THE MOSHIACH PAGE



THE KIDS' VERSION

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In previous Moshiach Pages by Chanie Wolf, we learned that the true definition of *Geulah* is the revelation of *Elokus* in our world; thus, truly "wanting Moshiach" means striving to live life with the truth of *Ein Od Milvado*. This requires that we immerse ourselves in the study of *Chassidus* which teaches us to see the world through the lens of *Geulah*. -Ed.

I still recall that coloring book I received as a young girl. It had pictures of clouds and eagles, delicacies growing out of the ground, oversized fruit, and wolves lying with lambs. Yes, you guessed it—it was about the future era of Moshiach.

Years passed until I learned that *Geulah* means something a bit different than Fairyland.

Adults may tend to assume that the real *Geulah* is somehow beyond children, too much for them to handle. They won't get it, we assume, let alone care for it. Seeing Hashem? Only wanting to learn Torah and do *mitzvos*? Seriously now, which five-year-old would care for that? We had better stick to talking about the candy, we figure. Let them at least get excited about Moshiach on their level. Maybe one day, when they mature, they will develop an appreciation for *ruchnius*.

The shame is, we have it all backwards. Our children may be much more fit to accept the truth than we are.

The Frierdiker Rebbe tells: When the Rebbe Rashab was four or five years old, he went to his grandfather the Tzemach Tzedek on Shabbos *Parashas Veyeira* to receive a *brachah* in honor of his birthday. Talking about what he had learned in the *parshah* of the week, the young boy began to cry, "Why did Hashem reveal Himself to Avraham Avinu but He doesn't show Himself to me?"

The Rebbe notes that the fact that the Frierdiker Rebbe specified his father's age at the time of this story teaches us a powerful lesson in *chinuch*: The Rebbe Rashab revealed and enabled a new, *Geulah'dike* approach to *chinuch*. In our generation, even a child as young as four or five years—below the age of formal *chinuch*—can be taught to yearn for *Elokus* so deeply that he would cry for it. This only depends on one factor: the kind of *chinuch* he or she receives.

The Rebbe is talking about the average child—my child, your child. They are perfectly capable of crying over *ruchnius* the way they cry over their broken toys. They can get excited about the idea of seeing Hashem when Moshiach comes. They can scream "We want Moshiach now!" and mean that they want to meet the Rebbe. And they can be motivated to do more *mitzvos* purely for that reason. But it is up to us to educate them that way.

This is not to say that it is never appropriate to offer rewards to children or to tell them about the candies-growing-on-trees parts of *Geulah*. If it works, and it helps them do the right thing, it is perfectly acceptable to utilize the age-old method of *chinuch* advocated by the Rambam. But there is a higher road, a *Geulah* approach, and we need to know it is possible.

So what does *Geulah'dike chinuch* look like?

The Rebbe says that in our generation, basic concepts of Chassidus can be explained in a way that children understand. The Oneness of Hashem, *Ein Od Milvado*, constant creation, and *hashgachah pratis* can all be shared with preschoolers. The same for the ideas of two *nefashos*; the *beinoni;* and *dirah b'tachtonim*. Of course, we have to find the right language. But when we talk about Hashem throughout the day, thanking Him for what we have and asking Him for help when we need it, we make *Elokus* real to children. When we encourage them to have a discussion with their *nefesh Elokis,* we inspire them to make selfless choices. And when we talk passionately about how wonderful it will be when Moshiach comes and we get to learn Torah with the Rebbe, it will probably be we who will end up in tears when their pure *neshamos* light up.

Beyond active teaching, *Geulah'dike chinuch* is one where a child is surrounded by solid Yiddishe values and is both consciously and subconsciously being impressed by the truth of *Ein Od Milvado*:

The pictures hanging on the wall, the music and videos playing at home, the toys a child plays with and the style of the child's clothing are all opportunities to reflect Yiddishkeit as a priority.

Our topics of conversation at the table, what we do in our spare time and the way we spend our money leave their impression on the child's values.

When we ensure that the food they eat and the images they see are completely kosher, we nurture their pure *neshamos.*

When we radiate real enthusiasm for *davening*, learning Torah, doing *mivtza'im* and helping other Yidden, they mirror us.

A child who grows up in this type of environment is likely to reflect a *Geulah* reality at age two by calling coins "*tzedakah*" and a video screen "Rebbe." And at age five, he will naturally cry that he wants Moshiach to come already—and it is the real *Geulah* he is asking for.

So our children are not the ones with the problem. The question is, are we educated enough and inspired enough about *Geulah* to reveal the spark of Moshiach within them? ▪

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This tenth installment of The Moshiach Page is dedicated to our beloved Founder, Mrs. Brana Sheina Deitsch, a"h. Brana Sheina is shown here with her daughter-in-law Leah Deitsch (c) and a grand-daughter.

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