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# The Modern Day Mikdash

that publicity beforehand, Kalinin was forced to meet with him and give the permit. And, as mentioned, the permit came together with an order to the local government that no one had the right to appoint any *mashgichim* or command them to do anything; nor did the *mashgichim* have to report back to anyone else aside from Rabbi Schneerson, and if Rabbi Schneerson would decide that a certain batch of flour is not *Kosher L'Pesach*, he must be obeyed (although the flour would have to be returned or sold for a cheaper price).

## “HOME BASE”

This was all only possible because in my father's immediate surroundings; in his home, the atmosphere was conducive to this. My mother would constantly ensure that the atmosphere at home was such that my father would be encouraged to withstand any risk and danger, and continue on with his work, despite the very real possibility that the government would accuse not only my father but all those who were close to him, and specifically my mother, with “counter-revolutionary” activities and attempting to destroy the entire country's economy. In fact, there were government officials who had made threats of such nature, and my father was warned by close friends who had connections with the “*Cheka*” (the secret police) of the grave danger he was in (although coming to warn him of the planned punishment was in and of itself a “crime”). ■

(*Hisvaaduyos 5750 vol. 1 p. 62*)

*Reb Avraham Ber Bobroisker, born in 5586 was a chassid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash, and the Rebbe Rashab. An exceptional Oved and Maskil, as a child his father hired the best Melamdin of Homel for him. Although generally reticent by nature, when speaking about chassidus or stories he would open up, and would be more talkative.*

When I reached the age of six, my father took me to Lubavitch for Shavuot, before enrolling me in the cheder. I was informed of this after Pesach, and preparations for the trip began by Lag B'omer.

I remember well how I went in to the Rebbe with my father for yechidus. My father entered the Rebbe's inner room, and I followed him, holding tightly to the corner of his coat. When we approached the place where the Rebbe sat, he raised his eyes and gazed into Tattes's face, and into mine. My father started trembling, and I also became flustered and commenced weeping silently.

The Rebbe stretched out his holy hand to take the pidyon from my father, who stood in his place, paralyzed with fear and at a loss for what to do next. He remained standing in silence, head bowed, eyes flowing with tears. At first he managed to control himself, crying silently; within a few moments he broke into loud weeping. When I saw my father crying like that, my heart fell to pieces and I too began to cry in earnest as I looked into the Rebbe's holy face.

The Rebbe read the pidyon that my father had handed him, and studied it for some time. As he read it, he looked up into father's face, and into mine, from time to time. Then he spoke to my father. As soon as the Rebbe started speaking, Tatte stopped crying. When the Rebbe finished speaking, my father said, “Here is my son,” as he pointed to me and moved me closer to the Rebbe. “I am about to enroll him in the cheder, and I request that the Rebbe bentch him.”

The Rebbe studied me for a moment, then closed his holy eyes. After a few moments he opened them again, looked directly at me, and said, “Study diligently, and do not waste any time. May Hashem help you to become a lamdan and a chassid.” “Amen!” we both exclaimed.

As soon as we emerged from the Rebbe's holy presence we went to the small Shul. My father lifted me onto his shoulders and joined into the

dancing with the chassidim who were already there, rejoicing in song and dance. After having the zechus to go into the Rebbe for yechidus, chassidim would inevitably launch into joyous dancing.

Being accustomed to lively farbrengens in our home, I was not surprised by the vigorous dancing of the chassidim in the little shul. But why did they dance specifically after they emerged from the Rebbe's holy presence? Furthermore, why was such an audience in the Rebbe's private chamber called yechidus?

My mind became totally preoccupied with these two questions. When I noticed that my father was in such a good mood, I asked him my questions.

He replied with a question of his own. "Do you know about the Mishkan that Hashem told Moshe to build in the desert? Do you know about the special chamber that was there, in which the Aron HaKodesh and Luchos stood? Do you know that once a year, on Yom Kippur, Aharon the Kohen Gadol would enter that room to light the Ketores and to daven for all of Klal Yisrael?"

Being eager to show off my knowledge to my father, I quickly recited everything I knew about the Beis Hamikdash that Shlomo Hamelech built, about the Kodesh Hakodoshim, with the Aron and the Luchos, the Avoda performed by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, and especially his entry into this Kodesh Hakodoshim. When the Kohen Gadol pronounced the Shem Hameforash, all the people in the Azara would kneel and bow, touching their faces to the ground.

"Who went into the Kodesh Hakodoshim together with the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur?" my father tested me further.

"Only the Kohen Gadol, no one else!" I replied.

"And what did the Kohen Gadol do after he completed the Avoda of Yom Kippur?"

**My father lifted me onto his shoulders and joined into the dancing with the chassidim who were already there, rejoicing in song and dance**

"Our teacher, Reb Elimelech, told us that the Kohen Gadol was very wealthy, for he wore golden garments, made from his own personal gold. When he finished the Avoda in the Beis HaMikdash, he would go home accompanied by all the Yidden, with song and melody. When they arrived at his home, there were tables filled with all sorts of food and drink. Everyone joined in the most joyful celebration, for their sins were forgiven."

"And now," asked Father, "do we have a Beis HaMikdash and a Kodesh Hakodoshim?"

"No," I replied with a sigh, "Now we have neither a Beis HaMikdash nor a Kodesh Hakodoshim."

I looked up at my father, waiting to hear what he would say next about all of this. But before I could regain my voice, a new group of people arrived to the shul singing, and another dance broke out. When father realized that most of the men in this group were our townspeople

from Homel, he suddenly sprang up from his bench with outspread hands and joined their dancing.

I was startled by this, and didn't know what to do. My first impulse was to follow my father, but I was afraid I might be trampled under their feet. I retreated, and climbed up to stand on one of the benches. I noticed the wagon driver Reb Avraham Meir among the dancers, but when I called his name he didn't answer.

I stood on the bench and watched, as father danced in the middle of the circle. All around him were several of the Homeler Chassidim, among them Reb Avraham Meir the wagon driver and Reb Shlomo Peshe's. Each one danced with closed eyes, his right arm on his neighbor's shoulder, his left arm waving to the beat of the nigun issuing from his mouth. An indescribable aura of holiness surrounded the dancers' faces. The love and brotherhood, the bliss and the ecstasy, are unimaginable. Each one held his neighbor tightly, in friendship and harmony. I nearly burst apart with desire to join the dance.

Reb Avraham Meir passed me by a second time, and then a third. Each time, I called to him, but he didn't respond. But suddenly, someone grabbed me from behind. I felt myself flying through the air, and there I was riding on the shoulders of one of the dancers. Bending my head forward, I discovered that Reb Shlomo Peshe's was carrying me on his shoulders. My delight knew no bounds!

In a thunderous voice, the chassid Reb Zalman Yaakov Esther-Disha's (a leading citizen of Homel, he was the gabbai of the shul and was intimately involved in all affairs of the community and its insti-



tutions) suddenly cried out, “Here ends the first hakkafah! Now it’s time to daven Minchah.” Within seconds of this announcement the dancing ceased and everyone got ready for Minchah.

Father’s words about the Beis HaMikdash, the Kodesh Hakodoshim, the Aron, and especially his last question, “And now, do we have a Beis HaMikdash and a Kodesh Hakodoshim?” had left me somewhat sad and dejected. In my mind, a new question began to take shape: why was everyone so joyful, if the Beis HaMikdash remains destroyed and goats run around in the place where the Kodesh Hakodoshim once stood?

The men in the shul davened Minchah in melodious tones, each one showing off his vocal talents; they davened loudly, with the Simchas Torah nusach. Meanwhile, my thoughts were busy with my new question why are they so happy while the Beis HaMikdash remains destroyed? At the same time, I recalled all the stories [about the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash] our teacher Reb Elimelech had told us on the previous Tishah B’Av. I therefore decided to ask my father to explain it to me after he finished Minchah.

When the davening ended, Reb Zalman Yaakov Esther-Disha’s announced that Lchaim and cake were being served. I then turned to my father and said, “You asked me whether we still have a Beis HaMikdash and a Kodesh Hakodoshim. Well, nowadays we have neither, so why is everyone dancing so joyfully? After all, the Beis HaMikdash is destroyed, and goats run free in the holiest of places!”

When my father heard this question he replied, “You are right, my son, you are

very right. The Beis HaMikdash that stood in Yerushalayim is now destroyed. When the Yidden will do teshuvah, then Hashem will send us Moshiach, who will gather us from the four corners of the earth and take us together with our houses and our furniture to Eretz Yisrael, where he will rebuild Yerushalayim and the Beis HaMikdash. Until that time, we have neither the Beis HaMikdash nor the Kodesh Hakodoshim. In the meanwhile, Lubavitch is our Yerushalayim, the shul where the Rebbe davens is our Beis HaMikdash, and the room where the Rebbe sits is our Kodesh Hakodoshim. The Rebbe himself is our Aron HaKodesh, containing the Luchos.”

**“Well, nowadays we have neither, so why is everyone dancing so joyfully? After all, the Beis HaMikdash is destroyed...”**

Father’s solemn expression as he said these words made an awesome impression on me. Then, the realization struck me: my father and I had just been inside the Kodesh Hakodoshim, and we now found ourselves in the Beis HaMikdash. What a wondrous idea! Very awesome indeed!

As these thoughts about the Beis HaMikdash and the Kodesh Hakodoshim went through my mind, I heard my father speaking to me again. “Are you

aware, my son, that after Moshe deposited the Aron and the Luchos in the Kodesh Hakodoshim, he was able to hear Hashem speaking to him from between the K’ruvim on top of the Aron?”

“Yes,” I replied, “I heard Mother reading about this to my aunt.”

“The words that the Rebbe speaks to each chassid entering his room for yechidus, are the word of the Aibershter,” father continued. “Just as when the Kohen Gadol would go into the Kodesh Hakodoshim, he would be alone, so too, whoever enters the Rebbe’s room (which is now our Kodesh Hakodoshim) does so all alone. That’s why the audience is called yechidus. And just as the Kohen Gadol and all of Klal Yisrael rejoiced when he emerged from the Kodesh Hakodoshim, so too, we chassidim all rejoice and celebrate the great kindness that the Aibershter has shown us by giving us the privilege of entering our Kodesh Hakodoshim and receiving our Rebbe’s holy brachos. Remember well the words of the blessing the Rebbe gave you,” my father cautioned me. “Im yirtze Hashem, when we get home, you can tell Mother all the details.”

Before I could reassure my father that I remembered the Rebbe’s blessing, and was able to repeat it word-for-word, Reb Zalman Yaakov Esther-Disha’s approached us. He made my father go to the table and partake of the liquor and cake. He gave me a sweet cookie with some jam on it; I recited the blessing of Mezonos out loud, upon which my father and the others who were near enough to hear my blessing answered “Amen.” ■

*Hatomim vol. 1 p. 214*