

**VA'ETCHANAN**

Av 12, 5772

**DISCOVERING A MYSTICAL PERSPECTIVE IN THE FRENCH RIVIERA**

One hundred years ago the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe left Czarist Russia (on the advice of his physicians) to spend a few months in the beautiful city of Menton in the French Riviera. On the train ride to Menton he told his son, the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, that it was his intention to discover a new, more profound underlying dimension to Chassidic philosophy.

Being true to his word, the Rebbe, during his stay in Menton, laid the basis for a thesis - called "5672" after the year it was authored - that was to become one of the most comprehensive and systematically structured presentations on mystical philosophy.

I write about this story today, because divine providence has brought me to this part of the world and I find it intriguing that of all places, it was this city of Menton, adjacent to Monaco, in the French Riviera, where the Rebbe had the inspiration which led him to author one of the most important mystical works ever written.

But as we all know and deeply sense, there is purpose and meaning in everything that happens in this world both on the macro and micro levels.

One of the most significant components and contributions of Chassidic philosophy is its ability to help the ordinary human being to discover the underlying essence in all phenomena. It is also this essence which both gives it vitality and is its true nature.

So when looking at something using our "ordinary lenses", we observe something that looks quite simple and ordinary. If however we work on our vision and acquire our "mystical lenses", we would discover something very special and extraordinary.

The same is true with regard to evaluating the inherent goodness of something. Even when on the outside it appears to have little value or on the contrary, it seems to be without any merit at all, if we would put on our "mystical lenses" we would discover profound value that is trapped inside and waiting to be unlocked.

It is with this in mind that we can truly appreciate the power of "*Shabbat Nachamu*" (Shabbat of Consolation) which occurs on the Shabbat after the ninth of Av, the most tragic day in the Jewish calendar. For true consolation can only be achieved once we discover the profound underlying reality of the tragedies we experience. Inherent in all the challenges and setbacks we face in life, lies the seeds of opportunity which enable us to rise to greater heights. We just have to wear the corrective lenses.

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3<sup>rd</sup> August 2012

Sedra: **Va'etchanan**

Shabbat Begins: 20.31pm

Shabbat Ends: 21.39pm

Perhaps this is also the significance of why the Lubavitcher Rebbe discovered the most profound Chassidic Insights in the French Riviera, not a place normally associated with rich Jewish life and teaching. For it was precisely this fact that the Rebbe was teaching us; our purpose in life is to elevate the world around us by giving purpose and meaning even to our most mundane and earthly experiences.

*By Yosef Vogel*

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