



ב"ה עש"ק פר' נצבים, חודש אלול "מלך בשדה" (ה'תשס"ח?)

Dear Alumni Sheyichyu!

*Mazel Tov to Chezky Altein, on the occasion of his engagement.
Mazel Tov to Shmully Zirkind, on the occasion of his engagement.
May he use out the special period of Yokor Mikol yokor to its'
utmost! Mazel Tov to Rabbi Nochum Labkowski on the birth and
bris of his son Yitzchok Zvi, may he and his wife bring up their son
leTorah uleChupa uleMaa"t mitoch harchovo!*

*Mazel Tov to Chaim Rosenstein on the occasion of his putting on
teffillin with a 101 year old man (Good Going Chaim!)*

Thank you as always for the feedback, it is much appreciated.

An older woman once took ill and visited her physician. The doctor examined her, and concluded that she was suffering from a life-threatening illness, that could only be cured through eating meat from a swine (i.e. a *dovor acher*). The woman was aghast at hearing the doctor's conclusions. "What?! To eat *treif*?! Out of the question! I am but a simple woman, but I lived as a G-d-fearing Jewess all my life, and I am not about to stop now." In vain did the doctor try to impress upon her that her life was in danger, and that it surely couldn't be considered a sin under these circumstances. The woman remained adamant: she will not defile herself with non-kosher meat.

In desperation, the doctor urged her to consult with a Rov. The woman accepted, and presented the question to the Rov. The Rov listened to her, and responded that this is a case of *pikuach nefesh*, and she can eat the food without any qualms.

The woman had no choice but to accept the Rov's judgment, but she had one request: "Rebbe", she begged, "If I must eat this meat, if you tell me that this is what the Torah requires of me, I am ready to comply. But at least let me not have it more 'un-kosher' than necessary. I would ask the Rov to slaughter the animal, and not just let it be killed."

The Rov was touched by the sincerity and earnestness of the woman, and he obliged her. He took out a *chalef*, checked it to make sure it was Kosher, and duly slaughtered the *dovor acher k'halacha*.

When this was completed, the woman turned to the Rov again and entreated: "Rebbe, please be so kind, and before I eat it check the insides to ensure that the animal wasn't *treif*". Once again the Rov consented, and performed a proper *bedika* on the inner limbs of the animal (as prescribed in the *shiurei* Rambam of these days). Sure enough, the Rov found a problem in the lung; a *shailah*. The lady begged him to verify whether or not it's okay. The Rov examined the lung thoroughly, then perused his Yoreh Deiah. Finally he rendered his ruling; the problem in the lung is not a *treifah*.

"Rebbe", said the woman, "The *shchita* was fine, the *bedika* was fine, so can you reassure me that the animal is Kosher?"

"My dear woman", said the Rov, "I *shechted* the animal for you, I checked it for you, I did all that's in my power. But after all is said and done, it's still a *dovor acher*. To declare the *dovor acher* kosher, - to give a *hechsher* on a pig, - that is something I cannot do!"

Recently, I received a request from a certain *bochur* to add his email address to my list. I was shocked! What connection does this *bochur* have with internet? What need does he have for email? *Di zeide hot . . . in Nevel*, his ancestors were concerned with a Rashba and a Rambam, they were identified by their *yedios* in Torah, in Chassidus, in Halacha, and he wants to be identified as a dot-com or dot-org?!

It occurred to me, that if I ask him the question, he's going to blame it on me. Since I send out emails, he sees that as a *hechsher* on having an email address, and all that goes along with it.

I therefore want to issue this disclaimer; **internet is a *dovor acher***, it cannot be koshered! While in certain special circumstances, it can be necessary for a *balebus* to be involved with *dovor achers* for the sake of his livelihood (despite what we learn in Bava Kama "*Orur megadel . . .*"), while for Shluchim it can sometimes be a matter of *pikuach nefesh* to make use of the benefits of the internet to save lives, it doesn't change the fact that it is a *dovor acher*. For a bochur, without exception, it is *chazer treif!*

I know all the excuses: 'I only use my email for *miutzoim*', 'I only use the internet for *yiras shomayim*', 'I only use the internet when someone else is present', 'I only use the internet when my eyes are closed', etc. The

fact remains: any form of internet or email is exposing yourself to *nisayon* in the highest order.

My own justification/excuse (for sending out the emails) is that I said to myself: All these *bochurim* are using the internet anyways, they're emailing their friends anyways, they're emailing their *vechulu's* anyways . . so I might as well take advantage of it to keep in touch with my old *talmidim*/friends (those who have email anyways), and maybe once in a while share a *chassidisher vort*. But if even one bochur uses this as a *hechsher* on the *dovor acher*, as an indication that it's okay to have email etc., then it's *יצא שכרו בהפסדו* many times over.

[There's a certain prominent Shliach, who, when he first went out on *shlichus*, didn't have any *cholov Yisroel* available in his city. His practice was that once a week he would drive 45 minutes to a farm, and supervise while the farmer milked his cows, and then left with a supply of milk for a week.

Once, he arrived at the farm a bit late, and the farmer was already done with his milking. The Shliach was in a dilemma; to come back again entailed a great loss of time that he could not afford. He decided that this once he would take the milk anyways, what could be wrong, it was the same milk he got every week?

As he was about to leave, he noticed that his young son, who had accompanied him on the trip, was missing. Frantically, he began calling and searching for his son. When he was unsuccessful in finding him, he turned to the farmer for assistance. 'Maybe he went into the pig-pen to play', suggested the farmer. The Shliach was startled. 'I didn't know you

raise p..gs', he said to him. 'Sure I do', replied the farmer, 'as a matter of fact, the milk I gave you today is not from the cows, as usual, but from the pigs'.

The above is a true story, and whenever the Shliach repeats the story he cries, as he recalls how the Eibishter miraculously protected him from sin.

The same happens with the internet. Some guys think; what can go wrong, I'm only gonna use it for good things, I wouldn't do anything bad *ch"v*. He doesn't realize that with all the popups and shmopups etc. even someone who truly wants to get a cow, often ends up with a *dovor acher r"l*.]

I know that many *bochurim* are going to say; 'I don't know how to learn because my RY didn't know how to give a *shiur*'. If that is the case, I'll have to face retribution. Others will say; 'I have no *yiras shomayim* because my Rosh yeshiva was a *shin vov*. I'll have to concede; guilty as charged. But that I should have to go to *gehinom* for the time you guys spend on the internet, for that I'm not prepared. I give no endorsement, no *hechsher*, to this *dovor acher*. Anyone who indulges in it, is merely giving in to his own *nefesh habehamis*. Nothing can help; one just can't give a *hechsher* on a *dovor acher*!

[A woman once went crying to a Rov, saying that her son went crazy. 'What happened', asked the Rov, 'what did he do?' 'Oy Rebbe', wailed the lady, '*er iz in gantzen arop fun zinen*', he dances with *meidlach* and eats *chazer*'. The Rov said to her; 'if so, you can rest assured that he didn't go crazy. If you would tell me that he eats *meidlach* and dances with *chazeirim*, then I would have serious doubts about his sanity,

but the way you described him, he's not *chassidish*, but he's normal!

BOYS! If you're involved with the internet, that means that you're **dancing** with the ***dovor acher!***]

BOYS! If you're involved with the internet, that means that you're dancing with the dovor acher!

What is the root of this problem? The approach that *kechol hagoyim beis Yisroel*. Whatever *naarishkeiten* the rest of *oilam goilam* is involved in, right away becomes *mutar umitzva* for every *chassidisher bochur* as well. What happened to your pride? Where's your self respect?

The standards of the world around us don't have to become our standards. Just because other *bochurim* are going to the restaurant in Manhattan to unwind, that doesn't mean that it's the *chassidische* thing to do. Just because other *yungeleit daven* without a *minyan*, or without a hat and jacket (because there's *kamo vekamo rayos* that it's more *chassidish* to *daven* with just a *tallis* and no jacket . . .), that doesn't mean that you could okay the same practice for yourself. We have to strive to the highest standard around, not for whatever becomes 'in' because of all the wrong reasons.

The prominent *mashpia*, R' Chaim Shaul Brook, came to the Rebbe for Tishrei, with one of the charters from Eretz Yisroel. R' Chaim Shaul was responsible for the financial burden of a Yeshiva (the Yeshiva was his baby), and while he was in America, some of his *mekuravim* arranged for him to meet with a *gvir*, who was one of his supporters, in the hopes of getting a large donation from him.

R' Chaim Shaul didn't exactly dress very fashionably. He didn't wear a shirt, instead he had a long undershirt under his *kappote*. Before he went to meet the *gvir*, his *mekurovim* suggested that . . . basically that perhaps he should dress like a *mentsch*. But R' Shaul refused.

When he was in the house of the *gvir*, in the course of the conversation, the *gvir* himself asked him 'Why can't you dress a bit more properly?' R' Shaul got up angrily. 'What!', he exclaimed, 'for a few dollars, I'm going to change my *levushim*?!' And he ran out of the house.

The *gvir* ran after him, apologizing and begging him to accept his donation, but R' Shaul refused. (*I know, you want to know the name of the gvir, so that you can inform him that you're prepared to accept his money. I have the same question.*)

Kinderlach! Our *levushim* are the *levushim* of a *chossid*, the *levushim* of a Chabad *chossid*, the *levushim* of a *chossid* of the Rebbe! What few dollars, what kind of glitter, of enjoyment in the world, could possibly entice us to change our *levushim* (whether in *machshovo*, in *dibbur*, or in *maaseh* – in practice) in the slightest *r"l*!?

On Rosh Hashonoh before *tekios*, the *gabai* in 770 would always announce '*aleh zolen shtendig vissen un gedenken, vu men shteit un far vemen men shteit!*' We have to remember who we are, and who we belong to do, and make sure that nothing that we do compromises that in the slightest. As we stand at the threshold of another Rosh Hashono, let us re-examine who we are and what we stand for, and do the last-minute *hachonos*, so that we can present ourselves to the Rebbe as genuine Chassidim.

L'chaim! May we all take advantage of the *brocho* that the Eibishter bestows upon all of us on this last Shabbos of the year, and internalize the *brocho* to be *nitzavim*, to stand up with courage and with strength and conviction for what we believe in and what we stand for, and the Eibishter in turn should give us a KVT in all areas BGUR. Hatzlocho Rabo!!

Rabbi Akiva Wagner

P.S. In connection with the above, I am attaching an article that I originally wrote a few years ago.

IT WON'T HAPPEN TO ME

By A Desperate Parent

I am writing out of desperation and frustration, and in the hope that someone will be able to provide some useful advice. I will skip the preface and begin with the problem:

I live in a pleasant neighborhood, and I am part of a very close knit and caring community. Recently an individual moved into our neighborhood. This person happens to be a very intelligent and suave individual. While he can't in any way be considered an official Lubavitcher, he is without question a very good friend of Lubavitch, and has provided immeasurable assistance to numerous Lubavitcher *mosdos*.

He is very witty and entertaining, and extremely willing to extend a helping hand to anyone in need. He is always helping out kids with their homework, and in general giving them a good time and keeping them out of their parent's hair. He helped one woman fix a broken

sink, saving her thousands of dollars. And when anyone needs information about almost anything for any reason, he is a veritable fountain of knowledge.

Needless to say his popularity is soaring. Many in our community bless the day when he decided to join us.

But. . .

But it has been whispered for some time, and subsequently confirmed, that this individual has had a very shady past, one in which he dabbled with ideas VERY foreign to Torah and Judaism. Ideas that would be classified as *avodah zara*, one of the three cardinal sins of *yehoreg veal yaavor*. Ideas that he has never fully renounced to date.

When this information began coming to light there was a subtle but persistent campaign by various members of our community to warn parents against allowing their children to associate with this individual. I mean, we all continued to treat him royally, we continued to respect his virtues and varied talents, but the protection of our children should be our number one priority.

Right?

To my surprise and chagrin, the campaign met with little to no success. Not that anyone challenged the information. On the contrary, every yenta had their own little tidbit to enhance the developing story. But as far as concerns for the safety of our own children, these were dismissed as unrealistic and fatalistic.

Some time went by, and the teenage son of one of the fine and upstanding families in our neighborhood began showing laxity towards crucial aspects of Yiddishkeit, while espousing ideas that he had definitely not heard

from his Rebbe in Yeshiva. It took little investigation to trace the source of the problem to the above individual.

While sharing in the sorrow of a fellow Jew, I was certain that this cloud had a silver lining. At least now the danger would finally be recognized, and everyone else would take appropriate precautions for the future.

To my shock and dismay I was wrong. Again.

While feeling genuine sympathy for what their neighbor was experiencing, the overall response of the neighborhood parents was that this teenager must have been heading astray from the start, and they still didn't believe that their own children were in any risk.

The story doesn't end there.

Shortly after the above incident some new information came to light. This fellow's past escapades included even worse incident than what had previously become known (suffice it to say that there were others of the three cardinal *aveiros*). What's more, he had a record of improper contact with children in the past, with catastrophic results.

Undaunted by their earlier failures, some diehards embarked on yet a third campaign to show people the folly of their ways. And still nothing changed in our community.

Not that anyone questioned the information. Nor did anyone bring to light anything that could exonerate him. Yet everyone chose to look only at what they could see of him and of his interaction with their children, and he continued to be a welcome guest in the majority of the homes in our neighborhood.

And then came the last blow. It was discovered that he had been making available to some local children indecent publications.

By now I was certain that everyone would be convinced that this person was merely a demon disguised as an angel.

Could you believe that I was still wrong??!!

Though its true that many people, at this point, did see the light, there were many others who persisted in coming to his defense, pointing out that he didn't show anything to anyone who didn't themselves ask for it, and that if anyone is at fault it is the parents of the victims etc. etc.. They insisted on focusing on all of his positive qualities, pointing out that anyone seeking inappropriate reading materials would have easy access to them anyways, even without this persons help.

I still see this individual as a prominent Shabbos guest in most homes, and as an esteemed participant at all kinds of programs and functions (including children's functions, where he continues to have unsupervised interaction with local children).

I (and others) beg people: Don't let him into your house!! **KEEP HIM AWAY FROM YOUR CHILDREN!!** But alas our words are falling on deaf ears. The women promise to discuss it with their husbands. The men say they'll discuss it with their wives. **BUT NOTHING CHANGES.**

This is where my story ends, and my plea begins. It may or may not be my affair, but there is an injunction in the Torah *LO TAAMOD AL DAM REIECHO!* We just can't sit back passively and witness tens of families destroy their children slowly but surely.

What should we do?! What can we do?

All of the above is a true story. Not only that, but it is taking place not in one community, but in almost every community around the world. In fact, many of you are

Are we inviting a
demon (disguised
as an angel) into
our homes?

probably familiar with the individual in question. His name starts with a W. Three of them in fact. And his last name is always dotcom or dotnet or dotsomethingorother. He is the Internet a.k.a. chatrooms a.k.a.

email/instantmessaging. The invasive stranger from Cyberspace.

Surely you heard speeches decrying the dangers of the Internet. Surely you've heard from Rabbanim and Mechanchim about the great risks inherent in email and chat rooms. Surely everyone has read all kinds of articles lamenting the great damage that has actually been caused (to young and old alike) by various aspects of the Internet. Some articles may have even been very convincing (you know, the ones you downloaded from the internet so that you can email them to a friend).

And yet this vile object continues to be a welcome guest in the majority of Jewish homes. We continue to benefit from its multitude of services, from helping our children with their homework, to saving us money on plane tickets, to organizing our affairs.

It continues to hold a prominent place in many homes. All the while corrupting our youth, perverting their minds, and defiling the very essence of our family purity.

None of this is even a drop of an exaggeration. On the contrary: it is understating the problem. I don't think anyone today still questions the dangers entailed. And most people must know families who were personally impacted by this blessing of modern technology.

What more will it take for us to open up our eyes, to take action before its too late? How many victims do there have to be before we acknowledge that the danger is genuine? How many casualties before we pay heed to all the horror-stories?

The point of the above is very simple: If you care at all about the future and spiritual wellbeing of your children **GET RID OF THE INTERNET FROM YOUR HOUSE! BREAK THE MODEM! DESTROY ANYTHING THAT PROVIDES INTERNET ACCESS!** If the only way to do this is to get rid of your computer, then by all means **GET RID OF IT.**

At the very least download this article and email it to a friend.

And chalk up another credit to the Internet.



ב"ה ליל ועש"ק פר' תבא, "שבת סליחות", יום לחודש לחודש הגאולה,
חיים שנה, שנת "תהי" שנת חי עולמים"

Dear Alumni Sheyichyu!

Sholom U'Brocho!

Heartfelt wishes to haTomim Sholom Dov Ber ben Miriam for a complete and immediate refuah shleima. May this time of Shabbos Slichos, when we reconnect to the Eibishter beyond any past difficulties, be the power and strength to remove all traces of any gashmyus'dige difficulties as well, and give every koach to dance joyously to selichos on 2 healthy feet!

Mazel tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Eliyahu Morrison on the birth of their son. May they bring him up lTOveCHuMAA"t mitoch harchovo, and to be a true chayol! (If anyone is aware of any mazeltov's that I omitted please let me know).

Thank you as always for the feedback, it is much appreciated.

A Jew once came to the Tzaddik, R' Yisroel of Ruzhin.

"What do you need?" the Tzaddik asked him, "are you having difficulties with *parnosoh*, do you have health problems?" The Jew clarified: "Boruch Hashem, I have all that I need. My family is well, and I am very well to do".

"Why, then, did you come to me?" asked the holy Ruzhyner.

"I came because I want to become a chosid!", was the singular response. To the Tzaddik's request for clarification, the Jew shared his story:

"I am a businessman, I run a successful business and do very well. For some time, I needed to hire a helper, to ease the burden on me. I found a fellow, who seemed very honest and efficient, and made a very favorable impression on me (since we don't know his name, we'll call him Yankel).

"Yankel worked for me and was very successful, and I began trusting him with more and more aspects of the business. It came to the point that I was trusting him with every aspect of the running of the business, except the yearly buying trip to Leipzig, which entailed entrusting the buyer with a very large sum of money. Finally, I felt I was ready to trust him with that as well. Friends and acquaintances questioned the wisdom of this move, - did I really know him well enough for such a level of trust? But I felt confident.

"He went off on the trip, carrying a very large amount of funds that I had placed in his care...and he didn't return! All my efforts to uncover his whereabouts revealed only the fact that he had mentioned an intent to visit some relatives nearby, but nothing further was heard. Of course, my friends saw this as confirmation of the foolishness of my decision, but I still had the feeling that my trust in him was not misplaced. But the mystery of his disappearance remained unsolved.

"It was some time later that Yankel himself appeared to me in a dream, and clarified everything: 'I indeed went to visit some relatives nearby', he told me, 'when I suddenly became seriously ill. When I

realized that my end was near, I immediately approached the local Rov, and handed him the money. I explained to him that I was holding the money in trust, and was very concerned not to arrive in the World To Come with this debt on my conscience. I begged to the Rov to locate you and return the money to you, so that I could have a clean slate'.

'The Rov did make efforts to track you down but was unsuccessful, and the money stayed with him. As a result, unfortunately, I was sent to *gehinom*! One day there was a big commotion in *gehinom*, and many souls were removed, myself amongst them. I asked what was going on, and it was explained to me that that was the day of Yud Tes Kislev, and there was a great farbrengen taking place in Gan Eden, and the holy Magid was schlepping anyone who was connected to him out of *gehinom*, and bringing them to participate'.

'I asked, what has this to do with me, since I never had any connection with the Magid in my lifetime? And it was explained to me that I was born as a result of a *brocho* that my mother had received from the Magid, and therefore I am connected with him, and was pulled out of *gehinom* along with the other *neshomos*'.

'However, when I reached the gate to Gan Eden, I was denied entry, on account of my unpaid debt. I was given permission to approach you about this; - I am therefore begging you to settle the matter, so that I will no longer be in limbo'.

"I promised Yankel that I would attend to the matter. I was also extremely impressed by this Tzaddik who

was pulling all of his *chassidim* out of *gehinom*. I asked Yankel which Tzaddik currently alive is similar to the Magid.

"He told me: 'Here, in the "upper worlds", they hold R' Yisroel of Ruzhin in very high esteem'.

"I woke up in the morning, and immediately travelled to the Rov, who confirmed the story and gave me the money (so the debt should be taken care of), and from there I headed straight here to become your *chosid!*"

There are many of us who have an urgent need to be *schlepped* out of *gehinom*. And that applies in different ways to different people. Some people are, *lo aleinu*, enduring physical *gehinom*, in one of the areas of בני חיי ומזוני, - whether suffering health problems that fill their life with suffering or misery *r"l*, or *parnosoh* challenges etc. [and they should all be *schlepped* out of their respective *gehinom*'s *teikef umiyad mamosh!*].

[And some are enduring the *gehinom* of having the need to engage in fundraising in order to keep their lives or their *mosdos* afloat, which (for some) is a true *gehinom*, a real hell on earth].

But there is, I think, a more general *gehinom*, out of which we all need to be extricated. Let us try to analyze this a little better:

What is *gehinom*?

I think we can clarify that definition by knowing what Gan Eden is. And, I think we know very well what Gan Eden is, we learn about it frequently. Gan Eden is a place where there is *giluy Elokus*, where *neshomos* are

נהנין מזיו השכינה - where the pleasure of the souls there results from their experiencing G-dliness.

What, then, is *gehinom*? It would follow that *gehinom* is the lack of the above; - either a deficiency of (*giluy*) Elokus, or (and) the fact that even whatever G-dly experience is available isn't **enjoyed**, there isn't any נהנין מזיו השכינה.

Let's try to picture, for example, a shul in *gehinom* (no doubt *gehinom* has its' share of *shuls* and *shtiblach* of all sizes and styles (one may be called "Beis Knesses Anshei Gehinom," while another may be known as the "Chevreh Leitzim," and so on): Probably, during *davening*, one person is complaining that the *chazzan* is going too slow and the *davening* is taking too long. Someone else doesn't even know how long *davening* is taking because he is deeply engrossed in his messages on his phone. By one table they are deciding the best course to take for the governments of the world, and another table is suddenly deserted before the *chazzan* completed *shmoneh esreh* (because they're in a big rush, but, somehow, on the way out, they get caught up in a conversation or an argument and they completely forget about the time).

In short, although *davening* is their interaction with the Eibishter, with the *schechina*, they see no joy in that. There is no נהנין מזיו השכינה. Rather, the *davening* is viewed by them as a bore and a burden, a strain and a pain.

And there's similar phenomenon taking place in the schools of *gehinom*. Of course there are Yeshivas there as well (one of them is, undoubtedly, the famous Yeshiva that's mentioned in Pirkei Avos, - ישיבת בני כנסיות (של עמי הארץ), - we all know the interpretation in Hayom

Yom on בשכבך ובקומיך. But the students there are counting the hours until their next meal, or until they can play basketball. There is no enjoyment in the learning, - no **nehenin** *miziv hashechina*.

Gehinom is the state in which one's pleasures and disappointments are determined – not by how connected he is or isn't with the Eibishter, but – by the material aspects of his life. In fact, I think, it could be a bit more or it could be a bit less but, we all experience some *gehinom* in our lives.

And we all want – need – to be pulled out of *gehinom*. To be pulled out of our own *gehinom*.

This is very much the idea of Shabbos *slichos*: We all know the story, of the way R' Shmuel Munkes ridiculed the notion of waking up at midnight to *daven* for material needs. But, what then are we *davening* for, what is our ultimate objective?

Our objective is to appreciate Elokus, to be excited about the *mah tov chelkeinu uma no'im goiroleinu umah yofeh yerushoseinu*. Our goal to have a *geshmack* in learning Torah, a *geshmack* in a *vort chassidus*, a *geshmack* in *davening*, - and in anything and everything that connects us with G-dliness.

We are able to feel that, it is natural for our *neshomo*. It is absent only because of עוונותיכם מבדילים ביניכם לבין אלקיכם, - our not-good conduct sullied our souls and clouded our vision and hindered our ability to appreciate what is truly meaningful to us, it ruined our sensitivity to *ruchnyus* and *eidelkeit* (like when you crack your screen on your phone and you no longer see things on it the way they are meant to be seen...).

This is what really concerns us, and this is what we want to take advantage of this tremendous opportunity of Shabbos *slichos* for; - that the Eibishter should restore our system, remove the blemishes that are

*The Eibishter cleanses
our souls, so that we
can appreciate His
glory*

distorting our view and our vision, and bring back to us the appreciation of what's good and holy. We should no longer be pulled down by our negative behavior, but, instead, we should be able to

use Torah and *mitzvos* to soar to the greatest heights, to feel in them such joy and satisfaction that nothing else can be important anymore.

This is what we are crying out to Hashem about by *slichos*. This is why we cry out: ויודו פלאך, וינינום מחה נא, ויודו פלאך! What we want is to be יודו פלאך, to praise and acknowledge and recognize the wondrous greatness of Hashem, the way He is incomparably higher than all existence (as Chassidus explains the phrase in davening נורא תהילות עושה פלא, that the level of עושה פלא, of מפליא לעשות, is so completely beyond our understanding to the point of it causing us to be afraid to say praises to Him, - there, there can only be הודאה). But because of us having dirtied ourselves, we are desensitized to spirituality, - all that we recognize and appreciate are worldly matters.

But this is the opportunity to reverse this effect, it is when the Eibishter, in His Kindness and Goodness, cleanses the dirtying of our souls, וינינום מחה נא, so that we can appreciate His glory fully, ויודו פלאך.

In short, it is our chance to be *schlepped* out of our *gehinom*.

The first point is that we should know what this *motzoei Shabbos* – this coming week – is all about, know what we are seeking to achieve, and take proper advantage of the opportunity that we are given. But the further good news is that we have, Boruch Hashem, a Rebbe, and – to help out the process further, the Rebbe, too, *schleps* us out of *gehinom* (as we saw in the story). In fact, this is the main thing that a Rebbe is all about, and is what everything about the Rebbe really is.

Rabbi (Dr.) Yitzchok Bloch, from London, Ontario, a"h, would occasionally bring groups of students to the Rebbe. The Rebbe would speak to them, and, afterwards, they would have the opportunity to ask the Rebbe questions on anything that interested them. On one of these occasions, one of them asked the Rebbe "Rabbi, what do you do for a living?"

The Rebbe replied: "Where does electricity come from? In the Niagara River, near Niagara Falls, there are very powerful currents. Nearby there are plants that take these forces and energy and transform them into electricity. This is then brought by wires to every city. Then, there are smaller networks of electric cables that bring the electricity to each individual neighborhood, and, finally, to each individual home. This energy is able to provide each home with light and warmth. But even after the electricity is transported into the home, it will not have any effect until someone in the house turns on a switch.

"All this is true in a spiritual sense as well: In heaven there are "plants" that contain huge measures of spiritual energy. This energy is then transported, until, ultimately, it reaches every single Jewish

neshomo. It has the power to provide every person with warmth and illumination. However, in order to take advantage of this energy, the person must turn on a switch. I help people turn on their switches, and tap into the energy of their *neshomo*.

The *inyan* of the Rebbe is to raise us above our pettiness and materialism. He helps us access the warmth and

The Rebbe will schlep

us out of gehinom -

אבער בלייב נישט

קײן בעל חוב!

light that are available to us. He schleps us out of our *gehinom*.

We may say: ‘What connection do I have with the Rebbe, that I should be able to depend on his extricating me? Am I really a

proper *chosid* of the Rebbe, can I see that I’m really living my life the way he teaches me to? Isn’t it presumptuous to expect that he will pull me out [as the Alter Rebbe once remarked to Chassidim: “You are depending on me (to extricate you from your difficulties in the world to come)? You won’t even know the path to my Gan Eden!”].

But, if we are to use the definition of being connected as in the above story, then we can be much reassured. In the most literal sense: who, today, cannot claim **that** connection with the Rebbe? We are all here, in one way or another, as a result of the *brochos* of the Rebbe, and, in this sense, we are all connected (and are thus on his schlepping list). Whether ourselves, our parents etc. we can all find our very being to be traced – at one time or another to a *brocho* of the Rebbe.

And, how much more so is this true, if we interpret the idea on a bit of a deeper level: If we truly learn and take proper advantage of the Rebbe’s teachings – the *sichos* and *maamorim* and *farbrengens* etc. – in a way that they

change us as they are meant to, - that we actually “join the revolution”, and ensure that our personal *avodas Hashem* is influenced by what we learn from the Rebbe, then, in a spiritual sense as well we can truly say we are only here as a result of the Rebbe.

However, there is – as the story teaches us – one condition; - you can't have any existing debt. If we didn't take care of all past debts, then we may be denied entry to the great farbrengen, where Elokus is *bepshitus* and *olamos* are *behischadshus*.

What is our debt? The Possuk says ימים יוצרו ולו אחד בהם. We were each given tremendous *kochos*, we were endowed with unimaginable abilities. We all see very clearly that those of us who apply themselves to use out these *kochos* as they were intended, can boast accomplishments way beyond anyone's imagination.

But if *ch"v*, we aren't utilizing these abilities, then the debt remains unresolved. The *kochos* were given to us, and they weren't returned, in the form of an enhanced and improved *dira lo yisborach*. In that case, our entry to Gan Eden, where all are מזיו השכינה, may be barred.

The good news is, as the Rebbe said many times, אין הקב"ה בא בטרוניא כו', ואינו מבקש אלא לפי כוחן. We have the ability, and we have the potential, it is רשאין ויכולין, as Chazal said מכם ובכם הדבר תלוי. We need only to apply ourselves, to take advantage of these special times and tap in to our unique abilities, and the Rebbe will help us be liberated – both individually and collectively – from all of our *gehinoms* and replace them with the light and warmth of the *geulah ho'amitis vehashleima* now!!

L'chaim! May we all do our part to want to get out of *gehinom*, to appreciate the opportunity of this Shabbos and the coming days and weeks, and may the Eibishter remove all traces of *gehinom*, of *helem vehester*, from the entire world, with the immediate revelation of Moshiach Tzidkeinu TUMYM!!!

Rabbi Akiva Wagner

לזכות ר' ברוך מרדכי בן חיי אסתר לרפו"ש ורפו"ק ואיוש"ט מתוך בריאות
הנכונה וכט"ס

לזכות שד"ב בן מרים שי', לרפושו"ק תומ"י ממש, ואיוש"ט בטוב הנרוהנ"ג!
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