



Fall No More
Parshas Tazria

Many years ago, on a Friday before Shabbos, I got a message that a holy man, Rebbe Chaim Zawil of Reminitz, would be joining us for Shabbos in Migdal Ha'Emek. The Rebbe had lived under the tyranny of Communist Russia, and through those dark years was a role model and staunch defender of Jewish heritage and tradition.

To this day, that Shabbos remains engraved in my mind. The Rebbe was in silent ecstasy, standing in pray for long hours, with his head reaching the heavens.

Throughout the Shabbos we enjoyed *Me'in Olam Habah*, a taste of the World to Come. Diligently and with great enthusiasm, I wanted to make this special man as comfortable as possible at our Shabbos table so that he would truly understand how much we appreciated him joining us for Shabbos, as it is written: "He who wants to pour wine on the altar, should fill the cups of Torah scholars with wine."¹



We were also joined by some of my students, young men new to the Jewish traditional way of life who were eager to receive a blessing from the Rebbe.

One of them was Chezi. Some years ago, while practicing some traditions of the Far East, he had grown his hair exceptionally long, and though we persistently tried to persuade him to cut it he would not.

Following Shabbos, we held a beautiful Melave Malka² with music, stories and words of Torah. The Rebbe took notice of Chezi, and quietly asked me to my surprise: "Tell me, Reb Yitzhak Dovid, do you think that he would sell me some of his hair?" Sell? I didn't understand.

Again, the Rebbe asked: "How much would he like for his hair?"

I got up and spoke with Chezi, hoping my words would touch his heart: "A golden opportunity has come to you. The Holy Rebbe, who is known for his righteousness, is ready to bless you with tremendous blessings, but on condition that you sell him your mane."

Chezi hugged me and looked into his heart; I knew what he was asking himself. You see, Chezi suffered from epilepsy, and on a number of occasions we had to call for emergency medical services to care for him.

Yes, I told him, this is an opportunity second to none. You cut your hair and the Rebbe will bless you.

The decision was raging a battle in his mind. We found a quiet place to speak, and I said to him: "You are a young man who

studies the Torah, and you know there is a parsha called Metzora. When a person behaves inappropriately G-d sends him a *Negah*, a lesion, which appears on his skin. G-d does not desire his death, but he wants him to return to the proper

"Lesions would appear only on the skin or on hair. Why as that so? This is because G-d desires that when one sees himself he will notice that there is something wrong. This will in turn cause him to reflect on how he is acting, resulting with an awakening within him of a yearning to correct his mistakes."

"However", I added, "part of the process is that the person with an affliction must "be brought to the Cohen," not a physician, but one responsible for 'spiritual health. Why? Because such an affliction can only be diagnosed and treated by one who understands how the physical and spiritual interact. Therefore, his "healing" is dependent on the words

of the Cohen.

Chezi still did not grasp the meaning of my words, so I pressed on. "The next step in the "healing process" of one with this affliction is, "he shall shave off all his hair." He must shave his entire body, symbolically removing the external trappings that caused him to go astray. Chezi, I can not stress enough the opportunity before you, you can remove this troublesome exterior, and be blessed by the Cohen!"

Chezi finally spoke and asked "Is the Rebbe a Cohen? Opening a Torah, I showed him the commentary of Rashi: "You will have a Cohen in your days".³

A spark ignited in Chezi's eyes "I'm ready, Rabbi. I'm ready!" he proclaimed, as tears streamed down his cheeks. "Rabbi you know all too well how I am suffering from "the burden"; from my epilepsy. If the 'Cohen' promises to eliminate the disease, I will remove my hair, here and now!"

Together we approached the Rebbe and I shared with him Chezi's circumstances. The Rebbe raised his eyes, crying out: "Of course he falls (has seizures). He carries such a burden on his head. If you will reduce this burden and keep the Shabbos, he will not fall again!"

Chezi proclaimed his dedication to Shabbos observance and his willingness to cut his hair. Scissors were brought and we had an *Upshirin* (traditional first haircut) for Chezi.

The Rebbe poured glasses for L'chaims, and from that moment the epilepsy vanished.

Today, Yechezkel is a prominent Torah scholar in Northern Israel, the father of a large family, walking without any fear of falling.

¹ Tractate Yoma 71a

² Traditional festive meal on Saturday night, accompanying the Shabbos queen as she departs.

³ Devarim 26:3