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EDUCATED IN THE HOUSE OF MORDECHAI

Mordechai was a chassid. Indeed, it was he who established the “obligation to celebrate on Purim ad d’lo yada.” Who would come up with the idea of “ad d’lo yada,” for all future generations, if not a chassid?!

Translated by Boruch Merkur

SALVATION CAME ABOUT THROUGH A WOMAN, THROUGH ESTER

It is written in *Tanya* that “hearing words of moral guidance is not the same as seeing and reading such guidance in books” [meaning that the former has a much more profound impact than the latter]. Therefore, I will take this opportunity to reiterate a matter that I have already written about in a letter.

Although women are exempt from timely, positively stated commandments, nevertheless, women are obligated to observe the holidays of Pesach, Chanuka, and Purim, holidays that are also relevant to them.

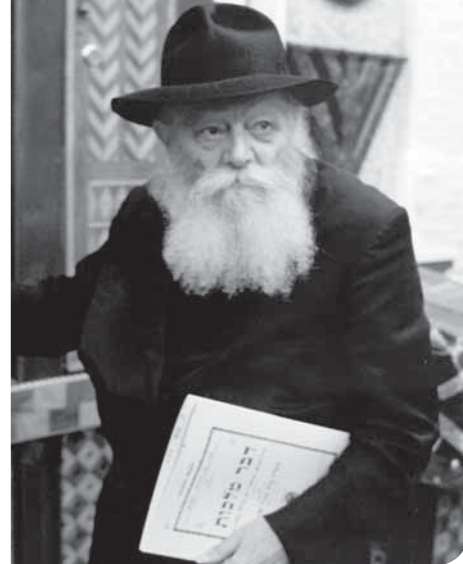
But there is a distinction, where women are concerned, between Purim, on the one hand, and Pesach and Chanuka, on the other. Regarding Pesach and Chanuka, the relevance to women is secondary in nature, as noted in the wording of the Talmud, “they too were involved with that miracle” (P’sachim 108b), whereas the main miracle of Purim came about through [a woman] Ester, and the entire Megilla is called by her name,

Megillas Ester.

The reason for this special connection women have with Purim is that Purim is the completion and fulfillment of the Giving of the Torah, as expressed in the verse, “And the Jews accepted upon themselves what they had begun to do” (Ester 9:23). Just as prior to the Giving of the Torah it is stated, “Thus shall you say to the House of Yaakov’ – this refers to the women,” and only then [referencing men], “and you shall convey to the children of Yisroel” [indicating the particular relevance the Giving of the Torah has to women], so too Purim, which is the completion and the fulfillment of the Giving of the Torah, is principally directed to women. The physical salvation, therefore, also came about [through a woman], through Ester.

GRIPPED BY THE CRISIS

How did Ester save the Jewish people? By proceeding with self-sacrifice. When Ester heard that there was a decree against the Jewish people, “the queen was extremely terrified.” To be sure, the decree did not



affect her personally, for Ester lived in the royal palace, and Achashverosh was completely unaware that she was Jewish, even as far into the story as Ester’s second banquet. Nevertheless, when Ester heard that there was a decree upon the Jewish people, “the queen was extremely terrified,” she was gripped by the crisis, and she went with self-sacrifice to nullify the decree.

Ester’s appearing before Achashverosh uninvited was fraught with danger, a risk to her life, as she remarks, “I have not been summoned to come to the king for the past thirty days.” Certainly it was dangerous, and according to the law of Torah, it was forbidden for her to put herself in such a situation, for it is unlawful to hand over one life for another.

(Had she asked a Misnagdishe rav whether she should approach Achashverosh under the circumstances, surely he would have ruled that it is forbidden, being that according to Shulchan Aruch one must preserve all 248 limbs and 365 sinews, the Mitzva of “And you shall guard your lives with extreme caution.” As it turned out, however, she did not go to ask.)

AD D'LO YADA

Where did Ester get this quality of unwavering self-sacrifice? From the upbringing she received in the home of Mordechai, for Mordechai was a Jew with self-sacrifice.

Mordechai was a chassid. Indeed, it was he who established the “obligation to celebrate on Purim *ad d’lo yada*” [i.e., to the point where one has transcended reason]. Who would come up with the idea to institute the enactment of “*ad d’lo yada*,” for all future generations, if not a chassid?! Prior to then, there was no place in Shulchan Aruch for the concept of “*ad d’lo yada*.” Even the joy of Yom Tov must be moderate and reserved. Only concerning a chassid is there the concept of going out of limits and boundaries. Thus, Mordechai established “*ad d’lo yada*” for generations. (Of course, some accessibility to “*ad d’lo yada*” had to be provided for Misnagdim, so the advice in Shulchan Aruch is to fulfill it by falling asleep... However, the true concept is to go out of boundaries.)

In a chassidishe home, people are not offended by saying “*l’chaim*” on a regular weekday, especially at a Melaveh Malka, and how much more so on Purim.

A RAV WHO GETS DRUNK AND TEARS UP CLOTHING?!

Parenthetically, in the city where [my] Father officiated as rabbi, he faced many opponents, those who reacted to him with disdain on account of his recitation of chassidus and on account of the various stringencies and *hiddurim* (observing Mitzvos in a

scrupulous, “beautified” manner) that he accustomed in the city.

One of Father’s opponents once informed on him to the governor, saying that many Jews had gathered and selected as a rabbi a person who gets drunk and tears up people’s clothing!

The governor, confounded by the notion that the majority of the Jews would choose such a person as rabbi, sent one of his representatives to Father’s home in order to see what goes on there. When the official arrived at Father’s house, he met my father as he was sitting and studying Torah. Seeing that there was no bottle of liquor on his table and that all was in order, the official became more intrigued as to what was going on there, and told Father about the informant’s claim. Father responded that the story is completely unfounded.

What was in fact the basis of the story? Later on they investigated and discovered that this is what had happened. On Yud-Tes Kislev they had had a farbrengen, a very intense farbrengen. Father recited a lot of chassidus and everyone was in a very exalted state. They continued to farbreng into the wee hours of the night.

Chassidim at that time had the custom, when farbrengens lasted until just before morning, to take off their kapatas (their traditional long, black jackets) and dance together without them. That is what they did on that Yud-Tes Kislev.

Among the participants in the farbrengen was an individual who, for some reason, was not forthcoming in taking off his kapata... Father was in high spirits. Having recently arrived from Lubavitch [to assume his

position as rabbi], he was free of concern about making a living. So Father helped this individual remove his kapata, and what happened was that the sleeve remained in the hands of Father but the jacket remained on the man...

JEWS, FAST ON PESACH!

Returning to our topic now. Mordechai educated Ester that when we’re speaking about a decree upon Jews, there are no calculations to be made at all but to simply go with self-sacrifice. In response to the decree, Mordechai and Ester said: Jews, fast on Pesach! Concern about the decree superseded the law of Pesach. Indeed, Ester even put her own life on the line and approached Achashverosh.

Not only did they jeopardize their own wellbeing and stood with self-sacrifice, they even gathered 22 thousand children and encouraged them to study Torah with self-sacrifice. The effect of the children’s self-sacrifice was to reveal the power of self-sacrifice among all the Jewish people, even those who had “bowed down to the idol,” and “partook of the feast of that wicked man [Achashverosh].” And as stated in *Torah Ohr*, a foreign thought [i.e., to reconsider the approach of self-sacrifice], G-d forbid, did not arise in the heart of a single one of them throughout the entire year. It was specifically through this inspired response on behalf of the Jewish people that the decree was rescinded.

(From the address of Shabbos Parshas Tzav, Shushan Purim, 5714, bilti muga)

THE REBBE HEALED MY SOUL

Lying paralyzed in a hospital bed and smeared with oil and sand, I was visited by an aunt with a telegram from the Rebbe. That made all the difference.

By Gai Kantor

Thousands of miracle stories of the Rebbe have been published over the years about brachos for children, health, parnasa, etc. Yet the story of Dr. Alon Dahan is unique since it involves personal growth and spiritual redemption in terms of the extreme change that he underwent in his life ambitions, going from a high school dropout to earning a doctorate in his early thirties with a PhD in Jewish philosophy.

It is no coincidence that Dahan did his doctorate on the Rebbe. He attributes his position today as a lettered academic and senior lecturer, and actually his entire life, to a letter he received from the Rebbe after his training

accident when he served in the army.

His association with Chabad began when he was a little boy. Like virtually all other children in Ganim he attended the Maon Chabad since that was the only gan there was.

“I remember how the Mitzva Tank would come, with music. We would get money for Chanuka with the Rebbe’s picture. I loved it. The Rebbe’s face always attracted me; there is something about it that calls out to you and says: What are you seeking there? Come here. And this attracted me, although it was not expressed in any facet of my life at the time.

“When I was older (10-12) I would see booklets of the Rebbe’s sichos in shul. I would open them but would only feel ‘culture shock’ and carry on; I didn’t understand any of it.”

IN THE HOSPITAL

“I did not spend my childhood in school. In tenth grade I was

finally expelled for good. When I reached draft age I enlisted as my friends did and served in troop 12 in the Golani brigade. In a training accident that occurred in the Golan Heights near the Syrian border, I was injured and remained paralyzed in my lower body.

“This happened when our team returned from an exercise. At night, on our way back to the base we had passed between basalt walls that were meant to block an armored invasion. On either side were minefields. The exhausted driver did not see the basalt walls in the dark and our vehicle crashed into a wall and overturned into the minefield. A spare tire that was in the trunk flew on to me and crushed my back. I lost feeling throughout my body and my legs crumbled beneath me. I tried to move my feet but felt nothing. I told a friend: I think there’s a dead soldier on my legs. Move his body off of me because I can’t get up.

“He looked at me and said: But there is no one here but you.

Note: This article focuses on the turning point in Dr. Dahan’s life due to a letter he received from the Rebbe. This article also tells about his research in the Rebbe’s teachings. Understandably, someone who is not immersed in living the life of a Chassid, is likely to arrive at erroneous conclusions. This article in no way gives a “hechsher” or approbation to Dr. Dahan’s work and conclusions.



Alon Dahan in the army

“Since the place was isolated, we shot almost all our ammo into the air in the hopes that someone would see and bring help. We had no communications equipment with us. The driver was horrified over what had happened. He knew it was his fault and in his misery and guilt he tried to kill himself. The other soldiers stopped him and kept an eye on him.

“Someone finally saw us and called for help. Because of the mines scattered all over and the fear of entering with equipment, they lifted us out to a helicopter with the help of ropes. They hospitalized me and after a month and a half and major surgery I was transferred to another hospital.

After my injury my relatives sought advice and brachos from tzaddikim. An uncle of mine traveled to a kabbalist in Yerushalayim and got special oil from him that was meant to be smeared on me at certain times. An aunt traveled to a rabbi in

the north who told her that the paralysis was a result of the fear that I left in that place so she should go and bring sand from the area where I was injured and pour it on me.

“My aunt exerted herself to travel until the border of Syria and despite the danger she collected sand and brought it to my bedside to pour it on me. A few minutes before she came, my uncle arrived with the oil so when he finished smearing me with oil she came and poured sand.

“I lay there with half my body shattered in the midst of oil and sand. It just doesn’t feel comfortable to say ‘no’ to people who want to help you.”

THE REBBE’S LETTER

“Then came another aunt with a telegram from the Lubavitcher Rebbe which said: **Check t’fillin and mezuzos and try to strengthen your service of Hashem in your new condition.**

“My relatives were

disappointed by this since they didn’t see any signs of encouragement or support, but to me it was very helpful – these simple words that were stated without promises, without oil and sand, without anything. It was just the unvarnished truth and an injection of energy for a new life. The Rebbe was saying to me: This is your condition. Live with it; deal with it. Find within it those things that you can change.

“When you are in a crisis, people try to show you that they have a connection with a higher world and that they can help you. Then there are expectations, a feeling that this person really has the ability to change things and you begin fantasizing about what will happen. Then along comes a person with the truth and he says: This is the situation. Now let us see how you will deal with it.

“The interesting thing is that to the Rebbe it was clear that my condition would remain as is. He was certain it would not change. I myself was not sure of this.

WHAT SIDDUR DID THE REBBE USE?

Dr. Dahan says that his research work has had an impact not only on himself but also on his family. Here is one example:

I daven from the Siddur of the Ben Ish Chai which I've been using since childhood. One of my children, when he was in third grade, attended the Dror school, a national-religious school. They use the Rinat Yisroel Siddur.

One day my son says to me, "Abba, what Siddur does the Rebbe use?" I asked him why he wanted to know and he said, "Because I want to daven from a Siddur of tzaddikim."

I asked him, "How will you do that? It's a different nusach! It's hard to change. You will also be doing something different than your classmates and a third grader will find it hard to commit to something like this."

He was insistent. I bought him a Chitas and said he should try it and see how he does. Today he goes to school with a T'hillas Hashem Siddur.

"I was so fascinated by the letter that I couldn't leave it alone. I kept looking at it and I said to myself that some part of me wants to return to Judaism but it took some time."

STUDYING TORAH

"In 5753-4 I began looking into it more. It was when I met a Dutch tourist whose father was a priest who had had a crisis of faith and restored it through Jewish philosophy. He told his son the tourist that if he had questions he could find them in the Jewish Torah.

"The son came to Eretz Yisroel and began studying Judaism. He asked me many questions and with each question

I realized that I barely knew anything. I suddenly saw a gentile who knew much more than I did.

"It confounded me to see to what extent the Israeli educational system disconnected me from Judaism, from the history of the Jewish people. The educational system tears you away from the culture of Judaism and you become a person without an identity. Mathematics to a Jew is the same mathematics as to a Chinaman but Judaism is not merely material to study but a life experience. I felt that for myself, in order to know who I am, I had to go back to these questions, in order to study and know the answers and thereby reveal what Judaism says to me. I began studying.

"I started with *Chovos HaLevavos (Duties of the Heart)*. I studied an entire chapter. The following day, when I discussed it with my gentile friend, I was very surprised when he immediately knew the material and the source. I suddenly realized that until that point, in the schools that I had attended, they had brainwashed me. Every time they mentioned religion or Judaism it was something dark, black and lacking relevance. Now, in Rabbeinu Bechayai's work, I was seeing depth, the rich language of the translation by Ibn Tibon, and I realized that they had taken something important away from me, my Judaism. I also found that I loved studying Rambam, which awakened my Judaism from a rational standpoint, but my connection was still weak.

"In 5760 or so I began studying in a more systematic fashion. The beginning was very hard. I wasn't observant and the little they taught in school I did not know. I didn't really want to attend a yeshiva. Somehow I

ended up doing my matriculation (high school graduation exams) and filled in what I was missing and then I started university. I slowly made progress. I started with Jewish thought and Talmud and a short while later I moved on to Chassidus and kabbala, particularly the Rebbe's teachings. I loved Chassidus. The concept of *memalei kol almin* (immanent G-d) was tremendously strengthening. It basically tells you that even when you're alone, you are not alone.

"The expression *l'chat'chilla aribber* also gave me tremendous encouragement. At times when all is dark and unclear and full of blocks and you feel you cannot make it, you start to despair and these Chassidic concepts help you handle things differently.

"I had many reasons to think that I did not stand a chance of getting anywhere. If I thought logically, I would not have reached where I am now. These Chassidic concepts are so strengthening, so supportive. They give you the fortitude to carry on. More than a subject of research, Chassidus proved to be a source of consolation and strength.

"Chabad Chassidus is a living example of these expressions. Logic would say that the Jewish people cannot survive. After the Yevsektzia, pogroms, the Holocaust – that all tells us that we should not have survived. But it's not logic that dictates. This is apparent in the work of the Chabad leaders throughout history. Look for example at the Rebbe, a man who lived through the most tumultuous periods in human history in the most difficult places in Europe, Russia and then in Nice, France during the Vichy regime.

"When we see the research

written after the Holocaust that refers to Chassidus in the past tense, we see that nobody believed that the few who survived and reached America would prevail. All were sure that within a few years, religious Jewry would falter and nothing would remain of it. For example, Benzion Dinur wrote a book called *Olam Sh'shak'a* with an entire chapter about Chabad Chassidus as something from a world that was no longer. And within this period of time the Rebbe rose and going against all logic he created a revolution! Look at what he accomplished, the changes he made in the world."

Why did you decide to do your doctorate on the Rebbe's teachings?

"Because what caused me to think about moving on in life was the Rebbe. His message to me is what motivated and sustained me. The letter said to me: Go against logic. Despite the despair, despite the hardships, carry on.

"I didn't start with it right away. First I learned Yiddish so I could do the research properly and learn the sichos in the original. All my translations of excerpts from the Rebbe's sichos are my own. Then, I began the research work.

"One of the unique things about the Rebbe, from my perspective, is his ability to lead in such diverse circumstances and to such a diverse public. He could relate to everyone on their own terms, whether it was science for scientists or speaking to ordinary people about things related to them. No matter where they were coming from his responses were always relevant. Simply put the Rebbe revived traditional Judaism, it was a gigantic rehabilitation project. I



Alon Dahan receiving his doctorate

“The Israeli educational system disconnected me from Judaism, from the history of the Jewish people. The educational system tears you away from the culture of Judaism and you become a person without an identity.

think this is the greatest thing of all.

When he first started in his role as leader he gave an interview to a gentile reporter of an American newspaper and he told him that in his opinion, 'We simply cannot close ourselves off.'

"A most amazing and outstanding thing about Chabad Chassidus, which in my opinion is one of the things that makes it unique, is the periphery of non-Chassidic and even non-religious admirers. You don't see this in Satmar or Toldos Aharon, for example, but in Chabad you can clearly see how influential an ideological movement can be, with a message that is so clear and so unusual, and to what extent it captures the heart of those who don't necessarily see

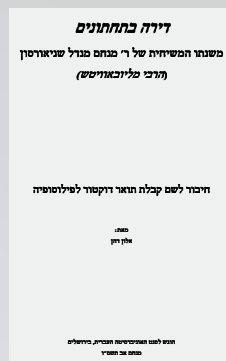


Alon Dahan (right) in a panel discussion about the Rebbe's eternal life

themselves as Lubavitchers or even religious. And it's not just Jews but even, l'havdil, non-Jews.

"By the way, the style of writing in the Torah world, that all your statements should be explicitly referenced, that is the Rebbe's innovation.

MESSIANISM IN THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS



Before we met for the interview, Dr. Dahan sent me his dissertation entitled, *Dira BaTachtonim* — *Messianism in the Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe*. At first glance I

could see how amazingly thorough he was. The material is over 400 pages, large-sized pages (25% bigger than all previous research done in this field). In a more careful perusal I could see that the author is someone who studied and delved into the material in extraordinary detail, including books and inside-Chabad material that no researcher used before.

Dr. Shelley Goldberg's work focused on the topic of eternal life of tzaddikim and Moshiach. Professor Yoram Bilu researched the lives and hiskashrus of Chassidim to the Rebbe in this generation. Dr. Yaakov Gottlieb writes about the Rambam in the Rebbe's teachings and the Rebbe as Moshiach according to the Rambam's specifications. Dr. Yitzchok Krauss shows how the Rebbe's conduct from the start of his leadership is the behavior of Moshiach. And now Dr. Dahan adds another dimension, perhaps the most important of all:

He shows how the Rebbe's view and teachings in every part of Torah and the world are the perspective of Moshiach; how even in the most material, trivial things the Rebbe reveals their connection to the G-dliness within them. Also, how the most spiritual and G-dly things are connected with and expressed specifically within the physicality of the world. He brings numerous examples such as Eretz Yisroel, the nations of the world, etc.

“The style of writing in the Torah world, that all your statements should be explicitly referenced, that is the Rebbe's innovation. Writing footnotes and sources did not previously exist in the religious world.”

Writing footnotes and sources did not previously exist in the religious world. You just had the commentaries on the side of the page in the Vilna Shas but footnotes on the bottom of the page did not exist. It's an academic style of writing that everything you say must be backed up with a source. The Rebbe is very particular about this.”

In recent years we have seen a number of dissertations on the Rebbe and Chabad that are derived from the Rebbe's own teachings. What do you think of this joining together of academia and Chassidus?

“The motivation of someone doing research must be, first of all, to come to the truth as he sees it, and he personally needs to be utterly *battel* (self-negated). He needs to experience the concept of bittul in the Chassidic sense, utter self-nullification towards what he sees and what he reads. There are often contradictions between faith and ideology, between the subject being researched and the opinions that the author holds. This is the case whether he is as a believer or a non-believer or even a heretic. It makes no difference what he is for in the final analysis he needs to be completely neutral towards the material. That's from the aspect of the person as a researcher.

“From my perspective, I can tell you that in reading these texts I experienced something that has

historical elements but also has elements that are very relevant to the here and now.

“Today you don't need to go to libraries and sit closed up in gloomy rooms. You just open the door, go to the Central Bus Station and see Chabad's work before your eyes. Then you understand that this becomes very significant and real and here is where it can have an impact on you as a person.

“You suddenly see that here are people who refuse to accept the malaise of prevailing culture and the state of society; people who rebel against anything negative and try to offer a way that is conceptually-based as well as practical and faith-based and comprised of many components, not only for themselves — how to break out of the bubble of existence which is so problematic in so many ways, but with a clear goal, to direct others.

“In order to achieve this, especially when you are so few people and with so few resources relative to the goal, you need people who are either completely crazy or who are baalei mesirus nefesh which is above reason, and it is specifically because of this that I am amazed anew whenever I encounter it.

“I want to remind you that after Gimmel Tammuz some wanted to eulogize Chabad. They said that if it's impossible to directly see this charismatic man, the spirit will dissipate. The feeling was that all was lost.

"And what happened? All the gloomy predictions were wrong and you see how Chabad has staying power, which is simply not understandable. Look at how this pathway continues to inspire thousands, perhaps millions, with mesirus nefesh, people who were born at a time when they could not see the Rebbe. They never met the Rebbe and what they have are his teachings, videos and pictures, as Professor Bilu said, 'creating a presence for that which is missing.'

"And this is something I learn from him in my life in general. It is specifically in those places where you don't operate with logic, against all odds ... you might not achieve exactly what you wanted but it is very

reasonable to assume that if you accomplish anything in the larger world, it will be in those areas. Because if we had started thinking before we started doing, we wouldn't be sitting here today.

"In Chassidus it is called *shtus d'k'dusha* (folly of holiness). On Purim 5714/1954 the Rebbe said that he was in France during the war and France was strongly fortified and the Germans didn't have anything and yet the Germans won. When they were asked how they dared to start a war where failure was certain, they said it was a matter of power that goes beyond the rational."

Dr. Dahan is a lecturer at Hebrew University and other places. His lectures focus on

Chabad Chassidus. He lately began research and lecturing on the growing phenomenon of Jews from the national-religious sector who are getting close to Chabad, mainly as a result of the crisis of faith in their ideology following the government's betrayal of Gush Katif and the subsequent expulsion.

He is currently editing his dissertation that he did on the Rebbe – *Dira BaTachtonim* and it will soon be published as a book.

Before we met, when I asked Dr. Dahan where he lives, he said, at yishuv Motza and he added that the Mishna in tractate Sukka says that they would collect willows from this location for the Beis HaMikdash. ■



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TAKE AARON, PLEASE...

Rabbi Heschel Greenberg

Founder and Director of the Jewish Discovery Center in Buffalo



AARON THE BRIDEGROOM

In this week's parsha, the Torah introduces the inauguration of Aaron and his sons as priests in the Sanctuary with the following three Hebrew words "*Kach et Aharon*," translated as "Take Aaron..."

Chida (an acronym for R. Chaim Yosef David Azulai, one of the greatest Halachic authorities and Kabbalists of the late eighteenth century) states (in his work *Chomat Anach*) that if we take the concluding letters of these three words it spells the word *chattan*, a bridegroom. *Chida* applies this to Aaron's appointment as High Priest. He was to be honored and feted as a bridegroom is at his wedding.

Every detail of Torah is precise. Therefore the association made by the Torah between the taking of Aaron and a bridegroom can go both ways. On the one hand it suggests that Aaron should be treated as a bridegroom because he was about to enter into a new relationship with G-d upon serving as a Kohen Gadol, the High Priest. And, on the other hand, it can also be said to imply the inverse: a bridegroom should emulate Aaron.

We can now interpret the words "Take Aaron" with its allusion to a bridegroom as a directive to the bridegroom to take his cue from Aaron. The Torah here is instructing the

bridegroom: "When you enter into your marriage, Aaron should serve as your role model."

What is the connection between Aaron and a bridegroom? And in what way is the *chattan* to follow Aaron's example? And how does that relate to each and every one of us, particularly in our day and age?

L'CHAIM: SPEECH, RELATIONSHIPS AND LIFE

The greatest gift given to humans is arguably the power to communicate with speech. It is for this reason that when delineating the four levels of existence (inanimate, vegetative, animal, and human) the term used to describe the human condition is "*medaber*" which means "speaker," rather than the title "intellectual."

Why is speech so central to our identity as human beings?

The answer lies in the very word for life in the Holy Tongue, the word "Chaim". The Rebbe once asked why this word is written in the plural form? The Rebbe's answer was that life is only worthy of its name if it is a life that acknowledges, appreciates, and is shared with others. Put another way, true life is defined by the nature and quality of our relationships. And since relationships are created, preserved, managed,

and enhanced through speech, it follows then that speech is the primary defining factor defining our humanity.

Marriage is the paradigm of all relationships. For a marriage to succeed it must be one in which the art of communication is well honed and refined. When our ability to communicate with our spouse suffers so, too, our relationship in general suffers. And with our diminished relationship the entire quality of life is profoundly affected since the quality of life itself hinges on the quality of our relationships.

MARRIAGE AND THE ART OF COMMUNICATION FOR THE CHATTAN

At which point in one's life is the art of communication most crucial? And for which individual is the need to communicate properly most imperative?

It stands to reason that it is the time of marriage, the ultimate relationship, wherein proper communication can either make it or break it, G-d forbid. At the point where two half-souls are to be united (or, more accurately reunited, since, according to the Zohar, our mate is actually the other half of our soul that was separated at birth), that is the time when communication is integral to the success of the marriage.

In the initial stages of marriage—particularly the first year, when Jewish law and tradition refers to the bridegroom and bride as *chattan* and *kalla*—the need for proper communication is indispensable. This period of transition from single life to married life is a most precarious time for the young couple. And frequently the future success of the relationship hinges on the way it is established at that time.

As important as this “art-form” is for both *chattan* and *kalla* the message and challenge of communication is even more imperative for the *chattan*-bridegroom. Before his marriage the man is used to a certain form of communication that might outwardly seem harsh. Even Torah learning—which the groom is expected to engage in prior to marriage—often involves the use of critical language. To be sure, even when Torah scholars argue vociferously it is only a façade.

Deep down, the two Talmudic students who argue incessantly about their studies love each other. According to the Talmud this love becomes evident at the end of their discussion and debate. The Talmud applies the verse “*Vahev b’sufa*-Love in the end” to this phenomenon of Torah scholars showing their true love for each other despite the strident debates in which they engaged that previously may have masked that love.

However, even this **façade** of harshness one must remove when talking to one’s spouse. And while verbal abuse directed against anyone is wrong, the Talmud exhorts us to be extra vigilant when speaking to one’s wife. In the marriage relationship the external form of communication



The Torah here is instructing the bridegroom: “When you enter into your marriage, Aaron should serve as your role model.” ... Not only did he love peace, he pursued it.

is almost as important, if not as important, as its inner dimension. While a teacher may occasionally use stern language to rebuke a recalcitrant student this ought not carry over to the way one must communicate with one’s spouse.

THE ULTIMATE ROLE MODEL FOR PROPER SPEECH

Who is the ultimate role model for proper communication?

The answer is Aaron. What was so unique about Aaron? Aaron, Rashi tells us, was beloved by everyone as compared to Moses who was not as “popular.” Moses, in his position as the ultimate leader of the Jewish people, had to occasionally employ the harsh language of rebuke. Aaron, by contrast, would always use gentle language; he would “wear his love for everyone on his sleeve.” He was able to change hearts by speaking with words that everyone could see emanated from his loving heart. Thus they recognized because his outward manner of speaking was a genuine expression of his true inner feelings.

Even when Aaron was in a most difficult position, which would have caused many a person to lose control of the content of their words, let alone their tone of voice, he still maintained his soft-spoken mannerism. One glaring example of this is when he was confronted by Moses for his role in the incident of the golden calf. His response is prefaced by the word “*Va’yomer*-And he

said” which in Hebrew has the connotation that he replied softly.

THE PRO-ACTIVE AARON

One might think that Aaron was a softy, that he was not an assertive or pro-active individual. And one might even conclude that his soft-spoken demeanor was a sign of weakness not of moral strength. To counter this misapprehension of Aaron’s unique model of communication, the Mishnah in Ethics of the Fathers cites the immortal words of Hillel: “Be of the students of Aaron; love peace, **pursue** peace, love all creatures and bring them close to the Torah.” Not only did he love peace, he pursued it. Not only did he love all creatures, he actively sought to bring them close to the Torah. This he achieved to a great extent by his unique method of communication.

Aaron’s goal was no less pro-active than Moses’. But unlike Moses, his method was obsessively positive, warm, loving and peaceful.

The *chattan* is therefore well advised to follow Aaron’s example of communication—“Take Aaron”—and incorporate Aaron’s mode of communication as your own.

“WITH KINDNESS AND MERCY”

We are living presently in the transitional period—on the bridge—between *galut*/exile and *geula*/Redemption. We are about

to enter into a new relationship with the world. We are like the chattan in his transitional period. We too must learn the lesson of communicating with love. And while in earlier generations we could have afforded the luxury of being more stern in the way we tried to affect others, today, the method we must use is the method of Aaron.

This lesson of the chattan and Aaron can be taken a step further and applied to G-d as well.

Our Sages tell us that all of the commandments that we were given are also observed by G-d. If G-d commands us to communicate to our kalla—and, by extension, to all others—with sensitivity and warmth, then we

ask of G-d to do the same with the Jewish people, His bride. Indeed, our Sages have compared G-d to the bridegroom and the Jewish people as His bride. More specifically, they have compared the Messianic Age as the time when our marriage will be complete.

However, the initial stages of the Messianic Age can be fraught with difficult challenges. Our Sages referred to the travail that can potentially accompany this transitional period. So we therefore say to G-d:

“Follow Aaron’s example. Just as You have commanded us to communicate with love, so too lead us out of exile with warmth and love. Take us your bride

under Your Chuppa (wedding canopy) and into Your embrace with loving and endearing words. We have had our fill of the showers of hidden love that were expressed through the pain and suffering of galut.

We respectfully implore G-d to communicate with us with loving sentiments that are expressed openly in a loving fashion. Not only should the outcome be pleasant but also the road to that outcome be filled with overt goodness. This is consistent with the Rebbe’s frequent blessings and prayers concerning the future Redemption: “May it be *b’chesed u’b’rachamim*-with kindness and mercy.”

Continued from page 31

for identity and purpose.

OUR HOPE

“Had the ship not been nearby, we would have drowned,” is how the Talmudic sage concludes the episode.

What saved us during the time of Purim – and what has guaranteed our existence throughout our long and difficult history – was not the forfeiting of our identity and surrendering of our truth. On the contrary, it was our living relationship with the

living G-d, the Creator of heaven and earth and our dedication to His Torah and Mitzvos that has allowed us to survive and thrive, until we reach the culmination of our great voyage, speedily in our days.

It is interesting to note that the metaphor employed in the Talmudic tale is the fish. What the travelers felt was an island, was really a fish, waiting to plunge them into the waters.

The zodiac sign for the month of Adar is Pisces, fish (mazal dagim.) As the book of Esther relates, the Persian Minister

Haman chose a day in the month of Adar (the 13th), to exterminate the Jewish people (Maharsha to Bava Basra 73b).

Conversely, what is unique about fish? They must remain submerged, in their natural element of water, to survive. So too, the Jewish people, must remain in their habitat of Torah and Mitzvos, for their continued existence (see Talmud Brachos 61a).

This essay is based on the commentary of the Maharsha (Rabbi Shmuel Eliezer Eidels), to Talmud Bava Basra 73b, and on other sources.

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MEETING ADMURIM ON SHLICHUS

By Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelevitz

Shliach, Beit Shaan

In the HaYom Yom for 14 Adar II, Purim, the Rebbe says that our wording in “Shoshanas Yaakov” is “*bruchim kol ha’tzaddikim*” (blessed are all the tzaddikim). As Purim approaches, I’ve thought about this. Are these words the only difference between Nusach Chabad and other nuschaos?! Definitely not. Why is this difference written in the HaYom Yom? Why isn’t it sufficient to look into the Siddur to see what we say? What message is the Rebbe conveying to us on Purim with this HaYom Yom? Why is this so important?

It was only after I drank a few glasses of mashke that I came up with this great explanation, that although we are Chabad Chassidim and only the seven Chabad Rebbeim are our Rebbeim – N’siim, led by the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid of Mezritch, we should not forget that there are other tzaddikim, *gutte Yidden*. We don’t look down on any of them; they are all beloved and are all tzaddikim!

In order for there not to be a “flaw” in *hiskashrus* (an old concept in Chassidus; it is recommended that everyone consult with his *mashpia* about how to avoid this) I began by

saying that we have only our Rebbeim (as quoted in the Rebbe’s *sichos* and letters). There is only one master. We follow them, we learn their teachings, and they guide us. At the same time though, “*bruchim kol ha’tzaddikim*” – there is what to learn from them, to praise them, within the guidelines of the saying, “the master is a master – but not mine; the servant is a servant – but not yours.”

I once ended up at a *tish* of the Vishnitzer Rebbe that took place at Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai’s gravesite in Miron. I was curious to see what happens at a *tish*, the soulful *niggunim* sung by hundreds of Chassidim, the *divrei Torah*. So the first thing I did was to remove my *gartel*. Now I could observe the *tish* without forgetting that for us – there is just one Rebbe.

In many Israeli cities there are numerous tzaddikim and Admurim. Most of them cooperate with the Rebbe’s *shluchim*. Sometimes they come to the Chabad house to give a *shiur* or to offer words of blessing at a big event. They are sometimes assisted by the Chabad house. Sometimes they

send people to learn Torah and to get involved in Jewish life. They might go out of their way to help Chabad houses, supporting the *shluchim* against those who oppose them, helping financially, with permits, with connections, with whatever is needed. Here are some stories to illustrate.

THE MEKUBAL IN BEIT SHAAN

In Beit Shaan there used to live a famous tzaddik and genuine *mekubal*, Rabbi Machloulf Lasry. Tens of thousands of people came from all over to see him, be blessed by him and to receive his *kameios* (amulets) and other *segulos*.

Rabbi Lasry *zt”l* was a true friend of the Chabad house and happily helped out whenever I made a request. Other Chabad houses in the country also benefited from his friendship. It happened sometimes that one *shliach* or another asked me to arrange an appointment with the *rav* and when the *shliach* came he was seen right away, without having to wait, and every request was responded to.

One time, for example, there was a *shliach* from the south

whose mayor was an admirer of Rabbi Lasry. Upon the shliach's request, Rabbi Lasry wrote a letter to the mayor asking him to designate a piece of land for a Chabad house, a request that was quickly fulfilled.

All this was in addition to open and hidden ties that Rabbi Lasry had with the Rebbe. He went to the Rebbe in his later years and received a dollar for tz'daka and a blessing. On a number of occasions he asked me to mention his name for a blessing from the Rebbe, and this included his receiving amazing answers from the Rebbe that alleviated some of his pains and amazed Rabbi Lasry with the Rebbe's ruach ha'kodesh that appeared openly in his answers.

TANYA AS AN AMULET

Rabbi Shlomo Segal, shliach in Afula, came in 5744 to print a Tanya in Beit Shaan. He went to Rabbi Lasry and spoke to him about the Tanya. Rabbi Lasry was very happy about it and even gave him money towards the printing. He also told R' Segal that decades earlier, the Rebbe sent dozens of sifrei Tanya to Morocco and he had studied it in depth.

At that time, a woman asked Rabbi Lasry for a bracha after having miscarried several times. Rabbi Lasry gave her a Tanya as a segula and she gave birth to healthy children and moved to Eretz Yisroel and lives in Tzfas.

I can't end this section about him without mentioning his son, Yosef Yitzchok, named for the Rebbe Rayatz after his mother had a dream back in Morocco. This son is now the chief rabbi of Beit Shaan and he lovingly takes part in every event we make. He is a Jewish leader who has Chassidic humility.

THE ADMUR REB ITZIK'L SUPPORTS MIVTZA T'FILLIN

Rabbi Zushe Silberstein of Montreal told the following story at a Chassidishe farbrengen that took place in a Chabad shul in Beitar Ilit. Before going on shlichus to Montreal, he lived in Antwerp. One day, he went out to do mivtza t'fillin and he saw a young Jewish man who, unfortunately, was covered with tattoos from head to toe. R' Silberstein ascertained that the man was Jewish and then suggested he put on t'fillin. The man agreed but did not want to do so in the middle of the street.

R' Silberstein and the man walked into a nearby shul which was none other than the shul of the Admur, Reb Itzik'l of Pshevorsk. Just as the man rolled up his sleeve to put on t'fillin, the gabbai of the shul passed by and at the sight of all the tattoos, he told them to leave the shul.

R' Silberstein and the man stood outside the shul and didn't know what to do. Suddenly, Reb Itzik'l himself came out and asked what was going on. Apparently he had been sitting in the shul and had heard some shouting so he had come out to see what was happening. R' Silberstein explained that he wanted to put t'fillin on with the man and the gabbai had thrown them out because of the tattoos.

The Rebbe asked them to come back into the shul and brought them over to his table, there on the Mizrach wall and he said, "Put the t'fillin on **here!** On my table! I am happy at the privilege of your doing this on my table!"

THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE HAS BROAD SHOULDERS

R' Silberstein related another

detail in connection with mivtza t'fillin, this time from the famous Mashgiach in Beer Yaakov, Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe a"h. R' Silberstein once heard from Rabbi Wolbe that by rights, he too should send bachurim from his yeshiva on mivtza t'fillin; he actually wants it, but he did not have the "broad shoulders" to take responsibility for the spirituality of the bachurim leaving the walls of the yeshiva. "Only the Lubavitcher Rebbe has broad enough shoulders to send bachurim out of the yeshiva and to be confident that they will return, Chassidish and fortified."

ADMURIM AND CHABAD HOUSES

Occasionally there are stories about encounters between Admurim and shluchim and we hear about the Admurim's admiration for the Rebbe's shluchim around the world. Rabbi Kutli Rapp, director of the Chabad house at Kennedy Airport, greeted and accompanied the Gerrer Rebbe and heard from him his great appreciation for the Rebbe's shluchim.

There is the famous example of the Klausenberger Rebbe zt"l who went to Texas for medical reasons and the shliach, Rabbi Shimon Lazaroff did a great deal for him and his entourage and even farbrenged with him for hours and heard his praise for the work of the shluchim.

We have recently heard a few stories about cooperation between Admurim and Chabad houses. During the summer, Admurim sometimes leave home and go to various vacation spots. There was the story (summer 2009) about the Bobover Rebbe who went to relax on Long Island. The shliach, Rabbi Baumgarten, made sure some bachurim came



The Satmar Rebbe and the Pupa Rebbe in the Chabad house in Palm Springs

from a nearby camp so he would have a minyan.

During the winter, the Chabad house in Palm Springs hosted the Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Aharon Teitelbaum and the Pupa Rebbe, both of them considered virulent opponents of Zionism (although some fanatics see Lubavitch as being too sympathetic to that worldview).

The residents of Moshava Migdal, near Teveria, were surprised to see an important guest at a special farbrengen made by the shliach, Rabbi Shmuel Gruzman. The guest was none other than the Toldos Aharon Rebbe from Meia Sh'arim. He spoke passionately about learning Chassidus and how this affects one's daily life.

And most recently this winter, the Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Aaron Teitelbaum, who needed to say Kaddish for his mother, was on an Aeromexico flight from Mexico to New York that was forced to land at Dulles after

“ Just as the man rolled up his sleeve to put on t'fillin, the gabbai of the shul passed by and at the sight of all the tattoos, he told them to leave the shul... Suddenly, the Rebbe, Reb Itzik'l himself came out ... and said, “Put the t'fillin on here! On my table! I am happy at the privilege of your doing this on my table!”

heavy snows snarled air traffic in and out of New York City.

He was taken off the grounded plane in Dulles with the help of Rabbi Levi Shemtov of Washington, D.C. R' Shemtov was contacted by Satmar Chasidim in Kiryas Joel and he used his government contacts to arrange for the Rebbe's earlier departure from the aircraft and very quick passage through customs, though the plane and its passengers were delayed on the tarmac after landing for about three hours.

R' Gershon Schlesinger of Satmar released the following

statement, “We would like to express our sincere gratitude for the Chabad emissary Reb Levi Shemtov who went out of his way to make sure that the Rebbe had a warm mikva. It was mamash a kiddush Hashem ...”

“Someone commented that so many people were taken away from their work today because of this,” said Rabbi Shemtov. “I told them, they were wrong. The Lubavitcher Rebbe taught us all to help anyone no matter who they are. It was a big z'chus to be able to do what we did today.”

Bruchim HaBa'im – Bruchim Kol HaTzaddikim.

PUTTING G-D BACK IN THE “NATION”

A translation of a poignant and electrifying sicha delivered by the Rebbe Rayatz in the year 1941. Beginning with a detailed account of the story of Purim, the Rebbe addressed the crisis facing the Jewish nation in his time. * Originally said and published 70 years ago, the sicha is uncannily relevant to our times. * Purim Sichas of 1941 Part 3.

Translated and adapted from the original sicha

Even though Haman HaRasha had made a distinction between the “*Ivri*” and the “*Yehudi*” Jews, and intended only to annihilate the “*Yehudim*” (r”l) and not the false “*Ivrim*”, the political lickspittlers and trucklers, Haman’s sons and cronies made no distinction between them. In their own minds, the “*Ivri*” and “*Yehudi*” Jews were one and the same. They rejected them completely, everywhere expelling them with insults and shame.

For the “*Ivrim*”, their decadent lifestyle and their servile flattering did not help them in any way. Their enemies took away their palaces, their gold, their silver and their possessions, and they expelled them from their homes, persistently reminding them of their origins that they had so willfully forgotten. Thus the global persecution of the descendants of Avrohom fell without a distinction between *Yehudi* and *Ivri*.

During this bitter time, Mordechai intensified his involvement in Jewish education,

and in the capital of Shushan alone he gathered twenty two thousand children who learned Torah and observed Mitzvos with self-sacrifice, thereby displaying their pride in their Jewish identity.

All the Jews – *Yehudim* – men and women, young and old, learned and ignorant, were consumed with the fire of self-sacrifice.

All, without distinction, were prepared to let themselves be killed, slaughtered and burned for keeping Shabbos and Kashrus, for keeping Family Purity and for putting on T’fillin, and, with the greatest Jewish pride, mocked Haman’s clique and the gentile religious authorities.

It was only then that the “*Ivri*” Jews understood the truth of Mordechai’s words. He had warned them years earlier that they should not rely on their political scheming, their wealth, or their government connections. With one blow from Hashem, the influential politician became a commoner, and the biggest millionaire became destitute. They were totally broken,

physically and emotionally.

With an unwavering, upright stance displayed through self-sacrifice, the “*Yehudi*” Jews revealed the “*Pintele Yid*” (the quintessence of the Jew which never is and never can be severed from G-d, and which can never be extinguished) in each of the “*Ivri*” Jews – – that they too should return to the true wellsprings of pure unadulterated belief in Hashem and to a life of devoted to Torah and Mitzvos.

A large number of “*Ivrim*” gave up the false ideal of the “*Jew sans G-d and Torah*”. They separated themselves from the ideology of the political “*Ivrim*” and began keeping Shabbos, Kashrus, Family Purity and T’fillin.

To encapsulate: The overall Jewish spiritual state in the capital Shushan, as well as in the one hundred twenty seven countries, was one of true devotion and self sacrifice for Torah and Mitzvos.

Haman and his clique proceeded with the depraved goal to annihilate, G-d forbid, the Jews from all the lands of Achashverosh’s kingdom. As he remained undecided as to the exact date on which he would carry out his plans, he threw a lottery. The most appropriate day, as indicated by the raffle, was to be the 13th day of the month of Adar. In the year Three Thousand Four Hundred and Four, on the 13th day of Nissan, the king’s edict was dispatched to all 127 countries, that the thirteenth day of Adar of the coming year – – in 11 months

approximately – – would be the day on which all the nations were to annihilate, G-d forbid, the Jews.

For three days, there was a widespread movement of t'shuva in all Jewish communities throughout Achashverosh's kingdom, and on that third day, which was also the first day of Pesach in the year 3,404, it was decreed in the Heavenly Court that G-d should send a salvation for all the Jews in the kingdom of Achashverosh.

The very next day, Mordechai was learning the laws of K'mitza with a group of students (laws regarding the procedure for scooping out the flour and oil of a meal offering). These children observed as the grand minister, Haman HaRasha, proceeded towards – L'havdil – – Mordechai. It is impossible for us to imagine accurately the situation of how Haman approached Mordechai. To illustrate the emotions of the moment, keep in mind that the Jews at that time were prepared to be killed; they knew that in just 12 months they were all slated for genocide. Jews who were ten years in Russia would related to this well; they can clearly imagine in their minds how a "melamed" (Torah teacher for young Jewish children) felt seeing the "badge" (i.e. the government representatives).

Mordechai told his students: "Run away, so that you will be saved from the Rasha's hands." But all his students responded in one voice: "We are with you, whether in life or death!"

This pure, heartfelt cry of self sacrifice that these children expressed, that "we are with you whether in life or death", demonstrated the level of self-sacrifice by which the Jews at



“The current global revolutions remind us Jews about the Hamans of old, who are presently reappearing with renewed vigor.

that time were holding.

There is a well known saying that Yom Kippurim means that the sacred day of Yom Kippur is equal in status to the day of Purim.

In Chassidus, this issue is clarified at length. Without the Chassidic explanation it is very difficult to understand how the holy day of Yom Kippur can be compared to the day of Purim!

Chassidus explains that the service on Yom Kippur involved the sacrificing of two goats. One was brought as a Chatas offering, while the other, the "Azazel", was stoned. Both goats had to be identical in every way: in color, in height, and in price. The only way to determine which

goat was to be a Chatas sacrifice and which an Azazel offering was through a lottery, because a lottery operates at a very high, ruchnius level.

Haman was well aware that the Jews are very important in Hashem's eyes, so he made a lottery, hoping that through the lottery he would be able to find the correct date for the – -G-d forbid – – Jewish annihilation.

But Haman was badly mistaken. He did not truly understand the great extent to which Hashem loves the Jewish people, as they are called "Children of Hashem". He did not correctly assess the great self-sacrifice of the Jewish heart. He could not comprehend the tremendous revolution that repentance and self sacrifice

“Jews who were ten years in Siberia would relate to this well; they can clearly imagine in their minds how a “melamed” felt seeing the “badge” of the government representatives.

impact on high.

Thus, Hashem enacted the great salvation of the Purim miracle, saving the “*Yehudi*”, both his body and soul, together.

In summation:

Jews had torn themselves away from Torah and Mitzvos and believed that they could become an autonomous nation, replacing their natural status as “Am Hashem,” the Nation of Hashem.

The brazen “*Ivri*” arose, a Jew without belief in Hashem and without Torah and Mitzvos, who corrupted the true “*Ivri*” title.

The Torah Jews then abandoned the name “*Ivri*” and adopted the name “*Yehudi*”, which expresses the tremendous self-sacrifice for Torah and Mitzvos observance of which a Jew is capable.

Haman and his cohorts proceeded to expel all Jews, even the “*Ivri*” Jews, with great denigration and shame. They destroyed their whole existence, and they become broken both physically and morally.

The great oppression and self-sacrifice of the “*Yehudi*” Jews brought out the “*Pintele Yid*” not only in those “*Yehudim*”, but also by the “*Ivri*” Jews. Through this they also returned to Yiddishkait, bringing about a salvation for the entire nation. The pure self sacrifice of the young Jewish children’s hearts led to the hanging of Haman and his sons.

Regarding the miracle of Purim, the Megilla states: “And these days are commemorated and are done in every generation, every family, every country and every city, and the days of Purim will not cease from the Jewish people and their memory will not be forgotten from their descendants”.

In a literal sense, everyone knows and understands very well what these words mean. However, upon closer examination, it is critical to note the seeming redundancy of the words “and the days of Purim will not cease from the Jewish people – *Yehudim* – and their memory will not be forgotten from their descendants”. This means that as

a result of the miracle of Purim there must be *Yehudim*, Jews who act with self-sacrifice for Torah and mitzvos.

The current global revolutions remind us Jews about the Hamans of old, who are presently reappearing with renewed vigor. There is a certain faction of the Jewish people who have forgotten that they are the nation of Hashem; “they told Hashem, ‘Go away from us, we don’t want to know Your ways.’” (Job 21:14). These are Jews, “*Ivri*” Jews, without faith and without Torah and mitzvos. They have totally forgotten their own heritage and that they are still in exile.

In Haman’s time, those “*Ivri*” Jews embraced the galus life with open arms and with joyous song. They didn’t want to know that the redemption was approaching. Foolish hedonists, they did not want to hear of the redemption. Mordechai’s warning words in Malachi’s prophecy were scoffed at. It was a time of *sh’fot ha’shoftim*, when anybody who had a minimum of financial wherewithal had the great impudence to denigrate the Torah scholars. And when the time of salvation arrived, the political assimilated “*Ivri*” Jew saw and felt that his political connectedness was of no help and provided him with no security.

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TWO DOLLARS EACH

Yossi Elbaz and his wife, Frechia, prayed for over twenty years to be blessed with children, but the Gates of Heaven were closed... During Sunday dollars, they each passed by the Rebbe separately – and what happened there took them both by surprise.

By Nosson Avrohom; Translated by Michael Leib Dobry

The following story was widely publicized in the general Israeli press about eight years ago. The headlines blared with the news that Mrs. **Frechia Elbaz** from Nahariya, about fifty years of age, had given birth to her first child, a girl, after twenty years of marriage to her husband, Yossi, an immigrant from Morocco. Throughout these two decades, they had not been blessed to become parents, and all the papers described how they dealt with their plight throughout the long and complex fertility process. A further detail reported in the newspaper articles was about the amazing bracha that the couple had received from the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach ten years earlier, during a visit that they made to Beis Chayeinu. The Rebbe blessed them that they should have children, and he even knew how many there would be.

Last week, we got together for a chat with Yossi. In our initial telephone conversation,

he was just on his way to drive his daughters to the municipal swimming pool, and he asked me to call him again later that evening. The happiness and joy in his voice was virtually tangible. So it is when people wait twenty years for children, while the biggest doctors declare unequivocally that this is a case of unexplained infertility, with no medical reason or problem to which it can be attributed.

When I called again that evening, the girls were already asleep, and we could conduct the interview calmly. Near him sat his wife, who had left her job since the birth of her daughters in order to devote her full time and attention to their upbringing and education.

HAVE YOU EXPLORED THE POSSIBILITY OF A BRACHA FROM THE REBBE?

“In our worst nightmares, we never could have imagined

that so many years would pass without our having children. There’s nothing that can even compare to such a painful situation,” said Yossi as he began his story. “When a year passed, and then another and another without our being privileged to become parents, we realized that there was a problem, but we were unaware as to how serious. We went to one doctor after another, and they all made their routine examinations, but they were unable to detect any specific condition. They couldn’t provide us with a medical diagnosis regarding the source of the problem. We were confused and perplexed. If there was a problem, we could try and find a way to solve it, but without detecting a problem of some kind, it would be impossible to provide a solution. The doctors simply called it ‘unexplained infertility’.

Years later, when we saw no light at the end of the tunnel and the biological clock kept ticking, my wife began a series of difficult and complex treatments, but here too we saw no salvation on the horizon. She went through more than thirty treatments, and anyone who has been there understands the tremendous

“**‘Yossi, we’re flying to the Rebbe.’ I was stunned, but she left no room for argument. She bought two airline tickets, and within a week, we were on a plane to New York.**



Illustration

hardships that accompany them. Treatment after treatment, test after test. The first few times there was still some hope, but with each notification that the treatment had been unsuccessful, the disappointment intensified and the feeling of inner pain grew sevenfold. We didn't know where to turn or where to go, and we felt that we had exhausted all possible resources that modern medicine could provide, but to no avail.

"We sustained heavy expenses on medical consultations, sparing neither funds nor efforts, as our desire was so great to have a child of our own. The days, months, and years that passed were not kind to us. Time was running out, and we were worried that soon there wouldn't be anything left that could be done. We believed with all our hearts in the Creator of the World. We went to all the prominent rabbanim and mekubalim, receiving a bracha from each of them, instilling us with a sense of hope and encouragement. Yet, the results all remained the same.

"Then one day, a close friend of my wife from their work at the school asked her if we had explored the possibility

“Near him sat his wife, who had left her job since the birth of her daughters in order to devote her full time and attention to their upbringing and education.

of receiving a blessing from the Lubavitcher Rebbe. 'Thousands of children have been born in the merit of the Rebbe's bracha,' she said.

"We knew about the greatness of the Rebbe. It would seem that there isn't a Jew in the world who hasn't heard about his prominence and his many activities. My wife's friend continued to insist, saying, 'You've tried so many routes. Why don't you try the one that has achieved miracles for so many Jews, even those who had already given up, yet they eventually merited to have children?' The friend's sincere words had an effect upon my wife, and that night when I returned home from my job at the Nahariya Hospital, where I have been working these last thirty years as a technician, my wife informed me, 'Yossi, we're flying to the Rebbe.' I was stunned, but she left no room for argument. She bought two airline tickets, and within a week, we

were on a plane to New York.

"Before the flight, I met with Rabbi Yisroel Butman, the Rebbe's shliach in Nahariya, at a bar-mitzvah celebration and told him that I was planning to fly to the Rebbe. At first, he thought that I was kidding him, but he quickly realized that I was quite serious. 'We've heard about what the Rebbe can do, and we have the tickets right in our hand.' I asked him to give us some tips on how to act, what to say, and what to do. He suggested that we should speak with his brother-in-law, Naftali, his wife's brother, who was learning that year in the beis midrash of 770, and he would already be able to give us all the help and direction that we needed."

"THIS IS FOR CHILDREN IN ERETZ HA'KODESH"

"Even before we got there, we rented a room in a hotel near 770.

“From our very first day there, we realized that a magical and thrilling world had been revealed to us. Jews from all over the world came to Crown Heights to receive the Rebbe’s holy blessing. In accordance with the advice and guidance of the chassidim, I spent the first Shabbos in 770 from eight in the morning until late in the evening. I understood rather quickly that if someone leaves the synagogue after the minyan and goes home, he already won’t be able to get back inside for the farbrengen, which takes place when the Rebbe returns about an hour or so later. This was a truly surreal experience that you can’t possibly understand unless you were actually there to witness it yourself. Thousands of chassidim, guests, local residents, Israelis, young and old – all with a desire to see the Rebbe and have the privilege of hearing words of Torah from his lips.

“I also found myself moving from bench to bench, from pyramid to pyramid. The place was absolutely packed. The benches were piled one top of the other, and it was only by a miracle that no one was injured. The Rebbe spoke in Yiddish, and I couldn’t understand the slightest thing that he said, but the atmosphere there and the Rebbe’s unique appearance enraptured me, restoring my heart and the heart of my wife, who was standing in the women’s section.

“On Sunday, we stood for dollars in a long and circuitous line of Jews from all walks of life and from countries throughout the globe. As we were waiting, we heard more and more stories of miracles that occurred in the merit of the Rebbe’s brachos, and this strengthened and intensified our anticipation in the hope of receiving his blessing. I stood in the men’s line, and my wife stood in the women’s line. When I finally came before the Rebbe after a tense and anxious wait, I saw two chassidim standing there to make certain that people didn’t cause excessive delays for those waiting in line, and each person was given a few moments to make his request. I decided not to go into lengthy detail and I simply said, ‘Rebbe, I have no children!’

“The Rebbe gave me two dollars and told me: ‘This is for children in Eretz HaKodesh.’ So he said with the utmost simplicity, and I found myself moving as the line continued out.

“I left the Rebbe a bit stunned, and I told the chassidim waiting outside about my request and the bracha I received. The chassidim told me quite simply: ‘If that’s the bracha you got, then expect two children.’ The truth of the matter is that I really hadn’t fully internalized the power of the Rebbe’s bracha.

“I waited for my wife to have her turn as well, and when she came out, I asked how it went. She told me that she asked for

a bracha for children, and the Rebbe also gave her two dollars and told her: ‘This is for children in Eretz HaKodesh’ – the same exact words. I already realized that the Rebbe was apparently using tremendous foresight. We hadn’t told the Rebbe about the connection between us, and lo and behold, we were privileged to receive the same bracha and an identical number of dollars.

“We returned to Eretz Yisroel very excited and filled with anticipation, but contrary to what we had expected, several more years passed and we still had not seen the realization of the Rebbe’s bracha. We believed then that the children are coming, but it still hadn’t happened. Another treatment and another treatment, and the failures reverberated and grated on our ears with a feeling of unease and discomfort. At our ages, it was already turning into a serious problem. My wife was rapidly approaching the half-century mark and we thought that all might be lost.

Then, the miracle happened, in a manner beyond all logic. We tried just one more treatment, even though we didn’t have much hope, but this time it proved successful, as we learned that my wife was pregnant. We were positively overjoyed. All the anguish we had suffered over the years had been transformed into one great simcha. In the examinations that followed, we learned that my wife was expecting twins, a boy and a girl. Due to her advanced age, she was placed under strict medical supervision. For a period of four months, she was confined to Haifa’s Rambam Hospital. Regrettably, when the birth took place, the boy did not survive, but the girl was born whole and healthy to everyone’s great relief. At the advice of Rabbi

“The chassidim told me quite simply: ‘If that’s the bracha you got, then expect two children’... We hadn’t told the Rebbe about the connection between us, yet we received the same bracha and an identical number of dollars.

Abuchatzera, we called her Chein Chana, after my mother, and we also realized that Chana was the name of the Rebbe's mother.

"When we saw that all was well, a year and a half later, when my wife was already fifty years old, we decided to try one last treatment. If it worked – all the better, and if it didn't, at least we were privileged to have one daughter. With G-d's help, this treatment also proved successful, and suddenly we felt that G-d is opening a gate that had been locked to us for many long years. Nine months later, our second daughter was born and we named her Sheila Talia.

"Since they were born, we have become twenty years younger. The older girl started second grade this year, and after thirty years of working in the field of education, my wife went on early retirement in order that she could raise them patiently and calmly.

*

The emotion in Yossi's voice is clearly noticeable:

"The Rebbe gave us each two dollars and blessed us with *children*, in the plural, and in fact, we now have two daughters. The observation of a tzaddik is something completely different; all distance in time and space has no relevance to him. There had already been moments

of total despair, but today I know that the bracha of a tzaddik never goes unanswered. The Rebbe gave a blessing, and the blessing was fulfilled.

"In honor of the birth of our daughters, we held a *Seudas Hoda'a*, during which the Rebbe's shliach in Nahariya, Rabbi Yisroel Butman, took part. He

spoke about the Rebbe's bracha, the difficult years that passed since the bracha had been given, and the happy ending. People left there in a great state of excitement over the tremendous miracle that they had heard about first-hand from those who actually experienced it."



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A CHASSID WITHOUT AVODA?

From the Sichos Kodesh of the Rebbe Rayatz,
Purim 5708

Presented by Rabbi Boruch Sholom Cohen and Y Ben Boruch



WHAT IS “D’VAR MALCHUS?”

At every Chassidishe simcha, especially by Chabad Chassidim, it is customary to begin by saying a “D’var Malchus” from the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples, the Maggid of Mezritch and his disciples – they were the teachers of the Alter Rebbe. By us (Chabad Chassidim), when we say “Rebbe” with no name, we mean the Alter Rebbe.

“D’var Malchus” is an inyan of *hodaa* (admission/gratitude) so every morning we start immediately with “Modeh Ani.” He started with that today, yesterday, the day before that, the week before, and the hour before, and now he says “Modeh Ani” again.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HODAA AND HASAGA

“Modeh Ani” is *hodaa*

(admission/gratitude) that is above *hasaga* (intellectual apprehension). There is *hodaa* and there is *hasaga* and *hodaa* is above *hasaga*. This is because *hasaga* is according to the ability of the one apprehending and according to the concept, while *hodaa* is of the essence, which cannot be apprehended.

With *hasaga*, questions are possible and this is the advantage of *hasaga* as we see with an effective teacher, that he not only teaches the subject in detail, but when he teaches a student he doesn’t say it all simply so that it is immediately understood, but rather he says it in a way that makes the student ask: Rebbe, this is hard! And this expands the student’s *klei ha’sechel* (intellectual capacities) – not the *klei ha’hasaga* (conceptual capacities) but the *klei ha’sechel*.

But all that pertains to *hasaga*, whereas with *hodaa* he takes

the essence – by his admission, his essence devotes itself to the Divine Essence.

WHAT MEZRITCH DID FOR THE ALTER REBBE

I would like to say (and this an accepted saying) something from my father, the Rebbe Rashab – when we repeat a saying we really need to describe the time and place and situation in which it was said and then the saying comes alive, but for a number of reasons I need to conceal all that at this time.

They asked the Alter Rebbe: What did Mezritch accomplish? (Meaning, what effect did it have on him?) He answered: Mezritch revealed in me the inner light of the Baal Shem Tov; the Baal Shem Tov drew down within him the inner light of the soul of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai!



THE MAIN POINT OF CHASSIDUS IS CHAGAS

The main point of Chassidus is *Cha'GaS* (Chesed-G'vura-Tiferes). Even though there is Chabad (Chochma-Bina-Daas) in Chassidus, still, the main thing is Chagas.

There is a head and heart, *haskala* (intellectual insight) and *avoda*, *havana* (understanding) and feeling, learning and prayer. The head needs to come down and be drawn into the heart, the *haskala* within *avoda*, *havana* within feeling, and learning needs to come down into prayer. The learning is for the sake of prayer; the prayer is for the sake of what follows prayer, i.e. the *avoda* of the entire day.

TO CREATE A VOID IN THE HEART OF STONE

The *t'filla* needs to create a void in the rocks that form the

heart into stone. Through *t'filla* a window is opened that lets light in and does not allow the evil winds to enter.

POLISHING THE VESSEL AND DRAWING DOWN CHAYUS

The G-dly light that is drawn down through *avoda* accomplishes the infusion of life force and polishing of the vessel – according to the simple meaning, “polishing the vessel” means not to be a wild man. He imagines he is a “something” and when he does a favor for a Jew he pats his belly, and this is polishing the vessel so he does not become a wild man. And the “infusion of *chayus*” is to inspire himself constantly and this is done through the *avodas ha't'filla*.

THE CHASSIDIC “ASHAMNU”

Chassidim are clever and

therefore, they do not hide the good and they know about that which is not good. He says “*Ashamnu*, *Bagadnu*” (we are guilty, we betrayed) since everyone says “*Ashamnu*, *Bagadnu*.” But the Chassidic “*Ashamnu*” is not merely to mouth the words “*Ashamnu*” but to have it penetrate, to know what “*Ashamnu*” is, what “*Bagadnu*” is. The main thing is to daven.

A LOT OF MASHKE

(The Rebbe Rayatz concluded:)

In order to hear this saying, you need to take a lot of *mashke*!

More specifically, in order for this saying to penetrate, you need much more *mashke*. And even more specifically, you need to “live with the *inyan*.”

WE DON'T GET INVOLVED IN POLITICS!

The Chassid, R' Michel Dvorkin said *l'chaim* and wished: May Hashem help there to be peace in the world and he asked the Rebbe about the situation in Eretz Yisroel, and added that this request was in a way of “and what is your request, up to half of the kingdom!” (This was before the War of Independence).

The Rebbe replied: We don't mix in to parades (i.e. politics).

Another version: There is no need to get involved. Hashem will help that the inner intention be completed in kindness and mercy.

HE THINKS HE IS A CHASSID FROM BIRTH

At one time they did less, but the little that they did was done properly and was more effective. They were connected with the innermost essence. But today

it's nothing. Nothing is done. He fools himself and calls himself a Maskil, Oveid, Chassid.

Today, there is a "Chassid" from birth, a "Maskil" from birth, an "Oveid" from birth – when the mohel did what he had to do and said, "this katan will be a gadol," he thinks that with this he already became a Chassid!

Today there is no preparation before davening, there is no davening, and there is no "after the davening." They haven't yet begun getting involved in avoda. The young men and especially the talmidei ha'T'minim are not involved in the avodas ha't'filla to the point that sometimes it is nauseating to look at a young man who had no avoda.

APPROACHING THE LIGHT OF DAY - THE GEULA!

Time is short. By the great darkness in the world we see that we are already approaching the light of day, the Geula! I am not setting a time, there is no need to set a time, and it is forbidden to set a time. Whoever does set a time limit (for Geula), that is an indication that he doesn't know.

At night when it's dark, you don't see that the clothing is dirty, the hair is disheveled, the eyes are sticking, the mouth smells, and all the limbs are not as they are supposed to be, but when the day illuminates, you see everything.

You see that now dawn has begun to illuminate and after (tikkun) chatzos a person needs to make himself rejoice with

divrei Torah as they used to do, and this is the preparation for davening.

TODAY THERE IS NO SUBSTANCE AT ALL

The names and titles such as Maskil and Oveid have not changed, but the substance changed. The substance is an entirely different substance; it is not the substance it ought to be.

When there is a small amount of substance it is still something; and when he is involved in that which he should be involved, then "this katan will become a gadol," and then from a small substance you can become a great substance, but today, it is no substance at all! They know how to learn but they are lazy about davening and they make easy lives for themselves.

WITHOUT AVODA HE SHAMES TORAS HA'CHASSIDUS

He calls himself a Maskil but he is in the category of "he knows not of what he speaks," not only does he not know what he is saying, he does not even understand what he himself says and what the other person says! He has the power of speech and therefore he prattles. He can say: The Alter Rebbe says in Torah Ohr or in Likkutei Torah such and such and the Tzemach Tzedek in a gloss says thus, and that's a contradiction! But he himself does not know what he says and he does not know what the contradiction is [In another

version: Even though the Alter Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek don't say thus, he says: So what?].

However, this Maskil with his speech does not cause that much damage to himself and for the other person it is no great harm. But avoda without Chassidishe middos is shaming Toras HaChassidus! *Puk chazi ma amah debar* (lit. go see what people take) – "debar" is from the same root as "dibbur" (speech) i.e. go see what people say about him: That's a Chassid?! Those are Chassidishe middos?

THE REBBEIM HELP FROM ABOVE

When the Rebbeim, souls above bodies, intervene, they can make him into a *baal mum* (wounded person or invalid) for the rest of his life. It's difficult and I don't want to talk about the negative; I want to talk about the positive and then they'll know the negative.

When the Rebbeim see that someone wants to do a favor for someone, truly and with desire, even though it's not befitting his material standing and condition, the Rebbeim help him and lift him up above his level, incomparable to his material standing and condition, until he can accomplish what he wants to do.

GOING SLOWLY

By Chassidim the way to do things is to go slowly, not to grab. When you grab you can destroy yourself. Rather, you need to go in an orderly, gradual way, step by step though firmly. The problem is that they don't put this into practice, *toporu da plachu* (Russian – the ax to the tree).

“When the mohel did what he had to do and said, “this katan will be a gadol,” he thinks that with this he already became a Chassid!

CHASSIDIM GRAB THE EVIL INCLINATION WITH THEIR HANDS!

Chassidus shows a person how to grab the Yetzer HaRa with his hand. The Yetzer Hara is a devious one with all his clever tricks and he always tries to hide his designs. He tells a person: I told you already (i.e. to trick the person into not thinking things through).

However a person is not to blame for this because he is this way due to his situation, but you need to recognize it (the Yetzer Hara). Chassidim grab the "clever one" with their hand. Like the well-known story with R' Nachum of Chernobyl and the 100 rubles that he got and the calculation that he made.

TO UNDERSTAND WHAT HE WANTS AND TO LIVE WITH WHAT HE IS

The Rebbe Rashab would say this internal and meaningful saying from the Alter Rebbe:

A person needs to understand what he wants and live (experience life) with what he is! When he will know what he wants, then he can live with what

he is. [Another version: When he lives with what he is, then he will understand what he wants] and then he will live with this in a more illuminated manner.

GOOD MIDDOS AND CHASSIDISHE MIDDOS

Chassidim need to have Chassidishe middos, not just good middos but Chassidishe middos! All Jews have good middos; every Jew has goodness, but in order to see it you need to look with a magnifying glass.

But Chassidishe middos are pleasant middos, i.e. when he does a favor for someone what is felt is not the favor but the sweetness. Good middos are pareve. He does a favor for someone out of compassion. It's better than nothing but by Chassidim there have to be Chassidishe middos.

ALL JEWS CAN BE SHOMREI TORAH AND MITZVOS

The head is stuffed up and the heart is made of stone. May Hashem help that we remove the concealment of the mind and the heart. May Hashem help

everyone in an expansive way and open the hearts of the Jewish people and then we will see by all Jews how they can be shomrei Torah and mitzvos!

YOU MUST BE INVOLVED IN AVODAS HA'T'FILLA

Due to the seriousness of the matter, I want to enjoin once again – why is there no involvement in avodas ha't'filla? Chassidishe young men and especially the T'mimim must be involved in avodas ha't'filla!

May Hashem help that it not be just talk but come down into actual avoda and that we meet again in peace and that this talk come down into a p'nimius.

PREPARATORY NIGGUN

When they sang the niggun of the "Beinoni," the Rebbe Rayatz said they should repeat it several times. Before they sang the "Dalet Bavos" of the Alter Rebbe, he said:

You have to sing the niggun of the Alter Rebbe but before you do, engage in contemplation. Maybe you should first sing the niggun of my father.

They sang the niggun known as "Der Rostover Niggun" and then they sang the "Dalet Bavos."

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An Island and a Whale

By Rabbi YY Jacobson

THE WHALE

The latest developments in Egypt have become a source of concern in Israel. The Jewish State is in doubt, whether the new emerging powers in Egypt will honor the cold peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, signed three decades ago.

This only underscores yet once again, the vulnerable position of Israel, and how its very existence is still questioned. A revolution, in the land of the Pharaohs, but Israel's right of existence, is still questioned.

One of the great Talmudic sages, related the following episode:

Once, while on a ship, we came to what we assumed was a large island, since we saw on it sand and growing grass. We disembarked the ship, went onto the island, built a fire, and cooked our meal. Yet what we assumed to be an island, was really a fish. When the fish felt the heat, he rolled over and we were plunged into the water. Had the ship not been nearby, we would have drowned. — *Bava Basra 73b*.

What is the meaning behind this absurd Talmudic tale, related by one of its great sages, Rabba the son of Bar Chana?

According to some of the great Talmudic commentators, this tale captures, in intriguing metaphor, one of the most essential truths about Jewish history; particularly one relating to the holiday of Purim, which will be celebrated in a few weeks.

THE JOURNEY

From the moment they stood at Mt. Sinai more than three millennia ago, the Jewish people have been traveling on a lone and long journey. Their destination is a world healed, redeemed and reunified, with its Creator; a society cleansed from ego-centricity, hatred and bloodshed; a universe permeated with moral and spiritual awareness, filled with "the knowledge of the Divine as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah chapter 11).

The Torah and its Mitzvos serve as their blueprint for this courageous voyage, in a vast and seemingly endless sea.

Yet the waters have often become increasingly tumultuous and the voyage discouraging, if not apparently futile. So when in the midst of their journey, they observed what seemed to be an island of serenity, an oasis of tranquility, a respite from a

miserable fate, many of them abandoned the "ship" of Jewish consciousness and commitment, for the perceived blessings of freedom and happiness.

The era in which the Purim story occurred, was a classical example of this pattern. The king was married to a Jewish woman; large segments of Jewish society assimilated into Persian culture; the Jewish establishment, played a pivotal role in the economical and political structures, of the Persian Empire. The community had been invited to the royal feast, and given status as equal citizens.

In reciprocity, the Jews learned how to "behave;" how to become integrated and law abiding citizens. They did not demand kosher food or kosher wine at the feast, nor did they create any other waves that would disturb the equilibrium and make them stand out as Jews.

Seventy years after being expelled from their ancient homeland, their Temple being burnt to the ground, many of them had abandoned the old ship, secure in their belief that they have reached an island of serenity; they finally "made it."





“What we assumed to be an island was really a whale. When the whale felt the heat, he rolled over, and we were plunged into the water.”

IDENTITY CRISIS

Throughout history, the struggle of Jewish identity and our relationships with the world around us has become so challenging that it often caused us to redefine ourselves from within.

Jean-Paul Sartre claimed, in his *Sur le Question Juif*, that the only thing Jews had in common was that they were the victims of hate. It is not Jews who create anti-Semitism, he said, but anti-Semitism that creates Jews.

Arthur Koestler wrote: “Self-hatred is the Jews’ patriotism.”

Time and time again, we have been lured into the concept that if we abandon the “ship” of Judaism-of Torah and Mitzvos, we would gain acceptance among the brotherhood of man.

“Be a man in the street, and a Jew at home,” was the 19th century slogan, by the Enlightened Jews in Western Europe. If only Jews weren’t so Jewish, we would have less anti-Semitism, so went the theory.

The past three centuries have produced a dazzling variety of movements, ideals and solutions, to the age-old “Jewish problem,” offering islands of hope for a people tormented by persecution,

and targeted for abuse.

The Enlightenment (Haskala) came to “civilize” us, and allow us free entry into European society;

The Marxists and Socialists, promised to create a utopia for us, and all of mankind; Zionism’s goal, was to grant us a State, a national identity, and thus cure anti-Semitism once and for all;

Reform came, to make us acceptable to the non-Jewish society, and to inculcate us with humanistic values;

Secularism came, to free us from the “burdens” of tradition, which have supposedly hindered our progress and happiness.

All of these attempts have been brilliantly captured in that ancient Talmudic tale: Once, while on a ship, we came to what we assumed was a large island, since we saw on it sand and growing grass. We disembarked the ship, went on to the island, built a fire, and cooked our meal.

DISILLUSIONMENT

What we assumed to be an island was really a whale. When the whale felt the heat, he rolled over, and we were plunged into the water. Had the ship not been nearby, we would have drowned.

Each time we came to feel comfortable on the island, and we began at last to live out our latent dreams, the whale turned over, and threw us back into the raging waters.

In the days of Purim, at the very time when the Jews felt that

they had successfully integrated into mainstream culture under the protection of a Jewish queen, the king was persuaded to issue forth a “final solution” against the Jews.

Assimilation, never cured prejudice. Not in the days of Purim, nor at any time in the future.

It didn’t help in 15th century Spain, where Jews converted to Christianity, and yet still suffered from persecution under the vicious doctrine of *limpieza de sangre* (“purity of blood”), the forerunner of modern racial anti-Semitism.

It didn’t in 20th century Germany, where Jews were often “more German,” than the Germans.

It didn’t in the Modern State of Israel, constructed as a secular democracy.

The historical truth remains, that none of the above movements, achieved their stated goals.

The Holocaust made mockery of Jewish integration. Zionism created the State of Israel, which we cherish deeply, but also created Anti-Israelism, a thinly veiled anti-Semitism. Stalin’s “paradise” of Marxism and Socialism proved to be hell for the Jews. The Enlightenment apparently did not sufficiently ‘civilize’ the eternal Jew. And secularism on the whole has deprived us of direction and meaning leaving our youth thirsty

Continued on page 14

PURIM: THE HOLIDAY OF CHINUCH

Chazal say “kiymu v’kiblu ha’Yehudim” that the Jews of that time fulfilled that which they had previously accepted at Mattan Torah. It says that Yom KiPurim is only “like” Purim. * How do we instill these ideas in our children when the Purim atmosphere does not exactly highlight the loftiness of the day? * We asked experienced mechanchim and here are their answers.

Presented by the Vaadas HaChinuch of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in Eretz Yisroel

When children are young, parents have the final say about their costumes but when they are older, they sometimes pick costumes, masks and accessories that are not to our liking. How should parents and mechanchim respond to this?

RABBI YOSEF PIZEM

MENACHEL TALMUD TORAH
CHABAD IN KRAYOT

The important thing is to plan in advance. Not to allow them to come up with crazy ideas but to give them good ideas early enough and to tell them explicitly that this is a holy day and that which isn’t appropriate, isn’t appropriate.

Since it’s a holy day, everything associated with it needs to be pure and in a spirit of k’dusha. Something devoid of meaningful content has nothing to do with k’dusha, and Mordechai, Esther and the Anshei Knesses HaG’dola (Men of the Great Assembly) did not intend



for Purim to be a time to mimic the goyim. Purim is a holiday of chinuch and mesirus nefesh and so we want only that which is pure and holy to be associated with simcha. Everything else comes from gentile carnivals. In Litvishe yeshivos they make parodies of the rebbeim. This was never done in Chabad and if we have it now, it should be eliminated.

Whoever attended the Rebbe’s Purim farbrengens or watched them on video knows that all

these things never existed. It came from the Litvishe yeshivos to the religious high schools and then to some of our places. If we plan a Chassidishe Purim well in advance, and explain ahead of time what a Chassidishe Purim is and come up with good ideas, the children will go along with us. However, if we leave a vacuum, it will be hard to stop what someone else organizes.

How should a parent react when he/she thinks the children’s Purim behavior has crossed the line?

RABBI DOVBER MENDELSON

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT,
MEMBER VAADAT HACHINUCH

Chazal say that Yom HaKippurim is only **like** Purim, i.e. in some respect Purim is loftier. And yet we see that on Yom Kippur we fast and daven all day while the mitzva of the day of Purim is “ad d’lo yoda.” And it’s all done with simcha – of course,



RABBI YOSEF YITZCHOK LEVKIVKER

MENACHEL TALMUD TORAH
CHABAD, TZFAS

simcha of k'dusha.

So I think that in many instances, it is better to look away from what the child is doing when the parent doesn't approve. As long as we are talking about situations that don't oppose Shulchan Aruch, you can accept it.

On the other hand, you are well advised to direct the simcha to the right places, for example, as part of mitzvaim, to bring simcha to the defense forces etc. You should definitely encourage the kids to rejoice and bring simcha with costumes etc. It's a good idea to have the children be involved in the preparing of mishloach manos for mekuravim and security forces and then you will have set the tone.

It has been customary to use firecrackers of various kinds (some of them are dangerous) and this can start "thirty days before the holiday," reaching a crescendo on Purim. What do you think about this?

We forbid it all year. Cap guns and firecrackers are off-limits. By the way, in many places these things are illegal. They are symbols of violence, of lawlessness, and have no place in the Jewish world, all the more so, a Chassidishe child, especially when they naturally cause the child to act like a robber, etc. It should not be allowed and children should be guided in other directions from the outset.

In general, the approach should be to remember how the Rebbe regards Purim. He held a joyous though serious farbrengen. It was nothing like those who make fun of their Torah teachers as though the Shulchan Aruch is not in force on Purim.

You can dress up, celebrate and sing, but you must keep the right perspective.

If we plan a Chassidishe Purim well in advance, and explain ahead of time what a Chassidishe Purim is and come up with good ideas, the children will go along with us. However, if we leave a vacuum, it will be hard to stop the foolishness.

Excerpt from an edited sicha of Taanis Esther 5743/1983 (printed in Likkutei Sichos vol. 31, p. 279):

It is customary in a number of places for children to put on plays in which they act out the story of the Megilla. Just as someone needs to act the part of Mordechai, Esther, Charvona etc. they also need someone to act the part of Haman, to speak as Haman etc.

When you ask the boy or girl: How can you take this part in the play, to say Haman's words when you call him the **wicked** Haman, the child answers that he knows that these words (of Haman in the Purim play) are not for a Jew, **G-d forbid**. But nevertheless, since he is promised "a few cents" for doing it, he is ready to deviate from who he is – for only a short time – and say what Haman said!

The child goes on to say: Why are you coming to me with questions and complaints? His teacher **knows** that he took the part of Haman in the play and since he didn't protest, obviously there is no infraction involved – "since he was silent, he agreed with me!" – and especially, as in most cases he allowed it explicitly.

From this we see how careful we need to be about the chinuch of children so if someone tries to convince them that for money (especially if they give some of it to tz'daka) and glory it is worthwhile for them to act (even for a short time) in a way unbefitting a Jew, they should know not to be impressed by such an offer! Most importantly, that such talk shouldn't even leave the slightest impression etc.

When you make the effort to educate him in this way while he is still young, "chanoch l'naar," then you can be assured that "even when he grows old, he won't veer from it."



At the Purim seuda some drink a lot and to the children the *mishteh v'simcha* (feasting and rejoicing) turns into a funny show. How can we run a Purim seuda so that it's proper chinuch and gives nachas to the Rebbe?

RABBI YISROEL DAVID

EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANT,
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL TALMUD
TORAH CHABAD IN KRAYOT;
MEMBER VAADAT HACHINUCH

From a Chassidic standpoint: We need to remember that feasting and rejoicing are mitzvos of the day and they should be treated with the proper respect like any mitzva that you do, and not with *kalus rosh* (in a frivolous manner). When parents and children sit down to a Purim seuda and treat it as one does an important mitzva, it looks altogether different.

Yes, one should drink but even here, you should emphasize to the children that the drinking is to lead to simcha and not to wildness and you should give them the Chassidic explanation about drinking l'chaim in order to anesthetize the Yetzer Hara, to make the "goy within you" drunk and arouse the *pintele*

Yid. "When wine enters, out come secrets" – the revelation of p'nimius ha'Torah.

From a practical standpoint, the Purim seuda should be prepared for like all other Yom Tov meals. The table should be set as it is for Shabbos and other Yomim Tovim so it is clear that something serious is going to take place here. Parents wear their Yom Tov clothes and candles are lit on the table. When children see this, they will realize

that this isn't a wild scene.

The meal should have many divrei Torah, the story of the miracle of Purim with Chassidishe explanations and sichos of the Rebbe, emphasizing to the children the special qualities of the day so there is pure simcha and not wild levity.

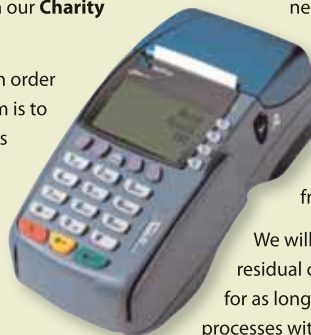
Of course the children can be in costume but at the same time, parents should be on the lookout for wildness and stop it immediately.

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MIVTZAIM, HAFATZA, AND JAIL



For a long period of time, R' Avrohom Dunin published a periodical called "Min HaMaayan." They were on the Rebbe's desk for over a year but the Rebbe did not answer as to whether they should be published as a book. R' Avrohom finally received a response in a yechidus. * The early days of mivtzaim: We ate mivtzaim, slept mivtzaim, dreamt mivtzaim, and I mean all of us – men, women and children.* R' Avrohom tells of his arrest and his criminal file after the Yom Kippur War and how that story ended. * Part 5 of 7

Interview by Chaim Cohen

You published a monthly page called *Min HaMaayan*. Passengers from the center of the country to the Emek in those days still remember you getting on the buses at night, after being in Kfar Chabad where you printed them, and giving them out.

Yes, for a period of time I published it, but I had started compiling ideas on the weekly sidra according to the Rebbe's sichos long before *Min HaMaayan* got off the ground. I got started in order to help my sister Sarah Abrams who was still a student in Beis Yaakov and she had to prepare material on the parsha.

Years later, when a Chabad

school opened in Natzrat Ilit, the first principal, R' Itzke Gansbourg (someone who came up with endless ideas and projects for the goal of U'faratzta) came up with the idea of *Min HaMaayan*. It was a colorful sheet the size of a flyer which had a point from a sicha on that week's parsha and other relevant bits that would be of interest to readers. It was meant – if I'm not mistaken – to be hung on bulletin boards in shuls for people to read.

Itzke published it each month. Before long he became sick and left the school and moved to Crown Heights (where he initiated many ideas to prepare the world to welcome Moshiach). In any case, he left me a

"yerusha" (an inheritance) – to continue publishing the parsha sheet.

Since I had the basic material ever since I compiled ideas on the parsha, I enlisted my brother-in-law, R' Yitzchok Markowitz, a gifted writer, to help out. We distributed the sheet through the Chabad house in Afula with subscriptions all over the country. There were schools from all sectors that accepted and even learned the material in a serious way.

Later on I heard positive feedback from educators who weren't necessarily religiously observant. Not far from Afula is Moshav Nahalel which might be familiar to you because of some

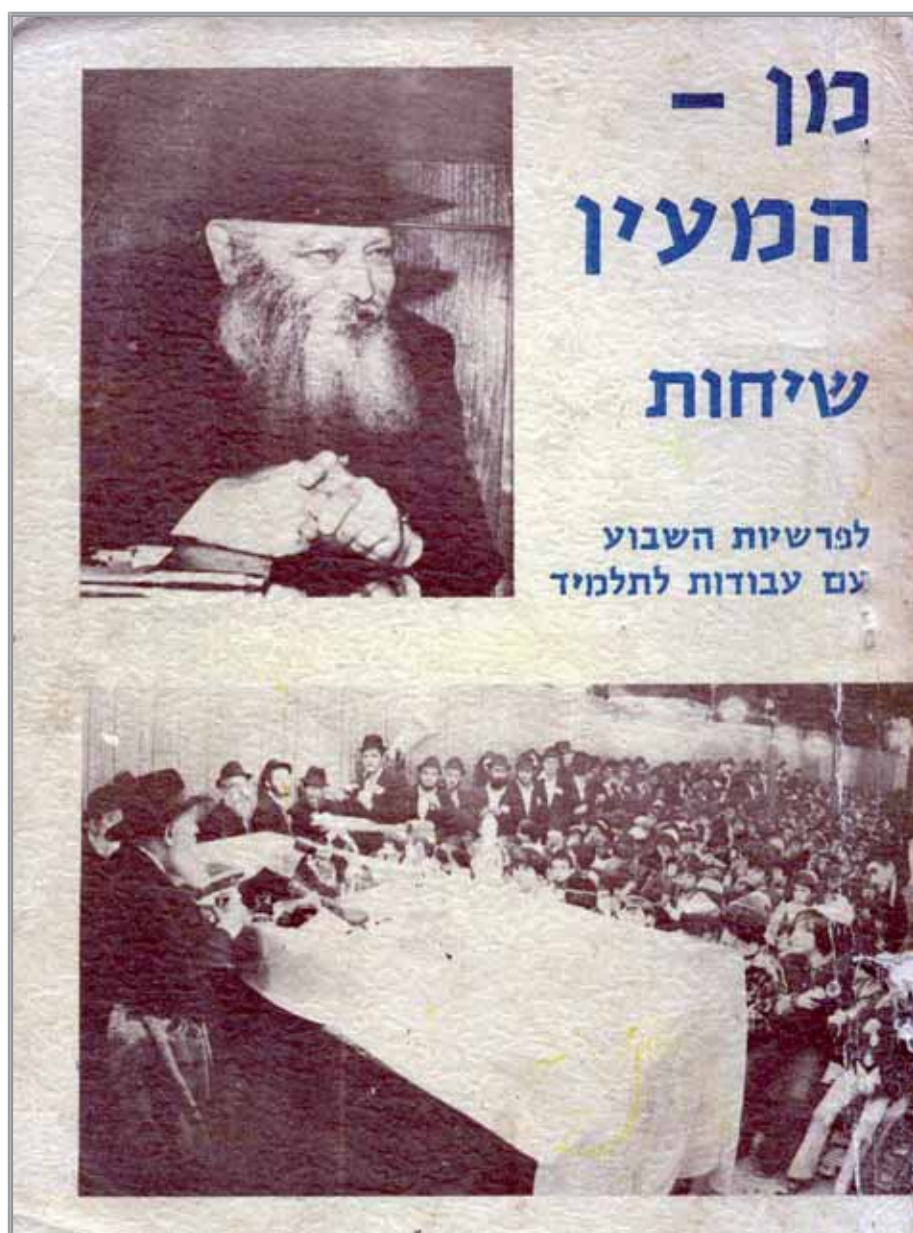
famous politicians. In Nahalel at the time was a seminary for teachers and some “budding teachers” would come to the Chabad house on a regular basis to pick up the newly printed issue. They used the material as the basis for model lessons and inadvertently helped us spread the message.

At a later point I published the page on a weekly basis and so I had much more material from the series. I thought about publishing it as a book and began editing it. Besides the point from the Rebbe’s sicha (that I had to extract from the long sicha which usually consisted of many topics strung together with a question with an answer that followed), there were questions and answers on the sicha and a crossword puzzle. It was presented in an easy format.

I printed it and sent a copy to Rabbi Chadakov to get the Rebbe’s approval and bracha. I also had questions about publishing it as a book, whether to do it through Kehot or to self publish.

A few days later I had another question to ask the Rebbe. In those days you called the office and spoke to either R’ Binyamin Klein or R’ Leibel Groner, and they wrote down the question and submitted it to the Rebbe. The second question was particularly pressing. Without my asking, R’ Binyamin volunteered the very good news (which I hadn’t even thought to ask about) that “in another few days you will get a response from the Rebbe about a book.”

The “few days” dragged out into weeks and months and there was no response. After a while, my brother Reuven went to the Rebbe and asked what happened but there was no definite answer.



Then I went to the Rebbe and inquired from Binyamin what had happened regarding the book. This is what he said to me: “I am familiar with the Rebbe’s desk. The items on the desk are those that are ready to go. When I saw your papers on the desk, I understood that an answer was about to be issued which is why I told you what I did. But they are still on the Rebbe’s desk ...”

So I didn’t get an answer and I didn’t print it at the time but I was happy that at least I had

the *z’chus* (merit) of having my material on the Rebbe’s desk for a year.

Another year went by and we were back at the Rebbe again (I tried to go once a year, usually for Sukkos so as not to interfere with my teaching, but in later years we went for the Kinus HaShluchim) and among other questions I noted that since I had not received a response, I understood from this that it was not a good idea to print a book.

I had quite a few questions when I went in for yechidus, including a burning issue concerning my wife, and what did the Rebbe talk about? Spreading the wellsprings. I waited for the Rebbe to address the burning issue, but we received one answer for all of our questions – hafatzas ha'maayanos! From this I understood that *Min HaMaayan* had to be published and that is what I did.

When the first edition was sold out, I printed a second edition. It sold out again and R' Moshe Slonim printed it under the auspices of the Reshet. Then, at R' Yossel Liberov's request, I changed the format a little bit and I published each parsha separately.

Speaking about hafatza, or as it's called these days – going on mitvtzaim – there is a legend told about a criminal file that was opened for you and the bachurim with you.

(R' Avrohom laughed and said:) I have to give you some background so you will understand the story properly. The Chabad house in Afula opened as a gift to the Rebbe in the Shnas HaShivim (the Rebbe's 70th year) as one of the 71 mosdos. At first, there was talk about 71 new mosdos throughout the world, including Eretz Yisroel, but it seems that Anash went all out and in Eretz Yisroel alone 71 new mosdos opened, including the Chabad house in Afula which was a project of Anash in Taanach and Natrat Ilit.

A month later two bachurim arrived to help out as well as a young man who settled in Afula in Elul when he married.

The Chabad house was located in the backyard that belonged to someone named Shmuel Lavi who was in charge of public service messages in the newspapers. He was also the deputy council head of Afula. Being a public figure, his office was centrally located. His office was divided into two parts and we rented the back part with a side entrance. There was a partition separating the two offices. He would send people with problems to the back entrance to be helped by us, the Lubavitchers. He felt that we were sincere, not to mention that we didn't get paid.

The Chabad house was open only in the afternoon. Each day, two Lubavitchers took turns volunteering to man the place. Every so often they all met to come up with ideas on how to attract more people.

During the Yom Kippur War many soldiers were brought to the area and everybody looked for Chabad. Shmuel Lavi kept urging us to be open during morning hours too because of the numerous soldiers who flocked to Chabad to be helped by the Rebbe at this fateful time. Although it entailed a great financial burden, we found someone who could open the place in the morning.

After the war there were terrorist attacks and the Rebbe began pushing mitvtzaim. We had a representative in 770,

Yeshaya Kaminker, who also raised money for the Chabad house and served as a source of immediate information regarding the Rebbe's latest instructions. As soon as Shabbos was over, he would send a telegram with the new instructions about mitvtzaim. On Sunday all of Anash in the area met in Taanach to plan our next activities. Nobody was absent. Everybody felt the collective responsibility for Afula and valley areas, and as I said before, most of the north of the country was our responsibility.

When the first mitzva tanks began operating in New York, we copied the idea right away. The first tank in our area – and dare say in all of Eretz Yisroel – was Itzke Gansbourg's old small van. Mrs. Sara Rivka Sossonkin made pictures of the five mitvtzaim and they were attached to the roof rack of the vehicle. Each time, we would rent a taxi or a van, hook up the "tank," add a loudspeaker and go out to "conquer" the area.

It is hard to describe how on fire we were. We ate mitvtzaim, slept mitvtzaim, dreamt mitvtzaim, and I mean all of us – men, women and children. Yeshaya continued to keep us informed and sent money and we sent reports to the Rebbe of what we did. We also prepared brochures to explain each mitzva in detail based on the sichos the Rebbe said at the time. The heading was: Five Mitvtzaim for *Shmira, Hagana, and Hatzala* ... (Protection, Defense and Rescue), and that is how we began our public announcements in the streets.

The most successful seasons were *bein ha'z'manim* (yeshiva intercession) or holidays when we had more manpower because the bachurim were off from yeshiva. There weren't any Chabad



Our loudspeakers proclaimed Mitvtzaim for "protection, defense and rescue" but the neighbors thought there was an attack and before we knew it, we were arrested for public mischief

camps in Afula yet, but bachurim would spend *bein ha'z'manim* on "Merkos Shlichus," and in this capacity they taught about Judaism in the local camps, which had two "trips." In the afternoons they did *Mivtza Shelah* and *sichos* in shuls. The bachurim, who were undergoing training for their future shlichus got a nice taste of shlichus here in the Emek, went with us on the tank and helped a lot with *mivtzaim*.

Everything was going fine until ...

We were invited to run an Erev Chabad in the Tira district. The bachurim with us packed the usual equipment and we took along loudspeakers in order to use the driving time to publicize the *mivtzaim*.

When we got to the Chaifa area we announced the five *mivtzaim* as usual, "for protection, defense and rescue" – Torah, T'fillin, Mezuzah, Tz'daka, Bayis Malei S'farim-Yavneh V'Chachomeha. We crossed the lower part of Chaifa and continued in the direction of Tira.

The driver liked the announcements over the loudspeaker and on the way back, at 11:00 or so at night, he suggested that instead of going through the lower part of the city which is a business district and empty at night, that we go through the Hadar neighborhood. Excited by the idea of shlichus and not wanting to lose an opportunity for more

Jews to hear the message, we said great, do it!

So there we were, driving and announcing and were already on the road outside the city when we suddenly noticed a police car following us. It stopped us and we asked, what's the problem?

What's the problem?! The entire city went down into the bomb shelters! The Hadar neighborhood is terror-stricken. All because of our announcement about "protection, defense, and rescue."

The police had gotten frightened calls. They were sure it was about terrorists (who used loudspeakers at the time). The police now realized that we weren't terrorists but why did we frighten the residents of Chaifa who had gone to sleep?

They saw that we were Chassidim and that we hadn't intended on disturbing the peace but they insisted we had to return with them to the police station in Chaifa. At the station they said they understood that we had no malicious intentions but we couldn't just be dismissed because the matter had reached the mayor and too many people were involved. So they opened criminal files for all of us – the bachurim and me, and released us until we had to appear in court.

The bachurim were actually happy that files had been opened on them because that freed them to travel on K'vutza without any problems from the army, but I

was afraid that this would pose an obstacle for me when I would want to leave the country to go and see the Rebbe.

I don't know what happened to those bachurim and how things worked out for them in the end but I can tell you what happened to me. I got a letter telling me to appear in court. My father went to the courthouse to check out the situation and when I arrived he told me that the judge was the brother of one of the Lubavitchers in the north.

The prosecutor said we had created mayhem that night and in the end, the judge said I should pay a symbolic fine of five *lirot*!

We ended up becoming relatives through marriage with that judge. The judge, who was the uncle, attended the wedding of course, but I didn't want to remind him about that "criminal incident." I recently attended the bar mitzva of one of my grandsons and met the judge on the way out of the hall. I recognized him immediately and I asked him whether he remembered me from court. He said he remembered the story but not me. He said he remembered giving a token fine of one hundred shekels. I corrected him and said there were no *sh'kalim* at that time!

And that's the story of my criminal file which was opened because we announced the five *mivtzaim* for "protection, defense, and rescue."

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CONTENDING WITH A PAPER TIGER

Who is King Achashverosh? * What is the most effective way of dealing with the enticements of the Yetzer Hara? * A fascinating look at the Megilla from the perspective of Chazal, Kabbala and Chabad Chassidus

By Rabbi Yosef Karasik,
District Rav Bat Chefer – Emek Chefer

Our first impression of Achashverosh from the story in the Megilla is that he is a powerful king who ruled the known world at the time, and who wielded the power of life and death with a wave of his scepter. But if you study the story more closely along with the Midrashim on the Megilla, you find that Achashverosh was actually a weak and fearful man.

The Yetzer Hara (Evil Inclination) is the same way. Its battles and victories make it seem invincible. It seems as if with a wave of its hand it wields power over man's body and soul. It dictates how to behave, convincing us to sin, transgressing the will of Hashem. But a deeper look at man's soul powers and way of life as explained in Chassidus in general and in Tanya in particular, shows that the opposite is true. We are dealing with an old and weak entity who is foolish and cowardly, who doesn't have any

true power and runs from a real battle. In short, the Yetzer Hara is a paper tiger.

LEGENDARY WEALTH BUT GREATLY INSECURE

Achashverosh ruled the world and his commands were obeyed by all. His wealth was enormous and he made a party that lasted 180 days (that's six months!) in the most opulent fashion with precious stones, couches of silver and gold, plentiful food and drinks in golden vessels.

History is replete with mighty rulers but when you study their personalities you often find that they are paranoid, afraid of betrayal and the overthrow of their rule. As Chazal say, *marbeh nechasim, marbeh daaga* (the more possessions, the more worries). Hurdus (Herod) for example, despite his enormous power and having built the Beis HaMikdash and accomplishing other great deeds comparable to

the modern era, was very fearful. His apprehension even led him to murder his wife, children and the Jewish Sages.

Achashverosh was of a weak and fearful personality and he was nervous about plots even within his own palace. The Megilla tells us that: 1) He had Vashti his beloved queen killed because he was afraid she was plotting to kill him. He was insecure even with the person closest to him. 2) His two servants "sought to assassinate the king," to poison his food, and miraculously, the Jew Mordechai overheard them talking and reported what he heard. 3) He stayed in his palace surrounded by his royal guards and was afraid to meet people, even his wife Esther whom he selected and loved more than the thousands of other women. For thirty days she was not summoned and she was afraid that if she appeared without being called, he would have her killed! Achashverosh wasn't even

secure with the righteous Esther and suspected she might be planning a rebellion against him so if she would approach without an invitation, he might want her killed.

AFRAID OF HAMAN THE RASHA

For “10,000 talents of silver” Haman the Rasha bought power, the king’s signet ring, and became the acting ruler. Achashverosh still bore the title of king but the practical rule of the kingdom, the seal, was in Haman’s hands.

The order “to kneel and bow to Haman” did not increase Achashverosh’s confidence. When he heard that people were treating Haman as the king and bowing to him, his fears of a takeover increased. From that point on he closed himself off in the “inner courtyard” in his palace and even his wife could not enter unbidden.

Esther’s sudden appearance and her request that he attend a banquet with her and Haman only intensified his fears. He thought she might be plotting against him with Haman. He was unable to sleep as he worried about what might be developing behind his back.

He looked in his royal records and found the story about the attempted assassination in which two servants sought to poison him and Mordechai rescued him. While thinking about this, there was a knock and in came Haman whom he suspected as leading a revolt against him. Haman had come to ask him to hang the person who had saved his life.

We know the happy ending. After the king became incensed by “Haman falling on the couch that Esther was on,” he took back control of the kingdom

“We are dealing with an old and weak entity who is foolish and cowardly, who doesn’t have any true power and runs from a real battle. In short, the Yetzer Hara is a paper tiger... His blandishments seem extremely hard to dismiss but the moment you challenge him, the test fades away.”

and had Haman hung and gave the signet ring to Mordechai. King Achashverosh – the Evil Inclination was cowed, at first because of Haman and his wickedness and then because of the righteousness of Esther and Mordechai.

LOOKING AT THE STORY THROUGH THE EYES OF KABBALA

Chazal say that there is a spiritual reason for the terrible decree of Achashverosh and Haman to exterminate the Jews. It was a heavenly punishment because the Jewish people enjoyed Achashverosh’s party.

In Kabbala it explains that punishments are precise and are a direct result of people’s sins. Sins strengthen the powers of evil and as a consequence, those evil powers have the ability to hurt the sinner. Punishments are designed for man to rectify what he did and to weaken the power of evil. So by enjoying Achashverosh’s feast, they gave strength to the forces of evil as a result of which, their manifestation in this world, Amalek, was strengthened and was able to promulgate an evil decree.

When a person does t’shuva, he cancels the power given to the forces of evil and when evil is divested of its power, the evil decrees in this world are nullified.

PAPER TIGER

King Achashverosh symbolizes the forces of evil and the Yetzer Hara. In man’s heart dwells the destructive force, the Yetzer Hara, which constantly tries to harm him by enticing him to veer off the proper path of Torah and mitzvos. The Yetzer Hara’s attempts are formidable and sometimes a person has to wage a mighty battle against it. The sifrei Chassidus are full of advice about how to properly wage this war and emerge victorious. One suggestion is to look at the Yetzer Hara as Achashverosh, a paper tiger. His blandishments seem extremely hard to dismiss but the moment you challenge him, the test fades away.

This is why we shouldn’t be afraid of dealing with the Yetzer Hara and we definitely shouldn’t give into it. All-out war needs to be waged and often, the very decision to fight it is what cowers and breaks it. Every time the Yetzer tries to take over our thought, speech or action, we need to show it the power of our faith in Hashem. That vanquishes the Yetzer Hara immediately.

The Rebbe Rayatz faced terrible trials when he sat in jail for the “crime” of disseminating Torah and Jewish practice and by all normal reckonings, there was no way he would get out of there alive. Yet, he relates how he resolved not to give his

“In Shadik, Poland there was a moser (informer) who terrorized the Jewish community. When a new rav was elected, he was warned about this evil person but the rav said he wasn’t afraid of him since he had a “secret weapon.”

enemies any consideration and to ignore them completely and thanks to this, and although “at first it seemed that they were a powerful entity, their very existence was negated until he was released from prison” (Seifer HaMaamarim Meluket, 1, 189).

Similarly, in every person’s struggle with wickedness, the firm decision that that the Yetzer is nothing but a mirage, negates the evil and brings about the person’s personal Geula and the collective Geula for the entire world.

SECRET WEAPON IN EXILE

Likewise, this galus is a paper tiger that can easily be subdued and the truth revealed:

The darkness of galus looms threateningly and we don’t feel we can contend with it. Who can face a bitter enemy like evil countries or forces of evil that try to prevent the observance of mitzvos and the spreading of Torah and Chassidus? But when you ignore the hardships, you discover that all the opposition eventually fades away.

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A situation arose in which the moser demanded a certain honor

and the rav refused to allow it. The man was furious and threatened to take revenge.

One day, some time later, the rav had to travel to a nearby village to do a bris and along the way he saw the moser approaching him. His traveling companions were very nervous but the rav remained calm. To the shock of the other men, the moser begged forgiveness from the rav.

The Rav explained. “When I saw him approaching, I started to search for some merit on his behalf. How sad, to think of the low state this man had sunken to. Perhaps, with the right education and home, this would never have happened to him. I kept thinking along these lines until I was overcome with compassion for him and bore him no animosity or ill will whatsoever. Once I was viewing him in that way, his heart responded in kind to that

warmth and caring. He started to think: ‘Perhaps the Rav is right. His intentions are not for personal honor or simply to fight with me. His intentions are truly for the sake of Hashem’s honor.’ And he asked my forgiveness. As the verse in Mishlei (27:19) says: *‘k’mayim ha’panim el ha’panim, kein lev ha’adam el ha’adam’* (As water reflects back the face that it’s shown, so too the heart of a man to a man). The power of love can melt the strongest individual and this paper tiger became a pussycat.”

Galus too can be subdued through Ahavas Yisroel. At the last farbrengen with the Rebbe, Parshas VaYakhel 5752, the Rebbe spoke about Ahavas and Achdus Yisroel. The Rebbe cried out, saying the true and complete Geula will come through Ahavas Yisroel, loving every Jew, including even someone who thinks and acts differently than us. As it says in the Megilla, “there is one nation which is dispersed” – although we are dispersed, we are “one nation.” Our slogan is: “With Ahavas Yisroel we will bring the Goel,” speedily in our time.

With thanks to Gai Dekel