precise man. He related this story in the name of his grandfather.

In the town of Mezhibuzh lived a wealthy man by the name of

Berish Byelaus. He owned a large fabric store. In addition to his wealth, he was a G-d fearing man and an outstanding Torah scholar. He spent most of his time learning Torah while his wife ran the store.

In those days, the Baal Shem Tov was already famous but R' Berish never went to see him. His wife though, went to Brody on business and each time she went, she stopped in nearby Tlust in order to receive the Baal Shem Tov's bracha. The brachos bore fruit and business was better than ever.

One day, Prince Augustus Alexander Tsartoreisky, the ruler of Mezhibuzh, decided to sell the rabbinate of the city to the highest bidder. R' Berish's wife bought it without telling her husband. After she paid the prince, R' Berish received a document appointing him to the rabbinate, signed and sealed by the prince.

A few days after he began to serve as the rav, R' Berish fell sick. Being a man of means, his wife called the best doctors to his bedside but no one was able to help him. When she saw that he was in a bad state, she urged him to go to Tlust to the Baal Shem

Tov so the tzaddik would daven for him, but R' Berish refused to listen. His wife continued to press him but R' Berish did not believe in the miracle worker and preferred dying of his illness to traveling to him.

R' Berish's condition deteriorated and one day he said to his wife, "If your belief in the Baal Shem is that strong, go to him yourself and give him a pidyon nefesh so he will daven for me."

At first she did not want to travel alone but seeing that he was in a desperate state, she agreed to go on condition that he promised her that whatever the Baal Shem Tov said to do, he would do.

R' Berish felt compelled to agree and his wife set out. When she arrived in Tlust she cried to the Baal Shem Tov and begged him to daven for her husband. When she finished speaking, the Baal Shem Tov said that in order for her husband to be cured, he would need to travel to Mezhibuzh and visit the ill man.

The woman hired another wagon and they both headed for Mezhibuzh. Upon their arrival they were told that R' Berish was

breathing his last.

The Baal Shem Tov's face darkened and he remained seated on the wagon, thinking. After a few minutes he went to the door of the house and placed his hand on the mezuza as he looked at the patient. After waiting there a while he said in surprise, "R' Berish, is that how you welcome guests? You are supposed to greet a guest!"

With superhuman effort, R' Berish held out his right hand but the Baal Shem Tov continued to remonstrate, "Lying down? Is it polite to greet someone lying down?"

R' Berish made the effort and sat up in bed. The Baal Shem Tov sat next to him and after a pause he said, "Rabbi Berish, you should know that there are accusations against you in Heaven. Number one – because you became a rav and you are not supposed to be a rav. There is an antidote for that, give up the position. I don't remember the second accusation, while the third accusation is that you abandoned the old beis midrash. Although you built a new beis midrash, the old beis midrash, where people davened for nearly three hundred years, has complained before the Heavenly

Court, saying it could have accepted prayers for many more years."

The Baal Shem Tov added, "This beis midrash correlates to the Beis HaMikdash up Above and it would be proper for more t'fillos to be prayed there. As for this accusation I have no advice except for me to move to your town of Mezhibuzh."

When R' Berish heard this, he announced that he was giving up the rabbinate. Slowly, his condition improved and he became completely well. The Baal Shem Tov did as he said; he settled in Mezhibuzh and davened in the old beis midrash until his passing. Till this day, it is known as the Baal Shem Tov's beis midrash.

The Baal Shem Tov lived in Mezhibuzh for 22 years until he passed away on Shavuos 5520/1760.

HEICHAL HA'BAAL SHEM TOV

The Baal Shem Tov's beis midrash was located not far from the large shul. The building, constructed of wood, was somewhat hidden in the Jewish quarter and separated from the main street by a picket fence made of wood. On the side of the beis

midrash was a small room known as the "Maggid's shtibel." That is where the Great Maggid, Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch stayed and davened when he visited his holy teacher.

According to tradition the Baal Shem Tov said that his beis midrash should not be whitewashed even though the wood inside was blackened as a result of a fire that broke out there which was extinguished immediately. Miraculously, no damage was done but it blackened the walls that served as mute testimony to the miraculous fire.

Years after the passing of the Baal Shem Tov, his grandson, Rabbi Boruch of Mezhibuzh began preparations to paint the walls but his grandfather came to him in a dream and warned him to leave the walls alone since they were suffused with Torah and avodas Hashem. So throughout the generations, the Chassidim and local people zealously preserved the original structure and allowed no renovations to be done.

The Baal Shem Tov did not have a special chair in the beis midrash. His seat was to the right of the Aron Kodesh on a bench that was in the southeast corner of the beis midrash. After his passing, his place was preserved and that part of the bench was fenced off.

When Haskala and the atheistic youth movements spread in the beginning of the 1900's it was feared the place would be desecrated. To prevent this from happening the Baal Shem Tov's seat was removed before strangers would get to it and out of the wood a shtender (lectern) was made where the Admurim of Mezhibuzh davened on the Yomim Nora'im and the other Yemei Ratzon.

Throughout the years, there



R' Berish made the effort and sat up in bed. The Baal Shem Tov sat next to him and after a pause he said, "Rabbi Berish, you should know that there are accusations against you in Heaven. Number one – because you became a rav and you are not supposed to be a rav. There is an antidote for that, give up the position.

were much Torah and t'filla in the Baal Shem Tov's beis midrash and the place attracted many visitors.

When the communists came to power they began eradicating every vestige of Jewish life and they eventually began closing shuls throughout the Soviet Union. In the spring of 1939 the Soviets locked the Baal Shem Tov's beis midrash. This happened on Shavuot, the Baal Shem Tov's yahrtzeit.

THE HOLOCAUST

War broke out between the Soviet Union and Germany on Shabbos, 26 Sivan 1941. German soldiers advanced quickly and

within a short time the Russian army had retreated from all its positions in the Ukraine. With the retreat of the Russian army and removal of Soviet assets from the area of Mezhibuzh, 11 Tamuz, Ukrainian nationalists began attacking the Jews of Mezhibuzh. When the Nazis invaded a few days later, they only had to finish up the job.

On Tuesday, the day after Yom Kippur 1943, in the morning, the Germans and their Ukrainian cohorts surrounded the Jewish ghetto and gathered the remnant of Jews in the city square.

Young people were sent to labor camps and the rest of the Jews, 1000 of them, were taken to

the banks of the Bug River and shot.

About 2500 Jews managed to hide in bunkers and villages. For the next three weeks, the Nazis hunted them down. By the end of the *aktion*, 5000 murdered Jews were buried in a mass grave outside the town. May Hashem avenge their blood.

Miraculously, the Nazis did not set the Baal Shem Tov's beis midrash on fire at that time. Only eleven months after their occupation did they set it on fire along with dozens of Torah scrolls. The shul, which had stood for over 500 years and corresponded to the Beis HaMikdash up Above, was destroyed. Like the day the shul was closed, this too happened on Shavuot, the Baal Shem Tov's yahrtzeit, and this was seen as a wonder.

Only a few people from Mezhibuzh survived the Holocaust. One of them is Mr. Margolis who continued to live in Mezhibuzh after the war up until a decade ago when he moved to Eretz Yisroel and settled in Ashdod. He is the one who related all he knew from generations back about the beis midrash of the Baal Shem Tov. With his memory for detail he helped reconstruct the history of this holy place.

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THE NINES OF TISHREI AND GEULA

By Rabbi Naftali Estulin, Shliach in Los Angeles

In the Rosh HaShana Musaf davening we recite nine blessings. On Erev Yom Kippur we wave the Kaparos around our head nine times and during Yom Kippur we recite several sets of nine chapters of T'hillim. What is special about the number nine?



WHY THREE CHAPTERS?

We are told that the Baal Shem Tov heard from his teacher, Achiya HaShiloni, that during Elul we should say three chapters of T'hillim a day.

Elul is a month in which three N'siim were born: the Baal Shem Tov, the Alter Rebbe, and the Tzemach Tzedek. These three N'siim prepared the world for Moshiach and as it is brought, the Tzemach Tzedek was not only the Moshiach of his generation but he was an inclusive-Moshiach since he corresponded to the midda of Daas which includes all the middos.

Since the Geula did not actually come in the time of the Tzemach Tzedek, apparently Hashem wanted the middos to be revealed too. Therefore he was followed by the Rebbe Maharash

who, the Rebbe says, represents Tiferes; the Rebbe Rashab who represents Netzach and Hod; the Rebbe Rayatz who represents Yesod, and in one of his sichos the Rebbe hinted that he represents Malchus.

When you examine the Rebbe's leadership in a manner of Malchus, we are immediately reminded of the month of Elul since the Rebbe conducted himself just like the "king in the field."

Rashi says on the verse, "and I will lead you upright" – "I will stroll with you in Gan Eden like one of you and you won't be terrified of Me. Perhaps you won't fear Me at all? It says, and I will be for you as an Elokim."

This precisely characterizes the Rebbe. On the one hand he goes out to the people in the field and spends more time with the

people than any other Rebbe. On the other hand, the majesty was more pronounced than by any other Rebbe.

Not everybody takes advantage of Elul. It is explained in Chassidus that the revelation of Elul does not inspire; it only gives the potential. If we arouse ourselves, we will find the kochos.

The same is true with the avoda we were given to do. The Rebbe made it clear many times that he does not operate like those tzaddikim who do the work for you. The Rebbe just gives us the kochos. The actual avoda is for us to do with the kochos we were given.

NINES

When you live with the Rebbeim and try to connect everything to the Nasi HaDor,

you sometimes find interesting connections: for example, the number nine. Quite a few things connected to Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur have to do with the number nine. The three chapters a day that we say during this time period was transmitted from Rebbe to Rebbe when they were **nine** years old. That's the way it was the Mittlerer Rebbe, the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe Rashab, and the Rebbe Rayatz.

In the Rosh HaShana Musaf davening we recite **nine** blessings. On Erev Yom Kippur we wave the Kaparos around our head **nine** times and during Yom Kippur we recite several sets of **nine** chapters of T'hilim.

What is special about the number nine? In the Gemara

Brachos 29a, in the chapter of T'fillas HaShachar, it says, "What do the nine on Rosh HaShana correspond to? Rabbi Yitzchok of Cartagena said it corresponds to the nine mentions of Hashem's name that Chana said in her prayer."

When Chassidim speak about Chana, they immediately make the association to the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana who gave birth to Melech HaMoshiach, the **ninth** generation from the Baal Shem Tov.

It is interesting to note that this Chazal is quoted in a maamer that the Rebbe Rayatz said on Rosh HaShana 5689/1928, the year the Rebbe married his daughter, which bound the Rebbe to the Chassidim and transformed the Rebbe into the Nasi of the

ninth generation.

The Rebbe once explained the custom to sing "Avinu Malkeinu" (the Alter Rebbe's niggun) before every t'filla on Rosh HaShana, also before Maariv even though we don't say "Avinu Malkeinu," in order to recall the merit of the Avos, the merit of the Alter Rebbe. And how many times is that altogether?

When Achiya HaShiloni gave the Baal Shem Tov the secret of the recitation of T'hilim, he told him that on Yom Kippur sets of **nine** chapters should be said. Perhaps this alludes to the nine N'siim who prepared the world for Moshiach, until the ninth Nasi from the Baal Shem Tov, the Rebbe MH"M who will redeem us all with the everlasting Geula. May it be now!

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Mivtza: HELPING THE NEEDY

To every member of the Lubavitcher community:

During this month of preparation for Rosh Hashonoh, the "head" of the New Year, we fondly recall our Rebbe's words that this is an especially auspicious time for strengthening our deep bond of Hiskashrus with the "Rosh Bnei Yisroel," the "head" of the Jewish people and leader of the generation.

Our Rebbeim explain that **an important way to strengthen Hiskashrus is by participating in the Rebbe's activities and concerns, consequently, by supporting an organization that brings together a number of these activities, the Hiskashrus is greater and stronger.** Such an organization is Kupas Rabbeinu, which seeks to continue many of the Rebbe's activities and concerns without change from the way he would conduct them himself.

Every year at this time, the Rebbe would call upon us to contribute generously to help needy families with their extra expenses for the coming month's many Yomim Tovim. This also coincides with the special emphasis during this month of giving extra Tzedokah, (indicated in the Hebrew letters of the word "Elul," as explained in many Sichos etc.), as a vital way of preparing ourselves for the new year and arousing Divine mercy upon us. See sicho in the Hebrew text of this letter.

We therefore appeal to every individual man and woman to contribute generously to Kupas Rabbeinu, enabling us to fulfill the Rebbe's desire to help all those who anxiously await our help. The greater your contribution, the more we can accomplish.

Your generous contribution to Kupas Rabbeinu will be the appropriate vessel for receiving the abundant blessings of the Rebbe, who is its Nasi, that you may be blessed with a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year, materially and spiritually. May it help to bring the full revelation of Moshiach - our Rebbe - immediately now!

Wishing a Ksiva Vachasima Tova for a good and sweet year,

In the name of Vaad Kupas Rabbeinu

Rabbi Sholom Mendel Simpson

Rabbi Yehuda Leib Groner

P.S. Of course, you may send to Kupas Rabbeinu all contributions that you would send to the Rebbe; all will be devoted to the activities to which the Rebbe would devote them.

You may also send Maimad, **Keren-Hashono** (this coming year 5769 - 354 days), Vov Tishrei, Yud Gimmel Tishrei Magbis etc. to Kupas Rabbeinu.

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AT THE BAAL SHEM TOV'S GRAVE

Mrs. Chani Horowitz – Vinnitsa

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*Beis Moshiach spoke with three shlichim who live near Mezhibuzh, yes, the Mezhibuzh of the stories, of the Baal Shem Tov. They regularly host guests, save visitors in distress, celebrate family simchos and hold public events near the Baal Shem Tov's gravesite... and of course spread the wellsprings right next to the one who started it all. **
Presented in honor of Chai Elul.

Tell us about your shlichus. How long are you living there and what do you do?

Rocheli: We are in Rovno for three years with our three children. We have a shul, a Kollel, and shiurim for women and youth, clubs for children and a preschool.

Chani: We are in Vinnitsa five years. We have a preschool, an Ohr Avner school, a shul and shiurim for men, women, and youth. My work is mainly teaching Judaism in the school focusing on holidays around the year, visits to homes and of course, hospitality.

You are all close to Mezhibuzh, a place which has thrilled hearts for some 250 years. Tell us about your closeness to the holy Baal Shem Tov.

Menuchi: Boruch Hashem we have the enormous privilege of living the closest to Mezhibuzh, to the gravesite of the Baal Shem Tov, a half an hour drive away. We go there about once a week with our son Shneur. My husband immerses there in the mikva, even during the winter. Twice a year, on Chai Elul and Yud-Tes Kislev, we take the children from the school and farbreng there.



When there is a problem or difficulty on shlichus, we write to the Rebbe and go to the Baal Shem Tov and daven there, and believe salvation will come.

Chani: We are about an hour and a half away from the Baal Shem Tov and we go there about once a month. A few times a year we go with all our students as well as groups from the Jewish community.

Rocheli: We are three hours away from the Baal Shem Tov. In

the vast distances of the Ukraine, three hours is considered close. We go a few times a year to the gravesite as well as when there are seminars and special Shabbasos for shluchim. We still haven't brought many of our people from the community there.

This year I want to take my women's club there.

What are your feelings at the gravesite?

Rocheli: Every time we go to the Baal Shem Tov I'm as excited

as the first time I went. Even my children are excited and look forward to the trip. When we get there, we write *panim* for the entire family and find it hard to leave that holy place.

Chani: I feel the Sh'china, a feeling similar to being at the Kosel. Interestingly, many Jews in our town say they have the same feeling.

Menuchi: There is an uplifted feeling even though we go there once a week, but each time I'm

The renovated beis midrash of the Baal Shem Tov, in Mezhibuzh



excited all over again and feel the k'dusha.

How do you arrange for a seminar or Shabbos at the gravesite?

Menuchi: We organize seminars several times a year for families, on the topic of Family Purity, or a bar mitzva, bas mitzva, a Shabbaton for boys or girls. We plan months ahead. First, we confirm with Rabbi Yisroel Meir Gabbai that the place will be available and there won't be other groups there. You can rent about a hundred places to sleep in furnished houses that Rabbi Gabbai built.

Providing the food is more complicated. Sometimes there are cooks and mashgichim there, provided by Rabbi Gabbai, and the fee includes food. When there are no cooks available, we have to provide the food. When we do a seminar, the school's kitchen is where the cooking is done and we pack it all and take it along on the buses and heat everything up. When we organize a Shabbos Achdus for shluchim in western Ukraine, everybody prepares something and brings it.

Chani: We brought students from our school and their parents for Shabbos a few times. We rented rooms and our school's kitchen is where the food was prepared. We packed it and heated it up. We enjoyed it tremendously.

Is it common practice to visit the gravesites of tzaddikim in the Ukraine?

Menuchi: Since we are located close to the gravesite of the Baal Shem Tov, we host many guests. Many of the people from Eretz Yisroel and other countries, who come to the Baal Shem Tov, also eat with us and they enjoy seeing our school. My husband even saved some lives. A few times

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people became suddenly ill and lost consciousness.

He took them to the local hospital, translated from Russian

to Ivrit, made sure they had kosher food, and didn't leave them until they were able to fly home. Their families thank us till today.

Rocheli: Many groups come from Eretz Yisroel and America. They visit gravesites and we provide them with room and board. Near us is the gravesite of the Maharsha and many Chassidim come here to this grave. We are also close to Anipoli where the Maggid of Mezritch's grave is, about forty minutes away, and we have many visitors because of that too.

Chani: In the summer we get large groups, about two hundred people. We provide kosher food. There are always people looking for their ancestors who are buried in the Ukraine and we help them in any way we can.

Do you have anything special to share that happened to you in connection with the Baal Shem Tov?

Menuchi: We have been able to go through the Jewish life cycle at the gravesite. Three years ago, a Jewish woman gave birth to a



Lag B'Omer parade in Mezhibuzh organized by shluchim, Yehoshua and Menuchi Raskin

son and we convinced her to circumcise him. The eighth day was Chai Elul and we explained that this is the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and she agreed to have the bris done at the gravesite.

There were groups there visiting from Eretz Yisroel and all were moved by the occasion. It was the most moving bris I ever experienced. Four years ago, on 3 Tamuz, we made an upsheren for a child in our city. The family wanted to celebrate at the Baal Shem Tov's grave.

Two years ago, on Lag B'Omer, we had the first parade in Mezhibuzh, with horses and music and children carrying signs. We marched from the old shul of the Baal Shem Tov till the gravesite. That is where we had our son's upsheren. We also celebrated our bar and bas mitzvos there together with Rabbi Wilhelm.

Together with Chani Horowitz and our husbands, we accompanied a couple to the chuppa. They were from Ozgorod and mekuravim of Rabbi M.M. Teichman. The chuppa was at the gravesite. We also had a funeral of a man in our town and he merited to be buried near the Baal Shem Tov.

Have you experienced miracles?

Chani: We waited about five years for children and I believe that it was in the merit of the many t'fillos at the Baal Shem Tov's grave that we had our son.

Menuchi: We have seen many miracles on our shlichus and in our personal lives. The following story is connected with the Alter Rebbe and since Chai Elul is also the birthday of the Alter Rebbe, I will relate it.

My husband and I waited for children for five years and we



Mushky and Levi Schneersohn with their cousin who came on a visit from Eretz Yisroel to the gravesite of the Baal Shem Tov

were worried. One day, Rabbi Shlomo Wilhelm suggested that we go to Haditch, to the grave of the Alter Rebbe, and each of us should recite the entire T'hillim.

We traveled about twelve hours by car. It was in the winter and very cold, minus 25 degrees and snowing. The gravesite wasn't renovated at that time and there was no heat. We stood barefoot in the freezing cold and spent several hours saying T'hillim. Then, on the spur of the moment, we promised the Alter Rebbe that we would name our child, Shneur Zalman and would bring him

when he was a year old.

Until he was born we saw miracles the entire time, but that's a separate story. We brought Shneur Zalman to Haditch when he was one year old, to thank the Alter Rebbe. When he was three we had his upsheren at the gravesite of the Baal Shem Tov who was the one who cut the hair of the Alter Rebbe when the latter was three years old.

What story about the Baal Shem Tov is especially meaningful to you?

Rocheli: The story about the leaf and the worm. I tell it to

many mekuravos. Almost all of them know it since it has a powerful message.

Chani: Stories about the Baal Shem Tov's childhood made an impression on me. I am always moved by how, when he was orphaned as a five year old, he was able to manage on his own and achieve what he achieved.

Menuchi: The *HaYom Yom* for my birthday, 9 Iyar, is, "Our master the Baal Shem Tov said: every single thing a person sees or hears is an instruction for his conduct in the service of G-d. This is the idea of avoda, service, to comprehend and discern in all things a way in which to serve G-d."

"My" *HaYom Yom* is my guiding light on shlichus.

What message do you have for our readers?

Rocheli: To know that even if there are only small successes on shlichus, carry on and be encouraged even by the small things. If fewer women came to a shiur than I expected, but one woman thanked me for the shiur and asked for more shiurim, that gives me chizuk and gives me the strength to continue doing more.

Chani: We cannot forget that we are the Rebbe's children and the Rebbe is the meshaleiach and we carry out his shlichus. We have kochos, privileges, and a lot of responsibilities.

Menuchi: I want to invite all of you to come and visit and pray at the Baal Shem Tov's grave, and



Celebrating the upsheren of Shneur Zalman Raskin

FAMILY PURITY WILL HELP

Chani Horowitz relates:

There is a young couple here who waited many years to have a child. Each time the woman conceived, she gave birth to a stillborn child. On one of their trips to medical treatment, they went to Kiev and met a traditional rabbi. They told him their sorrow and his answer surprised them. He said, "Why don't you consult with the Chabad shluchim in your city? They will teach you the laws of Family Purity and I believe this will help."

We did not know them before that, but because of the suggestion of the rabbi in Kiev, they came to us. My husband learned the laws with the husband and I learned with the wife. A short time later she conceived and gave birth to a healthy baby girl.

I am always excited and moved to make the journey with mekuravos, to see how these women successfully deal with the difficulties even though they weren't given a Jewish chinuch. In the merit of the shiurim in Family Purity that I give, they observe this mitzva with mesirus nefesh.

don't forget to be our guests. You won't regret it! May we soon meet with the Rebbe when we will

be able to see the Baal Shem Tov too!

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WHY WE TRAVEL TO THE REBBE

By Rabbi Elozor Kenig

Older Chassidim look at the young T'mimim in wonder: Why are they so keen on traveling to 770 when we can't see the Rebbe? Of course, we all await the hisgalus, but until then, why go?

The Rebbe MH"M described the difference between a Lubavitcher Chassid and a Poilishe Chassid, both in this world and the next. When a Poilishe Chassid goes to his Rebbe, he hears brief teachings, he receives *shirayim* from the Rebbe's table, and a wonderful time is had by all with singing and dancing. Before leaving for home, the Rebbe blesses him for a successful year with children, health and parnasa, a bracha for his daughter of marriageable age, etc.

When the Poilishe Chassid returns home and tells his wife about the brachos he received, about the parnasa he was promised for the coming year and all the other details, she is thrilled and she helps him make his next trip. This Chassid definitely has "this world."

Then, when he reaches the next world and he is asked who he is and what he did in his lifetime, he has nothing to fear. His ready answer is: "I was the Chassid of

such-and-such a Rebbe and the tzaddik takes cares of me."

"One minute," they say. "Did you do everything your Rebbe told you to do?"

"My Rebbe gave me brachos, and he told me to keep Torah and mitzvos and I should have set times to learn, etc. and I did what

he said."

Presumably, after this discussion on high, all of Gan Eden and Olam HaBa will be open to him.

Now, what about the Lubavitcher Chassid? He also goes to his Rebbe. He also pushes forward though not to grab *shirayim* but simply to be able to hear the maamer. Naturally, with all the pushing it's hard to listen and so the Chassid neither really hears nor understands the maamer.

In the sicha, the Rebbe goes on to describe what he heard from a visitor who spent Shabbos in Lubavitch. He was constantly pushed and barely managed to hear the opening question that began the maamer. He barely ate anything because immediately after the maamer was a review of the maamer and after that was davening. Since the davening was somewhat lengthy, it lasted until Mincha and that's how the entire Shabbos went by, with him squashed and hungry and not even knowing the maamer.

When the Chabad Chassid has yechidus with the Rebbe, he is ashamed to tell the Rebbe about his material circumstances, or to take the Rebbe's time to tell him that his wife gives him no rest because there is no meat for Shabbos and not even bread for weekdays, and the grocery store



doesn't want to extend any more credit. Instead, he asks the Rebbe for a bracha that he should have love and fear of Hashem, kabbalas ol, and t'filla without foreign thoughts intruding.

When he returns home to the wife who is waiting to hear about the Rebbe's bracha for parnasa, for a dowry for their daughter, he tells her that he did not ask for those things. Rather, he asked to be able to daven without being plagued by worries about parnasa. You can well imagine her reaction. The following year, when he wants to travel to the Rebbe, she yells that they would be better off if he

made demands of me. I heard maamer after maamer, but ..."

WE ALSO WANT TO RECEIVE

Upon examining this story, we see that we have a lot to learn from it, even as Chassidei Chabad. We cannot deny it because we Lubavitchers went to the Rebbe with certain ambitions, whether with the hopes of receiving a bracha for nachas from the children, parnasa, or other material matters. True we had ambitions to progress spiritually, to improve in our Torah study and

True we had ambitions to progress spiritually, to improve in our Torah study and our Chassidishe conduct. But still, we were somewhat guilty of the same approach as the Poilishe Chassid – we came in order to receive.

worked as a chazan or shamash and earned some money to support the household. This is definitely not a wonderful Olam HaZeh.

Then, when he gets to Olam HaBa and they ask him who he is, he says confidently, "I'm a Lubavitcher!"

"Do you know what the acronym 'Chabad' stands for?" they ask him.

He says, "Of course, chochma, bina, daas."

"Did you acquire it?" they ask. "Let's see what you know."

The Chassid remains silent. They ask, "Perhaps the Rebbe did not teach you?"

"Actually, the Rebbe *did* teach me, and when I wasn't able to go, the Rebbe sent me the printed maamer. The Rebbe taught me and

our Chassidishe conduct. But still, we were somewhat guilty of the same approach as the Poilishe Chassid – we came in order to receive.

We have all made and heard the wishes, before a trip to the Rebbe, that we return more Chassidish, warmer, more alive. These were hopes that meant we expected to get something from the Rebbe. Even if we hoped for spiritual improvement, we still hoped to receive. A Chassid dreamed of the moment he would be able to be with the Rebbe in yechidus, to list all his problems, and get advice for his material and spiritual issues. That is what every Chassid thought.

Who does not remember the farbrengens we had upon our return from 770 in which each

person related what **he** got, what brachos **he** received, how much **he** gained materially and spiritually; in short, how much **he** got from the Rebbe.

At this time though, in the final seconds before the hisgalus of the Rebbe, it seems that things are changing.

SEVEN GENERATIONS ON THE WAY TO ETZEM

A key principle in Chabad Chassidus, initiated by the Alter Rebbe, is *avoda b'ko'ach atzmo* (doing the work on your own). Poilish Chassidim's guiding principle is *tzaddik b'emunaso yichayeh* (the tzaddik "gives life" to those who believe in him).

Another pillar of the Alter Rebbe's teachings, an idea which he not only spoke about but actually "lived" with, is not to strive after *shirayim* (morsels, crumbs) but to rather want only the Essence. In many maamarim in Likkutei Torah, the Alter Rebbe repeats this point, quoting the verse, "who is unto me in the heavens, and aside from You there is nothing I want on earth," and as heard from him while in a state of d'veikus, "I don't want Your Gan Eden, I don't want Your Olam HaBa; I want nothing but You alone."

These two points, doing the work on your own and the desire for Etzem, are basic principles of Chabad philosophy. Despite that, we cannot ignore the reality and say that this is how Chassidim lived throughout the seven generations of Chabad.

First, regarding doing the work on our own – if we look at Chassidishe stories over all the years, you can't say that the avoda was completely on our own. Each person had specific guidance from the Rebbe. The Rebbe directed and encouraged and in many ways, the avoda was openly navigated by the

Rebbe.

Even at the beginning of our Rebbe's leadership, when the Rebbe often told shluchim and the heads of mosdos that they had to take initiative, we see throughout that the mitzvaim and other projects came from the Rebbe, and they were strongly encouraged by the Rebbe. There was almost nothing that moved on its own, completely.

The same is true for seeking the Etzem. If we look at the history of Chassidim, we see that despite what the Alter Rebbe said, that he doesn't want Gan Eden, Chassidim actually did want Gan Eden.

Chassidim wished for themselves and each other "*a lichtigen Gan Eden*" (a luminous Gan Eden) and when Chassidim in earlier generations died, those who attended the funeral would wish for them that they would merit to enter the "chamber of the Tzaddik." The avoda was in this manner too. Chassidim yearned for

one level or another; they wished to see giluyim of the Rebbe, to hear a miracle of the Rebbe, to progress spiritually, to get another crumb and another crumb. Spiritual crumbs, but crumbs nonetheless, because they did not really yearn for Etzem.

We might even say that this was per the guidance of the Chabad leaders, and maybe due to the fact that they knew it would take seven generations and so they enabled the Chassidim to get a bit of giluyim so they would have what to hold on to. But in our generation, especially this latter part, from the moment the Rebbe assigned us the final avoda – kabbalas p'nei Moshiach Tzidkeinu – it is clear that something changed drastically in both these points.

WHAT'S SO TERRIBLE ABOUT SCREAMING AD MASAI BECAUSE WE WERE TOLD TO DO SO?

In the sicha of Chaf-Ches

Nissan the Rebbe said that the reason Moshiach had not come yet was because even when people cried out "ad masai," they did so because they were told to do so. This is somewhat surprising. Why is doing something because you were told a problem? After all, the whole of Judaism is based on *kabbalas ol*, on *naaseh v'nishma!*

The answer is that when we're talking about the final avoda, the avoda whose goal is to bring about the revelation of the Etzem, not just "crumbs," giluyim, but the Etzem, then doing things because we were told is not sufficient. Now we need avoda b'ko'ach atzmo, doing things not because we were told and not because it was initiated by the Rebbe. It essentially has to come from us.

It's difficult to say this but, in a certain way, as long as we still saw the Rebbe, we were not completely on our own. It's when we are in a situation in which we don't see the Rebbe that we attain avoda b'ko'ach atzmo in the full sense of the term.

Doing the work on our own is so much more precious. We don't "eat the bread of shame" because we did it completely on our own. This is why the Rebbe said what he said on Chaf-Ches Nissan. The Rebbe was saying that from here-on-in, we had to be completely on our own. The Geula can come about only through this type of avoda.

The same is true for yearning for the Etzem and nothing else. In the maamer "V'Ata Tetzaveh," the Rebbe says that a Jew today is not broken by the fact that he has no giluyim. He does not long for spiritual glimmers. He is completely crushed because he does not have the Etzem. "Crushed for the light-source," and not crushed for the light. A Jew cannot go on another minute without



Etzem.

So too on the maamer's reference to "the eleventh day," the Rebbe says that a truly intelligent person does not desire giluyim, the shirayim that surround the king. He only wants the king.

The Rebbe is simply saying that all those things which the Alter Rebbe innovated can no longer remain in storage. The time has come for action. In this final avoda, the avoda to bring down the Ikar Sh'china to the lowest possible point, it must be done completely by the tachton and with one desire: You alone.

another. The trip to 770 is not in order to witness giluyim, not to receive lekach, and not to get a dollar. The trip is not made in order to **get anything**, but to **give**, in order to be mekabel panim and in order to bring the hisgalus.

No such thing existed in previous generations, not even at the beginning of the seventh generation. They went to the Rebbe in order to get brachos, to absorb the holy atmosphere, to gain spiritually, to see the Rebbe on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, to be blessed with Birkas HaBanim, to see the encouraging hand motions at the March, to get lekach, to shake the Rebbe's lulav.

Etzem, the revelation of the Ikar Sh'china. That includes everything, even children, health and parnasa as well as the loftiest levels, the Etzem itself.

This is what the Rebbe is aiming for now, that we naturally seek only the Ikar. Everyone feels that it depends on him and that he has the ability to bring the hisgalus. People don't look for what they can get from the Rebbe but what they can give, what they can do to bring the hisgalus. They don't go looking for the lekach and the kos shel bracha in the narrow sense of the idea, on the personal level in which only the person receives it, but in the global sense, so that the entire world receives kos shel bracha. That is how they go to the Rebbe.

It's true for both aspects, the yearning for the Etzem and the avoda b'ko'ach atzmo. It's hard to describe a place where you see more of this idea of avoda atzmis than a trip for Tishrei. Thousands of people, adults, young people and children who never saw the Rebbe go, and at first plenty of people raised an eyebrow and asked: Why are you going? For what? What is there to go for?

Not only weren't they fazed by this, they swept the adults and older people along with them. The situation today is such that the mashpiim and older Chassidim go to 770 in order to imbibe the spirit and chayus of the youth. They look in wonder at the mesirus nefesh of the kids and draw strength from it to last the rest of the year.

It's apparent in every minute of their stay in 770. Every single thing comes completely *milmata l'maala*. The T'mimim, at their own initiative, started a Hachnasas Orchim organization, an organization which, till today, is run by the T'mimim. It is the T'mimim who decide on the sidrei

The trip to 770 is not in order to witness giluyim, not to receive lekach, and not to get a dollar. The trip is not made in order to get anything, but to give, in order to be mekabel panim and in order to bring the hisgalus.

GOING TO THE REBBE AND NOT GETTING CRUMBS

If you want to see how these twin principles are expressed these days, the best place to go is 770 during Tishrei. When you see how T'mimim, girls, and Anash save money all year long and spare no effort in getting visas and passports and all the rest, you understand how these two points are coming to the fore.

Those who travel to 770 for Tishrei these days are not traveling to see giluyim! If you talk to them you see it in every aspect of their daily behavior. Going to the Rebbe is not in order to get a bracha and improvement in one area or

People wanted the crumbs; very lofty crumbs, but crumbs, since it is not the Etzem. The goal is the hisgalus of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach, Ikar Sh'china down here!

Nowadays, Chassidim go to the Rebbe for this goal alone: kabbalas ha'malchus. Senior Chassidim look at the young T'mimim in wonder. What makes them so eager to go when they won't see anything anyway? Of course everybody hopes for the immediate hisgalus, but until then, what's the urgency?

The simple answer is, the T'mimim are not going with longing for the giluyim of the past. They don't go with nostalgic memories. The T'mimim go to be mekabel malchuso, to bring the

ha'limud in 770.

In the yeshiva world, Tishrei is intercession time, and this is how it used to be in 770 too. Of course, Chassidim came to the Rebbe but they also found time to tour New York, go shopping etc. The historic chiddush is that they come to 770 now and sit and learn. This goes on all day, day after day. It's a pleasure to see thousands of people sitting and learning, with tremendous kabbalas ol.

This was not initiated by the hanhalos, nor by the mashpiim, but by the T'mimim themselves. The T'mimim are the ones who learn and they are also the mashgichim and meishivim. It's all milmata.

This is precisely what it says in Basi L'Gani. To whom does the king give his biggest, hidden treasures? Not to the officers, not the generals, but to the simple soldiers. He squanders his treasures on them.

The T'mimim are also the spirit of Simchas Beis HaShoeiva. They are the ones who stay and dance until dawn. They are the ones who organize the farbrengens Sukkos night for their mekuravim and they bring the mashpiim to these farbrengens.

THE AVODA OF MOSHIACH – ETZEM!

The Rebbe reveals the secret to success in this lofty avoda in the D'var Malchus of Parshas R'ei, based on a very deep point. The Rebbe says there are five acronyms for the name Elul that allude to five ways of serving Hashem. The first three are Torah, Avoda, and G'milus Chassadim and the fourth corresponds to T'shuva. These four represent the four worlds of Atzilus, Beria, Yetzira, and Asiya.

But there is a higher level which is alluded to in the fifth acronym: Ashira L'Hashem VaYomru Leimor,



which corresponds to Geula, the highest level, the level described in Chassidus as “the fifth to Pharaoh,” a level which represents a Jew’s avoda from the aspect of his yechida, which is totally one with Hashem.

The avoda of Moshiach and Geula is the avoda that derives from the Etzem. It is in this matter that the Etzem is apparent. As the Rebbe puts it so beautifully, “man’s service in a way that is above measure and limitation **in truth and perfection** is possible only with the true and complete Geula with Moshiach Tzidkeinu whose soul is the aspect of yechida of the Jewish people as a whole, and through him the individual yechida is revealed (the spark of Moshiach) in every Jew, the fifth level that permeates all the details of avoda ...”

It is specifically through a chayus and avoda in inyanei Moshiach that we can achieve these qualities: avoda b’ko’ach atzmo and the longing for the main thing and not the crumbs, because these qualities are achieved only through avoda with the Etzem.

This explains why we did not see this in earlier generations. The Alter Rebbe quotes the verse in Shir HaShirim 8:7 “Were a man to give all the wealth of his house to entice you away from your love, they would scorn him to the extreme.” He explains that any yearning for anything that is not Etzem, even if it is Gan Eden, and even if it is **Your** Gan Eden, is something to be scorned because it is not the Etzem.

Despite all this, we did not see that Chassidim actually scorned Gan Eden. We even saw, as I mentioned earlier, some glances towards Gan Eden ...Perhaps this is why the Alter Rebbe emphasizes this so strongly, “I don’t want Your Gan Eden!” What would have been

bad if he had said that Gan Eden is good but Hashem Himself is better? But that is precisely the point. We have to emphasize that we don’t want it! If we don’t emphasize that we don’t want it, then ... we actually do want it, maybe just a little, but we want it.

How did they not see this throughout the generations? The answer is that in order to reach this point it can only be through avoda with the yechida and this avoda applies only when we reach the final avoda, bringing the hisgalus of Moshiach to the world.

This is what the Rebbe

***“We are standing
at Rosh Chodesh
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ad masai!”***

demands of every one of us today; the avoda of Geula which is through the Etzem. We can see this in the sicha where the Rebbe MH”M explains how a person’s cheshbon ha’nefesh should look at this time of year. “We are standing at Rosh Chodesh Elul already, a month of accounting for the entire year, and the bottom line of the cheshbon is: **ad masai!**”

“Is it possible that after eleven months of the year of ‘I Will Show Them Wonders,’ Moshiach Tzidkeinu still did not come?!”

In simple words, the Rebbe

notes that we are past the time of longing for crumbs. We cannot make yet another cheshbon ha’nefesh whose bottom line is only why we didn’t improve in this or that area. We have to reach the point where the cheshbon ha’nefesh is straight to the point: Why hasn’t Moshiach come yet?

A few lines later, the Rebbe says, “It is not enough that **one hears** (and understands) that ‘behold this one (Melech HaMoshiach) comes,’ but we must **see him** with eyes of flesh and not merely ‘I will show them,’ in the future tense but ‘See’ in the present, and as a command!”

That means we are no longer satisfied with crumbs. We don’t want to hear and understand; we can no longer be told that it’s in the future. We want the Etzem, the immediate hisgalus!

In fact, the Rebbe has succeeded in implanting this in all of us, as we can see clearly; with mivtza t’fillin, tz’daka and every detail of life, and especially in traveling to the Rebbe for Tishrei. We see not only one *akshan* (stubborn person) but thousands of akshanim, who go not for giluyim, not because they want the lower Gan Eden or the higher Gan Eden, but Him Himself. This is not an occasional thing for them, but a constant one.

When you see this, that every Tamim is shaken up and crushed by the fact that we still have not merited the Ikar, then our demand is obvious: We want You Yourself! We really deserve it, for even on account of just the preparations to travel to the Rebbe, we should merit to see the “light-source” with his immediate hisgalus, when we will all proclaim:

*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu
V’Rabbeinu, Melech HaMoshiach
L’olam Va’ed!*

THE SHLUCHIM AND AHAVAS YISROEL

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, Shliach, Beit Shaan

One day, while doing research on his family tree, he discovered that he is a Kohen. That presented a terrible problem for he was forbidden to be married to a convert. They had to divorce. Although they had lived together for thirty years quite happily, they went to the beis din and divorced.

One of the challenges of shlichus is that sometimes, out of love for a fellow Jew, we have to guide them through the painful process of breaking off a forbidden relationship. This past spring, a young man by the name of Aryeh Prapalotchik a"h of the Chabad community in Tzfas, passed away. He had become a legend in his lifetime. Here is his story:

Aryeh was born in Kiryat Gat. He knew very little about Torah and mitzvos. As a young man, he traveled to Germany where he married a non-Jew. In fact, he was so assimilated, he didn't even know this was a problem. Later on he became involved at a Chabad house, which he loved. Whatever he learned there, he implemented. He grew a beard, put on a sirtuk and gartel, adopted Chabad customs and developed a strong

hiskashrus to the Rebbe. When he became aware that his marital situation was problematic, his wife converted and he remarried her.

The couple returned to Eretz Yisroel and settled in yishuv Chad-Nes, north of the Kinneret. They did all the work that shluchim do, not as a job, but from the heart. Along with his work as a branch manager of a large marketing network, he arranged many shiurim, paid all the expenses, and took part in all the religious and Lubavitch activities in the area. He was a wonderful, refined, Chassidishe man.

One day, while doing research on his family tree, he discovered that he is a Kohen. That presented a terrible problem for he was forbidden to be married to a convert. They had to divorce. Although they had lived together

for thirty years quite happily, they went to the beis din and divorced.

Aryeh remarried but soon divorced again and lived alone brokenhearted in the Chabad neighborhood of Tzfas.

When he passed away, his first wife said at the funeral: My husband, the tzaddik, had to choose between me and Hashem and he chose Hashem and went to Him.

Arise and sing those who dwell in the dust, and may a redeemer come to Tziyon immediately, mamash.

AHAVAS YISROEL

Every year, at the rally before the Lag B'Omer parade, I begin the quiz with the humorous question, "Who said the verse, 'V'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha?'" Every single time, lots of children scream out, "Rabbi Akiva!" some say "Bar Kochba," and only a few remember that this verse was said by Hashem in the Torah, in Parshas K'doshim.

To us Lubavitchers, especially the shluchim, this verse is not only a "great principle of the Torah," but the heart of Tanya (*perek lev-chapter 32*) and the motto that guides our shlichus work. We look at the Rebbe and at his Ahavas Yisroel for every Jew and we try to do the same in our daily lives on shlichus.

A few years ago I happened

upon a “scholarly lecture” on the topic of Ahavas Yisroel. The lecturer asked, “How is it possible to love every Jew like yourself?” He cleverly provided two answers: 1) The Torah did not literally mean “like yourself.” That’s impossible. It means “love a lot.” 2) The verse means to love your friends, your community, because it says “*l’rei’acha*” (your friend).

I got up and “sensitively and firmly” pointed out to the learned lecturer that the verse means we should love every Jew like ourselves.

I quoted the saying of the Baal Shem Tov and referred him to chapter 32 of Tanya where it explains how “in a straight and easy way one can fulfill the mitzva of *V’ahavta l’rei’acha kamocho* for every Jew, from the greatest to the smallest.”

STRANGE REQUESTS

It sometimes happens that we are asked to do things that we never dreamed of, and these things are not necessarily part of our official shlichus but Ahavas Yisroel demands it of us. I remember an odd request someone made of me years ago. It was during the big aliya from Russia and we very busy helping the new immigrants. They knew they could turn to us at the Chabad house for anything they needed.

One of the new immigrants called me and told me about his uncle, a driver in Beit Shaan, who didn’t feel well two days before. He drove for a check-up in Chaifa and died there. They had to bring both him and his car back to Beit Shaan. The man volunteered to drive with me to Chaifa and to bring my car back to Beit Shaan, but he was afraid to bring back the body.

So we placed a board on the seats, placed the body on it, strapped it on well so he wouldn’t fall off, and I drove the car to Beit Shaan.

Fifteen years later, the man from Russia – the one

who was alive – was hospitalized with his daughter in the hospital in Chaifa.

He was released a day before Pesach and who do you think had the mitzva of driving Erev Pesach to Chaifa in order to take the father and daughter back home? Naturally, it was the Rebbe’s shliach. *V’ahavta l’rei’acha kamocho*.

Every one of my fellow shluchim finds himself, often enough, dealing with unexpected requests such as these. We believe that if by Divine providence the request was made of us, we shouldn’t say no. Either we should do it ourselves or find someone to do it.

There is a woman who lives in Beit Shaan who, every time she needs to go to the clinic with her sick child etc., checks to see if the shliach is available. If he is, she asks whether he can take her. Of course, if she accumulates a few bags of old clothes - the shliach is the man to take them to the gemach. There are many more such examples.

A woman from Yerushalayim who reads my column had a request. Her neighbor disappeared and she wanted the shluchim’s help in finding him. Within half an hour, the item was put on the website of the shluchim and 250 shluchim joined the search.

I would be surprised if any of you who think this is inappropriate. The Chabad house in Thailand, for example, provides for all the spiritual and material needs of Israeli tourists. They

provide computer services, phone and mail, meals on weekdays and Shabbos, and search for missing people, those on drugs, and help out in natural disasters like floods and earthquakes.

So why shouldn’t I drive the woman to the clinic? The Alter Rebbe, we know, stopped in the middle of davening on Yom Kippur in order to heat up soup for a poor woman who had given birth ...



CHAFETZ CHAIM:

HE WHO DESIRES LIFE DESIRES THE GEULA

By Yehoshua Kenig

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, zt"l, may be most famous for his s'farim "Chafetz Chaim" and "Mishna Brura," but his longing for the Geula was no less significant. * He wrote "Tzipisa L'Yeshua," a collection of essays on the topic of yearning for Moshiach and Geula, and even ran a Kollel for the study of Kodshim. * This article, about his life and connection with the Chabad Rebbeim, is the first in a series on G'dolei Yisroel and Anticipating the Redemption.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan of Radin, who is known by the title of his work, the Chafetz Chaim, was born on 11 Shevat 5598/1838 in the town Dzyatlava in the Hrodno district in what is today Belarus. When he was ten years old, his father passed away. His mother moved the family to Vilna in order to continue her son's education. He spent his youth studying Torah in Vilna where he was recognized as a prodigy.

When he was 17, the Chafetz Chaim married the daughter of his

stepfather, and settled in Radin. He served as the town rabbi of Radin for a short period. He then resigned from this position to set up the yeshiva in Radin in 1869 which eventually became world famous.

In 1873 he published his first work, the *Chafetz Chaim* on the laws of forbidden speech. He was supported by a grocery store and by profits from his s'farim (which were printed anonymously).

The Chafetz Chaim was very active in Jewish causes. He traveled extensively to encourage mitzva observance and he became

one of the most influential European rabbis during the late 19th and early 20th century. He was in touch with other European rabbanim including the Rebbe Rashab and the Rebbe Rayatz.

He wrote more than twenty s'farim. In addition to his famous works on *Shmir's HaLashon* and his popular, six volume work on practical law called *Mishna Brura*, he also wrote s'farim on the topic of Geula, the laws of Kodshim and korbanos. His *Machane Yisroel* was written for Jewish soldiers in the army, *Nidchei Yisroel* for those living in faraway lands, and *Ahavas Chesed* about lending money to the poor.

The Rebbe noted many times how careful the Chafetz Chaim was about Ahavas Yisroel and he once explained that the reason that the *Mishna Brura* was widely accepted was because he was an "Ish ha'Chafetz Chaim."

EDUCATING GIRLS

The Chafetz Chaim was one of the prominent rabbis who supported the education revolution for girls, i.e. the Bais Yaakov movement, which provided the first schools for religious girls. The purpose of the movement was to educate Jewish girls in the spirit of Torah and to keep them away from, or counteract, secular influences, for girls were being educated in Polish public schools.

In the sicha in which the Rebbe

urges the study of Rambam for women, he quotes, in a footnote, a letter of the Chafetz Chaim (of 23 Shevat 5693): “All the apprehension and doubts regarding the prohibition of teaching one’s daughter Torah; there is no reason to be concerned about this nowadays ... because our generation is not like previous generations.”

GROWING A BEARD

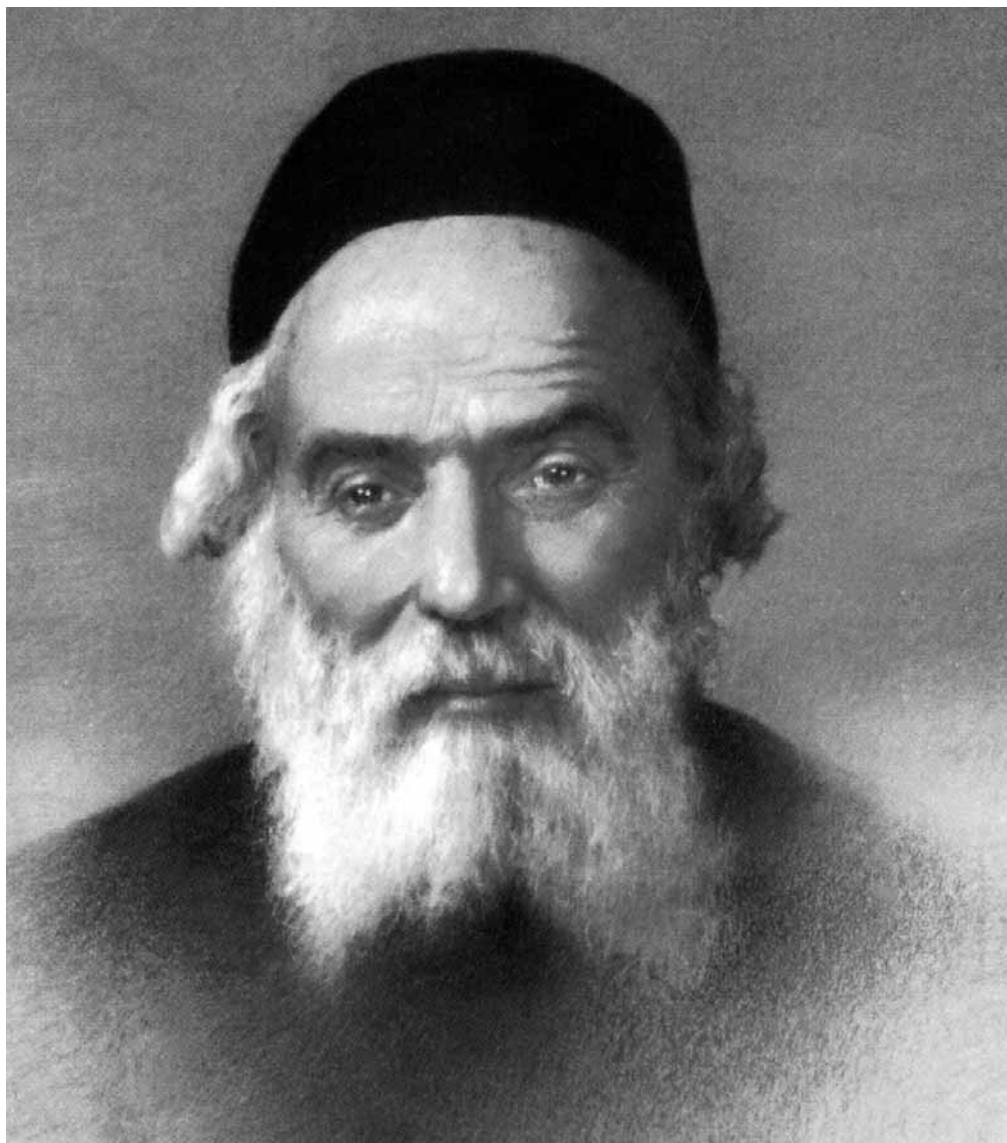
There were bachurim from Chassidishe families who also learned in the yeshiva in Radin. In other Lithuanian yeshivos, most of the bachurim did not have beards, but in Radin many talmidim did not shave and did not grow their hair long. The Chafetz Chaim made his view on this subject known as his grandson attested, that his grandfather urged the growing of a beard.

In his *Likkutei Halachos*, the Chafetz Chaim writes sharply against shaving with a machine. “The new machine that they use ... which shaves the hair like a razor and uproots the hair entirely and nothing remains – one who uses it is apparently transgressing what it says, ‘they should not shave the corners of their beards,’ and one who guards his soul will stay far away from it.”

Even as far as removing the beard in other ways, in his book *Nidchei Yisroel* he wrote, “But it is truly proper to be careful, even with scissors, because the kabbalists wrote that by doing so, one uproots the channels of holiness up Above.”

TIES WITH CHABAD LEADERS

There was a friendly relationship between the Chafetz Chaim and Chabad leaders, starting with the Rebbe Rashab



and continuing with the Rebbe Rayatz.

In a letter to Rabbi Yoshe Ber Soloveitchik, the Rebbe Rayatz describes an incident in which Misnagdim wanted to stir up trouble against the Rebbe Rashab and they asked the Chafetz Chaim to join them. Not only did he absolutely refuse but the Chafetz Chaim expressed his great admiration for the Rebbe Rashab.

The unpleasantness occurred when the kuntres *Eitz Chaim* was published, which deals with the mitzvot of Love of Hashem and Fear of Hashem, the necessity to

learn p’nimius ha’Torah, and the proper way of learning. This aroused the ire of those learning in Litvishe yeshivos, mainly because of what is written about the study of Nigleh without p’nimius ha’Torah (chapter 12).

The Rebbe Rayatz described: “A respectable delegation on behalf of the yeshivos went to the Chafetz Chaim, the senior disseminator of Torah with fear of Heaven and they showed him the kuntres and complained about the great insult to the b’nei ha’yeshivos.

“The Chafetz Chaim said: We all know the Lubavitcher Rebbe as

***Afterwards, the
Rebbe Rayatz
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Learning
Chassidus is not
enough. You also
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an Oheiv Yisroel and one who respects Torah and is a man of truth. My friend, the gaon R' Naftali told me in great amazement that when he was in Lubavitch, he heard with his own ears and saw with his own eyes the quality of the talmidim in yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim, most of whom are outstanding in Torah and genuine fear of G-d. Blessings should rest on the head of the Lubavitcher Rebbe and his supporters in disseminating Torah, and may Torah grow greater and be glorified."

It is told that at a meeting of rabbanim, the Rebbe Rashab and the Chafetz Chaim met. The Chafetz Chaim asked him how he managed to have talmidim with such refined faces. The Rebbe answered that it's from the learning of Chassidus. The Chafetz Chaim said that if so, I will have a shiur in Chassidus for my talmidim, and the Rebbe smiled.

Afterwards, the Rebbe Rayatz asked his father why he smiled and the Rebbe Rashab answered: Learning Chassidus is not enough. You also need a Rebbe!

In the book, *Chayei ha'Chafetz Chaim* it says that the Chafetz Chaim once asked the Rebbe Rashab how he got his talmidim to grow a beard. (Although the Chafetz Chaim greatly desired his talmidim to grow beards, they did not all do so). The Rebbe Rashab said that he never spoke to the talmidim about it. They understood the necessity on their own.

In 1932 the Chafetz Chaim visited yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim in Lodz and was favorably impressed by the talmidim and the staff.

After the passing of the Rebbe Rashab, there were warm ties between the Chafetz Chaim and the Rebbe Rayatz. They worked together for the public good at rabbinic conferences and with various projects. The Rebbe Rayatz's signature frequently appears alongside the signature of the Chafetz Chaim and other g'dolim on joint Kol Koreis (public proclamations).

In the winter of 5689/1929, when the communists ruled, hardly any kosher matzos had been baked. 1929 was a particularly difficult year because there had been a drought and the price of flour was high. Most Jews were not well off and they did not have money to buy flour to bake matzos.

The Rebbe Rayatz saw it was vital that matzos be sent along with *maos chitim*, i.e. financial aid for Pesach. In order to organize aid on this scale, the Rebbe Rayatz founded a special committee of which he was a member, along with the Chafetz Chaim and Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinsky.

The Rebbe Rayatz traveled to Berlin where the financial base of the committee for sending matzos was located. A Kol Korei was issued, asking people to donate

money for matzos for the Jews of Russia. It was signed by the aforementioned three g'dolim and by three leaders of rabbinic organizations in Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia.

**MILLIONS OF JEWS
ON THE SHOULDERS
OF ONE MAN**

Rabbi Shmuel Lew, shliach in England, related what he heard from the menahel of mesivta Torah Vodaas, Rabbi Alexander Linchner a"h. Rabbi Linchner had learned in Radin and one time, the Chafetz Chaim looked towards the Russian border and said, "There are millions of Jews there and the concern for all of them rests on the shoulders of one man, the Lubavitcher Rebbe."

The Rebbe often referred to the friendly ties between the Chafetz Chaim and the Rebbe Rayatz. In a yechidus that the Admur, Rabbi Yochanon Twersky of Rachmastrivka had with the Rebbe, the Rebbe said, "The Chafetz Chaim zt"l was a great friend of the Rebbe, my father-in-law. My father-in-law told me that he was sure that if they asked the Chafetz Chaim, he would say that it was obligatory to study the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov no less than the *Mishna Brura*."

The Rebbe said, "When Poland made a decree against the Jews, a delegation of Jews tried to get it annulled but were unsuccessful. When they came to the Chafetz Chaim to report to him, they said they had spoken with the minister and made their case but it hadn't helped. The Chafetz Chaim asked: *Did any of you faint?* If you really cared, someone would have fainted!"

A few times, when people tried to stir up trouble against Lubavitch, the Rebbe mentioned the Chafetz Chaim's great Ahavas



Yisroel:

“As the author of the *Mishna Brura* – the Chafetz Chaim, who wrote at length in his s’farim about the great need for Ahavas Yisroel and he negated the opposite etc. Urging people to be extremely careful of undesirable speech (even *avak lashon ha’ra* and the like) about another Jew, “you are children to Hashem, your G-d,” and furthermore, “you are My oldest son, Yisroel,” not to mention negating raising a hand, heaven forbid, to hit or to write slander against Jews.

“The Chafetz Chaim wrote a number of s’farim, the *Mishna Brura* and others, and one of them is called *Chafetz Chaim* because he explains at length about the idea of guarding one’s speech, in accordance with the verse, ‘who is the man *ha’chafetz chaim* - who wants life’ etc. and this is why he is referred to as the Chafetz Chaim. In this work, he explains at length the importance of guarding one’s speech and he enumerates a number of positive and negative mitzvos associated with guarding

speech. All this is based on the verse, ‘who is the man who wants life’ etc.”

ANTICIPATING THE GEULA

The Chafetz Chaim was known for his great yearning for Geula which he spoke about constantly. When he spoke about Moshiach – and when didn’t he speak about it – it seemed that you could hear Moshiach’s footsteps. The seriousness and simple faith with which he spoke about it, inspired those who heard him to believe that they had better prepare to soon greet Moshiach.

The Chafetz Chaim wrote *Tzipisa L’Yeshua*, a compilation of essays about looking forward to the Geula. He wrote about the obligation to anticipate Moshiach’s coming every day and at all times, to anticipate Hashem’s salvation despite the spiritual descent of the generations. He urged the study of Kodshim.

He would often ask the many guests who visited him whether they spoke about Moshiach and Geula back where they came from. One time, after asking his guests his usual question and being met with silence, he said: Oy, that’s the problem. It says, “I await him.” How is it that people are not waiting? I don’t understand ... it says, “I await him.”

One time, a talmid asked him: Chazal say that Moshiach will come with *hesech ha’das* (when our minds are diverted) and you are constantly speaking about his imminent arrival. That would seem to be preventing *hesech ha’das*!

The Chafetz Chaim answered: I am afraid that despite everything that is said about his imminent arrival, for most people there is *hesech ha’das*.

The Chafetz Chaim compared how we ought to wait for

Moshiach to a critically ill person who knows that a top doctor is about to visit him and will find the cure for his illness. The sick person impatiently waits for the doctor to come and every knock at the door raises his hopes that the doctor is finally there. That is how we should be looking forward to Moshiach’s coming.

He also compared waiting for the Redeemer to an only son who was sent away from his father’s house for many years. When the days of his exile were over, he informed his father that he would arrive by train on a certain day at a certain time.

Obviously, his parents will not go to sleep that day but will rush over to the train station to greet him. If something happens and he doesn’t show up on that train, they will wait for the next train and the one after that ... After all, they are waiting for their only child.

WALKING THE TALK

The Chafetz Chaim had a small suitcase packed with Shabbos clothes. He took this suitcase wherever he went, on all his travels, so that when Moshiach came, he would be able to greet him properly dressed.

Rabbi Avrohom Shechori, the talmid of the Gaon of Amstov on a visit to Radin, saw the Chafetz Chaim in his room wrapped in a fancy dress robe go over to the window and say to himself: He is coming ... he is coming ... are you ready for him?

Since the Chafetz Chaim was a Kohen, he rehearsed types of movement that will be necessary for a Kohen in the future, since he believed that he may be called to serve in the Beis HaMikdash on a moment’s notice.

Wagon drivers would say that the Chafetz Chaim never waited for the wagon to stop when he had

The Chafetz Chaim looked towards the Russian border and said, “There are millions of Jews there and the concern for all of them rests on the shoulders of one man, the Lubavitcher Rebbe.”

to get on or off. Rather, he would jump on or off. When he was asked why he did this, he said that being from a family of Kohanim, who were blessed with the trait of alacrity, he wanted to train himself to the necessary alacrity for the avoda in the Beis HaMikdash.

The Chafetz Chaim once sent a letter to all the rabbis in his area and asked them to make a list of the names of all the Kohanim who lived in their area of jurisdiction, including their ages, yichus, and their preparedness to serve in the Beis HaMikdash.

LEARNING THE LAWS OF KODSHIM

The Chafetz Chaim called upon all Jews, especially Kohanim, to learn the laws of the avoda of the korbanos. He himself studied them assiduously and wrote s'farim on these laws and urged others to learn them.

In 5665/1905, he founded a Kodshim Kollel in his yeshiva, a Kollel for scholars who would spend most of their learning time on the Order of Kodshim which deals with the avoda in the Beis HaMikdash.

He once said a parable about the study of Kodshim. A man was about to hold a festive meal for his family and friends. He began preparing days, even weeks in advance and when the guests appeared on the appointed day they found tables laden with delicacies and the host standing there ready to greet them.

What would the guests say if they showed up on the appointed day and discovered that nothing had been prepared; the tables are not set, the food not prepared, and the host walking around dressed in his weekday clothing? You can imagine how they would feel.

How about us, said the Chafetz Chaim, how many times a day do we ask Hashem to send Eliyahu to tell us about the coming of Moshiach and the building of the Beis HaMikdash and the renewed avoda? Do we actually prepare for this day though?

We don't learn the laws of korbanos and the avoda in the Beis HaMikdash and we don't properly prepare the Kohanim so they know the avoda, and without them, we can't do the avoda! Therefore, it is incumbent on every Jew, especially Kohanim, to learn Kodshim and the avoda of the korbanos so that when Moshiach comes, we can greet him properly.

He also said: If you are waiting for the king to come to your city, even if you are unsure whether he is coming, you decorate all the streets in his honor, even if the city has 1000 streets, lest he travel

A BRACHA LIKE THAT

The town Aishishok was near Radin. Every so often, the Chafetz Chaim would leave Radin for Aishishok in order to learn undisturbed. In the course of his visits he became very close with the rav, Rabbi Yosef Zundel Hutner.

One time, the Chafetz Chaim asked the wagon driver who often traveled between the towns: When you are in Aishishok, please go to Rabbi Yosef Zundel Hutner and ask him for a bracha for me.

The wagon driver went to Aishishok and was happy to do as the Chafetz Chaim asked him, however he was not at all keen to repeat the odd bracha he had heard. He tried to avoid seeing the Chafetz Chaim but in that small town, it was only a matter of time.

Within a few days, the Chafetz Chaim met the wagon driver and asked him for Rabbi Hutner's response. The wagon driver stammered and tried to avoid answering but the Chafetz Chaim begged him to tell him what the rabbi had said.

The wagon driver hesitantly related the bracha. "He said ... that he blesses that you soon walk barefoot and carry stones over your heart."

The wagon driver looked apprehensively at the Chafetz Chaim but to his surprise, the Chafetz Chaim looked pleased. The Chafetz Chaim then explained the meaning of the bracha. "I am a Kohen and the rabbi blessed me that I would soon merit to serve in the Beis HaMikdash where I will walk barefoot, as Kohanim are commanded to do. As for the stones, he is referring to the stones of the Choshen-breastplate which the High Priest wears over his heart."

THE CHAFETZ CHAIM TOLD ME TO PUBLICIZE THE IMMINENT GEULA

Rabbi Shachna Zohn, a man in his nineties who learned in Radin in his youth, saw the Chafetz Chaim in a dream. This dream had the chareidi world buzzing this summer. The following is from an interview that *Mishpacha* magazine did with him.

“One of the elderly tzaddikim of Jerusalem had a dream that the Geula is approaching. He’s a quiet, modest person who wouldn’t have told anyone about his dream. The Chafetz Chaim demanded that he recount his dream, and that is why he has done so,” Rav Tzvi Meir Zilberberg mentioned during a shiur he gave on Friday, Erev Shabbos Parshas Massei. Rav Tzvi Meir didn’t add any details.

Right at the start of his conversation with *Mishpacha*, soon after I introduce myself, Rav Shachna Zohn verifies that his venerated Rebbi had indeed appeared to him in a dream. “In a dream, I saw the Chafetz Chaim. He told me that I must spread the word throughout the world that the Geula is drawing near, and that we must prepare for it. Everyone must do t’shuva for his sins, with a broken heart.”

When I try asking him questions, he points to his hearing aid and tells me, “I don’t hear so well. Write down your questions and I’ll answer them.” He motions toward a black Parker pen lying on the table, and thus begins our interview. All the questions asked in writing; the answers recorded and transcribed for our readers.

They say that during the dream, you were told that Moshiach would come before Rosh HaShana?

“He didn’t say a time,” he answers firmly, “Nor did he give me any specific sign, for the time immediately preceding his arrival.”

Was that same dream repeated?

“I dreamt it twice, and it’s clear to me that it’s a chalom *emes*, a dream that must be accorded veracity. I have no doubts about it.”

In the dream, did the Chafetz Chaim appear the same way you remembered him during his lifetime?



“He is already in the world and we have to strengthen ourselves to hasten the revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, and may we merit the complete hisgalus speedily in our days.”

“Yes, yes, and that fact has significance as well. But this is not the time to get into it.”

He thinks for a moment. “I’ll tell you even more. If I hadn’t been commanded to recount this, I would have kept the story to myself. But since I was commanded to publicize it, and the dream occurred twice, and there are other *simanim* (signs) which the Gemara explains as pointing to a dream’s veracity, I deviated from my usual practice, at the instructions of the Chafetz Chaim.

It is known that the Chafetz Chaim had a special set of clothing that he saved for greeting Moshiach. Are you also preparing for his arrival?

“What kind of question is that? We have always been preparing for it.”

I am referring to the Rav’s personal preparations.

“In the Har Tzvi shul in Jerusalem, I established a ‘Kodshim Kollel,’ where the men study the laws of korbanos, because the Chafetz Chaim said that our generation is called the “*Ikvisa d’Meshicha*,” the generation of Moshiach’s arrival. That means that we must learn all the inyanim of the Beis HaMikdash. With Hashem’s help, the Mikdash will soon be built and we need to know how to bring sacrifices and how to do the avoda.”

Is Moshiach a living man?

Rabbi Zohn smiled and did not respond. Instead, he took a Perek Shira and began reciting it. It was an obvious hint that the interview was over but Rabbi Zohn motioned for the journalist to wait.

After a few minutes it became

clear what his view is regarding the question if Moshiach is a living person in our generation.

The answer can be found in his *Pirkei T’shuva V’Geula* where he writes in the name of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein z”l, “He is already in the world and we have to strengthen ourselves to hasten the revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, and may we merit the complete hisgalus speedily in our days.”

down that particular street.

He also said: If you are waiting for the king to come to your city, even if you are unsure whether he is coming, you decorate all the streets in his honor, even if the city has 1000 streets, lest he travel down that particular street.

Three times a day we say, "Therefore we hope to you Hashem, our G-d, to swiftly behold the splendor of Your might." When the Glory of Hashem is revealed, all the laws about korbanos and the Mikdash will be practical and if the Torah scholars don't know them, how shameful that will be for them. Why don't they prepare?

Rabbi Dovid Cohen (1887-1972), known as HaRav HaNazir, said, "In 5673/1913, when I traveled from Russia to Germany via Lithuania, I stopped off in Radin where my master and

teacher, the Chafetz Chaim lived, where I was educated from the age of nine.

In the evening, I went to the Chafetz Chaim's house and he began talking to me at length about our family of Kohanim which included rabbanim and g'dolei ha'Torah. He said, "At first, when I would daven, 'and to Yerushalayim Your city return with mercy,' I thought, this is a prayer and that's all. So too when I said, 'the sprouting of Dovid Your servant should quickly sprout,' I thought it was a prayer.

"But now, when I say these prayers, I think *ah! ah!*, now, now, soon, soon. I don't know if it will be in my lifetime. I am old, but certainly, certainly, certainly in your lifetime.

"The Mikdash will be built and there will be the avoda, and there will be halachic questions about

the laws of Kodshim. Who will be asked – the rabbanim? They learned Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Dei'a, Choshen Mishpat, Orach Chaim, but not Hilchos Kodshim. So we Kohanim must study the laws of Kodshim."

As to the claim that when Moshiach and Eliyahu come they will clarify all the doubts and so why should we learn the laws of Kodshim, the Chafetz Chaim said, "That is true that Eliyahu will clarify everything but the simple things that are explained in the verse and in the explanations in the Oral Torah that we have, we need to know them to the best of our ability. Eliyahu is not coming to teach each of us those things which we could know on our own! It's just the doubtful areas, which we cannot clarify on our own, that he will tell us.

As for the simple things he will say - you should have learned that before I came to announce the Geula, as it says, 'remember the Torah of Moshe My servant that I commanded at Chorev to all the Jewish people, the statutes and laws,' and following that it says, 'Behold I am sending to you Eliyahu HaNavi,' etc."

The Chafetz Chaim said that studying the laws of Kodshim is also a segula to nullify accusers as the holy Zohar states, "R' Kruspidae said, anyone who mentions the inyan of each korban and Mincha with his mouth in shuls and battei midrash with the intention of atoning for the sin for which this korban is brought; there is a covenant that the prosecuting angels that mention his iniquities to cause him harm, will not be able to do him anything but good."

TO DEMAND THE GEULA

In his commentary on t'filla, the Chafetz Chaim writes,

THE CHAFETZ CHAIM'S MINHAGIM

In a letter to *Beis Moshiach*, Rabbi Leibel Groner relates:

One of the Chafetz Chaim's sons-in-law told me that his wife, the Chafetz Chaim's daughter said that his daughters and granddaughters lit a Shabbos and Yom Tov candle from the age of six, with a bracha.

When she was eight years old, she had a friend over, the daughter of a Litvishe rosh yeshiva. The Chafetz Chaim would prepare the candles for his wife and daughters and this time, he prepared a candle for the friend too.

"My father was present when we lit and when he saw that my friend was not lighting, he asked her why she did not light. She said that at her house, only married women lit. He asked her to light and said that when she went back home, she should tell her father, in his name, that he asked that all the girls light Erev Shabbos and Yom Tov."

One of the Chafetz Chaim's great-grandsons told me that his mother said that the Chafetz Chaim would immerse in a mikva on Shabbos morning. One time, he had a cold and the doctor said he could not immerse, so he got up early in the morning, while everyone else was asleep, and he immersed.

When his wife heard that he went, she asked him how could disobey the doctor's orders, and he said, "I could not forego the holiness that immersing on Shabbos imparts."



"Several times a day we ask for the Geula, but a request alone is not enough. We must demand the Geula like a hired worker who asks for his wages. The din is that if he does not demand it, there is no obligation to pay him that day. This is how we should demand the Geula."

Every midnight, while all slept, the Chafetz Chaim would lock the door to his room and speak to Hashem. On a few occasions, people listened at the door. He would begin with praise and thanks to Hashem for the great kindnesses He did with him in every aspect of his life.

Then his style of talking would change and he would speak plaintively, as tzaddikim do when speaking to G-d. He would

demand that Hashem pay his debt that he owed the Jewish people, and he would cry: How much longer must we wait? We are all broken like a broken potshard. Look and see if there remains one whole Jew!

Then he would cry out for the help of departed tzaddikim, "Where are you? Why are you silent? You ought to be demanding for our sakes, holy souls. Have you already forgotten everything?

WHAT HE SAID ABOUT GEULA

The Rebbe Rayatz quoted the Chafetz Chaim, "Moshiach Tzidkeinu will come suddenly, if we only wait for him. We are accustomed to saying, 'because we wait for You,' and 'I await him every day, that he comes,' but we say it only with our mouths and not with our hearts."

The Chafetz Chaim would often emphasize, "More than we want him to come, he wants to come. However, he cannot come unless all the Jewish people wait expectantly for him."

"Even a blind person can see that we are in the *Ikvisa d'Meshicha*; all the signs point that way. It's not far at all."

"Melech HaMoshiach must come quickly because soon there will be nobody to come for."

"Chazal said, '*tzipisa l'yeshua*' and tzipisa is from the root

meaning a scout who stands on a high place and looks out for anything new. This is how Jews ought to wait for the immediate revelation of the Kingdom of Heaven."

"We can put it simply, that the time referred to as the End of Days has already come. If so, our obligation is surely to be aroused to t'shuva and then the Geula will be hastened."

MOSHIACH WILL NOT FORGET A SINGLE JEW

I'll conclude with a story from the last year of the Chafetz Chaim's life which teaches us how he defined the personality of Moshiach. For us living in the "seventh generation," it's easy to relate.

Rabbi Simcha Wasserman related:

Every year, my father (Rabbi Elchonon Wasserman, may Hashem avenge his blood, author of *Kovetz Shiurim*) would spend the Yomim Nora'im in Radin. In 1933, the Chafetz Chaim's last year of life, he was there with me.

The day after Yom Kippur, my father went to say goodbye to the Chafetz Chaim. After he left the house, the Chafetz Chaim called him back and said: **When Moshiach comes, he will not forget any Jew. He will even bring back a single Jew from some forsaken, distant place.**



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THE REBBE SAVED MY LIFE!

By Faige

Ita Malka, matriarch of a large Chassidic family, tells her story, how she searched in foreign pastures and then came home.

Once upon a time, many years ago, a little girl, six years old, lay in bed at night and spoke to her Father in Heaven. “G-d,” she said, “Make me into a better girl!”

This was Ita Malka’s (pseudonym) practice, one instilled in her by her grandmother. Perhaps it is to her credit that Ita Malka maintained a strong belief in G-d and a desire to connect to Him. Today, Ita Malka herself is a grandmother to Chassidishe grandchildren.

“AND YOU WILL BE GATHERED ONE BY ONE”

It is very hard to believe that this special, Chassidishe woman had wandered so far all those years ago! Yet, when I see the pictures of our Rebbeim on the wall of her living room, I sense that it is they who are concerned for every straying Jewish soul.

When you see the Chassidishe family that she raised and the beautiful home she has created, materially and spiritually, it’s hard to believe that this same woman

once yearned to leave the shackles of the materialism of this world and preferred cults of abstention and isolation. Those were cults that break the body and do not raise the soul to genuine spiritual heights, just a momentary high followed by a hard fall.

She underwent a long, exhausting, inner journey while simultaneously living far away from her parents and the American continent. Today, in hindsight, she knows that she was watched over in Heaven and she was sent signs to wake her up.

“The Rebbe saved me,” she says, and she quotes something she heard from R’ Leibel Groner, that the Rogatchover Gaon said about the Rebbe Rashab that every night he surveys the world to seek out Jews in need. So too, the Rebbe pulled her out of the ashram in India at nearly the last minute and directed her towards the truth.

When she began studying Chassidus, she discovered how distant Far Eastern teachings are from the truth. She learned that we need to fulfill our purpose as

souls in bodies, refining the material through Torah and mitzvos together with the powers of our animal soul, as in the teaching of the Baal Shem Tov on the verse, “If you see the donkey of the one you hate crouching under its load, will you refrain from helping him? – Surely, you shall help him.”

TRANSITION

Let’s go back more than fifty years. Ita Malka was born in 1946 and grew up in a Conservative Jewish home. Her parents and grandparents were fully Americanized. They didn’t hide their Jewishness and were even active in the Conservative community, but she had no real knowledge of Judaism.

The community’s activities were primarily social in nature and revolved around the weekly meetings at synagogue. Ita Malka joined the women’s choir that produced concerts with song and dance. Her mother and grandmother were in the choir too (the family name fit – it was Singer).

She was a member of the Conservative USY, United Synagogue Youth and there too, there was virtually no halachic observance.

They were a close family and they celebrated some holidays

together, but she was unaware of the actual mitzvos associated with these holidays. When she was very young the family still made the effort to rid the house of chametz (to the best of their understanding) but that petered out as time went by. Her younger sister has no recollection of it.

She once heard something about the concept of kashrus and she decided to separate between milk and meat. When she told her father he laughed and said, "What's the point? All our pots are treif anyway." She gave up on the idea when she realized that

she didn't understand it or how to implement it.

Her youth activities and dance filled her time and gave her much satisfaction until the end of her high school years. When she graduated high school though, and these activities ceased, she felt the vacuum.

She wasn't successful as a student in Minneapolis, where she attended a huge college campus. She wanted to study physiotherapy and help people but did not at all enjoy the hard science subjects of physics and chemistry. She was constantly

drawn to philosophy and took an interest in various approaches to life.

This was a time when American youth were fed up with the corruption of its leaders as evidenced in the Vietnam War. Young people searched for meaning and freedom from their parents' middle-class ways. They were interested in living in nature, in Love, Peace, and Harmony and were uninterested in chasing after material success. This was the hippie era and drug usage was popular. It gave people highs and left them depressed and in despair until the next high.

AT A CROSSROADS

Lisa, as she was known then, still didn't know that the Truth was available in her own backyard. It was like the famous story about the man who went to look for the treasure buried under the bridge only to be told that there was a treasure under his own stove at home. Lisa dropped out of university and went to S. Francisco where she studied music and dance and became friends with artists who lived a hippie lifestyle. Malnutrition and a life of abandon affected her health and she went to a small town on the beach where she healed her body though not her soul.

She began listening to "soul" music and to a radio program that gave a platform to various cults. She heard about yoga, meditation and spiritual highs and was drawn to them like a moth to the light. When she heard that there was a guru who had an ashram in the United States, she joined it.

She deepened her self-awareness based on what she read in a German philosophic work, and did her meditative exercises



in her corner of a room that she shared with others and which was divided by curtains. Her family was pained by her estrangement and the life she had chosen but always kept in touch.

The winter months passed. She kept on searching for something new, more exciting and found out about a more “authentic” guru who sat on a bench in Central Park and didn’t say a word. He had an assistant to whom he communicated in sign language, conveying his “spiritual messages.”

Ita Malka points out that the “Central Park Guru,” Gutman (Gil) Locks, is now a Chabad Chassid who puts t’fillin on with Jews at the Kosel.

Lisa joined the group that followed him. Every day she sat there and drank in his messages. At night, she slept on the roof of an abandoned building until it got too cold for that.

Winter set in and she traveled with members of the group to Mexico where, in a scenic place near a little brook, they lived the “natural life.” Interestingly, the nucleus of the group was comprised of young Jews and Ita Malka remembers talk of “love of G-d,” “one G-d,” and “universal harmony.” Even in this life of falsehood, the G-dly soul continued to whisper, but the group persisted in following their own, misguided path.

“TO A DEEP PIT”

One of the leaders of the group had previously been a wealthy psychiatrist who left that life behind to live on a commune. He provided the money for them to follow their dreams.

One day, he decided to pay for all of them to fly to India. When he offered a ticket to Lisa, she was ecstatic. She had always

wanted to delve into mysticism in order to reach higher levels and be a better person, a more complete person. She thought she would find what she was looking for in India.

“I hitched a ride to the airport and from there I called my parents. By this point, my parents had already given up trying to convince me to return to a normal life, finish my degree and start a family. They had gotten used to my wandering around and they had no control over me, but this was a shock for them.

“I informed them that I had a visa for four months and that I was going to India. I actually stayed there for two years and eight months and was nearly lost to them forever.

“I was 24 and focused on the desire to work on myself and attain spiritual heights. I joined up with a big guru, the guru of my guru in America, a man with thousands of Indian adherents and lots of young followers from Western countries. He had a large ashram in a village in the south of the country as well as a school for boys in Bangalore.

“Idols abounded and the Indians believed in their power and worshipped them in various ways, even bowing to them and presenting them with flowers and baskets of food. Real avoda zara. But for some reason, the guru would say, “one G-d.” I didn’t believe all the nonsense about the idols but I stayed there.

“At some point, the guru told all the Westerners to leave since there wasn’t any room, but some stubborn people, myself included, remained. I yearned to progress and reach the ‘highest spiritual level.’ I shaved my head as is customary there and my wardrobe consisted of a simple dress and an Indian sari.

“I rented a hut that used to house a water pump to irrigate the fields of rice. It was primitive but charming. I had a private well for bathing. There were green fields all around where sweet smelling papayas and guavas grew, which mingled with the intoxicating fragrances of mint and coriander. It was peaceful and at night I would listen to the croaking of frogs and in the mornings I would sit on a rock and watch the sunrise.”

“BREAKING OF THE VESSELS”

“There in my hut I tried to achieve spiritual heights but I did not yet know the Truth and about Tanya. The paths I was familiar with included a self-hating spiritual accounting, and breaking the body and drives by depriving it of basic needs, in contrast to Chassidus which explains that abusing the body adversely affects the neshama within.

“I focused primarily on asceticism, fasts, isolation, and meditation and I imagined that I was achieving something by doing this. I reached the point where I imagined I was receiving orders from Above.

“I was told to fast for forty days until a certain Indian holiday. I began fasting, nourishing myself with only mint-tea with a little brown sugar that I made myself from sugar cane.

“After two weeks of this, I felt that I had achieved a high level. I went outside and saw light around me. It was amazing! But then, I bottomed out.

“It was a terrible fall. The marvelous feeling I had felt vanished and in its place came a difficult and despair-filled plunge. For months I tried to retain that peak experience I had had, through fasting and eating

intermittently while remaining in isolation. However, starving myself only caused my body and mind to malfunction. I became very weak and uncontrollable negative thoughts plagued me.

"Members of the group tried to bring me food but I yelled at them and pushed them away. I remember that I screamed at a friend who begged me to eat. I called her the Devil's agent who was preventing me from achieving

"Members of the group tried to bring me food but I yelled at them and pushed them away. I remember that I screamed at a friend who begged me to eat. I blockaded the door with big, heavy bricks to prevent her from entering."

my goal. I blockaded the door with big, heavy bricks to prevent her from entering.

"One night I sat meditating for hours, wiped out by the fasting, from sleep deprivation and my mental and physical exertions. I looked up at the small window and saw that a new day had begun. I saw the light but instead of joy and a feeling of renewal, I felt terrible, blackness, despair.

With no more strength I fell and lost consciousness.

"Today I know that my neshama constantly yearned to get close to Hashem. I was a 'keili' but since I didn't put any k'dusha inside, a spirit of impurity entered. I don't know how long I lay there and what would have happened to me if...

"I awoke to the sound of loud banging at the door. A girl from the group ordered me to open the door. I could barely manage to drag myself to open the door and let her in. She told me that she was in the middle of meditating when the guru suddenly called her and told her to go to Lisa and tell her, 'You are forbidden from listening to these thoughts. You must stop entertaining them.'

"Hashem and the Rebbe who knew I was in danger, saved me at the last minute. The guru's motivation was not that he cared but he knew that I was starving myself and he simply didn't want the bad press if a dead girl would be taken out of his ashram."

BROKEN MIRROR

Lisa listened to her friend who took her out of isolation and helped her. After four days in which she was fed slowly and gradually with very light foods, she recovered somewhat but still weighed only 34 kilograms (75 pounds)!

She was sitting with her friends and casually picked up a broken mirror. It was months since she had last seen herself and she was horrified by her appearance.

"I looked awful. I felt that rather than separate from the animal qualities of the body, I had turned into a starved animal whose only desire was to eat. I looked like I had lost my human image."

Lisa was examined by a doctor. He was shocked. "What are you doing to yourself?" he exclaimed, and he sent her to hospital.

"The nurses at the small hospital were all nuns. I remember that they looked at me compassionately and said, 'She's just bones!' I was 27.

"The amazing thing is that on my first day there, a few nuns stood at the foot of my bed and said, 'But you are Jewish. Don't you know that you have the Truth?' I heard what they said but it didn't click for me yet.

"I remained there for a month at the end of which I was 40 kilograms (88 pounds) and they agreed to release me. A friend helped me contact my parents who paid for my return ticket. The nurses went along with me to the airport in order to make sure that I would board the plane and not remain in India!"

SIGNS OF LIFE

"I returned to America but I still didn't know where I was headed. Hashem had mercy on me and the Rebbe sent me signs.

"The first sign appeared when I landed in Minnesota, my hometown. As soon as I got off the plane I saw a large sign which said, 'Welcome to the girls of Beis Chana, Minnesota, Lubavitch.' I remembered having heard of Lubavitch somewhere before.

"My parents took me to a doctor who was Jewish who also 'happened' to be religious. He gave me a lot of time as a personal favor to my family and tried to help me rehabilitate my health, physically and mentally. He would urge me time and again, 'Take yourself in hand, what's with you?'

"One time, after a long conversation with him, the doctor

“I loved the Tanya classes. What especially amazed me was the fact that people who looked like they belonged to the material world, spoke about lofty concepts and this was part of their world, and mine – Judaism.”

leaned back in his chair and said, ‘You know, I have come to the conclusion that the best thing for you would be to go to S. Paul to the Lubavitch seminary.’ That was the second sign but I thought, ‘What do I need to go there for?’”

Lisa continued to try meditation and was in a state of despair and confusion. She refused to rejoin the world of the Establishment, of the Western world. “Why should I spend my life running after money? I won’t achieve real happiness that way.

“I asked myself what would be with me and what was I doing with my life.”

One evening, she was sitting in an armchair at home, wanting to concentrate without disturbances. She closed her eyes but something still bothered her. She opened her eyes and there, opposite her, was a large headline, “Beis Chana Minnesota – Lubavitch.” The local paper had printed a long article about the

Lubavitch school run by Rabbi Moshe Feller and Rabbi Manis Friedman. It was a special summer session for women and girls. The best lecturers and counselors worked to ignite women’s souls and to inspire them through the study of Chassidus and experiencing an authentic Shabbos.

Lisa saw this as a clear sign (the third) and decided to make the phone call. When she called, she was told that she should come immediately because the session was almost over.

Towards morning she dreamt that she was driving a car on a highway and there was an exit sign with an arrow with the word “north” on it. She turned that way and as she woke up she heard a voice that said, “Hashem is guiding your footsteps.” She had just gotten her driver’s license the day before and she drove off feeling good.

HISKASHRUS ON CHAF AV

“I arrived at Beis Chana and saw an impressive building on beautiful grounds. At first I felt that I didn’t fit in. The girls came from New York and were dressed elegantly and had nice hairstyles. I stood out. My hair hadn’t all grown back in yet and my clothes were inappropriate. The concept of tznius was foreign to me.

“But the strangeness wore off as I began to hear some ideas from Tanya. I found the learning fascinating. I discovered a wonderful, deep world that spoke to my soul. This is what I had been looking for in all the wrong places.

“I loved the Tanya classes. What especially amazed me was the fact that the girls who looked like they belonged to the material world, spoke about lofty concepts

and this was part of their world, and mine – Judaism.

“In the evening, I noticed a lot of activity and excitement on campus. Men dressed in black and with hats gathered in the large hall downstairs and tied on belts (gartels). The girls also came down hurriedly and I went with them. There was a loudspeaker attached to a telephone and we heard a strong voice speaking in a language unfamiliar to me (Yiddish).

“Afterwards, I was told it was the 20th of Av, the yahrtzeit of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok, the Rebbe’s father and the people were listening to the Rebbe’s farbrengen, live from 770.

“I stayed for another hour, listening, but I found it a bit hard to take in so much in one day. I decided to go home. They suggested that I return the next day, for Shabbos, and I said I would think about it.

“On Friday, my sister convinced me to go to the seminary for Shabbos and even drove me there. Shabbos was absolutely wonderful. We lit candles together and there was so much light.

“That Friday night I learned various Chassidic concepts from Rabbi Bergstein. For the first time I heard about the ‘breaking of the vessels’ and the ‘fallen sparks.’ He spoke to me for four hours and I was very impressed by him. I felt that he was genuine, that he worked on himself and was serious about what he spoke about.”

SEEING THE REBBE

On Motzaei Shabbos we had a Melaveh Malka after which we all danced in a big circle. On the wall was a big picture of the Rebbe and at one point, as Lisa faced the picture, she felt that the

Rebbe was looking at her and winking at her. For a moment she thought she was imaging things but once again, she saw that the Rebbe seemed to nod at her.

After having seen “revelations” from klipa as a result of afflicting herself, she was amazed to see real revelations from the side of holiness that appeared at a moment of simcha.

“After the sessions were over, I kept up the connection. I attended shiurim and worked in Rabbi Feller’s office. I heard that on Pesach, the Rebbe would visit Machon Chana in New York and I wanted very much to see him. That year I went to Crown Heights for my first Pesach. Rabbi Manis Friedman guided me in how to write to the Rebbe and I told the Rebbe my life story.

“The first night of Pesach, after Maariv, the Rebbe visited Hadar Ha’Torah, then 1414 President Street, and then Machon Chana. From there he went home.

“The women at Machon Chana waited eagerly for the Rebbe. The Rebbe went upstairs and then

came down to the dining room and said something. That year, if I am not mistaken, the Rebbe said the girls’ dormitory should have mirrors.

“The next day, as I walked down the street I saw the Rebbe. He had just come out of his house in order to walk to 770 and I walked right behind him. I was thrilled.

“The following year I learned in Machon Chana and was happy to be able to immerse myself in learning. It was a very special year in which I absorbed the Chassidic warmth through learning and in daily life. I experienced the cycle of the year with the Rebbe. I got so much from the excellent staff who put so much into us girls and till today I am indebted to: Rabbi Mangel, Rabbi Majeski, Rabbi Gordon, and Rebbetzin Gurewitz, Rebbetzin Groner, Mrs. Spritzer, Rebbetzin Heller, Mrs. Morosov and others (I apologize for not mentioning them all).”

MY MESSAGE

“It’s important to me to give

young people a message, how what we do in our youth affects our entire life. Young people like to do as they please without worrying about the consequences. These years are very precious and we need to dedicate serious thought to them and know that they are significant for the future. Your actions today affect your spiritual, mental, and physical health of the future.

“Hashem gave us a pure neshama and a holy, Jewish body. We need to value them and live according to the Torah and the truth of Chassidus. I made mistakes in my youth. I suffered from malnutrition and there was fear that it would affect my ability to have children. Boruch Hashem, after I married I received a bracha from the Rebbe (a story in itself) and I gave birth to healthy children. I see it as a miracle!

“How fortunate are we! We have a Rebbe who cares about us. We live a Chassidishe life which has the beauty and perfection of the spiritual and material together.”

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