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# THE BIRTHDAY OF THE REBBE RASHAB

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



## SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'YEIRA, CHAF MAR-CHESHVAN, 5750

1. On the previous Shabbosos, the importance of gathering together on every Shabbos to study Torah communally was mentioned. Similarly, it was suggested that one subject — the beginning or the conclusion of the weekly Torah portion — should be studied by all the communities. Accordingly, it is appropriate to focus on the first verse of the *parasha* and explain it in a manner which relates to the conclusion of the *parasha*.

Also, since this Shabbos falls on the 20th of MarCheshvan, it is associated with the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab, which also falls on this date. A birthday is a day when “the spiritual source of one’s soul shines powerfully.” Hence, this day is important to us, for the Rebbe Rashab was the predecessor of the *Nasi* of our generation, the Rebbe Rayatz, and he was the one who appointed him as the director of the Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim.

This connection is brought out by the following story which was related by the Rebbe Rayatz: When the Rebbe Rashab was a young boy, he went to his grandfather, the Tzemach

Tzedek, to receive a blessing in connection with his birthday. When he entered his grandfather’s room, he began to cry. His grandfather asked him why he was crying, and he explained that in *cheider*, he had learned that G-d had revealed Himself to Avrohom and he was upset — why G-d did not reveal Himself to him?

This story can be understood in terms of Rashi’s commentary on the opening verse of the *parasha*, “And G-d revealed Himself to Avrohom.” Rashi states: “[G-d came] to visit the sick. Rabbi Chama bar Chanina said: It was the third day after his circumcision and the Holy One, blessed be He, came and enquired about his well-being.”

We must understand, why did the circumcision cause Avrohom to fall sick? As explained in the previous *farbrengen*, the great happiness and joy which Avrohom should have felt at meriting to fulfill G-d’s commandment should have prevented him from feeling any pain. We see a parallel to this in *halacha*: Though Shabbos is intended to be a day of pleasure, when a person has a disturbing dream, he is allowed to fast on the Shabbos because his

fasting will give him more satisfaction than eating. Though the fast is connected with discomfort, the person’s emotional state is such that undergoing this discomfort is what will bring him pleasure. Similarly, in the present instance, the happiness Avrohom felt at fulfilling G-d’s *mitzva* should have transformed his discomfort into pleasure.

It was explained that since G-d desired that the covenant established through the *mitzva* of circumcision permeate through the totality of our beings to the extent that it effects our actual flesh, it was necessary that Avrohom let himself experience the feelings that the circumcision naturally brings.

Nevertheless, the question still arises: The fulfillment of *mitzvos* is intended to develop perfection in every aspect of a person’s soul. That spiritual perfection should, in turn, be reflected in every aspect of one’s body. In particular, in regard to the *mitzva* of circumcision, G-d told Avrohom, “Proceed before Me and become perfect.” If so, why should a *mitzva* which is intended to bring out perfection within a person cause him to become sick, so sick that on the third day, the sickness became

stronger, and G-d Himself had to “visit the sick?”

To understand this concept, it is necessary to explain the concept of G-d’s visiting the sick: In *Or HaTorah*, the Tzemach Tzedek explains that the source of sickness is the soul’s being lovesick out of a desire to cling to G-d. [The Hebrew word for sick, “*choleh*,” is numerically equivalent to 49. There are 50 Gates of Understanding. Thus, when a person has acquired only 49, he becomes sick, yearning for the completion he lacks.] The remedy for this sickness is the revelation of G-dliness. This is intimated in the Ramban’s commentary on our *parasha*, which explains that G-d’s revelation to Avrohom healed him from the circumcision.

Based on the above, we can understand the connection between the revelation of G-dliness and visiting the sick. Through the circumcision, Avrohom reached a higher spiritual level, the 49th Gate of Understanding. This made him “sick,” “lovesick,” yearning for the 50th level.

To elaborate: The *mitzva* of circumcision came after Avrohom’s service of leaving “his land,” “his native country,” and “his father’s home,” i.e., after he completed the service of departing from his previous state (even when that state is itself a level of holiness), in order to proceed to “the land which I (G-d) will show you,” i.e., to become one with G-d’s will. The *mitzva* of circumcision demonstrates how this union with G-d is reflected in “a covenant in your flesh.” This brought Avrohom to the level of perfection.

This perfection, however, reflects only the perfection that can be accomplished by a creation, what a creation can achieve with its own efforts (which relates to the 49th Gate of Understanding). Thus, the

possibility of sickness exists, i.e., one yearns for the fiftieth level which cannot be reached by man’s own efforts.

On this basis, we can understand why the perfection Avrohom achieved through the circumcision brought sickness. It was the reaching of the 49th level, the highest level that could be achieved through man’s own efforts, which led Avrohom to the intense yearning for the 50th level. This yearning was so intense that he became “lovesick,” which, in turn, was reflected in sickness on a simple level. He was healed from this sickness by the revelation of

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G-dliness, i.e., the revelation of the 50th level.

The words the Torah uses to describe this revelation, “*Va’yeira eilav Havaya* — Hashem appeared to him,” are each significant.

The use of the word “*va’yeira*” (appeared), as opposed to “*machazeh*,” an Aramaic translation of the word, implies that the revelation was direct and manifest.

“*Eilav*” (to him) implies that the revelation permeated Avrohom’s entire being. That is, his existence was not nullified by its power; rather, he was able to accept the revelation

and make it part of his being.

“*Havaya*” is the most sublime of the names of G-d. The revelation to Avrohom came from the highest level of G-dliness.

Combining all three concepts suggests that the revelation of the highest levels of G-dliness was revealed in the most complete manner and permeated the totality of Avrohom’s being. Such a lofty and complete revelation is only possible because it emanates from the 50th level, the level that transcends all the *sfiros* and is totally beyond the frame of reference of a created being.

The 50th level is a simple point, totally above all dimensions, and yet including within it all the length, breadth, and depth that is found within all the creations in the spiritual realm. This point represents, in the Ramban’s words, “the truth of His being,” from which “came into being all existing entities.”

In the personal world associated with our service, this concept can be explained as follows: Although a person must prepare himself to receive the 50th level through *bittul* (self-nullification), the “lovesickness” described above, nevertheless the revelation of the 50th level, does not nullify a person’s individual existence. Rather, it permeates through the totality of his being. Since, “the Jewish people and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one,” G-d’s essence is reflected within the Jew.

2. The Torah relates that this revelation took place “in the plains of Mamre,” i.e., it also had an effect on the surrounding environment in which Avrohom lived.

The relation of one’s spiritual level to the world in which one lives is reflected in the closing verses of the *parasha*, as well. After the Torah

relates the great *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice) of the *Akeida* (the binding of Yitzchok), it lists the descendants of Nachor, concluding with the mention of Maacho. Our Sages relate that the latter name is an acronym for the phrase, “Who reigns over the entire world.”

This implies that the process in which the *bittul* and *mesirus nefesh* (symbolized by the circumcision) emanate from the essential point of the soul to become a fit vessel to receive the revelation of the 50th Gate of Understanding (G-d’s revelation to Avrohom) is not self-contained. Rather, since the 50th level is a point beyond all dimension — above the boundaries of above and below — it, therefore, includes everything, from the highest point until the lowest levels and brings about a unity between those two opposites.

This concept is also reflected in the opening verse of Parshas Chayei Sara, which we begin to read in the *Mincha* service. That verse states that Sara’s life lasted “one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years.” Each of these three numbers is significant: 100 refers to the supra-intellectual powers of will and pleasure; twenty, to our mental faculties, wisdom and understanding; and seven, to our seven emotional potentials — thus including every aspect of our personalities. In Sara’s case, the quality of *mesirus nefesh* was such that it permeated through each of these potentials.

Furthermore, Sara’s service had an effect on her portion of the world as implied by her change of name. Previously, she was called Sarai which means “My ruler.” Changing her name to Sara, “the ruler,” i.e., “the ruler of everyone,” emphasizes the influence she exerted on the world at large. This shows how the quality of *mesirus nefesh* can permeate, not only

through the totality of one’s own personality, but can be extended further and influence one’s surrounding environment.

In this context, we can see the connection between the three portions Lech Lecha, VaYeira, and Chayei Sara: Lech Lecha represents the service of *bittul* and *mesirus nefesh*, leaving one’s previous state. This leads to VaYeira, the revelation of the essential point of G-dliness. Chayei Sara alludes to the reflection of that essential G-dliness in every aspect of our personalities.

3. The above concepts also share a connection to the present date, the

## ***On Shabbos VaYeira — particularly, when it falls on the 20th of Cheshvan — each one of us should think over the story of the Rebbe Rashab’s crying...***

20th of Cheshvan, the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab and the story of his crying related above. The Rebbe Rashab told the Tzemach Tzedek why he was crying, “In *cheider*, I learned that ‘G-d revealed Himself to Avrohom.’ Why doesn’t G-d reveal Himself to me?”

This story implies that the “lovesickness” that possessed Avrohom after his circumcision also affected the Rebbe Rashab. Indeed, his desire was powerful enough to move him to tears. Since this story occurred in his early childhood, it is self-understood that as the Rebbe

Rashab matured and experienced various revelations of G-dliness, his thirst and desire grew to reach even higher levels until he reached the ultimate peak, the revelation of the 50th Gate of Understanding. This approach should serve as a lesson to all his followers, teaching them not to remain content with the spiritual level they have achieved, but rather to constantly strive to rise to higher peaks, going from strength to strength.

Although the Rebbe Rashab displayed this powerful thrust of yearning, utterly nullifying himself to G-d, his service also reflected the importance of drawing down influence into the totality of his personality and into the world at large. This is emphasized in his name, Sholom Dov Ber. Sholom (“Peace”) is one of G-d’s names, and reflects the essential point that includes the totality of existence, as our Sages declared, “Sholom is equivalent to everything.” Thus, it is also drawn down and reflected in the lowest levels, even in the flesh of our physical bodies. This is connected with the Rebbe Rashab’s second name Dov Ber, which combines the Hebrew and Yiddish equivalents of “bear.” Our Sages explained that a bear is “over-laden with meat,” i.e., it reflects the lowest levels.

The thrust on relating G-dliness to the world can also be seen in the Rebbe Rashab’s activities. The Rebbe Rashab placed a heavy emphasis on explaining Chassidic subjects in a manner that could be understood and comprehended by human intellect. Similarly, he was the one who founded the *yeshiva* Tomchei Tmimim, which is dedicated to studying Chassidus in a systematic and organized manner, just as one studies a subject in Nigla (the revealed, legal realm of Torah study).

The Rebbe Rashab placed an

emphasis on extending the essential connection beyond the intellect, effecting a person's emotions and also his deeds and actions. This is also reflected in an effect on the world at large. Thus, the students of Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim became "soldiers of the House of David," spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus outward. This was carried further by the Rebbe Rayatz, the successor to the Rebbe Rashab and the *Nasi* of our generation, until Chassidus has been spread throughout the world, revealing how G-d "reigns over the entire world in His glory," as alluded to in the name Maacho, as explained above.

The above provides each of us with a practical directive. On Shabbos VaYeira — particularly, when it falls on the 20th of Cheshvan — each one of us should think over

the story of the Rebbe Rashab's crying and realize that regardless of the level he has already reached, he must strive to reach an even higher rung. This can be accomplished by increasing his Torah study, both Nigla and Chassidus, in particular the Chassidus of the Rebbe Rashab, fulfilling *mitzvos b'hiddur*, and spreading the wellsprings of *Yiddishkeit* and Chassidus outward. This should be done by gathering together as a community with *ahavas Yisroel* as the Rebbe Rashab stressed in *Kuntres Heichaltzu*.

Added potential for such service is granted this year, 5750, *Shnas Nissim* (A Year of Miracles). The Hebrew for miracles, *neis*, also means "lift up." Thus, it relates to the efforts to rise above one's previous level mentioned above. It also shares a connection to the revelation of the

50th level mentioned above for the letter *Nun* in *neis* stands for 50. This also is connected with the concept of Maacho, extending one's spiritual service to include one's environment, since the intent of "A Year of Miracles" is to infuse "the year," one's everyday routine, with miracles.

This will bring the most important miracle, the coming of Moshiach. His coming will be hastened by the service of *Heichaltzu* as performed by "the soldiers of the House of David" in their efforts to spread Chassidus. The shout of "*Ad masai?!?*" (until when?!), which they will inspire, reflects the great yearning for G-dliness, a yearning that will only be satisfied by the revelations of the Messianic era. May it be now, immediately.



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# ...BUT I'M ONLY FOUR-AND-A-HALF YEARS OLD!

BY BORUCH MERKUR

When the Rebbe Rashab was only four or five years old, he approached his grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, on Shabbos Parshas VaYeira – the Shabbos when we read the Torah portion beginning with the words, “And G-d appeared to him” – and he began to shed tears, saying, “why is it that G-d appeared to Avrohom Avinu, but to us he does not appear?!”

The Tzemach Tzedek answered, “When a righteous Jew, at the age of ninety-nine, resolves that he must

*Even a young child must yearn to see this Divine revelation – and even to the point of tears!*

circumcise himself, he deserves that G-d appear to him.”

\* \* \*

At first glance, this story seems to emphasize that G-d only appears to a very special kind of *tzaddik*, a righteous Jew who has reached the very heights of spiritual achievement, the level of devotion and self-sacrifice of Avrohom Avinu, who, “at the age of ninety-nine, resolved that he must circumcise himself.” Anyone else, however – even a *tzaddik*, such as

the Rebbe Rashab, who, as we can see from this story, was so holy that even as a child he was moved to tears over the fact that G-d does not appear to him *in the same way* that he appeared to Avrohom Avinu – anyone else besides someone at the level of Avrohom Avinu would seem to have no chance of G-d appearing to him.

But if this G-dly revelation is completely unattainable to the vast majority of Jews – all those Jews who have not yet reached the level of Avrohom Avinu – what are we meant to learn from the opening words and the very namesake of this week's *parsha*, “And G-d appeared to him”?

So the Rebbe explains that when a Jew learns these words, “And G-d appeared to him,” he must know that this verse is truly directed “to him” (for it does not say that “G-d appeared to Avrohom” but that “G-d appeared *to him*”). Every single Jew, being the descendent of Avrohom Avinu, is the eternal inheritor of the covenant Avrohom made with G-d, and every Jew is likewise the eternal inheritor of Avrohom's spiritual fortune. Therefore, we must take it to heart that in the same way that G-d appeared to Avrohom Avinu, He also appears to us – whether we perceive it or not!

So, although G-d appears to us, the question still remains: how do we open our eyes to see Him?

To this question, the Tzemach

Tzedek answers (in the story above) that we must work on ourselves so that we “deserve” it, we must strive to make ourselves fit for G-d to appear to us in a way that we can actually see Him.

When a Jew considers that “G-d appears to him,” this arouses a great desire in him to actually behold this revelation. And as we learn from the

*There is presently – not only the existence of Moshiach in the world, but also – the revelation of Moshiach. Now we must simply receive our righteous Moshiach!*

above story, even a young child must yearn to see this Divine revelation – and even to the point of tears!

With the force of this desire, we can strive to become fit for such a revelation by working to refine ourselves through the resolve to “circumcise” ourselves, to sanctify

(Continued on page 10.)

even our physical bodies and our physical possessions, to make them fit vessels for the revelation of G-dliness.

Similarly, with regards to the imminent Messianic Redemption, there is right now within the world the actual existence of the Messianic

King, as is known: “In every generation there is someone from the Tribe of Yehuda who is fit to be Moshiach...and when the time arrives, G-d will be revealed to him and send him... Were it not for negative circumstances that delay and hold him back...he would reveal

himself and come in actuality.”

And as the Moshiach of our generation has said, we have already finished and completed all manners of Divine service, and we are presently standing ready to receive Moshiach, for in these days, all

## RETHINKING THE BIG MISTAKE OF THE CHILDREN OF MAN

*(Continued from last week.)*

“Noach was a righteous man,” says the Torah, but the Sages add, “had Noach lived in the generation of Avrohom Avinu, he would not have amounted to anything.” At this point, any half-decent historian, would be quick to raise the objection, “but Noach did live in the generation of Avrohom! It even says so explicitly in the commentary, “Avrohom was fifty-eight when Noach died.” (Also, take note of the interesting mnemonic: 58 is the same numerical value of “Noach”).

To answer this question, we must first review the subject of last week’s “Editor’s Corner”: the first chapter of Rambam’s “Laws Concerning Idolatry.”

### REVIEWING OUR HISTORY

Rambam begins with the story of the origin of idolatry: “Near the very beginning of time, the children of man – and even the wisest among them – made a big mistake. ‘Since the Alm-ghty created the stars and constellations to govern the world and the forces of nature,’ they reasoned, ‘and since He exalted them by placing them in the heavens, surely it is the will of G-d that we should also praise and glorify them.’“

Next, Rambam details how, “after many, many years, false prophets began to surface...who claimed that G-d was commanding mankind to serve the stars.” Before long, the children of man fell to such depths that “with the passage of time, the most holy and awesome name of the true G-d was forgotten. Everyone believed that their was no G-d other than the idols they worshipped.”

And then Rambam details at length the revolutionary approach of “the pillar of the world,” Avrohom Avinu: *He did not have a teacher and he was not instructed on any matter. He was born and raised in Uhr Kasdim, amongst the idolaters and the fools. Indeed, his very own father and mother were idolaters. But even when he was still very*

*young, a child of only three years, his mind began to delve into the nature of existence, thinking and probing day and night, until he began to challenge the very foundations of the prevailing understanding of the time. He wondered: “Is it not foolish to maintain that the constellations revolve without the assistance of any external force? Surely it is impossible for them to have set themselves in continual motion!”*

*Eventually Avrohom conceived of the true path. He knew that there is one G-d, and that it is He who animates the entire universe. He created everything, and that in all of existence there is no G-d besides Him.*

Then Rambam writes about Avrohom’s success in publicizing and “implanting this essential principle,” the principle of monotheism, “in the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands,” and how “Avrohom...taught it to Yitzchok, his son. And Yitzchok taught his son, Yaakov...and Yaakov Avinu, taught all of his sons,” and so on, all explained in great length.

### RAMBAM WRITES A STORYBOOK?!

In writing the first chapter of “Laws Concerning Idolatry,” Rambam, in no way set out to teach us a history lesson, and certainly he did not intend to tell us an entertaining story. Rather, this is part of a book whose sole purpose is to codify Jewish law, as the author himself writes in his Preface. Therefore, it is a great wonder that Rambam goes to such trouble to detail such a lengthy account of the history of idolatry, for how does this story relate to Jewish law?!

To answer this question, the Rebbe MH”M explains that this first chapter serves as a general introduction to the entire section of “Laws Concerning Idolatry,” as it forewarns us of the original mistake of foreign worship.

The sin of idolatry is connected primarily with the faulty thinking of man, the false belief that a created being, an angel, or a constellation, etc., is a deity – a

obstacles have been nullified. Since this is so, there is presently – not only the existence of Moshiach in the world, but also – the revelation of Moshiach. Now we must simply receive our righteous Moshiach in actual reality! And then everyone will be able to point with his finger

and say, “Moshiach has come!”

The lesson to every single Jew from the verse, “And G-d appeared to him,” is that we must yearn for the complete revelation of G-d in the true and complete Redemption, and to do all that is possible to be fit

for this experience by ensuring that every single act is done today in a way that anticipates the true and complete Redemption. And may it happen now!

*(Adapted from Seifer HaSichos 5752, pg. 85-96)*

being that exists in its own right – or an agent between man and G-d.

In order to properly fulfill the prohibition of foreign worship, it is not enough to know which acts are prohibited and considered idolatrous, but we must – first and foremost – safeguard our thoughts to the utmost extreme. It must also be firmly established in our minds that all created beings in the world have no existence in and of themselves, and thus, there is no rational grounds to suppose that any created being should be worshipped.

To this end, Rambam illustrates the central role that faulty thinking played in the history of idolatry as a preface to the particular laws and prohibitions concerning idolatry. Rambam first tells us about the original faulty thinking of mankind: “Near the very beginning of time, the children of man – and even the wisest among them – made a big mistake.” They reasoned that “it is the will of G-d” that they should praise and glorify His most exalted creations, the heavenly bodies. Next, Rambam writes about the further descent of the children of man, until their thinking process became totally incongruent with reason: “false prophets...claimed that G-d was commanding mankind to serve the stars... Everyone believed that there was no G-d other than the idols they worshipped.”

And finally, Rambam teaches us of the birth of the correct approach to thinking, with the story of Avrohom Avinu: Although “he did not have a teacher and he was...raised...amongst the idolaters and the fools,” nevertheless, “even when he was still very young, a child of only three years, his mind began to delve into the nature of existence... Eventually, Avrohom conceived of the true path. By the age of forty, Avrohom truly recognized his Creator.

## COMING TO AN UNDERSTANDING

The Sages of the Talmud say in *Pirkei Avos*, “the person of forty years attains understanding.” Accordingly, Rambam emphasizes that Avrohom Avinu recognized his Creator “at the age of forty” to suggest that “he conceived of the true path,” through his own understanding, through his own human faculty of reason, and not through commandments and prophecy. Therefore, even the very foundation of monotheism – the central notion that there is one Creator, G-d, and that nothing exists, in its own right, besides G-d Himself – is not a concept that is beyond the grasp of the human intellect. In this sense, to stray from monotheism, G-d forbid, is to stray from proper thinking.

And with this explanation, we can now answer the question with which we began. Although Noach was actually still alive after the birth of Avrohom, and he even lived until Avrohom was fifty-eight, he still did not live “in the generation of Avrohom Avinu.” Only when Avrohom and his teachings became famous throughout the world, when he had managed to “implant the essential principle” of monotheism “in the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands,” only when he had succeeded in helping others around the world to recognize G-d with their own understanding – as Avrohom himself had done – only then was his generation considered to be the “generation of Avrohom.”

This stage in history, when the fame of Avrohom and his teaching became well established, only occurred when Avrohom was in his seventies, when he left his land and took his message to the world, as it is written, “Avram was seventy-five when he left Charan,” many years after Noach had died.

*(Adapted from Likkutei Sichos vol. 20 pg. 13-21.)*

*To stray from  
monotheism,  
G-d forbid, is to stray  
from proper thinking.*



# WHAT THEY DO ACHIEVE WILL BE THEIRS

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK GINSBERG, MASHPIA, YESHIVAS  
TOMCHEI T'MIMIM – LUBAVITCH, K FAR CHABAD



Reb Mendel Futerfas, *a"h*, told about his teacher and *mashpia*, R' Yechezkel Feigin, *a"h*, regarding *t'filla*: "My *mashpia* in *yeshiva* was Reb Chatshe Feigin. As was the custom of *chassidim*, R' Chatshe would *daven* at great length each Shabbos (and sometimes even on weekdays) until the late afternoon. Only after *t'filla b'tzibbur*, in its true and inner meaning did he go home and make *Kiddush*, if there was no *farbrenge* after *davening*."

The Rebbe MH" M tells the story of R' Yosef Yitzchok (the son of the Tzemach Tzedek, whom the Rebbe Rayatz was named after), who, when his father-in-law asked him how he *davened*, answered that he tried to *daven* with the *tzibbur* (congregation). His father-in-law liked this response.

(Polish *chassidim* didn't approve of *davening* at length. They said that when one travels by wagon and there is concern that gentiles might get up on the wagon, speed is of the essence. Any delay could allow the gentiles to ascend and hijack it. Such is the case with *davening* too, they claimed: one should *daven* quickly, for any delay allows foreign thoughts to enter and take over.

***"I will not allow my students and chassidim to do the same. They will have to work and toil with their own efforts. Perhaps they won't achieve as much, but what they do achieve will be theirs and not something imposed from above."***

(Chabad responded that the analogy applied when the gentiles were on the ground and not on the wagon. If, however, they were already on the wagon, traveling quickly wouldn't help at all! So too with *davening*: since a person already has foreign thoughts, *davening* quickly doesn't help at all!)

Once, the father-in-law sent for R' Yosef Yitzchok but the messenger returned saying that his son-in-law was still in the middle of *davening*. The father-in-law was amazed to hear this, considering how late it was. It was long after the *tzibbur* had finished *davening*. Some time passed and the father-in-law sent for his son-in-law again. Once again the messenger returned saying that he was still *davening*. The same thing happened a third time.

Afterwards he asked his son-in-law: didn't you say that you try to *daven* with the *tzibbur*?

R' Yosef Yitzchok said: I heard from my grandfather's father, the Alter Rebbe, that *t'filla b'tzibbur* means to gather all one's soul powers and to elevate them to one point, to G-d Himself. Doing this requires an investment of time.

\* \* \*

R' Mendel also *davened* at length. He couldn't imagine it any other way. Once he was invited to a *bris* in the family which took place on Shabbos after Shacharis in the Beis Menachem Shul in Kfar Chabad. Some thought that R' Mendel would *daven* with the *tzibbur* this time so that he could

participate in the festive meal and *farbrengen* which would take place afterward, but they were quickly disabused of that notion. R' Mendel flatly rejected the idea, and asked: What do you mean?! *Davening* on Shabbos with a *minyan*?! It's Shabbos!

Despite his difficulty in walking, R' Mendel went to the Beis Menachem Shul in the middle of his *davening*, participated in the *bris* and then went right back to *yeshiva* and continued *davening*. Much later on he returned to Beis Menachem in order to take part in the *farbrengen*.

Somebody told me that he once heard R' Mendel say: Whoever *davens* during the week (quickly) without a *minyan* perhaps should *daven* with a *minyan* on Shabbos. But whoever *davens* with a *minyan* during the week, should *daven* at length on Shabbos, with a true "*tzibbur*," gathering the ten soul powers together to focus on a singular point.

R' Mendel continued: At first, when R' Chatshe began *davening* at length, various thoughts disturbed him: "How can you know that the *t'filla* that you *daven* at length is truthful and *b'pnimius*, the way it's supposed to be? It's very likely that you are fooling yourself, something absolutely abhorrent to *chassidim*. You think that you have a certain holy feeling, but it's very possible that it isn't a true emotion at all, but your imagination.

"In general, emotions are hard to quantify. It's hard to know if it's true and *p'nimi* or perhaps only external and imaginary. A *chitzon* (superficial person) is the worst characterization in Lubavitch. On the other hand, by *davening* with other Jews, with a literal *tzibbur*, you walk on an 'iron bridge.' For the Torah, which is the Torah of Truth, promises us that by *davening* with a *tzibbur*, our prayers are always accepted and don't return empty-handed, as it says (and brought in

*halacha* in *Shulchan Aruch*, *siman* 52) "Hashem never scorns the prayers of the many!" Especially according to the Gemara (Taanis 8-1) that even *t'filla* without *kavana* (the proper concentration) is accepted by Hashem (if said *b'tzibbur*).

"And even if a person's prayers are not heard unless he 'puts his life in his hands,' the Gemara states: That's not a question, for here it's concerning an individual, and there – a *tzibbur* (i.e., *davening* done with a *tzibbur*, even if one's *kavana* is not the best, is accepted).

"Regarding the fact that the Rebbeim didn't always *daven* with a *tzibbur*, the Tzemach Tzedek explains that the *davening* of an individual whom many are dependent on is like *t'filla b'tzibbur*. This was the case with the Alter Rebbe in jail, whose *davening* was like that of a *tzibbur*. A Rebbe has a *neshama klalis* (a general soul) which includes all the Jewish people, the ultimate *tzibbur*.

"The fact that great *chassidim* *davened* at length without a *tzibbur*," continued the animal soul with its arguments, "well at least they *davened* with truth and *p'nimius*, with all their heart. Their *davening* was certainly desirable and accepted Above. But you, Chatshe, you know very well that your *davening* is not perfectly truthful and *b'p'nimius*, so how could you give up the wonderful advantage of *t'filla b'tzibbur*, which is certainly desirable and accepted?"

And so Chatshe thoughts continued to disturb him, time after time with various pious arguments which couldn't easily be vanquished. These were all points that were

correct and true, but the animal soul used them for its own purposes. It simply wanted to prevent Chatshe from *davening* at length.

Once, Chatshe decided to experiment. He tried to make all his preparations starting early in the morning so that he would be ready in time to *daven* with the *minyan*, but the *davening* had no *chayus* until the late hours of the afternoon."

What is the answer to the pious claims made by the animal soul? Why not go on the "iron bridge" and rely on the *davening* of the *tzibbur*? Why put in all that effort to meditate and think and *daven* at length (with his own



abilities), and then after all the effort expended – not be sure how true and *p'nimi* it was, and what percentage of ego and imagination were mixed in undetected? Why invest so much without the absolute certainty that one is on the correct path, instead of relying confidently on something which certainly helps and is acceptable, *davening b'tzibbur*?

The answer is contained in the following well known incident. The Alter Rebbe once saw (along with some other friends of his) one of the *chassidim* of his friend, R' Chaim Chaikel of Amdora, disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch, standing and *davening*. To these people who didn't rely merely on what they saw but who had a true understanding of *davening*, the *davening* of that *chassid* was amazing. His very soul was alight.

The Alter Rebbe was asked for his opinion about such a wondrous *davening*. He said: Indeed it is wondrous, but what's the "*kuntz*" (trick)? It's not the *chassid* who *davens* but his teacher, R' Chaikel, who *davens*!

The Alter Rebbe concluded : I will not allow my students and *chassidim* to do the same. They will have to work and toil with their own efforts. Perhaps they won't achieve as much, but what they do achieve will be theirs and not something imposed from above.

The Alter Rebbe argued this point with his colleagues, the *talmidim* of the Maggid. He made this principle one of the cornerstones of *chassidus Chabad*: not to rely on the Rebbe alone; a person must put in his own work.

Certainly one needs to connect and be absolutely devoted to the Rebbe, and in the final analysis everything the *chassid* does is only by means of his *rebbe's* power. But a *chassid* mustn't be satisfied with the fact that he is connected and devoted to his *rebbe*, and rely on *him* to pull him out of the

mud. He must work on his own to learn *chassidus* and try to understand it with his intellect, to meditate and try to work on his character, so that his work is really his. He, as he is with all his limitations, should understand to the best of his abilities the G-dly truth of "*ein od milvado*" (there is naught besides Him).

When he does all he can (as little, limited, and as tainted as it is), then Hashem will do, with His infinite

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from the essence of  
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power, what He will do. Then the G-dly truth will truly be internalized as it should be, and it will influence his very being and affect his entire life.

Put another way, the foundation must be connection and devotion to the Rebbe. One is forbidden to build on what I understand and on what I perceive. Yet, the G-dly will and intention are that the building itself be created with one's own abilities, with

the *avoda* of the *tachton m'tzad atzmo*, but this *avoda* must be penetrated with *hiskashrus* and devotion to the Rebbe.

Also within a person himself, the foundation must be faith beyond reason. One is forbidden to build on the weak foundation of intellect and emotion. But the building itself must be done through one's own efforts in intellect and emotion, "*ham'tzad atzmo*," which should be entirely permeated with *emuna*.

Though the foundation must be strong and stable, on an "iron bridge," in order for it to be absorbed in the *p'nimius* of the "*tachton m'tzad atzmo*," one must work and toil with one's own abilities to perhaps attain– not that much or not that grandiose, but – truth and *p'nimius* nonetheless. Then Hashem gives what He will, with His infinite abilities.

So too regarding the only remaining service, "actually greeting Moshiach Tzidkeinu." In the famous *sicha* of Ko'ach Nissan 5751, the Rebbe exclaimed: "Even when they scream '*ad masai*' it is because I commanded it, etc. If they would ask and scream in truth, certainly Moshiach would have come already! What else can I do so that all the Jewish people will make a commotion and truly scream and bring Moshiach? ... The only thing I can do is give this over to you. Do all you can – matters which are in a way of *oros d'Tohu*, but in *keilim d'Tikkun* – to actually bring Moshiach Tzidkeinu immediately!"

We learn from this that despite the fact that the foundation must be because we were commanded to do so, the absolute *bittul* and *hiskashrus* and devotion to the Rebbe MH"M and to his orders, nevertheless there must be one's own work – "do all you can!" For when the *avoda* is only because we were commanded to do so, because it was imposed from above, it is not truly coming from us. That is why the

avoda and what is demanded of us is “to live with Moshiach” with truth and *p’nimius*. Our entire existence, from the essence of our souls until the tiniest detail, must be instilled with the same essential point of wanting, longing, asking, and demanding from Hashem that we see it all already with our own eyes, with no need for explanations.

(Naturally, we should not put off publicizing the *besuras ha’Geula* and the need for greeting Moshiach, and wait for it all to be absorbed in a manner of *p’nimius*. In the end, by doing this, one will truly absorb what is being said. See *sicha* Parshas R’ei 5751.)

The explicit directive regarding the “straight, easy and quickest path among all the paths of Torah, to bring about the actual revelation and coming of Moshiach” is by “learning

the parts of Torah which deal with Moshiach and *Geula*, which is explained in many places...especially in the Torah (*maamarim* and *Likkutei Sichos*) of the leader of our generation.” (See *sicha* Parshas Tazria-Metzora 5751.)

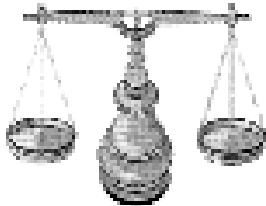
However, learning is not enough. You have to think about it, put in effort – *daven* with it, *farbreng* with it, not stop thinking and talking and doing it – until the point permeates your entire intellect and emotions and all your thought, speech, and action, so that they are in accordance with the special time we find ourselves in. This is the true “*hesech ha’dass*” which will bring the complete revelation of *Melech HaMoshiach*. (See *sicha* Parshas Balak 5751.)

\* \* \*

There is the well known story of the Rebbe Rashab who at the age of

four or five cried and asked why we don’t have the revelation of Hashem as Avrohom did. From this the Rebbe concluded that even a young child can and must demand, to the point of tears, to see a revelation of G-dliness which will take place with the *Geula*.

As the Tzemach Tzedek said in his answer, that in order for a Jew to merit this (even if he is a ninety-nine-year-old *tzaddik* who served G-d to perfection) he must decide to circumcise himself, to go “out of himself” (even from his holy existence) and connect and be totally devoted to an “eternal covenant” with Hashem and Moshiach, so that nothing can budge him. That “eternal covenant” is contained within the holy proclamation which brings about the full revelation – let us see it now! *Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v’Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach l’olam va’ed!*



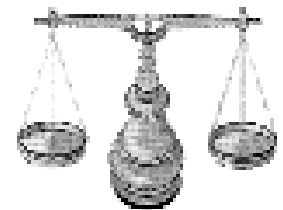
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# D'VEIKUS THAT STEMS FROM INNOCENCE

TRANSLATED BY RABBI SHIMON NEUBORT



*From the Sichos of the Rebbe Rayatz in America.  
Seifer HaSichos – Kayitz 5700. Daytime Meal of  
Shabbos Parshas Shlach – Part 2*

11. Continuing the *maamer*, “*Chayav Adam Levareich Meia Brachos*” [“A Person Is Obligated to Recite a Hundred Brachos,” printed in *Likkutei Torah – Toras Shmuel*] in the summer of 5638, my saintly grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash, recited the *maamer* “*Gal Einai v’Abita Niflaos mi’Torasecha*” [“Uncover My Eyes and I will Discover Wonders in Your Torah”]. For that Shabbos the *chassid*, Rashdam – Reb Shmuel Ber the Mashpia [of Borisov], arrived. Though this *maamer* was small in quantity (it took only about thirty-five minutes), it was great in quality. My uncle, Ramal [Reb Moshe Leib Ginsberg of Vitebsk, son-in-law of the Rebbe Maharash], knew the *maamer* better than my father and my uncle Raza (Reb Zalman Aharon), and they listened to him repeat it. Grandfather invited Rashdam for *Kiddush*. During the *Kiddush* he requested clarification on a few points in the *maamer*. During the Shabbos meal Grandfather repeated the *maamer* “*Gal Einai*,” and by then they knew it well.

There was a man living in Borisov

named Reb Moshe David. His occupation was plastering stoves – a simple person to whom no one paid any attention. Being a member of the *chassidic* community, he would travel to Lubavitch (on foot, of course) once every two years. He would remain for about three weeks before returning home. All his life, he supported himself by the labor of his own hands. On his way to Lubavitch, whenever he passed through some landowner’s estate, he would repair ovens or stoves, and thus earn his living. After he arrived in Lubavitch, when his money was gone, he would go away for several days to some squire’s estate on the outskirts of town, where he would pursue his trade in order to support himself while in Lubavitch. On no account would he do any work in the town itself, to avoid encroaching on the livelihood of the craftsmen in town.

On the aforementioned Shabbos, Reb Moshe David also happened to be in Lubavitch. When Grandfather repeated the *maamer* “*Gal Einai*” the second time, he instructed the

attendant Reb Pinchas Leib to summon Reb Moshe David, who was at the time sitting and saying *T’hillim* in the small hall of the *shul*. When Rashdam heard my grandfather’s instruction that Reb Moshe David the Plasterer was to be summoned, he said: “Moshe David is a constant listener to my [lectures], but his intellect assimilates little.”

Grandfather replied, saying, “With Moshe David it is his soul that hears *chassidus*. And Moshe David listens to what his soul says.”

When Reb Moshe David entered Grandfather began to recite the *maamer*, Reb Moshe David stood there the whole time, his lips moving and his face white as chalk. Early Monday morning, when my saintly father the Rebbe [Rashab] was with Grandfather for *yechidus*, Grandfather said to him: “Moshe David is a Jew of whom it can be said, “His mouth did not cease uttering [Torah texts]. He is a very simple person. At the age of five he remained an orphan with neither father nor mother. At the age of twelve he went to work. At the time he knew the five *Chumashim* of the Torah and *T’hillim*. Since that time about sixty years ago, he repeats by heart the words of the five *Chumashim* of the Torah and *T’hillim*, day and night, seven days a week. Moshe David is the wealthiest

magnate in the words of Torah. With his simple ways, Moshe David has surpassed many truly great *maskilim* and even masters of *avoda*. That which *maskilim* accomplish with their intellectual endeavors and which *ovdim* accomplish with their *avoda*, Moshe David the Plasterer accomplishes with his simple ways.”

Father related: “On Wednesday I arrived at the *shul* early, and I found Rashdam *davening*. On that day he went to the *Ohel* of the Tzemach Tzedek, and on days when he went to the *Ohel* he would *daven* with the earliest *minyan*. Reb Moshe David I found next to the stove – it was summertime, and the

**“That which *maskilim* accomplish with their intellectual endeavors and which *ovdim* accomplish with their *avoda*, Moshe David the Plasterer accomplishes with his simple ways.”**

stove was cold. Reb Moshe David stood near the stove with his hands clasped behind him and his eyes shut; his lips moving, but no sound could be heard.”

12. In the *maamer* of Rosh HaShana 5640 my grandfather the Rebbe Maharash said: “*D’veikus* to G-dliness that comes from faith, which is the simple faith of Israel, is *d’veikus* to the essence of G-d, for there is nothing higher than *d’veikus* that stems from innocence. If *d’veikus* stems from some other level such as *avoda* or understanding and intellectual grasp, such *d’veikus* can only reach the level from which it stems. But *d’veikus* of innocence stems from the essence of the

soul, and so it reaches all the way to the essence of G-d Himself (may He be blessed and exalted).”

13. *Chassidim* have several paths and ways for their *avoda*. There are those who have always conducted themselves discretely and in seclusion, and there are others whose conduct was openly apparent, and whose *avoda* of the heart was with a loud voice that inspired attention to what they were saying. It is told about those *chassidim* whose conduct was with discretion and serenity that they had a favorite saying: “If you are accosted by ‘this’ degenerate...” [i.e., the *yetzer ha’ra*, see the *Gemara, Sukka* 52b]. The word “this” signifies revelation; the word “this” itself is degenerate. What they mean to say is that when their *avoda* is in a revealed and expansive manner, it is not a true *avoda*. That is the meaning of “If you are accosted by *this* degenerate” – if your conduct is still revealed and expansive, this itself is degenerate and needs to be abolished.

14. My grandfather the Rebbe Maharash used to have his medical treatment provided by Prof. Bertenson. He lived in Petersburg, but during the summer months he would come to his estate near Vitebsk. Once during the summer he would come to Lubavitch to visit my grandfather, and once Grandfather would visit him at his summer estate. During the summer of 5634 Grandfather took my father along on his trip to Vitebsk to visit Prof. Bertenson; this was the only second journey of Father’s life.

Until a few days before his *bar mitzva*, Father had never been outside the town of Lubavitch other than – occasionally and at wide intervals – a short trip for an outing a few miles from town. On Tuesday, Yud-Daled MarCheshvan 5634, Grandfather summoned my father and his brother – my uncle Raza – and he said to Father: “Next week you will reach the age of *bar mitzva* (may it be with *mazel tov*). Today, you will travel to visit my brother, your uncle [Reb Chayim Schneur Zalman] in

Liadi to receive his blessing. He will undoubtedly recite a *maamer* of *chassidus*. And you too” (Grandfather said, turning to my uncle Raza), “travel together with him. You will spend the night there, and tomorrow towards evening you will return home. Since the road is in bad shape because of the abundant rains, and the river crossings are also dangerous and caution is needed, therefore you should travel only during the daytime hours.”

At that time there were about thirty young scholars – a few of them *bachurim* – who were “sitters” in Lubavitch. Among them were Yitzchok

**“*D’veikus* to G-dliness that comes from faith, which is the simple faith of Israel, is *d’veikus* to the essence of G-d, for there is nothing higher than *d’veikus* that stems from innocence.”**

Moshe the son of Avrohom Chayim from Vietka, Chayim Baruch from Zhlobin, and Eliyahu Moshe from Aftzuha (it was from them that I heard the story of the journey, their reception [in Liadi], and the return journey). Grandfather chose twelve of these young men to travel along with them. He ordered four horses to be harnessed to the large carriage in which Father traveled along with his brother my uncle Raza, and the two attendants, Reb Pinchas Leib and Reb Yosef Mordechai. The twelve sitters traveled separately in two other wagons.

(To be continued.)

# BNOS MENACHEM: MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL

BY A. MICHAELI  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*With an exemplary atmosphere and a high level of quality education, Bnos Menachem, a new educational institution, has begun its activities and is paving the way for a revolutionary style of learning. Its guidelines offer a fresh new approach to education. The faculty focuses on cultivating the students and developing their Jewish-chassidic awareness, which expresses itself through yiras Shamayim and proper conduct for Chabad girls. The connecting force that binds everything together is a deep-rooted and firm sense of hiskashrus, and vitality in one's involvement in mitzvaim, and "the only remaining avoda." More than 200 students are receiving their education here this year and are doing all they can to be worthy of such a privilege. Principals, teachers, and parents tell about this institution's secret of success.*

Suppose someone would stop you in the middle of the street, introduce himself as a pollster, and ask the following question: In what profession in the world is there always room for

improvements and innovations, in spite of the fact that it has existed for thousands of years? What would be the correct answer?



Education, of course! This is the profession in which development never ceases. For every successful idea, proper initiative, or original pedagogic project that crosses one's mind, there are still vast and flourishing grounds to be broken. Education is not just the most important thing, not just the most powerful thing with regard to forming and ensuring a more promising future for Judaism and *chassidus* in particular, and mankind in general – it is much more than that. We are talking about a diverse, exciting, and very challenging field of action.

When I entered the hallways of the beautiful facility of Bnos Menachem, the new girls school on the outskirts of Crown Heights, I was struck by the feeling that it is exactly these very motives – to improve, to innovate, to create a work of art interwoven with *chassidic* charm and grace, all in an aura of holiness and purity – which serve as the basis for the founders of this institution.

Even before I had begun my conversations with the teachers and staff, I understood that this was a "serious" school. Great care went into the choosing of staff members, the classroom conditions, development of interpersonal relations, and the

demands of proper conduct and *yiras Shamayim*.

“We called the institution Bnos Menachem, and we are doing everything to ensure that its students will be worthy of such a description,” says Rabbi Mordechai Gurary, one of the school’s founders and chairman of its material committee.

Rabbi Gurary, an energetic businessman raised in a Crown Heights family dedicated to the field of education, together with his colleague, Rabbi Yosef Simpson, an active resident of Crown Heights who is well known for his involvement in community matters, serve as spokesmen for many parents who have identified with the growing need for a more significant development of the educational institutions in the Rebbe’s *sh’chuna*.

Bnos Menachem strives to compete with a fundamental problem in education today. When we ourselves can bear witness to a variety of most unsuitable phenomena among our community’s young people, we must not settle for dealing with the symptoms; we must focus upon the

heart of the problem itself. In order to bring such a goal to fruition, Bnos Menachem was founded, a graceful pearl in the place where “here Hashem directed His blessing.”

Rabbi Yosef Simpson: “When an educator gives personal attention to a student throughout the years of her schooling, this molds her personality. This student will likely grow to become a *chassidic* woman with a deeply rooted outlook on life, proud of her *Yiddishkeit*, imbued with *yiras Shamayim* and a firm connection to Torah and *mitzvos*. Once this has been achieved, it automatically expresses itself in all aspects of Judaism. Her outward appearance will be modest, she will found a home faithful to the tenets of Torah and *mitzvos*, and she will educate the next generation along the same path. Furthermore, in the future, she can bring other Jews back to their roots, not just through conveying the essential substance of her Torah knowledge, but by the personal example that she sets. She will be an emissary of the Rebbe, a veritable lighthouse for her surroundings, and this is brought into force through the daily hard work accomplished in the

walls of her school.”

With the founding of this institution, a new opportunity for parents in Crown Heights has been created to reach a higher level in all aspects of education, each of which can be a source of tremendous blessing on its own.

Bnos Menachem was founded two years ago, in preparation for the 5761 academic year. It is located in an attractive and spacious building on the corner of East New York and Troy. Development and construction at the cost of \$3,000,000 were invested in order to create the most comfortable environment for teachers to educate and for young students to be educated in. “This sets the standards in every area,” says Mrs. Risha Majeski, one of the school’s principals. “Even before they begin their studies, the students are in a healthy atmosphere, which creates a desire to learn and develop proper *chassidishe middos*.”

During the previous academic year, there were three pre-school classes and another seven classes from Grades 1 to 7. This year, there are eight classes from





Grades 1 to 8.

The set of values that the staff tries to instill in the students is garnished with the seasoning of “*hiskashrus* to the Rebbe.” The teachers explain at various opportunities what it means to be “a daughter of the Rebbe,” and the merits and responsibilities that accompany the title.

“We are extremely concerned with a very important detail: All the *chassidic* values are bestowed out of love and absorbed in the same fashion,” says Mrs. Majeski. “Torah, *mitzvos*, *yiras Shamayim*, proper conduct, *middos*, *hiskashrus*, faith in G-d, anticipation of the Redemption – all these are concepts that we strive to transform into an integral part of the students’ character. We try to present the learning material in a way that help to form our girls’ identity to the fullest, and slowly but surely they internalize everything.”

The girls go home every day with a double-edged feeling of joy and greater knowledge. They are educated to be most proud of *Yiddishkeit* and *chassidus*. As a result, everything is done with an unabashed sense of vitality, without regard for the scoffers or for one’s personal inclination, which periodically can confuse a person’s mind and heart.

Mrs. Raizel Volvovsky, Head, Pre-School Education: “Tremendous importance is placed upon learning, so that even at this tender age the subject matter can be properly grasped. For example, when we learned about the *Aseres HaDibros*, I brought in a *baal koreh* to make the idea more tangible. When we learned about *mezuzah*, we brought a *sofer*, etc. The girls also experience a variety of different activities which are directly connected to the material they are learning in class.

“I feel obliged to give special mention to our school’s administration, which has given us the opportunity and the ability to use these methods, with particular thanks to our vigorous and

dedicated administrator, Rabbi Zalman Wilhelm. They are truly worthy of a hearty ‘*Yasher Ko’ach*.’”

### A TREASURE – SOMETHING TO BE PRESERVED

The school’s staff is dedicated with the highest consideration to the issue of modesty: “There is much to improve in this area for the betterment of these

young souls and the entire community. We see it as our obligation to instill a greater sense of awareness in our students in a variety of ways about the holiness, value, and beauty of modesty.”

**At what age do you begin to place an emphasis upon the importance of modesty?**

Mrs. Majeski: “Already from the age of three. We know from the Rebbe

### THE REBBE TAKES SPECIAL NOTE OF A PERSON’S MERIT

Rabbi Mordechai Gurary tells of a historic moment at Sunday dollars distribution: “After the publishing of the book *Seifer Siyumei HaRambam*, which documents the *siyum* celebrations held in New York at the Rebbe’s request, the contributors and their wives passed before the Rebbe at Sunday dollars to receive his blessing. I was privileged to be among them, and presented myself on that day with my wife and children to receive the Rebbe’s holy *bracha*.

“The group accounted for ten families and each one merited a *bracha*: ‘*Bracha v’hatzlacha*’ (Blessing and success) or ‘*B’suros tovot*’ (Good news). When I approached with my family, the Rebbe blessed us, looked at me, and said, ‘*Z’chus ha’rabbim talui bo*’ (the merit of the many depend upon him).

“I walked out in total astonishment. To the best of my recollection, I had never been an *askan* in any public capacity, and even regarding the book printing, there were nine other partners. Why were these words directed specifically to me?

“The lengthy period of contemplation which followed made me feel that I must do something. Over the years, as the issue of education became more and more serious, I felt that there was clearly a need here to invest greater effort.

“In the days when we were founding the school, problems seemed to sprout up unceasingly. I felt so helpless that I wrote to the Rebbe. The answer I received in *Igros Kodosh* dealt with none other than the education of Jewish girls! What does the Rebbe write? Amazingly, on this very matter! The Rebbe explains that the Jewish people have always placed great importance upon the woman’s role in the home, but in recent generations this is even more so, and from now on there must be additional emphasis regarding the education of young woman in our generation”



Rabbi Mordechai Gurary

*When an educator gives personal attention to a student throughout the years of her schooling, this molds her personality. This student will likely grow to become a chassidic woman with a deeply rooted outlook on life, proud of her Yiddishkeit, imbued with yiras Shamayim and a firm connection to Torah and mitzvos.*



about the importance of education beginning even at the earliest stages. The chances of success are much higher when they are being educated at a young age. Along with this, as a child advances in age, the subject is learned at a deeper level.”

**How is awareness about modesty cultivated in a young girl?**

“First of all, in response to your question in general, the issue is mentioned at every appropriate opportunity. Now, if you want to get into greater detail, at the start of the year, after Tishrei, they learn the laws of modesty in all the classes. First they memorize the basic *halachos* and then put them into practice. We alter the study content and its manner of presentation from year to year, but we continue to focus on the issue. This is due both to its importance and the message we convey to the students that prior to learning any *halacha*, we first must establish the foundation – modesty. Only then is it possible to progress further.”

**The school has developed wonderful discipline. What happens afterwards, when a student graduates? Is there a way to ensure that her education will be properly applied? You are investing so much.**

Mrs. Majeski: “Many girls tell about what they learned while sitting at the Shabbos table, sing *chassidic niggunim*. And when they are exposed to

improper conduct by their siblings or friends, they are repulsed by it, similar to one who is “disgusted by evil,” as we know from *Tanya*. Parents are overwhelmed to see how much *chassidishkeit* can be expressed through their daughters.

“I’ll tell you about an incident that happened to me when I had a chance meeting with one of our students. This happened a few weeks ago when I was traveling on a bus from Montreal to New York. Towards the end of the journey, at approximately 6 a.m., this girl woke up and when she recognized me, she turned to me and said, ‘Principal! See how modestly I’m dressed.’”

**How do you educate a girl to appreciate the value of modesty on her own so that she will always be ready to conduct herself in an appropriate fashion?**

Mrs. Majeski: “In preparation for Chaf-Beis Shvat, the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, of blessed memory, we organized an educational event for all the students. In acknowledgment of the Rebbetzin’s great modesty, the central message of the program was *tznius*.

“Throughout the year, we explain to the students that when something appears modest, it symbolizes its great value. Since you are the Rebbe’s daughters, this should be the appropriate mode of conduct. We

embody this in different ways. We display before them an array of objects known to be valuable, and show how people protect them in a secure package and don’t leave them out in the open. For example, a *seifer Torah* is wrapped with a special covering, an *esrog*, a *Megilla*, and – *l’havdil* – even precious jewels. We protect them with a special encasing in a special place. This demonstrates how every thing of honor, every Jewish girl, is a precious treasure to be protected modestly.

“In this way, we emphasize to our students the beauty and value of *Yiddishkeit*. You certainly noticed on your tour of the school the large poster on the wall with the message at the top: ‘Modesty is beauty.’ Underneath, there appear drawings made by women, young and old, from a variety of different backgrounds, all of whom have joined together in the common cause of *tznius*.

“Many long hours were invested in the preparation of this poster. It was designed primarily by the kindergarten girls, ages 3 to 5, as an appropriate means of teaching for this age. However, its inspirational value applies to all our students.

“These impressive displays and many others like them not shown in this article are the work of our activities director, Mrs. Nechama Dina Brenenson.”

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

In B'nos Menachem, they know that if the students don't see a living example through which they can apply their learning, all the investment is liable, *ch"v*, to go to waste.

Therefore, one of the school's more important principles is to determine the quality of the teachers in their conduct and *yiras Shamayim*. In the employment contract between the teachers and the school administration, very clear and unambiguous clauses are included regarding the conduct, dress, etc., required of the teachers.

Similar criteria are adhered to in relation to the secular studies teaching staff. "Even though they are not involved in religious studies," explains Mrs. Raizy Katz, principal, Secular Studies Department, "the students look upon every teacher as an example, regardless of the subject matter she teaches. Thus, we have very strict quality guidelines."

The school carefully scrutinizes those books that will be allowed to enter the library.

## A SCHOOL THAT IS LIKE FAMILY

Along with creating a proper educational climate, the administration has set as a goal for itself the creation of a family atmosphere within the walls of the school. "The school's relatively modest dimensions make this task easier. However, this is not enough. It is critically important to create this atmosphere in action and words," explains Mrs. Majeski.

**In the final analysis, we are talking about an educational institution, not a summer camp. In your opinion, why is the family atmosphere so important?**

Mrs. Majeski: "Beyond all the exams and grades, we want to deeply instill the educational values they acquire into their personality. From experience, we see that the girls take what they have

learned home with them."

## CALM, RELAXED PARENTS

In the words of the principal, even the parents feel the openness to turn to the school administration with every problem. The parents feel that there is someone listening to their requests, their comments, and their complaints.

Most of the telephone calls received are expression of thanks and esteem – a wonderful phenomenon that is happening more and more often. "We are recipients of repeated expressions of gratitude," says head secretary Mrs. Chaya Lewis. The parents feel that the girls are receiving a great deal. There is a thick file in the school's office filled with notes sent by grateful parents.

Numerous episodes happen every day. Here are some examples:

One of the mothers wrote to a teacher that once she saw her ten-year old daughter suddenly beginning to cry. When the mother approached her, she found out the reason for the tears. The girl had discovered that the skirt she was wearing did not cover her knees properly when she sat down.

In another instance, one of the mothers told her friend that she feels that she has to improve the level of *her tznius*. "My daughter comes home from school and I see that the matter has been taken with the utmost seriousness. I must do no less," she admitted.

Further testimony from the mother of one of our young students: "The school is doing everything, above and beyond, for the girls. The principal, Mrs. Majeski, and the faculty under her direction, spare no effort to make improvements. Here's an example: In the class where my daughter learns, there are twenty-six girls. It would have been reasonable enough to make one large class for all of them. Yet the school split the class into two in order to ensure proper follow-up of the development of each student in a more individual manner. It is commendable that the school administration chose to employ four more teachers despite the fact that it could have managed without doing so. Everything for the sake of the girls."

**Has all the investment proven to be worth it? Can you put your finger on a specific achievement?**

"Apart from what I have seen throughout the school year, I have one thing I would like to focus on. During the summer vacation in the Catskills, I was moved whenever my daughter came to me on her own and told me stories, *halachos*, and other things she had learned a long time before. The personal conduct continues to impress me anew. I see this as a direct result of the personal care each child receives."

The mother of another student pointed out certain things that genuinely touched her heart: "My little

## HE WANTS TO GIVE

One of the secretaries tells about the school's family atmosphere: "During Chanukah, we received a call. The caller identified himself as the father of one of the B'nos Menachem students. He was coming with a request: 'I wish to send a nice sum of money to the school to be distributed as *Chanuka gelt* to girls whose parents don't have the extra money to do so themselves.' Naturally, he requested that it all be done quietly.

"The following day, a messenger arrived at the school with an envelope filled with cash, which brought much holiday *simcha* to all the recipients."

*A seifer Torah is wrapped with a special covering, an esrog, a Megilla, and – l’havdil – even precious jewels. We protect them with a special encasing in a special place. This demonstrates how every thing of honor, every Jewish girl, is a precious treasure to be protected modestly.*



girl is friends with all the girls in her class. There is an aura of complete harmony. What the teachers have succeeded in doing is to instill within the students the pride and satisfaction of the *chassidic* experience. My daughter is very proud to be *chassidish*. She is happy and shows it with a spirit of true accomplishment.”

#### What about the studies?

“The academic achievements have been very good. The girls are being taught at a very high level.”

Mrs. Shterna Kanelsky, an emissary of the Rebbe MH”M in Elizabeth, New Jersey, states with absolute confidence: “We are talking about a Chabad institution that provides above all an excellent education. I see examples in a more personal manner: Our daughters were educated at home to say *Chitas* and *Seifer HaMitzvos*, however, sometimes it happened that they were too tired or overburdened from their daily routine to find the time. Since they began learning in B’nos Menachem, this no longer happens. They are educated with pure faith, and declare “*Yechi Adoneinu*.” Among the girls, there is a kind of secret competition to see who will be more successful in standing out in her *yiras Shamayim* and her studies.

“Another thing that is important to point out: Every month, a journal is printed documenting the events that happened throughout the month. The

studies, the outstanding activities, the *farbrengens*, and the banquets held on auspicious *chassidic* days in every class.”

**And you send your girls every day a distance of an hour-and-a-half each way?**

“I agree that it’s not easy. Nevertheless, when I compare this to what my parents did back in Russia, when they sacrificed everything for the

**“He turned to a seven-year old student and asked her, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’ The little interviewee blurted without hesitation, ‘A shlucha of the Rebbe.’ Jerry turned to us, completely stunned. ‘At the age of seven? I’ve never seen such a thing before!’”**

sake of their children’s education – that says it all. We are thankful to the *Oibershter* that the difficulties are no longer what they once were.”

#### BAS MITZVA ACCORDING TO HALACHA

The Rebbe MH”M gave clear instructions regarding how to make a *bas mitzva* celebration. For example, it should be modest, not showy. A *chassidische farbrengen*. For some reason, it seems that this was not publicized. Thus, many people give greater emphasis to the more external aspects of the whole affair. At times, this results in a *bas mitzva* celebration devoid of any real value.

This year, in accordance with the school’s guidelines and the great meaning attached to a *bas mitzva*, the administration decided to reveal a true sense of awareness among the students and their parents. Responses were generally most favorable, though there were cases where there was a need for constant convincing.

One of the girls, who comes from a very good family, was approaching her twelfth birthday and her mother contacted the school to make the arrangements for her party. The mother knew that we request very clearly to conduct the party in the spirit of the Rebbe’s instructions. However, she claimed that for the sake of her parents (the girl’s grandparents), it was most important to have a large-scale affair.

Gently but firmly, the importance of making a party in a fitting and appropriate manner was persistently explained, and so, in the end, the mother agreed. The day after the party, she called to thank the school. "It was so beautiful and moving. I felt the celebration's true purpose. The gift from her classmates was so wonderful and meaningful. Thank you for opening our eyes."

In addition, we decided on our own to encourage the fellow students to give the *bas mitzva* girl in honor of her coming of age a gift of *s'farim* as a proper and meaningful gift.

### THE LEVEL OF STUDIES

The great effort that is invested into *chassidic* education does not come at the expense of the level of studies. From conversations with parents, it is apparent that the level of study at Bnos Menachem is among the highest at any comparable elementary school. With *Chumash* studies, for example, in addition to the tests prepared by the classroom teachers, the head principal conducts her own set of exams. The purpose: to reinforce the follow-up after the students' improvements in their reading ability.

The head principal is on constant watch of the academic progress of each class. The teachers receive continual advice and guidance. When a student is found to be most diligent in her studies, she is given an additional assignment,

suitable for her level. And when another student demonstrates a lack of academic progress, the matter is handled immediately as the student's best interests always stand at the fore.

The principal knows each student on an individual basis – her name, her age, and her class. This also contributes to the healthy atmosphere that translates into educational advancement.

The students respond most positively to the personal touch. They are not afraid to speak with the principal according to the need. The strong discipline is interwoven with the love that radiates to the girls. And "as water reflect the face," they demonstrate their appreciation through their learning, their conduct, and the positive example they display.

### TO SEE AND CONNECT TO THE KING

This is a scene that surely gives much *nachas* to the Rebbe. Twice daily, dozens of students sit in the school hallway and watch earnestly the Rebbe MH"M in all his glory projected upon a video screen. This takes place before the day's studies begin and at the lunch break. "It is impossible to describe adequately what this does for the students. The parents can not stop expressing their praise for this wonderful custom, relating how much it adds to the girls' *yiras Shamayim*, *chassidic* conduct, and the honor they

give to their parents," administration member Rabbi Yosef Simpson sums up with great satisfaction.

The tour of the school leaves a clear impression. In all things connected with *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe – following the path of *chassidus*, fostering the ambition to be a *chassid* of the Rebbe, and to radiate it all with full force in the Jewish home they will eventually establish, G-d willing – there is no distinction between boys and girls.

Before Gimmel Tammuz, the principal addresses all the students in assembly and explains the significance of the day and the general faith among *chassidim* in the imminent revelation.

My eyes were attracted to a giant sign with pictures of the Rebbeim. Under each picture shines a small inscription, a saying associated with the Rebbe in the picture. I found (translated from the original Yiddish) "Tomorrow must be entirely different," along side, "Better one action than a thousand groans." There is, "If good is good, then is better not better?" next to "Here comes Moshiach." The teaching, "When two Jews meet one another, they should say *chassidus*," hung proudly near the edict, "A Jew does not want – nor can be – torn away from G-dliness." The circle of *chassidic* sayings closes with, "The unity among *chassidim* will lead them until Moshiach."

On one of the walls stands a large picture of the Rebbetzin Chaya



*I feel obliged to give special mention to our school's administration, which has given us the opportunity and the ability to use these methods, with particular thanks to our vigorous and dedicated administrator, Rabbi Zalman Wilhelm. They are truly worthy of a hearty "Yasher Ko'ach."*

*G-d willing, in Kislev, we will begin the second phase of the development project at an estimated cost of \$5,000,000. It will include fourteen new classrooms plus an expanded computer room and educational science laboratory, and a giant auditorium for events and large meetings, a dining hall, a library, and a magnificent events hall.*



Mushka, of blessed memory. The picture is surrounded by her memorable words, “The Rebbe and the *s’farim* belong to the *chassidim*.”

In Bnos Menachem, they take seriously every auspicious day on the Chabad calendar. They try to combine a show, presentation, or play into every event. This way, the matter penetrates the students’ very being. Again, neither cost nor effort is spared. The realization of the educational goals stands above all else.

Rabbi Gurary: “Several months ago, we brought a film crew to record ongoing activities. The crew was headed by Jerry Levine, a Jew who has been familiar with Chabad for many years, works with Chabad institutions, and most prominently, served as host to the Chanuka lighting ceremonies broadcast annually via satellite in the presence of the Rebbe MH”M. Mr. Levine chose to interview some of the younger girls, those who truly ‘speak their mind.’ He turned to a seven-year old student and asked her, ‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’ The little interviewee blurted without hesitation, ‘A *shlucha* of the Rebbe.’ Jerry turned to us, completely stunned. ‘At the age of seven? I’ve never seen such a thing before!’”

**The Rebbe demands that we prepare ourselves to greet Moshiach, something that clearly is an inseparable part of *hiskashrus*. How do they prepare**

**to greet Moshiach in the school?**

“First of all, everyone knows and lives with the Rebbe’s prophecy and his announcement of the Redemption, ‘Here comes Moshiach!’ Children accept these matters without reason or explanation. We teach the girls that every good action, every *mitzva*, must be penetrated with the intention that its fulfillment brings closer the Redemption that can happen at any moment.

“We teach according to the pure *chassidic* faith that the leader of the generation is the Moshiach of the generation, and this adds more to the vitality in their actions.”

### EXPANSION

Building and expansion projects are due to be carried out in the very near future. These projects will increase the school’s operational ability and the number of students that the institution is able to accept.

Rabbi Dovid Leib Mayhill, Bnos Menachem’s development director, explains in greater detail: “Until now, the school functioned on one floor only. While the floor was spacious, it was filled to capacity – fifteen classrooms, a faculty lounge, and a computer room. G-d willing, in Kislev, we will begin the second phase of the development project at an estimated cost of \$5,000,000. It will include two parts: a) on the entry level: the construction of

fourteen new classrooms plus an expanded computer room and educational science laboratory; b) on the below ground level: construction of a giant auditorium for events and large meetings, a dining hall, a library, and a magnificent events hall which will serve the entire Crown Heights community.

“G-d willing, the building of the classrooms will be completed before Chanuka, and the auditorium will be built the following year.”

**And where will the \$5,000,000 come from?**

Rabbi Gurary: “We are working all year long to raise the necessary capital. Many Jews, who are not Lubavitchers, and have come and seen what has been done here, have contributed generously and willingly. They tell us, ‘You are truly raising *shluchos* of the Rebbe. What they learn here today in the way that you teach them, they will give in the future to those Jews that they bring back to *Yiddishkeit*. This is an actual investment in the Jewish People!’ When we hear such words, this gives further strength to prosper and thrive.”

One thing is certain: There’s no time to waste! The Rebbe prophesized that the Redemption is very close and the teaching staff at Bnos Menachem want to get there with the maximum amount of achievements: “To give as much *nachas* as possible to the Rebbe.”

# THE GREATEST REWARD I COULD GIVE YOU

BY RABBI TUVIA BOLTON, MASHPIA IN YESHIVA  
OHR TMIMIM OF KFAR CHABAD



This week let us try to understand the *Akeida* (binding) of Yitzchok, which could possibly be the most important, and yet the strangest single occurrence in the entire Torah.

Imagine yourself taking a long hike in the woods. You've been peacefully walking for several hours, when suddenly you notice through the trees in the distance a horrifying sight: what seems to be a man tying up his son on what looks like an altar with a small fire burning nearby!

You can't believe your eyes! Shaking all over, you take out your cellular phone, call the police and begin shouting and making noise to interrupt the ritual. The police arrive faster than you thought possible, get out of their car, and begin approaching the man while announcing through their megaphones, "Put down the knife and let the boy loose, and nothing will happen to you."

He complies, and minutes later he is sitting on the altar calmly explaining "G-d spoke to me three days ago and told me to sacrifice him. Well, we were on the road since

then waiting for the sign – and finally it came."

If this man were your relative would you be proud of him? Would you try to emulate him?

Why, then, is the *Akeida* at the foundation of the Jewish religion? It is even printed at the beginning of every prayer book to inspire us every morning before we pray. Why? What is it supposed to make us think?

I want to answer this with another story.

Once there was a king who loved to hunt wild boar on horseback. One cold winter afternoon after an unsuccessful day of hunting, one of his entourage spotted a large boar. The king set off to the chase. Several times he almost caught his game, but after over an hour he suddenly realized that he had become separated from his company and that it was getting dark. The king turned his royal coat inside out so no one would recognize him, for he feared his enemies, and in pitch darkness he began wandering aimlessly in the freezing, snow-covered forest. After several hours, he was becoming frightened. The wolf's howls were nearer and the

biting wind had already numbed his hands and feet. Suddenly he saw a small hut with light shining from the window. He quietly approached on horseback and looked in the window. There he saw an old Jew, obviously a woodcutter, sitting by the stove reading a book while his wife was lying fast asleep in her bed. The king, numb and shivering from the cold, alighted from his horse, walked around to the door and knocked. The woodcutter cautiously opened up and said, "If you are a robber, I have nothing to steal, but please come in, you must be freezing!"

He sat his guest by the stove, pulled over the table, gave him a drink of vodka, a hot meal, and finally a warm place to sleep.

Late next morning the king woke up. He thanked the Jew for saving his life, and, with difficulty, succeeded in forcing him to accept a gold coin before mounting his horse and returning to his palace.

The next day the old Jew heard a knock on his door. He opened up and was shocked! There stood one of the king's royal guards in full uniform and behind him a royal

coach escorted by twenty soldiers on horseback “Our orders are to bring you to the king’s palace,” said the guard, “Please put on your best garments. The king wants to speak to you.”

Two hours later, the astonished woodcutter found himself standing before the king (who he, of course, did not recognize) seated on his throne in his immense palatial hall surrounded by royal pomp and glory. “Zalman” said the king to the bewildered old Jew, “I have been watching you. My spies have singled you out as one of the most honest and pure men in the kingdom. I want you to be one of my advisors. Your hours will be from one to two in the afternoon every day with a free house on the palace grounds, all the servants you need and special privileges for all your family forever. Your wages are \$1000 a day beginning today.

“But, one small detail, you will have to change your religion; I’ll not have a Jew on my royal court. That is all. Congratulations,” he said with a smile.

“Your majesty,” answered Avrohom bashfully, “I am truly grateful for your kindness and praise, but please forgive me but I cannot accept your offer. Please understand that I am a Jew, I was born a Jew and will die a Jew, and I cannot change who I am. I am sorry, I cannot accept your offer.”

Suddenly the palace became silent. The royal musicians sensed something was wrong, and they stopped playing, all eyes were on the king.

Slowly his smile faded and his eyes narrowed in hatred. He leaned forward on his throne and screamed, “What do think, that I am one of your friends that you can say yes or no!!! I am your king!! You are NOTHING! Either you take my offer

and receive everlasting comfort for you and your family, or...”

At this point the king clapped his hands three times. A gasp went up from the crowd as three immense executioners dressed totally in black with black hoods over their heads appeared as if from nowhere and grabbed poor Zalman. One forced him down onto the floor onto his knees. The other, carrying a large chopping block, set it before him, grabbed poor Zalman by the hair

*The king, numb and shivering from the cold, alighted from his horse, walked around to the door and knocked. The woodcutter cautiously opened up and said, “If you are a robber, I have nothing to steal, but please come in, you must be freezing!”*

and stretched his neck over the block. Finally the third raised a huge glistening sword and poised it in the air, ready to chop the poor Jew’s head off.

“Perhaps now, you want to retract your words?” hissed the angry king. Avrohom stared up at the king... and suddenly, as though transformed into a completely different being, he closed his eyes and proudly shouted: “SHMA YISROEL HASHEM

ELOKEINU HASHEM ECHAD!

The next thing he heard was the king clapping his hands three times and then saying, “Zalman, please stand up, please stand up my friend.”

He opened first one eye and then the other, and he felt the strong hands of one of the executioners helping him to his feet. “Zalman, do you recognize me?” said the king as he removed his royal cape and his crown. The crowd again gasped in amazement; His Majesty removed his crown!!!

“Why... you were the wanderer that came to my house the day before! Why are you doing this to me, what is happening?” asked the bewildered Zalman.

“Let me explain,” answered the king, “Zalman, you saved my life. If it wasn’t for you I would have frozen to death last night. I wanted to reward you, but I didn’t know how. I saw that you didn’t want money and were happy living your modest life, and then I remembered something.

“When I was a young child, my father, who was then the king, used to encourage me to wander around the palace grounds and see how the simple workers lived. I especially loved to watch the Jewish tailor. His life was completely different than all the others, especially in the way that he treated his children. Every day he would sit and talk with them, teach them Torah and other things and tell them stories. But once he told a story that really impressed me. He told how Avrohom, the first Jew, wanted to offer his 37-year-old son as a sacrifice to G-d, and how his son, Yitzchok, actually happily agreed! Then he explained that what that meant was that Avrohom was willfully destroying his past, his present, and his future; everyone would say that both of them were insane, and all of Avrohom’s



accomplishments would be erased in one instant. He would lose his beloved son, and it could be that he would even lose his place in heaven for transgressing the universal prohibition of murder!

“Why did he and his son do it? Because they were happy to serve G-d.

“I remember thinking to myself,” the king continued, “these Jews are really strange. Everything we do is for a reward, for ourselves, yet these Jews are thinking about giving everything to G-d without receiving anything back. That is really unusual!

“So,” concluded the king, “I decided that the greatest reward that I could give you was to allow you to sacrifice your life to your G-d. But I also know how much you love life, and I couldn’t bear to see you killed, so I arranged this whole scene.”

*“I remember thinking to myself,” the king continued, “these Jews are really strange. Everything we do is for a reward, for ourselves, yet these Jews are thinking about giving everything to G-d without receiving anything back. That is really unusual!”*

\* \* \*

This, then, answers our questions. The *Akeida* is the essence of Judaism because Judaism is only one thing: serving the Creator, and loving Him with all our being. Avrohom knew the voice of Hashem when he heard it; he had purified himself and devoted all his life to searching for and embodying the truth. But today we have the word and will of G-d in the Torah, so our man in the woods was only fooling himself.

This was the essence of Avrohom’s life and the inheritance he gave to all the Jewish people, *mesirus nefesh*, self-sacrifice to carry out the Creator’s plan, namely to make this world perfect with the coming of the Moshiach, NOW.

For more articles from Rabbi Bolton visit: [www.ohrtmimim.org/torah](http://www.ohrtmimim.org/torah)

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# FROM THE PEAK OF HAPPINESS TO THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR AND BACK AGAIN

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

Over ten years had passed since Danny and Yardena Amrani of Afula had gotten married. Life was good except for the fact that they had no children. Doctors told them their chances of having children were zero, but when you want a child of your own, you spare no efforts. The couple did not despair, and they went from doctor to doctor. One top doctor advised them to adopt a child. There were doctors who pitied them and told them to try a certain complicated treatment, which perhaps would give them a slim chance at having their own child.

A close friend of Danny's who met him one day, suggested he speak with Rabbi Yitzchok Yadgar, a Lubavitcher in Taanach. "We didn't know how that would help," tells Danny, "but we asked to meet with him in the hopes that something would come of it."

"By Divine providence this was at a time when my wife was taking her first steps towards observant Judaism, while I lagged behind. When we met with Rabbi Yadgar, he warmly welcomed us. As soon as we met him, we realized that he was somebody special, someone who listened and cared and really wanted to help.

"We told him our situation and said that we had signed up for some special treatment at the Carmel medical center in Chaifa. It was something new and experimental and

*"We were devastated," recalls Danny. "Our disappointment brought us down from the peak of happiness to the depths of despair, and nobody could console us. I sat alone for hours and introspected, wondering why this had happened."*

the costs were astronomical.

"R' Yadgar listened to our story and then began to tell us about the Lubavitcher Rebbe in Brooklyn, and how he was a *tzaddik* who helps so many people with his *brachos*. He told us some stories of blessings that had come true, and how people had conceived despite the doctors' prognostications. He suggested we write to the Rebbe, explaining how to do so. I told him that an answer wasn't urgent since the treatment did not begin for another half a year. We

wrote the letter and sent it off, hoping for good results.

"While writing the letter, R' Yadgar told us that the Rebbe had once written him to tell everyone in his name that in addition to his giving the Rebbe their names, he should tell them that the more they strengthened their fulfillment of Torah and *mitzvos*, the more of a vessel and channel it would be for whatever they needed. R' Yadgar suggested we take on certain *mitzvos* and good practices, in order to be a vessel to receive a *bracha*.

"My wife committed to Shabbos and *tahara*, whereas I..."

Six long months went by. It was Thursday, three days before the first morning of monthly treatments. Danny returned from the hospital after taking care of all the necessary paperwork. He was preoccupied with thoughts of the protocol his wife and he were about to start, and he prayed that it would be successful.

He walked into his apartment with a bunch of letters that had been in the mailbox. To his surprise, one of the letters was from the Rebbe MH" M. "The letter came just in time," he thought. He and Yardena opened the envelope and found a letter full of unfamiliar abbreviations and concepts.

They asked the *shliach* to Afula, Rabbi Chaim Sholom Segal, for help in reading the letter. After explaining

what the letter said, he told them what a privilege it was to receive a letter from the Rebbe, and how important it was to fulfill what the Rebbe had written about family purity, and what it said in the postscript, where the Rebbe wrote that many people opposed certain medical treatments, including the one they were about to try.

Tears filled Danny's eyes when he reached this part of the story. "The Rebbe clearly did not approve of this treatment. We felt awful, to put it mildly. We waited a long six months for an answer, and just as we were

All attempts at finding a compromise were unsuccessful. Yardena strongly believed in the Rebbe and insisted on following what he said."

Sunday he called Dr. Dirnfeld, the director of the department at the hospital and said they wouldn't be coming in. The doctor couldn't believe her ears. "You waited for half a year, did all the tests, and now you're canceling?"

\* \* \*

Yardena, wanting to fulfill the Rebbe's instruction to review the laws of family purity, arranged private

Some time later it became apparent that their trials weren't over yet. Yardena needed bed rest, and her mother was told the news and was called upon to help out. A few days passed and Yardena did not feel well. She was taken to the hospital where the stunned couple was told the pregnancy had suddenly ended.

"We were devastated," recalls Danny. "Our disappointment brought us down from the peak of happiness to the depths of despair, and nobody could console us. I sat alone for hours and introspected, wondering why this had happened. Then I remembered what R' Yadgar had said, quoting the Rebbe: "they should strengthen themselves in Torah and *mitzvos*, and this will be a channel to receive all their needs." Yardena had done what the Rebbe said, but I had lagged behind and hadn't done anything. Apparently, this is why the *bracha* was fulfilled through Yardena, but had been stopped since I hadn't done what I was supposed to do.

"Right then and there, I decided to travel to the Rebbe with Yardena, so that we could be vessels to receive his brachos, and in order to absorb the holy atmosphere surrounding him."

Gimmel Sivan 5749. Danny and Yardena entered 770 for the first time in their lives. It was shortly before *Mincha*. "The *shul* was full of *chassidim* – some locals and some guests who had come for Shavuos. I waited impatiently for my first glimpse of the Rebbe," says Danny.

"Then a path opened amongst the *chassidim*, and from the distance I could see the majestic form of the Rebbe entering with confident steps. The Rebbe approached the spot where I was standing. I looked into his eyes and felt a beam of light; I felt that the Rebbe's eyes were happy, and that a smile shone in them.

"That was an amazing month for



about to start the treatment, the letter arrived warning us about it. I felt that after we had bothered to undergo all the tests, and had even paid in full, how could we not go through with it? Yardena insisted that we couldn't do anything against the *tzaddik's* advice.

"We were terribly uncertain as to what to do. On the one hand, the Rebbe had said no, but on the other hand, how were we to explain to the head of the department at the hospital that at the last minute we were pulling out because the Lubavitcher Rebbe didn't approve?

sessions with Rebbetzin Hertzel, a<sup>h</sup>, who lived in Kfar Tavor, and the practical application of the laws seemed natural and self-understood.

Not too many months passed when the Rebbe's *bracha* was fulfilled in a natural manner. The couple was ecstatic. They considered this a miracle, completely supernatural. The first ones to know were the *shluchim* who had been involved, Reb. Hertzel and Rabbi Segal and Rabbi Yadgar, from whom they learned that up until the fifth month they should keep the news to themselves.

us. We *davened* with the Rebbe three times a day, participated in the *farbrengens*, and got “dollars” every Sunday. The first time, I asked in a trembling voice for a *bracha* for children. The Rebbe asked me my name and my mother’s name, but suddenly, I was blank. The name just flew out of my head! I remember that I left in great turmoil.

“I met Yardena waiting outside, and how shocked we were when we discovered that the same thing had happened to both of us. Since it was close to Shavuos, I asked the Rebbe for a *bracha* that the following year we would be able to bring him ‘*bikkurim*’ – a baby. I asked, but deep down I thought it wasn’t realistic.”

The month with the Rebbe flew by quickly. The Amrani couple returned home. Till this day they don’t know the name of the *chassid* who spoke to them at length on the plane. He asked Danny to put on *t’fillin*, and then Danny told him about the *brachos* they had gotten from the Rebbe. The *chassid* said they needed to make a vessel and strengthen their *mitzva* observance. Danny resolved to wear a *kippa*, to put on *t’fillin* every day and to keep Shabbos, thus preparing himself for good news.

Less than a month after they had returned home, they had good news! All tests showed that everything was



fine. R’ Segal suggested that they write to the Rebbe and ask for a *bracha* for a healthy pregnancy and an easy birth at the right time.

Danny: “That’s what we did. Each month we sent the Rebbe a letter, asking for another *bracha*, and this time everything went smoothly. During the pregnancy I decided that if all went well, we would travel to the Rebbe to thank him for the child born in his *z’chus*.”

“On Daled Adar 5750 our daughter was born. That year was a year of miracles for the Jewish people, and for us in particular. I had asked the Rebbe if we could bring him *bikkurim* the following Shavuos, and that is what we did. We went to the Rebbe for Shavuos 5750 with our baby Oshri Simcha.

“We were allowed to go by the Rebbe together. All choked up, I said to the Rebbe, ‘Rebbe! This is your daughter! Last year we came for a *bracha*, and now we’ve brought the

baby to you.’

“The Rebbe’s face shone. He put a dollar into Oshri’s tiny fist and said, ‘This is G-d’s *bracha*. What is her name?’ I answered, ‘Oshri Simcha.’ The Rebbe gave another dollar and asked for her mother’s name.

“When we started walking away, we were called back. The Rebbe said to Yardena, ‘We will soon go out of Galus. May you merit to raise her to *chuppa* and good deeds. This is a good beginning,’ and he added two more dollars and said, ‘may you live with sons and daughters with G-d’s help.’

“Four year later our son was born, Uria Chaim.”

\* \* \*

Today Daniel and Yardena are among the Chabad *chassidim* in the north of the country, and their children go to Chabad schools. Their son attends the *talmud Torah* in Migdal HaEmek, and their daughter goes to the Chabad school in Taanach, which is run by R’ Yadgar.

“The lesson I learned from this great miracle is the way a person becomes a vessel to receive the Rebbe’s *brachos*, and that no *bracha* from the Rebbe returns empty,” says Danny. And he knows what he’s talking about.

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# THE REBBE ALREADY TOLD US: WHAT SHARON SHOULD SAY TO BUSH

BY SHAI GEFEN



## SHARON'S TRIP TO WASHINGTON

Prime Minister Sharon visited President Bush in Washington this week. In preparation for the visit, Sharon decided to relieve the Palestinians even more from their hardships. In addition, he permitted Foreign Minister Peres to renew contact with the members of the P.A. According to political pundits, all these concessions were in order to appease the U.S. before Sharon met with Bush, for Bush had asked that Israel leave at least another two Arab cities in Yehuda/Shomron.

We were just saved from two terrible attacks by suicide bombers. Miraculously, the stories ended happily. At the same time though, Security heads are talking about more serious impending threats. And so we ask: To whom were those concessions made? Sharon knows good and well that the only thing "humanitarian easing-up" means is another terrorist who will find it easy to blow himself up in the midst of a quiet civilian population. The price, as always, will be paid by us, the citizens, with our blood.

It's now, when the United States

itself is feeling the long arm of terror, and its citizens have been killed around the world, that the prime minister can convey a strong message and explain that the security of his citizens cannot be harmed for the sake of concessions to Arabs.

At "dollars" in Sivan 5750, the Rebbe told Mr. Ron Nachman, mayor of Ariel, after the latter asked what should be said in the U.S. regarding the situation: **"As I said a number of times, the U.S. is interested in the welfare of Eretz Yisroel, because the other side is the Arabs, and the Arabs are against the U.S. They don't want the U.S. to be successful, preferring that Iran and others like them succeed. But lately, foreign ideas have gotten mixed in, side issues, and you have to find what to say to respond to these additional issues. It's easy to clarify this by looking up the speeches of past American presidents in which they publicly explain how, for the sake of the entire world, Israel must be strong, so that Syria and Iran, etc., don't expand. For they are just as opposed to the U.S. as they are to Israel, and maybe more so. It's easy to explain this because you don't have to come up with anything new, just find the newspapers from two and three years**

**ago, and there you have all details ready-made."**

Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, there's no question that it's easier to explain things to representatives in Washington when they themselves have experienced Arab terrorism aimed specifically against them. Sad to say though, things haven't changed. Just as we're in a position when the entire world can understand that we are up against the biggest terrorist organization in the world, i.e. the P.A., and the other terror groups that are associated with it, we continue with the familiar pattern of obsequiousness and withdrawal as soon as our Big Uncle in America frowns.

Take for example the humiliating withdrawal from the Mukta'a a few weeks ago. For a few days, Israel was able to do what it pleased in the area. Not a word was heard from the U.S. But then a few days passed in which Israel delayed action against Arafat and dozens of wanted terrorists, and then the U.S. spoke up. Chazal have an aphorism for this: "It's not the mouse that's the thief, but the hole that's the thief," i.e., the waffling and vacillation are what bring on the criticism.

In a conversation that Elyakim

Rubinstein, then secretary of state, had with the Rebbe, Rubinstein said that they were going to be meeting with President Bush (senior), and added, "these are not easy times; the situation in Washington has changed."

The Rebbe responded, **"You know that in order to obtain something from the U.S. you have to show strength and how you will not capitulate. Not in order to anger them, but because otherwise, it doesn't work. They cannot demand that Israel do something which goes counter to its existence, counter to its life...the solution to the political situation is the opposite of what they've done in the past, because in the past the government took the position that you have to make concessions - and not just on anything, but on key issues - and that they would get something in return. This is the opposite to the nature of the U.S. The U.S. was founded by standing strong on the principle of you cannot concede vital interests, and even though England screamed and France was against them, and the whole world was opposed to the U.S. then - since they stood strong, they succeeded and continue to succeed. It benefits the U.S. to have a strong Israel in the Middle East, because it is America's only true partner in the Middle East."**

If up until a year ago, they thought otherwise in the U.S., and thus pushed a more pro-Arab line at the expense of Israel's security, today "times have changed," and it is much easier to explain our own war against terror. All we need is for our leaders to know what they themselves want, and then to stand strong in face of pressure from within and without.

### **BLOOD FOR BLOOD**

Shortly before the present wave of attacks of suicide bombers, which only miraculously did not end worse, the Sharon government handed over 80 million shekel to the P.A. in a move

called "building trust." The Intelligence agencies say this money goes towards financing attacks.

Documents confiscated in the past showed a close connection between the money given to Arafat and terror attacks. Tens of millions went into the hands of the one who is "no longer relevant," i.e., Arafat, with nary a protest from anybody on the Right or in Security. Those who convey the money to murderers know that after giving the money, there will be an attack in the center of Israel. This money gives the P.A. and all terrorists

***That in order to obtain something from the U.S. you have to show strength and how you will not capitulate. Not in order to anger them, but because otherwise, it doesn't work.***

the impetus to continue their work, and despite this, nobody says boo. We did not hear Effie Eitam scream about this obscenity, nor have we heard from his friends. Worse of all, there's nobody to pay the price for these serious lapses.

And the blood continues to flow.

### **THE PRICE OF RETREAT**

*Chazal* say, "fleeing is the beginning of a fall." There were many reasons offered as to why the El Aksa intifada started two years ago. Some blamed

Sharon's visit to the Temple Mt., while others offered other reasons. But many in Security said it was a result of Barak's humiliating withdrawal from Lebanon, which taught Arafat that it's possible to make Israelis run from anywhere, by stubborn warfare.

Recently, the latter has proven to be the reason for the Intifada. According to various reports, Arafat saw the withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanon and told his cronies that he would do a much better job than the Hezbollah did in Lebanon.

Only four months later, after Barak offered the world to Arafat at Camp David, Arafat began to show us that he can do it as well as the Hezbollah.

Did anybody in the Israeli political-security establishment get the message? It's hard to say that anybody did, despite the desire to show that something changed. It seems that what was, will still be. The attempt in recent weeks to evacuate outposts that are vital to the security in Yesha, prove that cynicism has no limits. For the sake of primaries and intra-party problems, the prime minister and the defense minister are ready to clear out dozens of outposts, and to show the world that they seek peace and they cannot be blamed for holding on to illegal outposts. That shameful withdrawal from Lebanon continues today in Yesha.

To our shame the armed forces are getting ready to leave Arab cities, thanks to pressure from the U.S. and despite the fact that they know that the price to pay is so high.

### **IT DEPENDS ON WHO'S TALKING**

It's been a few weeks now that our leaders have been squirming over the question as to whether to make the Islamic movement illegal. Everybody knows that this movement incites terror and violence, and in recent months quite a few Israeli Arabs were

caught who were involved in terror and who helped terrorists. Just the other week, Intelligence discovered three Israeli Arabs from Ramla who underwent training in order to carry out terror attacks. Naturally, in the meantime, nothing was done to the movement which constantly incites the Arab sector against Israel and Jews. This is in contrast to any word uttered by Jews against Arabs, which is strictly investigated and threatened with prosecution.

Somebody on the Right who wore a shirt with the logo, “*Ein Aravim, ein piguim*” (No Arabs, No Attacks), is standing trial. Rabbi Shmuel Eliyahu, *rav* in Tzfas, is “guilty” for criticizing the fact that Arab students are being allowed to study at the branch of Michlelet Bar Ilan in Tzfas, after we learned that the students studying there did not report the suicide terrorist at the Miron junction a few months ago, causing the deaths of nine Jews and dozens of wounded.

We must not delude ourselves: many of the Arabs living in Israel have become part of the terror network which the P.A. operates against us. It started in October when they took part in the incitement against Jews in Eretz Yisroel, and then in the discovery of terror cells throughout the country. We are still trying to ignore the huge problem of Israeli Arabs who are an inseparable part of the Arabs on the other side of the Green Line. These Arabs - which our leaders continuously fooled themselves into thinking were on our side - are actually our worst enemies.

Instead of curtailing the movement and intensifying the fight against them, the fight is being waged against those who sound the warning about the real problem.

One of the most serious problems involving Israeli Arabs is centered in Lud and Ramla. The mayor of Lud, Maxim Levy, ז”ל, suddenly passed away

two weeks ago. Thirteen years ago, in 5750, when he passed by the Rebbe for “dollars,” the Rebbe gave him a dollar “for *shleimus* of the entire Eretz Yisroel,” and an additional dollar “for *shleimus* Lud.” Today we can better understand what “*shleimus* Lud” means, and Mr. Levy was someone who tried to fight an uncompromising war about this.

### FAULTY P.R.

An investigative report which was publicized recently warned about the

***Today “times have changed,” and it is much easier to explain our own war against terror. All we need is for our leaders to know what they themselves want, and then to stand strong in face of pressure from within and without.***

country’s faulty P.R. According to the national comptrollers office, the public relations fiascos of the Foreign Ministry cause significant harm to the national interests of the State.

The comptroller is certainly correct in this, however it did not target the real problem. If within the Foreign Ministry, we have officials who don’t know why they are sitting in this country, some of whom are even certain that we are at fault for the Palestinian problem, and they are more

certain of the righteousness of the Arab cause than our own, why would we count on them? The real problem, Mr. Comptroller, is not in the correlation between the public relations entities and fiduciary distress. The Problem of all Problems is that we don’t know how to explain ourselves.

If after killing Palestinian civilians, Israeli P.R. stammers and stutters and doesn’t know how to explain itself, why should we complain? If after arch-terrorist Shehada was killed by the army, our leaders apologize for the civilians killed, that means we automatically turned the action into something illegitimate and immoral.

Ministers in the government have complained that they have not been well received in Europe. If after two years of war, we still haven’t learned our lesson, and haven’t grasped the source of the problem, why should we complain about Europeans who don’t exactly welcome us? If we still fuel the hopes of the Palestinians that they have reason to fight, and we let them know they can expect things from us, there’s no reason why our explanations shouldn’t fall on deaf ears.

### JOIN THE STRUGGLE

At this time, when we live in fear and experience repeated acts of terrorism, we must fight on behalf of *shleimus ha’Aretz*. R’ Shabsi Bloch, a *chassid* from Tzfas, has begun in recent weeks to organize the activities on behalf of the Matteh LMaan *Shleimus HaAretz*. New stickers were made and more material was published. *Anash* and *T’mimim* are asked to take part in this battle for the sake of *shleimus ha’Aretz*. It’s not just a *z’chus*; it’s an obligation to express one’s protest on matters that affect the lives of millions of Jews. Everybody can contribute, in order to be a part of the battle against the abandonment of our security and peace.

# THE FUTURE? THE REBBE IS IN CHARGE

SHLOMO GROSSMAN

In 1991 the Rebbe gave a *sicha* about Iraq. I listened to the *chazara* on Motzaei Shabbos, in which the Rebbe mentioned that Iraq would basically be totally decimated! (Nuclear bombs?) When I listened to the *chazara* the next day in order to clarify some of the points the Rebbe made, I noticed that a large part of it was cut out.

I recently asked someone who was working in the Sichos at the time exactly what happened then. He said that in the course of the *sicha* the Rebbe mentioned that there were rumors that Saddam Hussein was dead. They went to the Rebbe and asked him if they should print that as it appeared that he was still alive. The Rebbe answered to take it out, but he also mentioned that “*od hazon la’moed*” – the prophecy will yet be fulfilled.

As a result, we can confidently say that Saddam’s days are numbered. But what is significant here is why the Rebbe himself had to mention this. It seems that by saying this the Rebbe also helped bring about Saddam’s (future) demise.

In my mind it seems that Saddam’s demise is a significant event. Either because he is some sort of *kli* that has to be removed in order for Moshiach to be revealed, or possibly he has the ability to do untold harm to the world, and the Rebbe himself has to step in and stop him. In any event, his demise signifies some sort of turning point.

This also takes on significance because of the fact that in 1991 the Rebbe said that the Yalkut Shimoni

refereed to the gulf war that took place at that time. The Yalkut Shimoni says in brief that Iraq attacks another nation

*A we know,  
Moshiach’s power  
increases from day to  
day (maalim  
ba’kodesh). So  
whatever is going to  
happen it is all under  
control, and it won’t  
be anywhere near as  
disastrous as it could  
be, because the Rebbe  
is in charge.*

(Kuwait) and the world is in a turmoil. It is a very frightening situation, but Moshiach appears and tells the Jews not to worry since it is all happening for them, and it is all part of the *Geula* unfolding.

It is very interesting to note that the exact same situation is playing itself out at this very moment. Even the same players are involved: President Bush (junior this time) and Saddam Hussein. Then Moshiach appears on the roof of the Beis HaMikdash (770, *Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel*), as it says in the *Yalkut*

*Shimoni* that the Rebbe quoted countless times!

It seems that what is happening now is a fulfillment of what the Rambam says in *Mishneh Torah*, in the last chapter which explains what will happen in our times, the times of Moshiach. He says that two religions will be proven false: Christianity and Islam. The followers of each will realize that they were lied to, and that Judaism is the true religion. We see this happening before our very eyes in the disintegration of Christianity with the endless publicity of their degenerate leaders. It is also written that the last battle will be with the Muslim religion. The war that America is about to enter is not a war with Iraq alone; it is a war against Islam, a war of good (Judaism) against evil (Islam).

Both the Christians and the Muslims realize that now is the time, and they want to rule when the dust settles. They both realize that before they can rule the world they have to get rid (G-d forbid) of the Jews. As we see the tremendous rise in anti-Semitism in the world. But if you tell a secular Jew that he is important, he will fight you tooth and nail: “Me, I’m just like anybody else.” But the non-Jews know better.

The Rebbe says in a *sicha* that the situation may be a terrifying one, yet Hashem laughs at the plans of the *goyim*, and the plans they have to conquer the world and to conquer the Jews. So Jews should not be concerned by this. Rather, we should be concerned about giving *musar* (direction) to our children. This is something that we can effect and do



something about, something that is more important than the war around us, of which we already know the end: Moshiach.

If you want to be elevated and inspired, read the Rebbe's Sichos. If you want to be depressed then read the newspapers.

II. It is important to be aware of the extent to which this may go to, in order that we know what to expect and not be surprised by it. In this way, we are able to keep cool, and keep our *emuna*, and be aware of the *hisgalus* happening before our very eyes.

The Rebbe Rayatz writes in *HaKria V'HaK'dusha* that preceding Moshiach's revelation there will be major changes in the world. Including major flooding. This could reach to such an extent that an entire country could be destroyed!

Could you imagine that one day, G-d forbid, Japan just disappears! (Of course, all this can be mitigated by our utilizing our free-choice and spreading the *b'suras ha'Geula*). The Rebbe Rayatz writes that this is in order to make the world realize the fact that the world doesn't just run by itself; Hashem is in control. He does it in this manner because he wants people to utilize their free-choice and realize this on their own. This creates a *dira ba'tachtonim*. This will make the world a vessel for the revelation of G-dliness that is taking place, and the world will be able absorb the infinite light that is coming into the world.

III. I think that America will not be able to win this war. Somehow (G-d forbid) the economy of America will come to a standstill. As we see that Al Qaeda feels that the economy is the machine that fuels the American ability to conduct a multi-billion dollar war with state-of-the-art weapons.

So they want to hurt America's ability in this regard. Why do I say this? Because if America wins the war, it will be a setback to Moshiach's arrival. Why, because it will mean that capitalism and democracy are the truth and all powerful, and not Judaism, Moshiach

and G-d! Therefore, the entire world has to be affected and brought to its knees, and then Moshiach will be revealed and guide the world back from the brink of annihilation.

The Alter Rebbe writes that before Moshiach is revealed, only the government and a few individuals will have money.

It took ten plagues for the Egyptians to admit that G-d runs the world and to let the Jews worship their G-d. How many will it take for the American people to realize this?

It says in the Midrash that Haman did more for the Jews than Moshe Rabbeinu and all the prophets. Why? Because fear is much stronger than love. That's why we say "*yiras Shamayim*"

***Directing our  
children is something  
that we can effect and  
do something about  
that is more  
important than the  
war around us.***

instead of "*ahavas Shamayim*." Fear is a basic emotion, the desire to survive reaches the essence of a person. Love, you can take it or leave it.

When the Rebbe said that the time of your Redemption has arrived, he got an argument. But when 9/11 happened millions of people asked why, and ran to churches, etc., to find an answer. The Rebbe wanted it done the easy way, but the nature of man is to do it the hard way.

VI. As the Rebbe said, "open your eyes," I have noticed that since the eighties there have been a tremendous amount of natural disasters, yet the loss of life has been minimal. Bin Ladin boasted that he would kill a hundred

thousand people, yet he got around three thousand. Still a tragedy yes, but no where near what could have been. A few years ago there was a hurricane that was heading directly for Miami, Florida. If it would have hit, millions would have been affected. The Rebbe waved his hand, and it hit just thirty miles away in a non-populated area. About five years ago a tornado hit Los Angeles. If you hear tornado and Los Angeles you immediately think "Oh my G-d, millions..." (G-d forbid). The media showed highways twisted, buildings destroyed, it wreaked havoc, but how many people were killed -two hundred. An open miracle.

Who do we have to thank? Melech HaMoshiach! The Rebbe himself. As the Rebbe said in 1991, that Moshiach has started to directly affect events in the world. And as we know, Moshiach's power increases from day to day (*maalim ba'kodesh*). So whatever is going to happen it is all under control, and it won't be anywhere near as disastrous as it could be, because the Rebbe is in charge.

V. I also feel that when the Rebbe's revelation occurs that the entire world may not realize immediately that he is Moshiach. Only the people that were prepared by the *b'suras ha'Geula* will be ready. The rest will just think that it is just an interesting quirk of nature that now, after Gimmel Tammuz, the Rebbe is alive. They have no idea about what a *tzaddik* is, they never heard the word "Moshiach," they don't know about Jews, so they have no way to associate this event with the *Geula*, which is why it is so important to prepare the world now so that we won't have to start from the beginning when Moshiach arrives and delay the *Geula shleima*.

The Rambam in the *Mishneh Torah* suggests that even after Moshiach does a number of things, individuals still won't acknowledge that he is Moshiach. He brings the Jews back to *t'shuva*, he fights the wars of G-d, he builds the Beis HaMikdash, he brings Jews to the Holy Land from all over the world, but until all this happens and more, he is not

acknowledged by everyone as being Moshiach!

Why? Because Hashem wants there to be free-choice. Of course as time goes on it gets harder to deny the obvious, but we continually see that people are not necessarily truth-seekers. They do whatever they can to hold on to their positions or philosophies until the last drop of blood. Look at Pharaoh, who even after ten plagues still didn't give up. Look at Saddam Hussein, who feels that if he can't rule the world then life is just not worth living, and many other examples.

Those who have learned *chassidus*,



learned about the *Geula*, know what the Rebbe has said about our times, and are ready and excited. We realize now that the Rebbe is Moshiach and scream "Yechi Adoneinu" with all our heart. Others are still waiting to see what will happen.

VI. I think that for Jews who haven't learned *chassidus*, Moshiach is some kind of angel that appears spontaneously, and materializes out of thin air, and then forces them to believe in him because G-d has decided that the time has come. As a result, they will have no choice but to go along. But the Rebbe has said that we can make it

happen. He made us realize just how powerful every Jew is. And for that matter, every person alive today. We can make a difference. Unfortunately free-choice is rarely utilized. Others say no, people are just people and only Hashem Himself can bring the *Geula*.

At some point however Moshiach himself will cause even these hardships to do *t'shuva*, but at what point?

VII. Someone once asked me if I believe that the Rebbe is Moshiach. I answered: No! What does *belief* have to do with it? Is the only reason Shabbos exists is because I believe it? It's a fact. The Torah says to keep Shabbos, so

there is Shabbos. Over one hundred and seventy-five *rabbanim* have *paskened* that the Rebbe is Moshiach. The Rebbe himself has said as much in Sichos, on video, cassette, in *s'farim*, first hand accounts, etc. What does belief have to do with it?

I think the only test of faith here is if one believes that Hashem really exists or not, and if Torah really is true. When G-d is only a philosophy, everyone is a *yira Shamayim*. But when it comes to reality, everyone runs for cover. They say, "The Rebbe is Moshiach, are you for real?"

Then you get the question, "How many Lubavitchers believe that the

Rebbe is Moshiach?" The question implies that if the Rebbe is Moshiach then everyone who saw him should realize it. But Hashem wants free-choice. So one can see Moshiach, hear Moshiach, have Moshiach say in so many words that he is Moshiach, and then say, "The Rebbe, Moshiach! Are you crazy?"

If Judaism were strictly democratic, we wouldn't be here today. Avrohom was called *Ivri*, because he was on the other side. The whole world with millions of people were on one side, and he was on the other. They thought that he was crazy when he said that there is only one G-d, it was bad for business. Yet Judaism is still here and thousands of empires are not.

VIII. It seems that in general Moshiach can be brought in two ways. 1) *Kamus*: Not all Jews, or people in the world, need to scream to Hashem that they want the Rebbe to lead us out of Galus. There is a certain number that is "critical mass" that will trigger the *Geula* Shleima.

The Rebbe also spoke about other acts that can prepare the world for his revelation. And if enough of these acts are done, this also helps: *tz'daka*, *achdus*, learning about Moshiach, learning *chassidus*, saying "Yechi," spreading of the *Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach*, *hiddur mitzva*, saying *Kiddush Levana* with *kavana*, saying the parts of *davening* that speak about Moshiach with *kavana*, etc.

2) *Eichus*: If a single *tzaddik* (any Jew) sincerely wants Moshiach bad enough, and deep enough, that also can trigger the *Geula*.

Everything written here is subject to change. Since we have free-choice, the *Geula* can theoretically come at any point. But "Lo yegati, lo metzasi," there is no free ride. Hashem wants a *dira ba'tachtonim*. He wants us to willingly accept Moshiach in our minds and our hearts, and to do something. The sooner the better.

*Yechi Adoneinu, Moreinu V'Rabbeinu, Melech HaMoshiach, L'olam Va'ed!*

# READERS *writing*



## “I DON’T NEED A LOT OF MONEY TO LIVE”?!

I read with interest the fascinating and enlightening article by Mr. Grossman, but I believe that when he said (in the second column), “I don’t need a lot of money to live,” I took exception. The average Jewish family (over 3-5 children) probably needs \$75-\$100 thousand dollars a year to live properly (didn’t the Rebbe MH”M say we should buy houses) even without owning a house.

*Boruch V. Hoffigner*

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# SOME GOOD NEWS FROM CHEVRON

With word of the planned pullout of the IDF from the Arab section of Chevron infuriating those who understand that their presence means peace and quiet in the area, there is also some good news – of a spiritual sort.

On Hei Cheshvan, a group of people from the Chabad house was doing *Mivtza T'fillin* with a paratrooper unit in the Chevron area when they heard an explosion. To the shock of the many soldiers standing there, it turned out that a stray bullet had been shot by a soldier standing nearby when he unloaded his weapon. Miraculously, the bullet flew upwards, and the soldiers and Lubavitchers weren't hurt. Some of the soldiers were in mild shock, so Rabbi Yossi Nachshon, director of activities at the Chabad house, calmed them down.

The soldiers said goodbye and thanked Nachshon for putting *t'fillin* on with them and providing them with snacks. Some of the soldiers said they were leaving the area for Tul Kerem. Others said they were finishing their military duty, and that they would keep in touch. Many of them even gave Nachshon their addresses.

Other positive news from Chevron has to do with the opening of the Kollel Menucha Rochel. A few weeks ago, the defense minister approved the *kollel* in the area of the old cemetery in Chevron. On Beis Cheshvan, the first *shiur* in the *kollel* took place.

In the first stage, the *kollel* will be

opened in the afternoons, Rabbi Danny Cohen, director of the *kollel*, Rabbi Yossi Nachshon, and other young men, participated in the first *shiur*. By way of introduction, R' Nachshon began with a *sicha* about Noach. R' Cohen gave a *shiur* in *Tanya*, and then they *farbrenged*.

A meeting took place between Rabbi Victor Ettiya and Mr. Moshe Katzav regarding the dedication of the archaeological museum in Kiryat

Arba. Council leader, Tzvi Katzover, invited R' Ettiya to present the work of Chabad in Kiryat Arba, Chevron, and its environs to the Israeli president. R' Ettiya told about the incredible work Chabad does among the residents and soldiers in the area.

The Israeli president expressed his amazement over their work, and Katzover and the head of the community center, Yigal Kutai, praised Chabad's work.



Rabbi Yossi Nachshon with soldiers moments after the scare



Rabbi Victor Ettiya speaking with Moshe Katzav

# FOR THE FIRST TIME: CELEBRATING SUKKOS IN THE HOME OF THE GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY

For the very first time in history, over 500 men, women and children celebrated Sukkos at the Governor's mansion, with New Jersey's newly elected Governor, James (Jim) McGreevy. A huge *sukka* was built on the lawn, and respected Jewish leaders from throughout the state were invited to celebrate the holiday with the Governor and his wife, during one of the evenings of Chol HaMoed. The *sukka* was built and decorated by the students at the Chabad school of New Brunswick, who did a wonderful job.

Despite the blustery weather, many hundreds made it to the *sukka*, danced to the *chassidic* music and partook of the lavish spread offered in the *sukka*. The Governor himself circulated among the crowd, and spoke a few words about the personal faith G-d gives him in his own personal life.



Rabbi Y. Carlebach presents silver goblet to New Jersey Governor McGreevy

He also spoke of the need for unity within the community – in order to overcome the difficult challenges of these times for both the US and Israel.

Rabbi Yosef Carlebach, Director of Chabad of Rutgers, thanked the Governor for hosting the historic event, which was the first ever held in a Governor's mansion in any state in the union. He expressed his hopes that this would be the beginning of a yearly tradition which would extend to other Governors of other states as well. At the conclusion of his words, Rabbi Carlebach presented Governor McGreevy with a silver "cup of Eliyahu," and then all proceeded into the

*sukka*. Many of the visitors particularly enjoyed seeing the Governor join in a traditional *chassidic* dance with Rabbi Carlebach and others.

## NEW RELEASE!

The second volume of the bilingual version of *Shulchan Aruch: Code of Jewish Law* by the Alter Rebbe, covering the "Laws of Tefillin," sections 25-45 of *Orach Chayim*, was just released, dedicated in honor of Rabbi Levi Bistritzky, a"h, Chief Rabbi of Tzfas.

The meticulous translation, by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger and Uri Kaploun, is a great tool to aid in learning this vital masterpiece of *halacha*.



# VICTORY FOR SHLUCHIM IN KIRYAT ARBA



Legal papers regarding the case



Rabbi Victor Ettia

“*Didon notzach*” for the Rebbe’s *shluchim* in Kiryat Arba, Rabbi Victor Ettia and his family, and the entire Jewish community, with the legal threat against the shliach’s son being dropped.

The story began a year ago, when one of the supporters of Kiryat Arba, R’ Yechezkel Mualam, was murdered. The youth of Kiryat Arba organized a protest demonstration at the scene of the murder. They erected a tent and demonstrated opposite Arab houses.

Every now and then, scuffles broke out between the Arab youth who live in the nearby houses and the Jewish youth

in the tent. The police, as it usually does, only arrested the Jewish boys as they fled stone-throwing Arabs. The police began an intensive investigation into the matter and located the one who had thrown the stones: Yehonosan Ettia, son of the director of the Chabad house in Kiryat Arba, Rabbi Victor Ettia, and grandson of Chassidic artist Boruch Nachshon.

The evidence against Yehonosan was based on ... the testimony of an Arab boy by the name of Achmad Jebar, who claimed rocks had been thrown at him. A twelve-year-old Jewish boy who

was also threatened, served as state’s witness.

There was supposed to be a court case about this, and the Ettia family was aware that the police had sewn up a case on their son. The day before the court case, Rabbi Ettia received a phone call from the plaintiff Achmad Jebar. Jebar said, “I’m sorry Victor. I didn’t know it was your son. All the Arabs in Chevron know that you’re a nice Rabbi and you’re good to everyone. I know that your son didn’t do it. They just wanted to prove that he threw rocks in order to punish him.”

Rabbi Ettia, who was greatly surprised by the unexpected phone call, was careful about what he said so that he wouldn’t have any legal problems. He told the Arab that he wasn’t involved in the matter. Achmad didn’t give up. He said, “Tomorrow I won’t be showing up to complain.”

The next day, indeed, Achmad did not show up at court, and the judge realized that their main witness did not want to testify. The case was closed and the prosecutors were held in contempt of court.



Photos of an impromptu Moshiach Flag parade during Simchas Beis HaShoeiva this year. Photo credit: Raanan Isseroff

# THE GREATEST REWARD I COULD GIVE YOU

BY RABBI TUVIA BOLTON, MASHPIA IN YESHIVA  
OHR TMIMIM OF KFAR CHABAD



This week let us try to understand the *Akeida* (binding) of Yitzchok, which could possibly be the most important, and yet the strangest single occurrence in the entire Torah.

Imagine yourself taking a long hike in the woods. You've been peacefully walking for several hours, when suddenly you notice through the trees in the distance a horrifying sight: what seems to be a man tying up his son on what looks like an altar with a small fire burning nearby!

You can't believe your eyes! Shaking all over, you take out your cellular phone, call the police and begin shouting and making noise to interrupt the ritual. The police arrive faster than you thought possible, get out of their car, and begin approaching the man while announcing through their megaphones, "Put down the knife and let the boy loose, and nothing will happen to you."

He complies, and minutes later he is sitting on the altar calmly explaining "G-d spoke to me three days ago and told me to sacrifice him. Well, we were on the road since

then waiting for the sign – and finally it came."

If this man were your relative would you be proud of him? Would you try to emulate him?

Why, then, is the *Akeida* at the foundation of the Jewish religion? It is even printed at the beginning of every prayer book to inspire us every morning before we pray. Why? What is it supposed to make us think?

I want to answer this with another story.

Once there was a king who loved to hunt wild boar on horseback. One cold winter afternoon after an unsuccessful day of hunting, one of his entourage spotted a large boar. The king set off to the chase. Several times he almost caught his game, but after over an hour he suddenly realized that he had become separated from his company and that it was getting dark. The king turned his royal coat inside out so no one would recognize him, for he feared his enemies, and in pitch darkness he began wandering aimlessly in the freezing, snow-covered forest. After several hours, he was becoming frightened. The wolf's howls were nearer and the

biting wind had already numbed his hands and feet. Suddenly he saw a small hut with light shining from the window. He quietly approached on horseback and looked in the window. There he saw an old Jew, obviously a woodcutter, sitting by the stove reading a book while his wife was lying fast asleep in her bed. The king, numb and shivering from the cold, alighted from his horse, walked around to the door and knocked. The woodcutter cautiously opened up and said, "If you are a robber, I have nothing to steal, but please come in, you must be freezing!"

He sat his guest by the stove, pulled over the table, gave him a drink of vodka, a hot meal, and finally a warm place to sleep.

Late next morning the king woke up. He thanked the Jew for saving his life, and, with difficulty, succeeded in forcing him to accept a gold coin before mounting his horse and returning to his palace.

The next day the old Jew heard a knock on his door. He opened up and was shocked! There stood one of the king's royal guards in full uniform and behind him a royal

coach escorted by twenty soldiers on horseback “Our orders are to bring you to the king’s palace,” said the guard, “Please put on your best garments. The king wants to speak to you.”

Two hours later, the astonished woodcutter found himself standing before the king (who he, of course, did not recognize) seated on his throne in his immense palatial hall surrounded by royal pomp and glory. “Zalman” said the king to the bewildered old Jew, “I have been watching you. My spies have singled you out as one of the most honest and pure men in the kingdom. I want you to be one of my advisors. Your hours will be from one to two in the afternoon every day with a free house on the palace grounds, all the servants you need and special privileges for all your family forever. Your wages are \$1000 a day beginning today.

“But, one small detail, you will have to change your religion; I’ll not have a Jew on my royal court. That is all. Congratulations,” he said with a smile.

“Your majesty,” answered Avrohom bashfully, “I am truly grateful for your kindness and praise, but please forgive me but I cannot accept your offer. Please understand that I am a Jew, I was born a Jew and will die a Jew, and I cannot change who I am. I am sorry, I cannot accept your offer.”

Suddenly the palace became silent. The royal musicians sensed something was wrong, and they stopped playing, all eyes were on the king.

Slowly his smile faded and his eyes narrowed in hatred. He leaned forward on his throne and screamed, “What do think, that I am one of your friends that you can say yes or no!!! I am your king!! You are NOTHING! Either you take my offer

and receive everlasting comfort for you and your family, or...”

At this point the king clapped his hands three times. A gasp went up from the crowd as three immense executioners dressed totally in black with black hoods over their heads appeared as if from nowhere and grabbed poor Zalman. One forced him down onto the floor onto his knees. The other, carrying a large chopping block, set it before him, grabbed poor Zalman by the hair

*The king, numb and shivering from the cold, alighted from his horse, walked around to the door and knocked. The woodcutter cautiously opened up and said, “If you are a robber, I have nothing to steal, but please come in, you must be freezing!”*

and stretched his neck over the block. Finally the third raised a huge glistening sword and poised it in the air, ready to chop the poor Jew’s head off.

“Perhaps now, you want to retract your words?” hissed the angry king. Avrohom stared up at the king... and suddenly, as though transformed into a completely different being, he closed his eyes and proudly shouted: “SHMA YISROEL HASHEM

ELOKEINU HASHEM ECHAD!

The next thing he heard was the king clapping his hands three times and then saying, “Zalman, please stand up, please stand up my friend.”

He opened first one eye and then the other, and he felt the strong hands of one of the executioners helping him to his feet. “Zalman, do you recognize me?” said the king as he removed his royal cape and his crown. The crowd again gasped in amazement; His Majesty removed his crown!!!

“Why... you were the wanderer that came to my house the day before! Why are you doing this to me, what is happening?” asked the bewildered Zalman.

“Let me explain,” answered the king, “Zalman, you saved my life. If it wasn’t for you I would have frozen to death last night. I wanted to reward you, but I didn’t know how. I saw that you didn’t want money and were happy living your modest life, and then I remembered something.

“When I was a young child, my father, who was then the king, used to encourage me to wander around the palace grounds and see how the simple workers lived. I especially loved to watch the Jewish tailor. His life was completely different than all the others, especially in the way that he treated his children. Every day he would sit and talk with them, teach them Torah and other things and tell them stories. But once he told a story that really impressed me. He told how Avrohom, the first Jew, wanted to offer his 37-year-old son as a sacrifice to G-d, and how his son, Yitzchok, actually happily agreed! Then he explained that what that meant was that Avrohom was willfully destroying his past, his present, and his future; everyone would say that both of them were insane, and all of Avrohom’s



accomplishments would be erased in one instant. He would lose his beloved son, and it could be that he would even lose his place in heaven for transgressing the universal prohibition of murder!

“Why did he and his son do it? Because they were happy to serve G-d.

“I remember thinking to myself,” the king continued, “these Jews are really strange. Everything we do is for a reward, for ourselves, yet these Jews are thinking about giving everything to G-d without receiving anything back. That is really unusual!

“So,” concluded the king, “I decided that the greatest reward that I could give you was to allow you to sacrifice your life to your G-d. But I also know how much you love life, and I couldn’t bear to see you killed, so I arranged this whole scene.”

**“I remember thinking to myself,” the king continued, “these Jews are really strange. Everything we do is for a reward, for ourselves, yet these Jews are thinking about giving everything to G-d without receiving anything back. That is really unusual!”**

\* \* \*

This, then, answers our questions. The *Akeida* is the essence of Judaism because Judaism is only one thing: serving the Creator, and loving Him with all our being. Avrohom knew the voice of Hashem when he heard it; he had purified himself and devoted all his life to searching for and embodying the truth. But today we have the word and will of G-d in the Torah, so our man in the woods was only fooling himself.

This was the essence of Avrohom’s life and the inheritance he gave to all the Jewish people, *mesirus nefesh*, self-sacrifice to carry out the Creator’s plan, namely to make this world perfect with the coming of the Moshiach, NOW.

For more articles from Rabbi Bolton visit: [www.ohrtmimim.org/torah](http://www.ohrtmimim.org/torah)

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