



### SICHA – 6 TISHREI 5742

*Free Translation\**

My father was exiled by the Communist Government to a place where no ink was available. My mother, whose Yahrtzeit I observe today, would go out into the fields and pick certain herbs, which, she was told, or maybe she knew on her own, could be used to create ink.

She would gather these herbs, she would mix them and grind them, and create the ink which my father used to write his commentaries.

Since paper was not available either, he penned his comments on the margins of the few books he had with him and on the few pieces of paper he was able to collect.

The end of the story is, when he passed away, my mother took these writings with her, which was an act that could have been punished with death.

Since she had been exiled with her husband, if they were to find these writings, these manuscripts, on her person, even if they did not know what the writings were, the first thing they would do in that country is assume guilt. When they do not know what a person is about, first of all, they place the person under arrest! When they have some free time, they investigate what is written in the manuscripts, whether they are against the government or not, and rule accordingly.

This is how any person walking the street would be treated. How much more so a person who had been under surveillance for many years, the wife of someone who had been exiled for many years, because his actions in spreading Judaism were interpreted as counter-revolutionary!

In spite of all this, she took the pages and the books with her, endangering herself in a series of events, until finally, through various means and ways, the writings reached these shores sometime after she herself arrived.

It is in her merit that the studies continue to this very day. Every time someone studies the writings, it is to her merit. To quote the Talmud: "The wine belongs to the host, but thanks are given to the waiter" who serves it. The study is to her merit, it brings her soul to even higher levels than she would have attained otherwise.

What does this all teach us? What do the "living take to heart"?

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\*) Taken from the Subtitles that appear on the screen



## פרשת האזינו

When we find ourselves challenged by what appears to be an insurmountable obstacle, –insurmountable not due to negative thinking, rather based on the experience of yesterday, last year, two years ago, or the experience of an entire generation.

As we see with my mother: In that particular situation there was no way out –in the “natural order” of things– to bring the manuscripts across the border, and the outcome of that; that they should be published and learned from etc.

There was not even a possibility for any Jew to leave that country, certainly not someone who had been in exile, a Jewish woman who had been under surveillance and was still under suspicion. Particularly since she carried our family name, which alone was a “certificate,” that the person belongs in prison or to be denied of freedom to travel and certainly to be denied an exit visa.

And although it was necessary for her to use a false name on her passport, but knowing how carefully they scrutinize passports in that country, changing the name was actually effective, only because it was purposely overlooked. They kept it at lower bureaucratic levels, with lower officials, so they let her out. But their superiors knew of all the “tricks,” they knew she was leaving but they did not care. Why did it not bother them? Because “the hearts of kings and ministers are in the hand of G-d.” This is what G-d wanted, so it came to be. As quoted earlier: “Many are the thoughts in the heart of man, but it is G-d’s plan that prevails.”

But what we want to derive from the Yahrtzeit, is not a lesson of how G-d behaves, rather a lesson on how a Jew is supposed to behave.

And that is: when we find ourselves in a situation, a dilemma, in which it would appear that in spite of our best intentions, in spite of our desire to do good, what is proper and necessary, something that G-d’s Torah, the Torah of Truth, demands of us –as it was for my mother when for fifty years in a row in that country, at that time, no one was able to smuggle anything across the border certainly not an elderly woman with manuscripts.

Fifty consecutive years, which Torah refers to as an “eternity,” people tried to leave and failed, except for a handful of individuals who weren’t carrying manuscripts. One would think that it would be a waste of time to put all the effort into an attempt to accomplish something that was impossible for fifty years. Since “the action is of the essence” why waste time doing what has very little chance of succeeding, when you can better accomplish easier things with less effort rather than attempt that which has been unsuccessful for years?

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My mother’s story demonstrates that when a Jew resolves not to be intimidated by difficulties and follows the Torah’s instructions –then sooner or later, it may take a day, a



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month, a year, or more— but in the end, the word of G-d prevails, and G-d's mission is fulfilled, and he has the merit to be the agent through whom it happened.

And the result benefits not only an individual, or a few people—but many people. As we see from the story, that her efforts benefited the public, bringing an increase in the study of Torah, the fulfillment of Mitzvot, the inspiration for prayer, and the contemplation on “Know the G-d of your father” which moves us to “serve Him with a whole heart.”

