

The Chassidische Vibe

THE BEIS MOSHIACH MAGAZINE
FOR N'SHEI U'VNOS CHABAD



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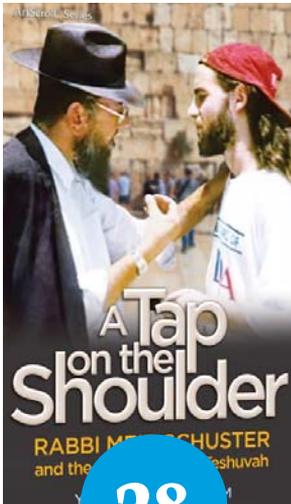


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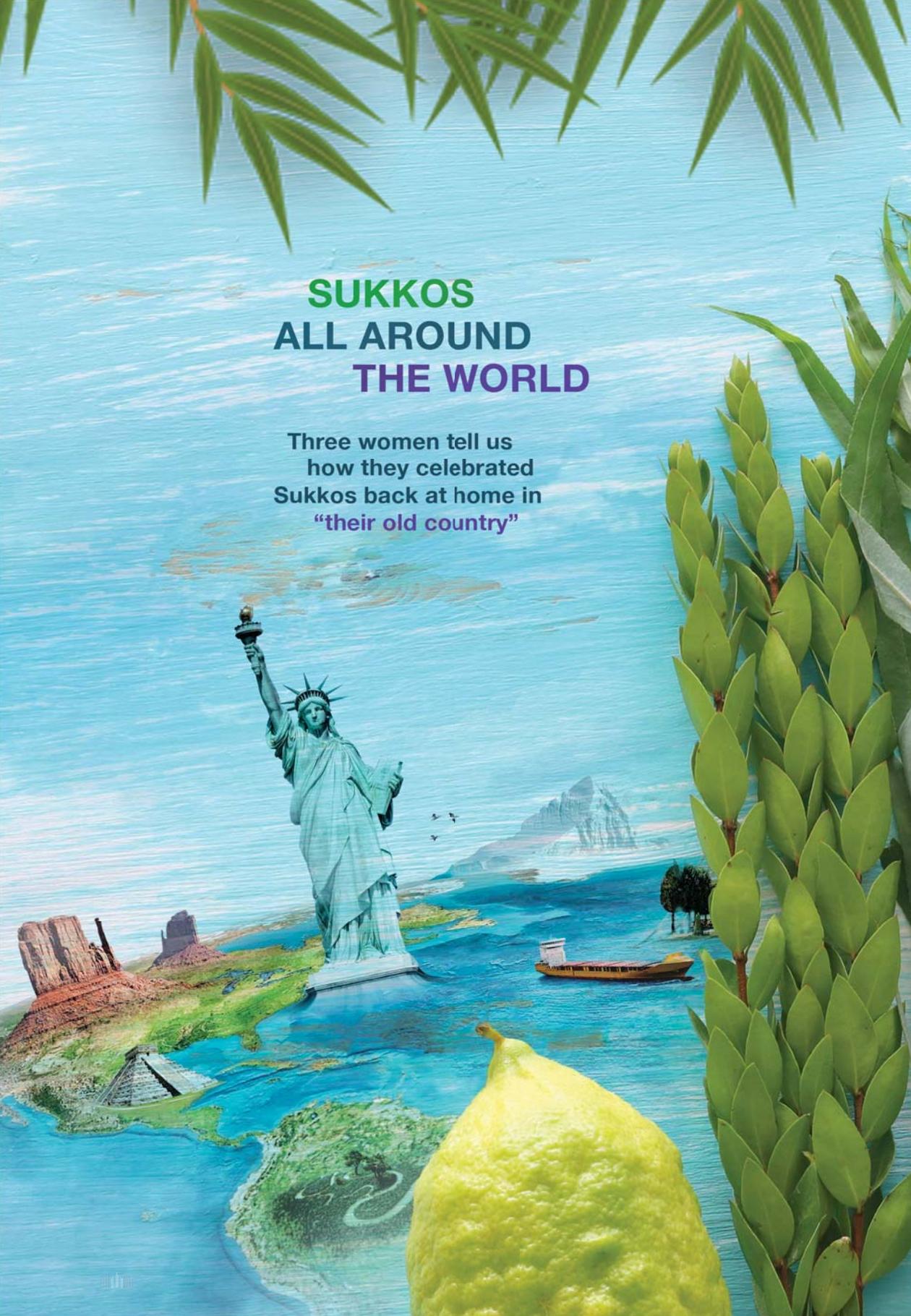
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How Do We Get Through Yom Tov In Peace?

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**BEIS
MOSHIACH**



SUKKOS ALL AROUND THE WORLD

Three women tell us
how they celebrated
Sukkos back at home in
“their old country”



Mrs. Yehudis Ross

from Belgium. A happy
mother and grandmother,
magazine editor

Mrs. Lida Dahan

from Iran. A mother of seven
darling children, a cosmetician
and substitute ganenet

Chanale Raitport

former (and always) shlucha
in Venezuela who now lives
in Crown Heights

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THE COUNTRY I GREW UP IN

Yehudis: I was born and raised in Holland, second generation to Holocaust survivors. My parents went there right after the war and then we moved to Antwerp.

Antwerp is a lovely city, full of unique architecture and well-tended parks. There is even a park called the “cholent park” because on Shabbos afternoon all the Jews go there to relax :)

Lida: Before I moved to Eretz Yisrael, I lived in Iran in Shiraz, one of the big cities there. Shiraz is an amazing city that is surrounded by mountains that are visible from whatever direction you look. The city is full of trees and flowers. Most of the Persian poets and writers lived there. It’s a city full of art, music, and crafts. Persian culture is generally very warm and this is most apparent in our city. The people there love guests and the city is famous for its hospitality and the warmth of the residents.

Chanale: Until a year and a half ago we lived in Venezuela, a third world country in the northern part of South America. A large part of the country is covered by the Amazon jungle so we were surrounded by interesting animals and tropical vegetation. Although the scenery is extraordinary and the country is full of natural resources, the government is communist. The president has led the country

in such a way that people don’t have what to eat. There is no way to obtain oil and flour and it’s difficult getting potatoes. This situation is a result of flawed leadership.

When we lived there (and it’s true today), it was dangerous to go outside since the streets were full of starving people looking for food and who were ready to grab anything in order to get some money or food. Sometimes they grabbed a wallet and sometimes the person himself, to get ransom money.

HOW JEWS ARE TREATED

Yehudis: We moved to Eretz Yisrael because of how Jews were regarded. The anti-Semitism was felt. As far as Torah and mitzvos, we could keep everything. Building a sukka wasn’t a problem; it was a matter of the location. Our sukka was in the inner yard so that nobody noticed it. Despite that, the situation wasn’t rosy. I remember the derogatory comments and curses hurled at us, the cries of “Jude.” A Jew in Flemish is a curse word to them. It reached the point where children couldn’t be sent to the park anymore or walk on the street in peace. It only got worse.

Lida: In my generation, the relationship with Jews was fine, relative to other eras. The previous generation, that of the Holocaust, things were much more liberal as far as modesty and religion, but the attitude toward Jews was denigrating.

In the years following the revolution, when the government became Moslem, Khomeini changed the thinking of people regarding religions and he actually admired Jews and Christians, respecting anyone who worshiped G-d. True, not everyone believed as he did. In our city, for example, most were believers but it was less so in the capital.



Despite this, everyone was respectful and behaved as the government dictated. From that respect, we were able to live relatively well, without persecution, and we could celebrate Sukkos without interference. Most of the Jews lived in private homes or houses with porches, so it wasn't a problem at all to build a sukka. We lived in a private house with a big yard and we built our sukka there every year. The gentle neighbors knew that at a certain time of the year they would see a sukka here and there and, thank G-d, they respected this and there was no opposition on their part.

Chanale: The attitude toward Jews in the country was okay. Before that, there was a period of great anti-Semitism. The previous prime minister was a big anti-Semite but he got his punishment. He did some things that proved to all that G-d runs the world. A small, amusing example is one time, he announced that he is the ruler of the heavens and earth (sounds ridiculous but it wasn't that long ago,

a few decades ago) and he decided to give the entire country vacation for three days.

He announced that since he is the ruler of the world, he would stop the skies from raining on those days and everyone would be able to go to the beach and celebrate, no school, no work. It ended up raining for twelve days, without a break, day and night. It was a natural disaster. Venezuela is full of mountains and the mountains couldn't absorb the water and it poured into the street, blocked highways, and caused tremendous damage to houses and barns built of simple materials. Everyone saw who the real ruler is and realized there is a G-d who runs things as He wishes.

When we lived there, Jews were treated well but despite this, everyone was hungry and nobody was thinking about others. There is no anti-Semitism but you can't say that the situation there is that great on the street. As for a sukka, there is no problem with building one in a yard but, from a security standpoint, it is preferable not to go outside unless it's necessary which

makes it a bit hard to deal with, especially as Chabad Chassidim who are particular not to drink even a cup of water out of the sukka.

PREPARATIONS FOR YOM TOV

Yehudis: In Antwerp, there are two days of Yom Tov, of course and it often happens that Shabbos immediately follows, so you have three days in a row for which you need to prepare all the meals for three days. It's a special experience which definitely requires planning and organization.

Since we lived in the Jewish ghetto, on the main street where there was a kosher grocery store, a kosher butcher, etc. there was a festive atmosphere with dalet minim stands ... The preparations for Yom Tov were done in a very festive atmosphere.

Lida: On motzoei Yom Kippur, my father would start building the sukka. We would decorate it with fruit, all types. We would even hang a small watermelon, grapes ... We filled the sukka with beautiful, juicy fruits.

At this time of the year, the weather was very pleasant, like in Yerushalayim. We could sit in the sukka and enjoy the weather which is perhaps why we would take everything to the sukka and move out for a week. We would take sefarim, the table to learn on, we would bring in couches, we'd really live there!

Chanale: The atmosphere and preparations were only at home, not outside. In Eretz Yisrael, as I know from the stories and songs, all the neighbors go out one day and build sukkos. If one needs a tool, he asks a neighbor. The atmosphere is one in which everyone is outside and everyone is doing the same activity and you wake up early in the morning to the sound of hammers banging. We had none of that in Venezuela. There was excitement, but it was personal, in the family, not communal.

Sukkos was the only time we allowed ourselves to go to the front yard which we usually didn't do because of security, and it was a time to go out and breathe some air.



A CHALLENGING MOMENT

Yehudis: In Belgium, winter begins early and sometimes it was really cold so that we had to bring a heater into the sukka. We couldn't sleep there. Although my husband learned there and we tried to sit in the sukka as much as possible, sleeping there wasn't an option. When we moved to Eretz Yisrael, we began taking on Chassidic customs and so, here too, we can't sleep in the sukka, but this time it was for another, higher, reason.

Chanale: The weather on Sukkos was very challenging. It's the height of the rainy season since it's a tropical country near the Amazon jungle. When it rains, it pours! Under these conditions it is very hard to sit and eat in the sukka.

In addition, there were the difficulties I mentioned before, about security. It's very dangerous to be outside and Sukkos is celebrated outside the house. Nor could we go on mitzva lulav on the street or build a mobile sukka. The solution we found was to set up a big table in shul with about a hundred sets of dalet minim and we would send people there to do the mitzva and eat something in the sukka.

ONLY HERE

Yehudis: We had the second day of Yom Tov, which is not only in Antwerp, of course, but anywhere outside of Eretz Yisrael. There was also the weather for which we had creative solutions whether it was a heater in the sukka, a folding roof ... outside of Eretz Yisrael it's an inseparable part of the sukka.

Lida: In our community in Shiraz we were very particular about eating and drinking in the sukka. In general, we treated the sukka with great respect. We would stand next to the sukka, say a bracha, and only then would we enter.

Something special that I remember – when I was a little girl it was customary to have sukka competitions in the community. Everyone

would visit one another's sukka and in the end, they would announce which was the nicest one. There would also be a prize. We didn't live near one another but we would choose three sukkos each day and go and visit, sit and drink, eat some fruit, and at the end of Yom Tov we chose which was the nicest sukka we saw. One year, we won the competition :) It was a serious competition and the winner was announced in shul.

Chanale: When I was younger, we had a real pizza oven at home and a pile of pizza boxes, just like in a store. We didn't have a kosher pizza store; it wasn't like Eretz Yisrael where, when you don't have strength to make supper, you can order pizza ... In Venezuela you had to make the dough, roll it out, put on the tomato sauce and cheese (which also had to be imported from New York), light the pizza oven, put it in, take it out, cut it into thirds, put it on a tray and bring it to the table.

One night of Chol HaMoed we would gather in the shliach's house together with the entire family, the children and grandchildren (this was in the days when things were safer), and my mother would prepare twenty trays of homemade pizza, packed in boxes just like in the store! That was a special supper that we had with the children of all the shluchim who came and we played together.

In later years, we stopped doing this because of the security situation and because it was also complicated to import cheese for the pizza.

A SPECIAL STORY

Yehudis: It rained a lot on Sukkos so my husband built a sukka in the yard and decided to construct a retractable roof. At the time it was a novelty.

That year, it poured throughout Yom Tov but thanks to the roof, we could make kiddush in the sukka. We even managed to eat something and when the rain began to come down again, we closed the roof.

The next day in shul we heard that some people hadn't been able to make kiddush and we were thrilled that we had managed to do so despite the stormy weather.

Lida: We had a big yard and lived in a two-story house. We lived on the first floor and a gentile older woman lived upstairs. This neighbor's daughter did not have a house for many years and she tried many times to obtain money and find the right house but hadn't been successful. Sukkos time, she asked that when we have the sukka up and ready, we should call her since she wanted to pray there. Indeed, when we finished building the sukka we called her and she came to pray.

She entered the sukka and prayed to be able to buy a house and that year she found the house she was looking for and bought it at an excellent price! What a miracle!

Chanale: Legally, it was problematic to bring fruits and vegetables from another country, especially for Sukkos when a large quantity of lulavim and esrogim were needed which couldn't be placed in a suitcase and smuggled in somehow. They had to be imported illegally and a lot of Tehillim recited that they arrive intact. We had connections at the airport. We paid a number of officials and in exchange they were asked to look away from what was passing by on the machine.

One year, I remember that they did not allow the esrogim through and they told us they were going to burn them all. It was very close to Sukkos and it wasn't possible to bring in another crate. Financially too, it was difficult. We were under pressure because of the approaching holiday and the fear that we wouldn't be able to smuggle them. In the end, one of the members of the community went to the market and bought two hundred lemons. He gave it to someone at the airport with some more cash and told him to burn the lemons and to give him the other "lemons." The bribery helped

to release the esrogim and they burned the lemons that our friend bought in the market.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Yehudis: One of the special things we discovered in Eretz Yisrael is Simchas Beis HaShoeiva. It's only here that we began attending it. It was something new for us; we were completely unfamiliar with it. Of course we knew of the concept but we hadn't heard about dancing in large crowds with the great joy there is here. I was very moved to see the great joy every night, a novelty for me.

Lida: I moved to Eretz Yisrael right before Sukkos so it was the first holiday I celebrated here. I cannot describe in words how I took pleasure in that here, everyone builds a sukka, and how many sukkos there are outside! In Iran, who saw ... On our street there was just one sukka and here the street is entirely festive and you feel in the air that it's Sukkos.

On the other hand, after several years here in Eretz Yisrael, I can say that here you feel things more simply. There is less excitement; it's all a given. In Iran we felt Sukkos so powerfully. We felt the holiness very much.

Here in Eretz Yisrael, I don't know why, maybe because I'm a mother, I feel the atmosphere and specialness less; it all seems somewhat commercialized. You need to build a sukka, so you do. You need to buy clothes, so you buy. You need to cook, to clean ... The doing is very technical. But maybe that's what I feel because of life's burdens. When I celebrated Sukkos in Shiraz I was a girl and I didn't have the burden of a home and the raising of children so I was freer to experience things.

Despite this, the general mood here is something special. It draws you in without my needing to make an effort. The entire country is festive and that's amazing.

Chanale: In Venezuela we were the only odd ones who built a wooden hut in the yard in the



middle of the rainy season. There wasn't all the hoopla that there is in Eretz Yisrael because it was just five families in the entire country who built a sukka. There was plenty of room to build a sukka and you didn't need to snag a spot in the parking lot or the roof of the building, but it is very, very different.

FINAL WORD

Yehudis: Sukkos in Eretz Yisrael is the most special holiday! It is far nicer celebrating here, even if you need a fan.

Likewise, as I mentioned, there is the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva which thrills me each time anew. With prayers that this year we merit the great joy we had in the Beis HaMikdash!

Lida: At this stage of life it is a little hard for me sometimes to feel the holiday, the excitement. I would really like to go back to the time when I literally felt the holiness of the sukka, I prayed so powerfully ... So I call upon all young girls to take advantage of this time when they are still free and can focus on the spiritual,

on the meaning of the holiday. You have the time to fill up and take strength for all of life!

And of course, utilize the holiness of the sukka and pray that G-d erect for us the fallen "sukkas Dovid" and we merit the Geula shleima soon!

Chanale: This is always the hardest part of an interview :)

Rejoice with what you have. Sukkos in Eretz Yisrael is the most special! It is one of the three regalim, and Yerushalayim is close to you; some of you even live there. It's not out of the question to go up to Yerushalayim on Sukkos. It was never possible for me; it was always a dream, never the reality.

Another thing, remember that wherever you are in the world, if you make a Sukkos atmosphere, then you feel the atmosphere of Sukkos. It all depends on you! And it's not just Sukkos; it's about everything in life.

May we merit that G-d erect the fallen "sukkas Dovid" and that we celebrate the next Sukkos in Yerushalayim with the Rebbe MH" M! ■



**TWO RECIPES
FOR HAPPINESS**



A YOUNG MAN WAS STANDING

in the line for “dollars” from the Rebbe. He apparently didn’t fully understand the magnitude of the tremendous experience he was about to have.

When his turn came, without thinking too much, he asked a very simple question and received a very straightforward response in kind...

“Rebbe, how are you feeling?” the young man asked in a manner of a friendly chatter...

The Rebbe smiled and said: “I’m always happy, but I’m never satisfied!”

A simple question and an inspiring reply! The Rebbe included within his powerful answer a Divine message that he wanted to convey to us – his flock.

A Jew always needs to be happy! The very fact that he was born a Jew and that Hashem is giving him the opportunity to connect with him, should make him happy without any explanation, reason, or logic. Just pure happiness!

On the other hand, however, there’s never a dull moment! A lack of satisfaction will motivate us to constant action, as our true satisfaction will be realized with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu – now!

However, this all sounds nice on paper; how do we actually come to this level of simcha?

THE FIRST PATH

Simcha stems from our Avodas Hashem, the *avoda* of *hisbonenus* — thought and meditation...

If when in a similar situation with similar difficulties we’re led by negative thoughts (this can be compared to a certain state of awareness) – we can come to sadness and depression,

then with *positive* contemplation and awareness we come to experience true joy!

It isn’t for naught that the word *b’simcha* has the same letters as *machshava* (thought)!

The simcha is already within me, and I don’t need to ‘import’ it (it exists, breathes, and pulsates inside me, and it wants to reveal itself with all its radiance and glory). This is the result of thought, proper meditation, and G-dly awareness.

THE DISAPPEARING RASHA

In an inspiring and unique commentary on a passuk in Tehillim, the Chassidic masters (cited in Likkutei Moharan and in the name of the Heiliger Ruzhiner) shed light on our whole manner of observation:

“A short while longer and the wicked man is not here, and you shall look at his place and he is not there” (Tehillim 37:10).

The aforementioned verse explains an interesting situation: I stand near a *rasha*, and I look at where he is holding – where he came from, what he went through, how he managed to deal with all his trials in life, etc. (in other words, judging him fairly, giving him the benefit of the doubt).

Suddenly, I look at him – and he’s not there! What happened? Did he suddenly disappear through my looking at him?

Yes! The evil within him has vanished, he’s no longer a *rasha*!

In other words, my power of contemplation – the fact that I interpret reality differently, this is what influences the prevailing situation and changes it.

A close relative of mine went through a complicated surgical procedure. When I was

visiting her, I accompanied her as she came in to the physiotherapist treating her. During one of the more difficult exercises she had to endure, she screamed at her: “You’re making my life harder! I have no more strength!”

The physiotherapist smiled and replied: “On the contrary! I’m helping you in order that afterwards, you’ll have a much easier life!”

I immediately got a hold of myself and thought in my heart: “How many times do we complain to Hashem using these words?...”

On the other hand, Hashem merely tries to teach us, help us to work on ourselves, so that we will truly have proper, happier, easier, and better lives.

ROLE REVERSAL

One of the treatment exercises in the “Eitan Method” (based on Tanya) is a form of ‘role reversal.’ For example, if you are having difficulty with one of the children, you change places: The person being treated becomes the child, and the treatment provider becomes the person being treated.

The main principle is that the mother (for the sake of argument) enters the child’s world in order that she can successfully perceive matters from his vantage point.

The more complex / interesting / thrilling stage is when the person being treated starts seeing things from a G-dly perspective, i.e., how Hashem sees this whole process, how the nature of the good to do good helps her or enables her to go through what she is enduring now.

Quite often, someone can get angry at his/her environment or blame the gloomy reality of life manifesting itself before her eyes.

However, at the moment that the treatment goes into high gear, from the viewpoint of the *Nefesh Elohis*, the world suddenly takes on other shades of color, calmer and more pastoral tones...

From that moment, in most cases, the picture starts becoming clearer and brighter. May we merit soon to see our world in the light of Redemption!

What is the role of the *yetzer hara* trying to show us all the misery out there? Painting it with dark shades of charcoal? Its whole purpose is to convince me that what’s good, pleasant, even proper for me – is something that I really want... However, the truth is quite to the contrary! I want what Hashem wants, not what the *yetzer hara* tells me what I want.



Rabbi Kenig provides a marvelous example on the role of the *yetzer hara*:

A guest enters a wedding hall, sits down and eats rolls with hummus... When the hummus is finished, he asks them to bring him more... The waiter brings him as much hummus and rolls as he wants – on the house...

The guest is most satisfied! He orders whatever his heart desires, and his request is immediately granted! He approaches the hall’s manager and says, “Sir, you offer wonderful service! How generous! Well done!” And what did the manager have to say? He let the guest in on a secret... “The truth is that the more you fill yourself on rolls and hummus, the less room you’ll have for the main course...”

The lesson is clear... The objective of the *yetzer hara* is to confuse us like in a honey trap, ensnaring us and giving us the taste of honey in our mouths. Its job is to spread us around the hummus (getting us to deal with insignif-

icant matters), just as long as we don't get to the main course – *yiras Shamayim*, davening with yearning and vitality, doing Hashem's Will and rejoicing over the essential fact that I am privileged to be a Jew!



THE SECOND PATH

Another method to be in control of our mood is through recognizing the good and giving thanks – and it isn't for naught that we're called *Yehudim*, from the same root as *hodaya* (thanksgiving), after *Yehuda* ("This time I will thank Hashem", Leah's statement after giving birth to her fourth son).

Just as all Jews dance on Simchas Torah, the learned scholar together with the simple Jew, all are equal to one another. Therefore, we dance with our legs, without any connection to understanding Torah (which relates to the head), and we don't express our joy through Torah study, rather from the very essence of Torah. So, we dance with the Torah when it's wrapped in its mantle, dancing endlessly because we are joyous from the essence of the Torah!

Thus, we have to be *b'simcha* through our gratitude to the Creator! Gratitude for the very fact that we are Jews, there's no other need for us to search for a reason to be grateful... It's not just because I passed a test, my son got a 100 on his Gemara exam, the baby started to walk, or a lot more things before that.

Gratitude is the source of our good *middos*. Giving thanks creates a sense of appreciation and joy. When someone takes note of something good that happened to him, he is filled with feelings of appreciation and a connection to the person who did this favor for him.

Without acknowledging the good that Hashem does for us, the connection is based solely on submissiveness and obedience. We are servants and He is our Master, and there's an impassable distance between us. However, it's impossible to build a country with people who are merely subservient and compliant. A regular awareness of Hashem's Divine Kindnesses towards us fills our hearts with joy, introducing a new and revolutionary element into the connection: We are not just "servants", we are His "children" as well. Hashem isn't just "our King", He is "our Father" too!

JOY = SUCCESS

There is no substitute for joy in this world. Simcha produces success.

Anything that a person does out of submissiveness is done far better through joy. A happy person is more active, more creative, and achieves more than he is obliged to do.

Finally, we will conclude with the words of the Rebbe *Melech HaMoshiach* shlita: "Before the revelation of Chassidus, the *avoda* was along the lines of fear and bitterness until there came a special emphasis in the concept of simcha through the Baal Shem Tov. The concept of simcha comes through giving acknowledgement, the result of providing a person with something good that leads to joy, as in the acknowledgement of 'Your restoring my soul within me'...and continuing with all the Birchos HaShachar, as all matters of acknowledgement are connected with simcha" (Hisvaaduyos 5746).

May we be privileged from the Season of our Rejoicing to contemplate on and recognize the good, and we will thereby merit the joy of the Redemption – now! ■





Sara
Gopin

THE REBBE AND THE MISSIONARY: COMMUNICATION STYLES

ON Simchas Torah we read parshas V'zos Ha'bracha, when Moshe Rabbeinu's farewell address to Bnei Yisrael reaches its climax. The drama intensifies as each tribe is given an individual message that will guide them and enlighten their future. The unbounded love of our loyal shepherd for us, and for the Torah that is our inheritance, is palpable in every single word.

The entire Sefer Devarim is the straight talk that we all desperately need to hear. There are no fire and brimstone speeches but, on the other hand, there is also no denial of our misbehavior in the past, and of the extent of human frailties. Sometimes the language is subtle, where only a brief mention of the place of a certain encampment is sufficient for Bnei Yisrael to take heed not to repeat their mistakes. Yet there are other sections of rebuke where Moshe Rabbeinu is extremely explicit, to the point where one trembles from the piercing expressions.

ADAPTING OUR COMMUNICATION STYLES

When guiding other people, communication styles must be in accordance with their capacity of receiving. Young children are educated through very clear directions of how to behave. As they mature there is greater emphasis

on using explanations in order to instill the proper values. Adults still need guidance, but the goal is that they are able to arouse within themselves the appropriate conclusions and act accordingly.

But age is not the only consideration when adapting our manner of speech to the level of the one who is in need of our influence. I know parents who are struggling with their twenty-five-year-old son who sleeps in the day and is up most of the night, glued to his smartphone. He's regressed to the level of a child, and it's a real *rachmanus* on all of them. Most of the time he's in his room, and whenever he does see his parents, he adamantly refuses to hear anything that they have to say. If they continue to allow him to live his free-for-all lifestyle it will get even worse. Exasperated, his parents finally sought help in order to feel less intimidated. They stated the rules, firmly and clearly, for living normally in their home. B'ezrat Hashem this stage will pass.

There's another bachur whom I know who is also home all day, doing almost nothing but, *baruch Hashem*, he still has some self-motivation. In this case there's less antagonism and more communication, but this bachur desperately needs a framework, and boundaries too. Yet his parents are laying down the rules in



PHOTO OF DANIEL LIFSHITZ LEARNING TORAH IN THE SUMMER YESHIVA PROGRAM OF CHABAD IN LUGANO

a more subtle and softer way, without hiding their compassion.

STRONG WORDS THAT SAVED A LOST SOUL

The Rebbe MH”M serves as the prime example of speaking with the utmost sensitivity to every human being. Yet impactful words and forceful speech are used too, when necessary. Many of you may have seen the clip of “The Rebbe with the Missionary,” which is the only video that I’ve ever seen where there is no beaming smile on the Rebbe’s holy countenance.

In Kislev 5750, **Daniel Lifshitz**, who converted to Christianity when he was twenty-nine, came to receive a dollar from the Rebbe. He brought the book in which he wrote his life story as a gift. The Rebbe’s reaction was powerful and explicit, “If someone was born a Jew he is a Jew for all of his life, and he cannot change it, he can only make his life more complicated and more miserable.”

As Daniel Lifshitz responds by saying that his life is much better, the Rebbe speaks even more strongly, saying, “If someone is thinking about his illness that it is a healthy thing - that is only a sign that his illness is more forcible, and needs a *refuah*, a treatment, as soon as possible!” The Rebbe then tells him to do

teshuva for the biggest sin (which is) to change, “apparently,” his being Jewish, and to acclaim to all the people around him that it was a big error. But G-d Almighty has so much mercy that He forgives even for the biggest sin that can be done. The Rebbe ends the *yechidus* by saying that as soon as he does teshuva Moshiach will come, the **real** Moshiach.

This video shows the Rebbe MH”M speaking very firmly in order to save a Jew who was almost lost, *chas v’shalom*, to his people. Daniel Lifshitz did not appear to be offended, it looked more like he was touched, even though he seemed stunned. After such an intense *yechidus* I was sure that there would be follow-up.

Later I heard that, baruch Hashem, Daniel Lifshitz made complete teshuva! This past summer I even saw a photo of him learning Torah in the summer yeshiva program run by Chabad in Lugano, Switzerland. What a story!!!

SIYATA D’SHMAYA TO DO TESHUVA

In the “Dvar Malchus” that was published for parshas Vaeschanan 5782 there was a section of a maamar (Yechayeinu Mi’yomayim 5704, from Sefer Hamaamarim — Yiddish) in

CONT. ON P. 29

**WHEN
BUBBY & ZEIDY
ARE
NOT-YET-FRUM...**



A sensitive and sensible panel discussion between baalos teshuva on how to handle relationships with parents who are not yet observant. The challenge: keep family, home and values complete

DEVORAH LEAH AMIR ◦

OKAY, THIS TOPIC DEFINITELY

pertains to me. I'm also married to a baal teshuva whose parents and family are not-yet religious. Boruch Hashem, I have wonderful

in-laws who respect our values very much. When we go to them we have a kosher kitchen and screens turned off. I know that a lot of the changes in their approach toward us came from my change of perspective and approach toward them, and the respect that I actually developed and which I work on all the time.

When our son was born I was unsure how to handle it and the woman who gives a "Respecting Parents" course that I took, gave me some pointers which I will share with you, because they are so relevant.

I asked her what she suggests I do in a situation in which we go to my in-laws and the television is on and I don't want my child to watch or be exposed to this for a second. She said:

"When a person chooses his path in life, he can do so to oppose his parents – they are on the Right, I'll be on the Left; they eat meat, I'll be a vegetarian, they aren't religious, I will be religious. When a person is oppositional, he isn't 'clean.' He is influenced by the *yetzer hara* to do the opposite of his parents. As for your question, when I come from a place that's not judgmental and condescending to my parents - 'How are you not seeing the light as I do?' - then they can relate to my request in a matter-of-fact manner.

"Remember, our parents want the best for us. They want our children to cooperate with us and grow up in the best way. So when I am really not judgmental of them, the likelihood is far higher that they will agree to my request."

After I learned such important tools with her, which completely changed my approach, I really came humbly and respectfully asked, not demanded, and with the readiness to hear a “no.” Thank G-d, it’s so enjoyable to go there. It’s all as “mehadrin” as can be. The television is shut off. A few weeks ago, when we stayed with them, they even begged us to stay for Shabbos and were willing to make a Shabbos atmosphere for us. They delighted in the smells and foods of Shabbos that they so longed for. That was thanks to mutual respect, because it needs to come from both sides.

Children always create a bridge. My father-in-law took my little one to the municipal pool and my two-year old yelled, “We don’t want galus anymore; we want Geula, *teikef u’miyad mamash!*” When my father-in-law told me this, I asked him whether he had been embarrassed. He said, not at all. “I yelled together with him in the pool, in front of everyone.”

So, for whoever is dealing with sensitive situations, I spoke to some other women so we can learn from their experiences. Those interviewed were:

Moran Kors – shlucha of the Rebbe in Ohr Yehuda, mother of six, mashpia, teacher and coordinator of social integration in high school, lecturer, group leader, therapist (emotional issues and marriage counseling), kalla teacher, writer of magazine columns including in this publication, and a reporter for Hidabroot.

Her “ani maamin” is (Tehillim 46:11) - “Desist and know that I am G-d.” The moment you understand that it’s only when you desist that you allow the knowledge to penetrate “that I am G-d,” He is the one who runs the world, you can live in a reality that is a level above the world that we see. All the “difficulties” we see with all sorts of challenges become dwarfed when one is aware of the presence of G-d who gives life to the world at every moment.

The more you learn and meditate upon what you learn, the more you can internalize this awareness. In my humble opinion, it is the most worthwhile life-work in all areas of life, and in all times and trials that a person goes through.

Tali Feld – mother of five, teacher in a Chabad school and shlucha in the center of Israel.

Zorit Leder - shlucha in Nahariya, mother of wonderful kids and director of a daycare center in Kiryat Bialik. She believes in mutual respect for every Jew and is confident that we will get back what we convey to the person in front of us.

PARENTS AND PRINCIPLES

How do you preserve the relationship while being protective of principles? Who needs to come toward whom more? What about a relationship with uncles and cousins?

Moran: My mother-in-law and parents are not yet religious. I think that when you take things simply, they become more simple too. The relationship does not interfere with your values; on the contrary, the children see how important respect for parents is and how we manage even when we think completely differently. You take things in good humor and try to introduce a good atmosphere even when the conversation veers into problematic topics.

It’s important to speak respectfully and to explain the values that are most important to us. When there’s a good atmosphere and the desire to bring joy to one’s parents, the parents also want to make their children happy! With the proper, respectful way of speaking you can bridge everything. It’s not contradictory, since the more respectful the relationship the more it will align with protecting your values. That’s because parents want to make their children happy; it’s human nature. When a parent sees that his child respects him, the parent wants to respond in kind.



With all that, children need to be conciliatory towards their parents. That I chose to become a baalas teshuva is my choice, not my parents'! They don't need to change to adjust to my choices. So I need to know how to walk between the raindrops, cautiously and with sensitivity. There are things that are more simple and things that will eventually become simple ;)

As for the cousins, it's more complicated since they are children their age with their wants and desires and smartphones, etc. Before every encounter there needs to be clear direction to the children – telling them how much *koach* they have and that they are shluchim and how much this encounter can be uplifting for their cousins and it depends on them. Putting your trust in them that they can be a positive influence, looking at the children as mashpiim, and with Hashem's help, this messaging will give them the strength to be like that, even if right now they are not acting that way.

Tali: My father grew up as a dati-leumi and left it all completely. My mother comes from a traditional family. So I grew up with the values of minimal kashrus and holidays but nothing

more. My parents sent me to a Chabad preschool at the age of two, in Natzrat Ilit. I guess the foundations went really deep. At the age of twenty-one, after a year in the Far East, I came back home with a Chitas and mitzvos. My family was on a completely different track than me (and there are even some who oppose Judaism).

Preserving the bond is really challenging. We are married for thirteen years and we had one joint Shabbos with the family. After that Shabbos, I realized it's just not possible. The light was turned and off, the music before Shabbos was beyond the pale as were the topics of conversation, etc. For us it was less appropriate because of our children. You can't ask something of others that is not within their abilities so we try to meet with them on Chol HaMoed but it's not always possible every year.

There are principles that I make no concessions on, in order to protect my children. At the same time, I noticed that the more I stopped demanding that my family "give in" to me, the more accepting they became. I have a sister who is very anti-Jewish. Even when we

SEEING THE HUMOR

Zorit relates:

I have a unique picture that I'm sure nobody else has ... Our first seder night after we married, we invited my brothers who came, all excited. As my husband made kiddush, my brother spontaneously took out his camera and took a picture of him. Recently (ten years later) my brother sent us the picture which brought up a bunch of feelings – it was funny, sad and moving all at once.

Our amazing niece sometimes stays with us on Shabbos for a few hours so my brother and sister-in-law can rest. She already knows all the “pesukim” by heart and asks my girls about the games – which are muktza. When they go to the sink she asks: Are we now cleaning our hands or washing netilas yadayim? Children are innocent folks and we need to learn from them what bridging is about!

Three years ago we flew to Tblisi, my mother, myself, and two of my brothers (without our families, just us). It was very special (I ate canned foods and prepacked meals to heat and they ate twice a day in restaurants). I think that many heads turned at the strange sight but we're used to it already :)

looked for a kosher restaurant she declared, “I don't want kosher! The food isn't good.” A year ago, when we met, she is the one who looked endlessly for a kosher restaurant that met our needs. Today, my parents come to visit us more often, boruch Hashem.

Zorit - When I was two, my mother “mistakenly” registered me for the Chabad day-care which was near our house. Everything escalated quickly from there. My mother was moved by all the things I brought home from preschool (like a game with Shabbos candles, brachos, etc.) which she knew about from her grandmother's home in Russia and which she vaguely recalled. My mother ended up becoming a baalas teshuva but my father did not co-

operate and I have two older brothers who are not yet religious.

My husband is a baal teshuva. His parents and brothers are not yet religious. Who moves toward whom? I refer back to what I said at the beginning. Everyone! Of course, without compromising on principles. It's constantly walking a tightrope but everyone makes an effort for everyone else, respecting even though not agreeing and knowing that you don't ever give up on family!

My mother-in-law has special utensils in her house ever since my husband became a baal teshuva. Before we come, she “does over” the kitchen, covers everything, kashers the sink, and of course, only uses our special utensils. Shabbos is Shabbos; if we come, then everyone switches into “Shabbos mode.” It's fun for them too, with a special atmosphere; there's nothing like it. By the way, my in-laws do not keep Shabbos but even when we're not there they make kiddush and have a Shabbos meal with challos and they even invite friends for the experience.

As for my family, the joint Shabbos and Yom Tov meals usually take place at my home. They've learned to be respectful. The sisters-in-law come dressed (relatively) modestly and the phones are deep in their pockets. Again, it's not because they're in agreement; it's out of respect. That's the key word in my opinion!

CHALLENGES AND BONUSES

What are the main challenges and what are the benefits from this struggle?

Moran: The challenge is actually the benefit. Where there is difficulty, there is work. The challenge is the education, and the benefit is

the sense of shlichus. In other words, if you switch from influence mode to educational mode there is a great opportunity here to influence the family. My parents are less likely to be receptive to anything coming from me and I'm also not coming from a place of wanting to change them. I accept them as they are. My children are coming from another place; they are a lot more innocent.

The kids say: We wear a kippa at kiddush – they suggest this directly. Now, we're going to wash – they directly ask them to wash their hands. It's not about yes or no, right or wrong. They present it and we know that it's harder to refuse a child. The idea is to take the difficulty and turn it into a mission. Again, less the children versus the parents and more via the grandchildren.

To summarize, I learned to expand my creativity. You can find many solutions to many challenges in life. If you try and get out of your usual way of thinking, you can discover that everybody benefits.

Tali: At first it was a challenge for me to say a bracha near them, to daven, to do simple things that I felt they mocked. On Shabbos I would go to an orchard near my parents' house and daven there. Today, the challenge is the quality of the family bond. We do not spend Shabbos together and our ways of speaking are very different. I'm a big believer in divine providence, miracles, and living with emuna and bitachon in Hashem. Previously, when I would speak like this, it created distance. Today, my sister says, "How do you say it – I had a miracle!" So, slowly, I can speak more freely and they'll accept it but it's still not that way with all of them.

I feel that the benefit is that my children know that not everybody is like us whether in conduct, kashrus, the goal. The fact that we are shluchim results in my children being "into" shlichus, thank G-d. My four-year-old daughter said to her grandmother, "You are so

sweet for caring about me that you need to be a chassida of the Rebbe! You need to be a shlucha of the Rebbe and you need to bring the Geula."

The children are the ones who make the kiddush Hashem. When the grandmother hears that her seven-year-old granddaughter learned Pirkei Avos by heart, it moves her so much. When my father, who went off the derech, asks my son questions and he has a ready answer it moves him. When they hear some chapters of Tanya that the children learned by heart and see the behavior of Chassidishe children, it moves them and brings them great joy.

My grandmother a'h was religious and when I told my son about her, I added, "You are surely giving her tremendous nachas." At night she appeared in my dream with a very big smile! When I told my father he said, "He's definitely giving her nachas." In the end, every neshama knows the truth that Hashem is Elokim.

We are Chassidim of the Rebbe and we transmit hiskashrus to our children. When we live in a way that we value the place we've reached (because if we would have remained where we were, we would have fallen very deep) then you are more appreciative, protective, and become stronger and more grateful.

Zorit - That's a question for an entire farbrengen. There are many challenges as there are in everything and as there are for every person. The question is what we choose to emphasize. We choose to try and smooth over the challenges and bridge them. We ask many questions to a rav that paskens halacha who understands the sensitive situation and helps us walk between the raindrops.

The main benefit, I think, is that the children who are raised in this blended reality and don't see those who are not observant as an odd bird, become far more quickly beloved to the mekuravim and already know how to skip over what separates people and to find that which connects and bridges. If they are successful and become better shluchim, ashreinu! ■



**“A HOLLYWOOD
KITCHEN,”
REBBETZIN
RIVKA’S
LOST JEWELRY,
& HOW WE LADIES
CAN GET
OUR HUSBANDS
TO LEARN
MORE TORAH!**

BY DAFNA CHAIM

AS with many important subjects, the Torah and the Rebbe emphasize the special qualities of women and their importance long before the feminist movement, and far more than they themselves could imagine. The Rebbe, more than any other leader in the world in general, and the Jewish world in particular, believes in women and their tremendous powers which are only increasing in the era of Geula; and we see the results all over the world.

Although this is known, it is always moving and heartwarming once again to discover how much the Rebbe relies on and supports and

believes in the women and the greatness of their influence. Here is an example from Simchas Torah 5722.

Simchas Torah is one of the peak times of the year, the day on which all material and spiritual divine flows are drawn down after all the avoda of the holidays of Tishrei which are overflowing with all material and spiritual good.

On this joyous day, when we finish the annual cycle of reading the Torah and begin it anew, love for Torah is aroused in every Jewish heart, and the inner connection he has with Torah is revealed. At this lofty time, at a joyous

farbrengen replete with lofty revelations, the Rebbe brings down the great lights into practical vessels and urges the crowd of Chassidim to strengthen themselves in Torah study and not be immersed in worldly matters.

In order to give practical force to his words, the Rebbe addresses women specifically, with full trust in their abilities to influence their family members, and guides and directs them - using the model of Rebbetzin Rivka, wife of the Rebbe Maharash - as to how one draws down abundance to the home to the point of literal wealth, and what is the order of priorities in the building of a Chassidic home.

Before we continue, some background is needed so we can get some idea of the luminous character of the Rebbetzin who merited to have the “Beis Rivkah” schools named for her.

DOWRY OF AN ORPHAN

Rebbetzin Rivka’s parents were Rabbi Aharon Alexandrov and Rebbetzin Chaya Sarah, daughter of the Mittlerer Rebbe. When she was about four, her father died, leaving her and her older sister Gittel orphans. Their mother remarried but three years later the ground, once again, shook under the little girls’ feet with the passing of their mother.

For a number of months, the orphans moved around to the homes of different relatives until their grandmother, Rebbetzin Shaina, wife of the Mittlerer Rebbe, took them in and raised them devotedly and with love. When they came of age, she looked for suitable shidduchim for them.

The shidduch with the Rebbe Maharash did not come easily. The Rebbe Maharash was first married to Rebbetzin Shterna but, tragically, the kalla took ill during the week of the wedding and passed away three months later. After her passing, Rebbetzin Shaina, through a messenger, suggested a shidduch to the Tzemach Tzedek, her daughter’s husband,

for her grandson, Maharash, with one of her orphaned granddaughters.

The Tzemach Tzedek responded: I have an offer along with a dowry of 20,000 rubles. What are you offering?

She responded to her mechutan: *Eishes chaver k’chaver* (the wife of a Torah scholar has the status of a Torah scholar) and I am giving the chassan forty years of “*eishes chaver*”!

Following this suggestion, a Beis Din of three convened to discuss the shidduch with one of the sisters. In the course of the discussion, the Rebbe Maharash remembered that when he was a boy, he said to little Rivka that he would marry her and everyone present had laughed but did not think anything of such a statement.

The Beis Din paskened to look into the shidduch but did not pasken with which girl. A few months later the Beis Din reconvened because of apprehension of marrying off the younger sister before the older one. They paskened that because of that incident from the past, he should marry Rivka and not be concerned.

His father, the Tzemach Tzedek, called for the older sister Gittel and promised her that he would see to a good shidduch for her as well as all of her needs. Gittel wholeheartedly allowed her sister to marry first and the shidduch was made to the satisfaction of the Tzemach Tzedek.

On the day of the wedding, the Tzemach Tzedek sent his son, the chassan, to collect the dowry and receive a bracha from Rebbetzin Shaina. The Rebbetzin, who was preoccupied with preparations for the wedding, told him that the day was long and he should come back later.

When the chassan told his father what the Rebbetzin said, his father told him to return and demand a bracha! This time, the Rebbetzin stopped what she was doing, washed her hands, put her hands on his head and in the presence of two witnesses blessed him: Yehi ratzon that

all the *kochos* I inherited from my husband rest on your head.”

THE MORE HE GAVE, THE LESS SHE HAD

The travails that Rebbetzin Rivka went through in her childhood, along with her great *yichus* and her being raised in the house of the Rebbe, made her into a regal and refined woman. At the same time, she was compassionate and exuded goodhearted warmth and was highly sensitive to the suffering of others.

The Rebbe, in this *sicha*, told about the qualities of the Rebbetzin so that we should learn from her a lesson for life. First, he spoke about the Rebbe Maharash. It is known that his conduct was “a *baalshemske hanhaga*” (supernatural). However, unlike the Baal Shem Tov whose life was one of poverty, which was the case for his disciples, the Rebbe Maharash lived a wealthy life like a prince. This was the case even before he became the Rebbe. Of course, this was all with holiness and purity and according to Shulchan Aruch.

One time, a big merchant gave the Tzemach Tzedek a gift of a magnificent winter buggy equipped with all the latest appurtenances, the “Ferrari” of coaches of those days that only the very rich would use. The Tzemach Tzedek, who was removed from all material things, politely declined the impressive gift but said to the merchant, “I don’t need a coach like that but if you want, give it to my son, Shmuel.”

This mode of living a wealthy life was also how the Rebbe Maharash treated his wife. He would buy her gifts and jewelry in very generous fashion. However, the Rebbetzin had a big heart that was alert to all in need and she wasn’t interested in a life of wealth and pomp. She was constantly involved with *chessed*, *hachnosas kalla* and helping the needy. Sometimes, when she needed money to finance her *chessed* projects, she would take a loan and pawn her jewelry. When the Rebbe Maharash would return from his travels, so they said in

Beis Rebbi, he would find out where she had pawned her jewelry and redeem it.

The Rebbe stresses, the Rebbetzin was the granddaughter of the Mittlerer Rebbe and grew up in the home of the Tzemach Tzedek so she knew how to appreciate the spiritual value of a gift given to her by the Rebbe Maharash and she still did not hesitate to pawn it for the benefit of something greater like *hachnosas kalla* and *chessed*.

The Rebbe then brings another story which sheds additional light on her personality. The Rebbe Maharash would often travel throughout Russia and abroad on communal matters. Sometimes, the Rebbe would suggest that his wife accompany him. The Rebbetzin, who could have lived like a queen and traveled in a luxurious coach and stayed in expensive hotels and seen the world in an era when most people did not leave the town they lived in all their lives, not to mention the great respect she would be given on these travels, chose to remain at home. She was busy with *chessed*, in secretly giving *tzedaka* and helping all the needy. She would ask her husband for the amount of money it would have cost if she went and used this money for her *tzedaka* and *chessed* work.

This is how her grandson, the Rebbe Rayatz, describes her in the *Sefer HaZichronos*: “She was famous as a great *baalas tzedaka* whose goodheartedness defies description. The Rebbe Maharash was the only one of the Lubavitcher Admorim who lived with wealth and the more he gave her, the less she had, for she would give it all to those in need. When she did not have the courage to ask her husband for money, she would pawn her jewelry and use the money she received for *tzedaka*.”

This is the lesson we need to learn from the Rebbetzin, despite her being a royal personage and way above the average in her level and character. Each of us needs to take something from her, at least to learn from her what the

proper attitude ought to be toward jewelry and other luxuries.

THE OBLIGATION OF N'SHEI U'BNOS CHABAD

There are women, says the Rebbe, who urge their husbands to put more time and energy into work so they will earn a lot of money and the home will be run expansively and they will have jewelry and other extras, for one needs to have nice furniture and not make do with a regular rug but must have wall-to-wall carpeting, all this so she can boast to her neighbor. For this, time, money and energy are wasted and the husband needs to work extra hours which he could be devoting to Torah study.

Unfortunately, says the Rebbe, this “illness” has also crept into the homes of Anash, Chassidishe families, whose conduct is all according to Chassidus, and yet, when it comes to something superficial such as this, they lose their head.

When a person knows that the purpose of his creation is to serve his Maker, then a rug more, a rug less, doesn't matter. The main thing is that the husband can devote his time to learning Torah.

This pertains particularly to those husbands who don't think for themselves; first they were dependent on their mothers' opinions and now on the wisdom of their wives.

This also refers to those Chassidim for whom, when they were in Russia, it was a given that one needs to be moser nefesh for Judaism without being fazed by the difficulties but over here they are influenced by their wives' view and now, it's a given for them that they must have a Hollywood kitchen and a television with which they can see things that oppose the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch.

A yungerman came to me for yechidus. I asked him, what about having set times to learn Torah? He said he does not have the time since he was preoccupied with parnassa so it will

be ample. This is a yungerman with a beard who learned in Tomchei Tmimim and lived in Russia with self-sacrifice, and nevertheless, when he came in for yechidus he said, as a matter-of-fact and with sincerity, that he does not have time to learn because he is busy with parnassa for luxuries. When mashke is given out for additional learning of Chassidus, he pushes to the front. This is the story of a yungerman who has ample parnassa.

On the other hand, I had a yungerman come to me who said he does not have time to learn because he is busy explaining to his wife why he doesn't have the money to buy her a Hollywood kitchen. These are two examples, of someone rich and someone poor, both of whom are influenced by their wives who are *daatan kala*, and therefore, they don't have set times to learn Torah. May Hashem grant everyone ample parnassa so they will use gashmiyus as a vessel for G-dliness.

“The power that women have to urge their husbands will, from now on, be used for the opposite extreme. Instead of – until now, urging their husbands to be immersed over their heads in parnassa, from now on, they will urge their husbands to learn Torah and not just to fulfill their obligation by learning Chitas, but learning copiously as explained in Hilchos Talmud Torah of the Alter Rebbe.

“The upshot of all that has been said: the obligation of Chabad women and girls is to urge their husbands, fathers and brothers to learn Torah copiously. Women should try and get their husbands to reduce the hours, even set times, in which they work for a living, and increase Torah study and to say: I forego quite a few extras if only you can learn Torah as explained in Hilchos Talmud Torah. This itself will be a vessel for expansive parnassa and not only ‘enough for what he lacks’ but also literal wealth, in a way that there won't be an obstacle and concealment of Torah-mitzvos; on the contrary, the wealth itself will be a vessel for G-dliness.” ■



*Yehudis
Homnick*

A TAP ON THE SHOULDER

MY husband and I just finished reading *A Tap on the Shoulder*, about Rabbi Meir Schuster a'h, by Yonoson Rosenblum (ArtsScroll 2021). Rabbi Schuster passed away in 5774/2014, after having changed the lives of tens of thousands of Jews. How did he accomplish this?

By approaching Jews at the Kosel and asking them whether they'd like to meet a wise man, attend a yeshiva, partake of a Shabbos meal. He personally escorted thousands of Jews to a Torah class, to a yeshiva, to Shabbos hosts. He was a facilitator. He didn't give classes; he made it possible for those with minimal Jewish knowledge to participate in Jewish life and hear Torah. As a result, there are thousands of Jews around the world today who married Jewish, raised from children, and have Jewish, frum grandchildren.

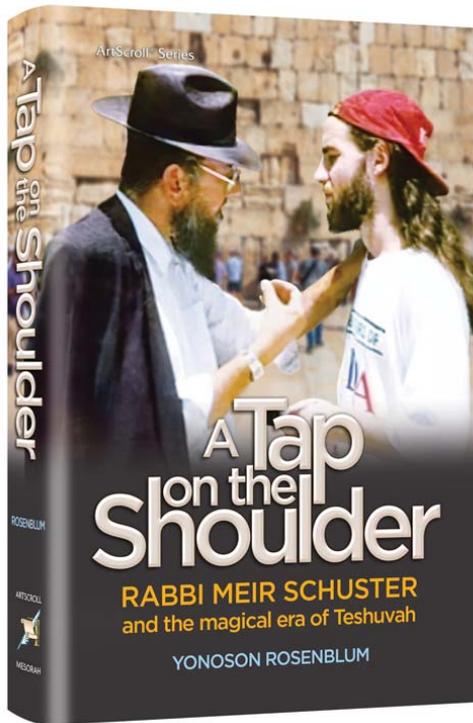
What did it take to convince someone, both young men and women, to come with him, a stranger, dressed as an Orthodox Jew?

If you had to describe the personality most likely to succeed at this you would probably say he needs to be personable and able to converse easily with strangers. The truth is that Rabbi Schuster would be the *last* person you would have voted for "most likely to achieve" in this venture. He was shy, awkward, the antithesis of a people-person.

Why was he successful? Because he was a man on a mission who believed 100% in his "product," and he was a consummate Oheiv Yisrael. In addition, his quest to find Jews and intro-

duce them to Torah was only about others and not at all about himself.

Rejections were sad only insofar as the Jew was missing out. Successes were fabulous be-



cause a Jew was going to learn about Torah and mitzvos. He did this completely for the sake of heaven and heaven reciprocated and gifted him with *siyata d'shmaya* (heavenly assistance).

He reached out to Jews for decades, from 1971 until incapacitated by illness in 2007. Numerous Jews who ended up in Chabad were “tapped on the shoulder” by R’ Schuster.

As for us, what can we learn from him? Oftentimes, when we read a biography or an inspirational article about a special person, we think - I can't do that, I can't be like that, it's so not me ... What we learn from R' Schuster is that it's not about you! It's about the mission. If you are passionate about the mission and care

about the person you are reaching out to, then your personality and background don't matter.

At a recent N'Shei Chabad event on the theme of mitvzaim, various women told about how they reach out. Some love to give classes, some do classic mitvzaim with strangers, some learn one-on-one. It could be on the phone or in person.

These days, interacting via Zoom and similar video communication, is common. It can be with written material or what you say. It can be with the basics of parsha and halacha with those who don't know or “spreading the wellsprings” with those already frum. Figure out your approach and - just do it. ■

SARA GOPIN, CONT. FROM P. 17.

which the Rebbe Rayatz describes those Yidden who are not embarrassed to allow themselves all of their heart's desires. They do whatever they want, without making any account of whether it is permissible or forbidden, and become more and more coarse, to the point that, *Rachmana li'tzlan*, they have fallen into the lowest levels of coarseness... So much of what has happened to them was influenced by their company and surroundings.

The Rebbe Rayatz is very explicit, but stirs your heart as well. Every Jew has free choice to return and follow the right path but, for those who lack the capability of picking themselves up out of the “mud” of all of their sins, there is *siyata d'Shmaya* to do teshuva. Without any readiness or preparation beforehand, they suddenly feel remorse as they realize that it was insane the way they were driven to amass a fortune, and their Yiddishkeit no longer mattered. But now it's time to correct the past and to make good resolutions for the future. The Rebbe Rayatz explains that this deep yearning comes from the higher parts of the *nesham*a, the *chaya* and *yechida*, which are not

contained in the body, but are up above, in Heaven. Hashem is with us, like a parent who does everything possible for the health of his child, and we're **all** the sons of Hashem, “*banim atem l'Hashem Elokeichem*.”

This maamar is especially pertinent to Tishrei, when the heavenly echo calling us to do teshuva is at full volume. We should never underestimate the possibility of our fellow Jew to return to the right path. The more “mud” that covers his pure soul, the greater the help that he will receive from above. This is something to keep in mind, especially on Sukkos and Simchas Torah, and particularly regarding Yidden who are confused and searching. When they are in a sukka, or dance with a sefer Torah, their whole essence is elevated! This is just the beginning, their *seichel* will expand too.

This year, Shnas Hakhel and the “Year of Plaos Gedolos, Great Wonders,” may we all be together, celebrating the rebuilding of the Third Beis HaMikdash with the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach! ■

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CROWN HEIGHTS TISHREI HOSTESSES SPEAK UP

I thought it would be an easy assignment to interview a handful of Crown Height hostesses, there are so many of these generous women who open their hearts, kitchens and homes. But it turns out they are all so humble... I did, however, manage to convince three of them to speak up. Whether you're a guest or a host, listen to what they have to say!

BY C. LABKOWSKY



SHULAMIS Slapochnik : We have nine children, bli ayin hara, as well as two grandchildren and a son getting married soon.

I think Crown Heights and hospitality are concepts that go together. I think that especially the Israelis among us, who experienced being guests when we were young and went to the Rebbe, agree. So, automatically, when we came to live here, it was a given that our house would be open to guests.

At first we hosted lots of family and friends and slowly it developed and our name got passed around and now we have guests who are people we don't even know.

The last time it was a Shnas Hakhel the mitzva of hospitality was done all year, especially in Tishrei. They came for Chanuka too. In general, Chanuka has turned into a time with lots of guests in Crown Heights. For Shavuos there are also groups of women and girls, bnos mitzva, who come.

What inspires me to open my house to guests? First of all, I think that the Jewish people has always been a nation of hospitality. Especially here, in the Rebbe's neighborhood, it's been decades already that guests come to the Rebbe and they need a place. The Rebbe said several times that they are his guests, so we do all we can for the Rebbe's guests. That's how we look at it.

The Tishrei guests are very special. I always say I don't know who works harder in Tishrei, the guests or the hosts. For us, the work is mostly in the kitchen but being a guest in Tishrei in Crown Heights is avoda!

Hachnosas orchim is a chessed and this is what we want the children to see, adopt and perpetuate. Obviously, being a role model is number one when you want to transmit a message to a child. A table with guests is a table with lots of simcha, songs, and interesting stories. It's an encounter with people from all over the world with their cultures and stories. We sometimes discover people we know in common. A table with guests is very special and happy, very uplifting.

Hosting is not easy and we want to host wholeheartedly. That means quantities, variety, and it's never enough, and it's not easy. If more time remains before Shabbos, I'll make another salad, cake or dessert. When hosting we are on a high and the benefit is in being a personal example to the children, at the table itself and the house which gets lots of light and what we learn from the guests, and there's a lot.

TISHREI GUESTS ARE OUR PRIDE AND JOY

Avigayil Levy: I have five children. I try to host whenever possible. From childhood I've experienced the warmth of sharing food and hosting people. I grew up in a home that was not religious. My grandparents were immigrants and they hosted and shared what they had with friends and family such as very good food that my amazing grandmother prepared.

She was an outstanding cook. Anybody could come at any time. One person would play the violin, another would dance ... The warmth and joy in their home are unforgettable! In our home we try to implement everything about hosting that we learned from them, as much as possible.

We have never spent Shabbos or Yom Tov without guests but Tishrei and Pesach are times when "whoever is hungry, come and eat." That people share their food and open their homes with all their heart is indescribable. I consider it very special. I always feel that this is a shlichus. If someone cooks it is so special that she invites others to enjoy the food.

One of my friends grew up in an orphanage and one of the things she particularly remembers that intensified her loneliness was the fragrance of supper cooking that wafted from people's homes. We never know what people went through and are going through, but we can always convey warmth and interest through food. I'm a big believer in that food is healing and I always try to add healthy elements to cooking and eating.

The most healing thing of all is love. Togetherness and sharing on Shabbos and Yom Tov are like a magical vacation in a world that is all goodness and joy.

The Tishrei guests are our pride and joy. They bring such nachas to the Rebbe. Anything we can do to pay them for their avoda, i.e. their learning, davening, dancing, and their kabbolas ol, we try to do with meals, beds, food, showers.

We are already in the days of the Geula. In 5751, the Rebbe told us that the Geula has begun and now, we as Jews can no longer tolerate galus. Our task is to instill Geula in our personal lives. The main way of doing this is through simcha. After 27 Adar 5752, the Rebbe said five words: amen, yes, no, shira v'zimra! This is the way to the Geula, simcha and shira. The greatest joy is when Jews are united. When we sit

together at our Father's table. And this is what will be happening this Tishrei, G-d willing.

HELPED BY OUR GUESTS, PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY

Ayala Moshiaich: I'm a teacher, a mechanic in Bais Rivkah high school here in Crown Heights. I usually host married couples and girls because I have big girls and young boys. I never know how many are coming for a meal.

I cook with the guests who stay with me. There are several advantages to this. They feel at home. They can contribute to the menu and as we cook I teach practical halacha for the kitchen if they're single girls. There aren't many things in which I'm better than them but I'm good at giving instructions.

Another reason I accept help from my guests is because I can't do it all on my own, and I don't want to dump all the work on my daughters. I don't want them to remember this mitzva as a burden, as a demand which isn't fun. I want it to be a happy memory for them so they'll want to do the same in their future homes. This is also why I won't demand that my children give up their rooms; I ask if they're willing. It's important to me that it come from them.

We are particular that at the Shabbos and Yom Tov table, our children all sit at the table with the boys next to my husband and the girls near me. They shouldn't think that concern for guests takes precedence over them, that they're not important enough to us. That's also my advice to all those hosting: pay attention to your children in the midst of the guesting mayhem!

This Shabbos I had twelve guests without having had prepared for them ... My girls said to me, "Mommy, it will be Tishrei soon. Hashem is preparing us!"

Our Shabbos table is run very nicely. First of all, as I mentioned, all the children are at the table. My husband thanks Hashem, the Rebbe and his wife for the preparations and anyone

who helped, children and guests. Each child shares something good that he did that week and says a dvar Torah. Every guest introduces herself and shares a point on the parsha.

The Tishrei guests contribute a lot with the chayus they bring, not just for me but for the entire family. They draw us into the atmosphere of going to the Rebbe, something which we don't experience since we live here and are busy cooking for the Rebbe's guests twenty-four hours a day.

The Achos Tmimim organization here started a program called "Going to the Rebbe" so we will experience this even if we live here all year and don't have to actually travel. This program is empowering. Instead of being frustrated by my just working in the kitchen, they come and tell me, "Come, you're also going to the Rebbe!" (at least experientially).

As a teacher, every year in Tishrei I give my students homework which is marked, in which they have to interview guests who have come here. They need to ask them what made them come, what did they do to get here, how do they have the money to travel. As Crown Heights girls they don't experience all this and it's important to me that they be aware that nowadays, not just Chassidim of yesteryear, nowadays there are people who have mesirus nefesh to come to the Rebbe! They save up money and come. A student who also brings the guest she interviewed to class gets a prize. So in Tishrei, it's very interesting in my classroom!

I also try hard to be a role model for the girls and young women who are my guests, showing them what a Chassidishe home is, how it's all for the Rebbe.

If only this year we experience Tishrei in the Geula. That way, considering the prophecies of "the nations will serve you" and "delicacies available like dust," the gashmiyus will be taken care of without us and we can really enjoy the spiritual treasures. ■

COPPER PENNIES

Raizel Liberow

A simple man with a small fortune, Reb Yankel the peddler labored long, sweaty hours pushing his cart through the marketplace. Through the years, he slowly amassed a modest collection of sparkling gold coins, shiny silver pieces and copper pennies.

En-route to the next town to peddle his furs, Reb Yankel was nervous to take along his treasure. What if there were bandits along the way? What if he misplaced his money pouch at the tavern? Determined to find a safe home for his money, Yankel decided to pay a visit to the wealthiest man in town, asking him to hold on to his fortune until he returned. A kind and gracious Yid, he readily agreed and Reb Yankel was on his way.

Weeks passed and Yankel returned to the mansion, eager to pick up his money pouch. The rich man returned the worn bundle and Yankel promptly spilled the contents onto the fine oak table, coins clattering noisily. He then proceeded to count the gold, ensuring every all the glittering coins were there. Which they were. He then patiently counted each silver piece, making sure there was not even one missing. Which there wasn't.

As he began counting the pennies, the wealthy man's face soured as he spoke sternly to Reb Yankel.

"Leave my house immediately. And don't ever return!"

Shaken, Yankel asked for an explanation.

"You counted the gold and it was all there as you left it. You counted the silver and it was all there too. You really think I would've taken your measly pennies?! Shame on you!"



Every evening, our *neshama* is given to Hashem for safekeeping. And every morning, as we return to Hashem's mansion of a world, he graciously returns our goods. He gives us back our gold - our *neshama*. He returns our silver - our health, our eyesight, our hearing, all the blessings in our life. And we worry that Hashem won't take care of our copper pennies? Our *parnassa*? Our challenges? Our personal mountains we are each struggling to climb?

If Hashem wanted to, he could take away our gold and silver easily. Let's trust Him that he'll care for our pennies too.



As we enter the Yom Tov of Sukkos, let's try to feel the *eibishter's* embrace as the holy *sukka* encompasses us from all sides. The *Aibishter* loves us, He cares for us, He takes care of our gold, silver and copper and when we worry less and trust more, we open up new channels of *bracha* for ourselves and our families.

May we all be blessed abundantly from Hashem's endless supply of goodness and may we merit to finally spend this Sukkos basking in Hashem's glory, as we are embraced by the *Sukka* of the *livyasan*. ■





Ofra

Badusa

HOW DO WE GET THROUGH YOM TOV IN PEACE?

WE'RE already well into the “routine” of the Tishrei holiday season. One day follows another, one holiday follows another. We have regrets, we return to Hashem, we change ourselves, we ask forgiveness, we break out in joy, we build a sukka, and we dance deliriously... So many profound and transforming procedures within the span of one month. And we closely adhere to the instructions that we received on Har Sinai in obedience of “naaseh v’nishma.”

Throughout this period, there is one thing that remains the same however, neither moving nor changing. Always, but always, the Yom Tov is accompanied by a large seuda. Even on Yom Kippur – when we have one day with a break from food – the Torah commands and explains that those who eat (most plentifully) on the ninth receive spiritual reward as if they fasted on both the ninth and the tenth of Tishrei!

The truth is that this is fun and tasty – cooking, spoiling the family, preparing the Shabbos

and Yom Tov table. Thinking about our spouses and children – and what each of them likes. Making culinary surprises that will make them happy. However, at the conclusion of all these festive meals, we feel a little too full, a little too bloated, a little too tired – and this is not a very pleasant feeling.

So, how do we reach a proper balance? On the one hand, we must fulfill the mitzva and the true simcha of sitting at the festive and elegant family Shabbos and Yom Tov table. On the other hand, we mustn’t finish the holiday season with excess weight, high cholesterol, and difficulty breathing when

climbing the stairs... Is this at all possible?

Here are a few important suggestions on this subject:

THE QUANTITIES

The Rambam emphasizes that one of the main causes of illnesses is exaggerated quantities of food intake. The correct thing is to fill one’s stomach only to three-quarters



capacity. The problem is that we quite often eat so fast and so much, and not just on Erev Yom Kippur... In such a case, it's already impossible to feel our true "point of satiety." With such a manner of eating, we stop our intake only when it's no longer possible to breathe... It would be most appropriate to put a halt to this custom. It's important to learn to eat slowly and in moderation.

Another thing that causes us to eat far more than our bodies really need is the serving of cooked food. Therefore, you should try to increase the amount of uncooked food you eat in your meals. The Rambam says that it would even be preferable for a person to eat a little bit of unhealthy food than to overfill his digestive system with healthy food.

THE FOOD ITSELF

In general, it would be correct to prepare a wide selection of fresh salads. If you make a cooked salad, make certain that it won't be fried. It's always possible to add oil later. For my Libyan husband, I even prepare an oil-free hot cooked tomato salad, called "marduma", which passes all the tests! While it's difficult for some to give up the fried foods, especially those from communities where they've long been used to them, nevertheless, the long-term price over the years for eating fried foods is not a simple one.

It would be a good idea to start getting used to consuming dishes saturated with oil in far smaller quantities. There's also the matter of seasoning the food: It is strongly recommended that you use fresh (not preserved) lemon juice instead of vinegar. As opposed to using regular oil, season the food with a modicum of olive oil. Mayonnaise can very often be replaced by olive oil or tehina.

DESSERTS

Try as much as possible to keep desserts to a minimum – no one has much room for them

FRESH TURKISH SALAD

Ingredients:

2 tomatoes sliced in wedges
6-8 sundried tomatoes (soaked for 30 minutes in water)
1 tablespoon of lemon juice
¼ teaspoon cumin
½ cup of cut parsley leaves
2 stalks of scallions, chopped

How to Prepare:

Place all the ingredients (save for the parsley and onion) in the food processor. Grind until it gets a smooth and thick texture.

Transfer to a bowl and add the parsley and green onion.

Ess gezunterheit!

anyway. Furthermore, from a nourishment standpoint, consuming sugars (even fruit) after a meal can cause all the food to ferment in our stomachs, thereby harming the digestive process. I prepare mashed fruits with dates and freeze them in heart-shaped silicone containers and serve a few of these hearts to each of the dinner guests. This way, we can conclude the meal with a sweet taste in our mouths, while on the other hand, leaving a little room for us to catch our breath...

These are a few tips, which, with Hashem's help, will assist you in getting through this month of holidays peacefully and in good health. And if at the end of the month, you still end up seeing unfamiliarly high numbers on the scale... you are cordially invited to speak with me and get a little advice on how to reduce the excess weight and adapt a healthier lifestyle.

May you be sealed in the Book of Life for a good and sweet year! Gmar chasima tova! ■

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THE SECOND HOUSEWIFE

—→ A SERIALIZED FAMILY DRAMA ←—
SET IN THE SHTETL OF TWO CENTURIES AGO

RECAP: *Aidel agrees to go ahead with the shidduch with Reb Shmuel, the Rosh Hakahal twenty years her senior, realizing that its her only chance to ever marry a talmid chacham.*



A COLD wind wandered aimlessly between the gravestones, tickling the swaying plant growth sprouting under the rocks. Zalman and Reb Shmuel the Rosh Hakahal silently walked near the fence, wrapped tightly in their coats.

Zalman slowed down for a moment, stretching out his hand to stop Reb Shmuel. He tilted his head to the side, as if he was listening to something. He then ordered him: “Stand here.”

With an unusually swift motion for someone his age, Zalman vaulted over the fence and made his way between the gravestones. As he



approached the third marker, he stopped. "It's here."

Reb Shmuel got a little closer to the fence. "Yes, I see."

Zalman moved back and climbed over the fence to the other side.

"They buried him literally right next to the fence," Reb Shmuel muttered.

Zalman chuckled, his head still tilted to the side. "They apparently knew that he would have a kohen for a son-in-law..."

Reb Shmuel didn't smile. "Fine, let's keep our distance now."

He looked for a long moment as Zalman hobbled away, then turned in the direction of the gravestone.

"Mazal Tov, Moishe'le," he said quietly. Afterwards, he took a deep breath and added: "I came to invite you to my wedding to Aidel, your only daughter." He sent a cloud of steam into the air, as he pushed his hands deep into his coat pockets.

"I have a lot to apologize for, I didn't know that they had buried you this way at such a remote end of the cemetery. The truth is that I was then lying wounded from the blows I received from that peasant farmer when I went to save... you, and others took care of the burial. However, I should have checked. I'm sorry!"

"I also apologize for the years that Aidel worked for Nechama Leah the cook. I arranged that she would live in her home, but I never dreamed that she would work for her. It's a good thing that the Rebbetzin found out. Again, I'm truly sorry that I didn't pay closer attention and check up on her."

After another moment of silence, he added: "Things will be good for her from now on. I promise."

He looked at the gravestone for another minute, then rejoined Zalman. The two then

THE CHARACTERS:

Reb Shmuel: The distinguished Rosh Hakahal of Lubianka. A widowed man and father of many children, all married. He's seeking a shidduch after the town's rav encourages his to do so.

Zalman: Reb Shmuel's son-in-law and confidant.

Aidel: A destitute orphan girl who is working in the Rav and Rebbetzin's home. She dreams of marrying a talmid chacham, but her financial state doesn't allow it.

Pessia: Reb Shmuel's youngest daughter, two years younger than Aidel and was once her friend.

Pesach Tzvi: Pessia's husband. A tremendous young talmid chacham who was "worth" a 5,000-ruble dowry.

proceeded to walk back to the village. "I have to send some workers to uproot the weeds and repair the fence," he mumbled.

"Absolutely," Zalman laughed. "This is your shver's gravesite now..."

Reb Shmuel didn't respond. The weather was dry with a freezing cold that chilled down to the bones. At that early morning hour, there was total and complete silence, as if even the animals were frozen.

"I was in cheder together with Moishe'le. He was in the group of small children learning from Reb Pinchas the melamed." Fond memories flashed before his eyes.

"They say that he was taken over by Chassidus during his final years," Zalman noted cautiously.

"People say a lot of things," Reb Shmuel replied, shrugging his shoulders. "I know that he

was a very pious Jew and a great Torah scholar as well,”

“And in the end, he was also made holy,” Zalman noted. “May Hashem avenge his blood.”



AIDEL sat on the bed in her small room in the rav’s house, reciting Tehillim from her old siddur. A new siddur, leather-bound, engraved in gold, was waiting for her – a gift from her *chassan*. At that moment, however, in this room, the old siddur suits her more.

The last time in this room, the last time in her nice and plain Shabbos dress, the last time as an unmarried woman...

There was a gentle knock at the door. She quickly got up expecting to see the Rebbetzin, but when she opened the door, she was surprised to see standing outside her room Mirele, Chana Rochel, Leah Zissel, and Pessia – the only daughter and daughters-in-law of the man who would be become her husband that evening.

“Mazal tov!” Pessia blessed her warmly. “Since none of us will be coming to the wedding tonight, we came to give you our gift now.”

“Thank you,” Aidel replied shyly. “Please come in.”

They entered, crowding inside her tiny bedroom, exchanging expressive glances among themselves. Chana Rochel presented her with a small box, as Leah Zissel complained: “We apparently will be the only people not participating in the most talked-about wedding in Lubianka for the last twenty years...”

Aidel wondered how she should react. She eventually chose simply to open the box gently. Placed on a velvet tray was a gold pendant set with diamonds, laced on a delicate chain.

“How gorgeous!” Aidel was absolutely thrilled. “Thank you very much! I feel so honored!”

// AIDEL WONDERED HOW SHE SHOULD REACT. SHE EVENTUALLY CHOSE SIMPLY TO OPEN THE BOX GENTLY. PLACED ON A VELVET TRAY WAS A GOLD PENDANT SET WITH DIAMONDS, LACED ON A DELICATE CHAIN.

“With pleasure,” Pessia smiled kindheartedly. “We won’t disturb you anymore. You probably still have a lot of preparations to make!” She got up and motioned to her sisters-in-law to get up as well.

“Have an easy fast,” Chana Rochel smiled.

“There’s no such thing as an easy fast,” Leah Zissel grumbled. “Anyway, it should go well for you.”

Mirele stayed for a moment in the tiny room. When everyone else had left and the two were alone, she turned to Aidel and said: “I’m very happy that you’re joining the family,” and then gave her a quick warm hug. “Thank you!” Aidel smiled. “You have warmed my heart!” The tears that had been glistening in her eyes for the past two days now began to roll down her cheeks.



Reb Shmuel walked with brisk steps, and Zalman had difficulty keeping up with him. “We still have a lot of things to do,” Zalman said, trying to catch his breath. “Maybe we can skip this? It’s enough that you sponsored the

festive meal for the poor. Why do you have to be there?”

“How can I possibly stay away?” Reb Shmuel became annoyed. “They’re my guests, aren’t they?”

People walking innocently in the street stopped in surprise to see a chassan on his wedding day... Reb Shmuel entered the hall at the soup kitchen. He stopped for a moment, took a deep breath, and waited for Zalman.

When Zalman arrived, he found Reb Shmuel squeezed into the corner where the Netilas Yadayim sinks were located, peering inside, gesturing to Zalman to be quiet. “What?” Zalman motioned to him.

“There’s nothing lacking. It looks that way, doesn’t it?” Reb Shmuel whispered.

Zalman looked inside. The soup kitchen looked like a wedding hall. Beautiful tablecloths of blue velvet were spread out on the tables set with porcelain plates alongside a sum of money. Jugs of wine stood on the tables and about ten bachurim were busy serving portions of meat in sauce with side dishes of potatoes.

The guests were welcomed by the aroma of the cooking mixed with the smell of freshly baked rolls placed near each person’s plate.

“I have no words,” Zalman declared. “I never would have believed that this place could look so good...”

Reb Shmuel entered, smiling from ear to ear. Within a few moments, the first guests recognized him and quieted all the others.

‘Mazal tov!’ cried Feivel. “May you establish a faithful home among the Jewish People!” Other guests started showering the chassan with brachos as they raised their glasses to say “l’chaim.”

“Thank you,” Reb Shmuel smiled and nodded slightly. “Thank you very much!” After some more chattering, the hall became relatively

quiet. “I especially came to see that you aren’t lacking anything and to ask you that if anything gets finished off, such as this jug for example,” he went over to the nearest table and lifted the jug, “just call, ‘Akiva,’ and he’ll bring you whatever you need.”

The surprised Akiva, who was going from table to table with a tray of chickens in his hands, stopped and smiled. Reb Shmuel put the jug back and continued: “I also wanted to ask you to bless me and my kallah, that we should have a long happy life together!”

The assembled guests became most enthusiastic. People enduring day-to-day difficulties, dressed in tattered clothes, some of them disabled, began to bless him with tremendous *kavana*. Reb Shmuel lowered his eyes, replying “Amen” with great devotion.

“Sit with us,” R’ Reb Shmuel,” cried Leizer the fool. “Eat with us a little.”

“Thank you, Leizer,” Reb Shmuel placed his hand on his shoulder. “I’m fasting today, as is customary. If only I could!” He then motioned to Akiva to come to the door.

“Their brachos are just what you need, huh?” Zalman quietly laughed to himself.

“It does them good,” Reb Shmuel smiled. “Look how happy they are...”

Akiva managed to make his way between the tables to speak with Reb Shmuel. They talked for a few minutes, and Reb Shmuel handed Akiva a large sum of money. Then, Reb Shmuel suddenly cried: “The flowers! We said that there should be flowers on the tables!” He was very angry and Akiva became alarmed. “We had no time to arrange for flowers,” Akiva shrugged his shoulders.

“So, take the flowers from the wedding hall!” Reb Shmuel raised his voice. “When I said that this seuda has to be nicer than the wedding – what exactly did you think I meant?” ■

To be continued...