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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“There is nothing so whole as a broken heart,” said Menachem Mendel of Kotzk. Our beloved author, Rabbi Burt Jacobson, knew the Kotzker Rebbe well, as he knew all the sources of early Hasidism. We are publishing Burt’s magnum opus, *Living in the Presence: A Personal Quest for the Baal Shem Tov*, this November.

But today, all of us at Monkfish are brokenhearted, knowing that Rabbi Burt died two days ago on Shabbat.

We weren’t surprised Burt died. Everyone knew he had pancreatic cancer, and it was in the final stages. Burt was in hospice. But we are sad today.

Rabbi Burt Jacobson’s memory is a blessing. זיכרונו לברכה.

Rabbi Burt Jacobson was a rabbinical student at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, where he studied with Abraham Joshua Heschel, and was mentored in Kabbalah and Hasidism by Rabbi Arthur Green. After moving to California in the early 1970s, Burt joined with Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and others in founding the Jewish Renewal movement, helping to reintroduce Jewish spirituality and mysticism in the U.S. and throughout the world.

In 1984, Jacobson founded Kehilla Community Synagogue in Berkeley, which presently has a membership of 560 families. One of his tasks at Kehilla was the creation of new Jewish liturgy that was both universal and non-patriarchal. Out of this work he co-edited with Rabbi Leila Berner the first liturgy for Jewish Renewal. Rabbi Burt was also instrumental in designing the curriculum for the Rabbinic Training Program of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal.

Jacobson was a student of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, for more than fifty years. He lived in El Sobrante, California with his wife, Rabbi Diane Elliot.

Living in the Presence: A Personal Quest for the Baal Shem Tov, by Rabbi Burt Jacobson, will publish on November 19, 2024.

Yours truly,
Everyone at Monkfish Book Publishing
Rhinebeck, New York