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## Beis Moshiach

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# THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE OF CREATION

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



## SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'YISHLACH EREV YUD-TES KISLEV, 5750

1. Yud-Tes Kislev is referred to as "the Rosh HaShana of Chassidus." It was given this name because the redemption of the Alter Rebbe on Yud-Tes Kislev represented a victory for the teachings of Chassidus. In other words, just as the head includes the life energy for all the limbs of the body, and just as Rosh HaShana includes all the days of the year, on Yud-Tes Kislev, there is drawn down "a revelation of the light of the inner aspects of our holy Torah...throughout the entire year."

The connection between Rosh HaShana and Yud-Tes Kislev is further emphasized this year when it is celebrated on the same day as Rosh HaShana. Also, on Yud-Tes Kislev, it is customary to wish a colleague, "May you be written down and sealed for a good year in the study and practice of Chassidus," a greeting that reflects the intrinsic connection the two holidays share. For just as Rosh HaShana is celebrated on the sixth day of creation because the purpose for the creation of the world is associated with the creation of man, which took place on the sixth day,

Yud-Tes Kislev likewise represents "the ultimate purpose of the creation of man upon the earth."

The above concepts can be explained through a discussion of the relationship between Yud-Tes Kislev and Parshas VaYishlach.

The latter relationship, however, itself requires explanation, for the two concepts appear to be worlds apart. Parshas VaYishlach is related to Yaakov's refining of Eisav. In sending angels to Eisav, for example, Yaakov's intent was to elevate him to his source in holiness, the transcendent revelation of the world of Tohu. Similarly, the delineation of all the descendents of Eisav at the conclusion of the *parasha* is intended to describe them as they exist in the Torah, which reflects their ultimate state, after they have been elevated. What relationship do these efforts in refining the world have with the revelation of Yud-Tes Kislev, which drew down the inner dimension of the Torah to the Jewish people?

This question can be resolved through an analysis of the location of Parshas VaYishlach within the context of the Book of Bereishis as a

whole. The Book of Bereishis is referred to as the "Book of the Just," "the book of Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, who are called 'the just.'" Since "the deeds of the patriarchs are a sign for their descendants," it follows that the Book of Bereishis serves as a guideline for the service of the Jewish people in all the coming generations.

In this context, we can understand the order of the *parshiyos* in the Book of Bereishis. The foundation for our service is stated in Parshas Bereishis: "In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth." Our Sages explain that this verse also implies that the heavens and the earth and all the creations they contain were brought into being for the sake of "*beis reishis*," two entities which are called "*reishis*" (firsts), the Torah and the Jewish people.

The purpose of the creation can be derived from the name of the following *parasha*, Noach. Noach is related to the concept of satisfaction (*nachas ruach*), the satisfaction G-d feels from the fulfillment of His desire for a "dwelling in the lower worlds."

Parshas Lech Lecha describes Avrohom's journey from his "land, native country, and father's house," a journey which reflects the descent of the soul from the spiritual realms to our material world. It is through this descent that the soul is able to attain a higher level than it had attained before its descent.

In order for the soul to be able to descend and fulfill the intent for the creation, it is necessary for it be granted an extra measure of Divine revelation, as implied by the opening verse of Parshas VaYeira, "And G-d revealed Himself to him."

This revelation must permeate through the totality of an individual's personality, a lesson alluded to in Parshas Chayei Sara, which describes Sara's lifespan as being "one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years," three divisions which represent the categories of will and pleasure, intellect, and emotions as they are forged into a single existence.

All of the above grant the potential for Toldos, "offspring," "the essential offspring of the righteous are good deeds." In particular, in this context, Toldos, Yitzchok's offspring, refers to Yaakov ("doing good," service within the realm of holiness,) and Eisav ("turning away from evil" and on a higher level, transforming it into good).

After this, it is possible to begin the service of G-d as alluded to by Yaakov's journey mentioned in Parshas VaYeitzei. The journey from Be'er Sheva (representative of the soul's place in the spiritual realms, the seven sublime attributes) and the descent to Charan ("the place within the world which aroused G-d's anger") is intended to elevate and refine the world. This week's portion, Parshas VaYishlach, represents a continuation of that

activity, describing how Yaakov sent messengers to Eisav with the intent of elevating him. Thus, it reflects the elevation of the lowest possible levels.

This service leads to Parshas VaYeishev: "And Yaakov dwelled...", interpreted by our Sages to refer to dwelling in peace and prosperity. It brings us to Mikeitz, "the end," referring to "the end of days," VaYigash, "And he approached," alluding to the establishment of unity between a Jew and G-d, and VaYechi, "And he lived," which reflects eternal life, the era of the resurrection.

## ***Parshas VaYishlach describes the refinement of Eisav, the refinement of the lowest aspects of existence, and thus, the fulfillment of the intent of Creation.***

On a more general level, the structure of the service of the Jewish people as outlined in the Book of Bereishis is divided into three general categories: a) The first portion from Bereishis until Toldos describes the preparation necessary for the service of G-d, defining the goals for our service (Bereishis and Noach) and describing the commandment to carry out this service (Lech Lecha), the powers we are given (VaYeira and Chayei Sara), and the manner in which the service is to be carried out (Toldos). b) The second portion (VaYeitzei and

VaYishlach) describes how this service is actually carried out. VaYeitzei describes the refinement of the lower aspects of the world and VaYishlach, the refinement of the very lowest dimensions of existence. c) The third portion (from VaYeishev to VaYechi) describes the results of the service, including the ultimate reward, the era of the resurrection of the dead.

In this context, Parshas VaYishlach, which describes the refinement of Eisav, represents the refinement of the lowest aspects of existence, and thus, the fulfillment of the intent of creation, the establishment of a dwelling for G-d within this world.

On this basis, we can understand the connection between Yud-Tes Kislev and Parshas VaYishlach. Yud-Tes Kislev represents the beginning of the "spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus outward." Even though Pnimiyus HaTorah was studied in the previous generations — the Arizal had proclaimed "It is permitted and a *mitzva* to reveal this wisdom," and the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid had already revealed Chassidic teachings — the revelation of the teachings of Chabad by the Alter Rebbe represented a major breakthrough. From Yud-Tes Kislev onward, the teachings of Chassidus were spread, reaching the "outer reaches," the lowest aspects of the world. For a dwelling for G-d to be established in the lower worlds, it is necessary that the "wellsprings," the essence of Pnimiyus HaTorah, which is drawn down from the essence of G-d, to permeate every aspect of existence until even the lowest elements of existence are transformed into a dwelling for G-d.

Thus, the elevation of the lowest aspects of existence, which is accomplished through the spreading of Chassidus, which began on Yud-Tes Kislev and continued by all the

Rebbeim in the subsequent generations, represents the completion of Yaakov's service of "sending messengers to Eisav." The *shluchim* who have been sent to every corner of the world — even the furthest removed islands — and have spread the wellsprings of Chassidus there have accomplished the refinement of Eisav, i.e., the elevation of the furthest removed portions of this world. Since Parshas VaYishlach represents the completion of the service of the refinement of the world, it is appropriate that the redemption of Yud-Tes Kislev be associated with it.

2. This explanation also serves as the basis with which we can understand the connection between Yud-Tes Kislev and Rosh HaShana: The service of Rosh HaShana centers on the coronation of G-d as "King of Yisroel" and "King of the entire earth." Yud-Tes Kislev, the Rosh HaShana of Chassidus, reveals that kingship through the world at large. By spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus outward to the furthest removed corners of existence, we reveal how G-d is king over the entire earth. Since Yud-Tes Kislev expresses the deepest aspects of G-d's essence and spreads the revelation of this dimension outward

until G-d's kingship is evident throughout the totality of existence, it therefore reflects the inner depth of Rosh HaShana.

This year, the connection of Yud-Tes Kislev to the revelation of G-d's sovereignty is given greater emphasis since Yud-Tes Kislev falls on Sunday. The Torah describes Sunday as "one day," the day when G-d was at one with all existence. Our Sages explain that the *Shma* which describes how G-d is one in the seven heavens and all four directions of this world expresses His Kingship over the totality of existence. Similarly, the appreciation of G-d's oneness granted by Yud-Tes Kislev expresses His sovereignty over our existence.

"Deed is most essential." It is proper to arrange *farbrengens* everywhere in connection with Yud-Tes Kislev for men, women, and children so that they will accept good resolutions together with others in regard to all aspects of Torah and Mitzvos as they are illuminated with the light of the Torah, the teachings of Chassidus. These *farbrengens* should be held on Motzaei Shabbos, on the night between Yud-Tes Kislev and the 20th of Kislev (the night when Chassidim would customarily hold the

*farbrengens* associated with Yud-Tes Kislev), and these *farbrengens* should continue until Chanuka.

The resolutions accepted in these *farbrengens* should center on the three pillars of service, Torah, prayer, and deeds of kindness as associated by our Sages with the verse, "He redeemed my soul in peace." This refers to "those who are involved with Torah, deeds of kindness, and those who pray together with the community." In particular, they should involve the construction or the enhancement of buildings connected with these activities. (In this context, it is worthy to mention the construction of a building for the library of Agudas Chassidei Chabad.)

May these activities lead to an added commitment to the study of Chassidus and the spreading of the wellsprings of Chassidus outward, both in regard to one's self — having Chassidus permeate every aspect of one's being — and similarly, spreading Chassidus to others.

May this, in turn, lead to the coming of Moshiach when we will kindle the *menora* in the *Beis HaMikdash*. From there, "light will go out to the entire world," revealing G-d's oneness throughout creation.

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# THAT'S THE TICKET

BORUCH MERKUR

So you don't think it will ever be you, but somebody's lucky numbers have got to come up, somebody always stands to cash in on a fortune – that is, if that somebody can find his winning ticket. If he can, then he's laughing. But if he cannot – and you could bet that he would've pulled his hair out trying – you can only imagine how he must feel.

Now, this is so if someone did little more than purchase a one-dollar ticket. Imagine if that person had a little more invested in that ticket. Imagine if that person worked his entire life to obtain that ticket, and before he could cash it in, it was plucked from his hands, G-d forbid...

## THE SPOILS OF WAR

Not too long ago, under pressure from Jewish groups around the world, several countries began putting together a fund to help compensate for the financial loss of the remaining victims of one of history's worst atrocities, the Holocaust.

The U.S. and Britain are among the countries that have made commitments to reimburse the victims. France, however, has been slow to follow suit.

Recently publicized French Finance Ministry archives reveal that in 1953, France finally gave in to outside pressure and agreed to distribute some of the spoils of war, funds that the Nazis had stole from the Jews and recovered by the Allied nations in the form of war booty, a treasury described as, "piles of gold, sacks filled with jewels, and rivers of precious stones."

But, to qualify for reimbursement, the victims had to provide receipts proving that their goods had been seized by the Nazis during the war. One hundred and twenty individuals or firms managed to produce the receipts, cashing in on 2.7 tons of gold that was rightfully theirs. But a total of 963 receipts were issued – leaving 843 receipts outstanding. And not everyone was so lucky to

***When Napoleon led the French in the invasion of Russia, the Alter Rebbe had to choose between two superpowers, France or Russia, the Czar or Napoleon. The Rebbe sided with the Czar...***

even get a receipt in the first place...

Documented in the archives is a letter of a man recounting how he was forced by a Nazi SS officer to turn over his safe containing all his money. He wrote, "When I asked him to provide me with a receipt for the sums in my possession, he pulled out his revolver and said, 'Here is my receipt.'"

## NAPOLEON'S MARCH

When Napoleon led the French in the invasion of Russia, the Alter Rebbe, who lived in Liadi, Russia, had to choose between two superpowers, France or Russia, the Czar or Napoleon. The Rebbe sided with the Czar.

Although the victory of Napoleon would almost certainly assure the material benefit of the Jewish population in Russia, the Alter Rebbe, a man of true *ahavas Yisroel*, much preferred for his people a life of poverty under the rule of the Czar than the atmosphere of assimilation that Napoleon would have brought with him.

In the year of 1812, in the midst of the Napoleonic War, the Alter Rebbe fled his home of Liadi accompanied by Russian soldiers, along with his entire household and a large following of *chassidim* – a convoy numbered sixty wagons in all, as well as those who traveled with them by foot.

When they came to a river several miles outside of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe gave the order to cross. Then he and two of his *chassidim* hurried back to Liadi in a light carriage drawn by two good horses and driven by two armed coachmen.

Rushing to his house, the Rebbe instructed his men to carefully search the house for any remaining personal belongings. They found in the attic a worn-out pair of slippers, some rolling pins, and a sieve. He instructed his men to take these items with them and set the house on fire. Then he blessed the townsmen and

he was off.

Just then, the first of Napoleon's

army arrived from the other direction, and within a short time. Napoleon himself arrived in Liadi

escorted by a retinue of generals. Immediately, Napoleon rushed over to the house of the Alter Rebbe.

## ARE THEY OUT TO DRIVE ME UP THE WALL OR AM I JUST BEING PARANOID

In response to the article, "Living with Lavan," which appeared in this column last week, I received the following criticism via email:

**your article contained some of the most convoluted, obscure reasoning I have ever encountered... I am totally non convinced of the basis for your "reasoning."**

**G**

I started to panic: did I completely fail in explaining myself? But the panic quickly segued into confusion as I read the next letter:

**thank for this unique perspective, i had never heard this concept explained so succinctly! have a great shabbos!**

**Sh**

At this point I knew that either G and Sh were really the same person under different aliases out to drive me up the wall or (they were, in fact, two different people and) different people simply perceive and understand things differently (and I was just being paranoid).

On another front, I received the following letter attacking the conclusions of last week's article.

**I don't like your answer that Yaakov [who was said to have kept the whole Torah - i.e., all 613 mitzvos] could marry sisters according to the Noachide laws. How could they outweigh the Torah [which explicitly states that a Jew I may not marry two sisters]???**

**N**

I thought it would be enough to simply recapitulate: In the time of Yaakov, the Torah had not been given yet, and it was, therefore, not binding. It was merely taken on as

stringencies. In this case, however, the binding Noachide laws took precedent.

But N responded:

**then how could you say that Yaakov kept all 613 mitzvos, when he didn't?**

Dear N,

This is a good question. In fact, the Rebbe anticipated this question and explained as follows.

It says, "with Lavan I dwelled (*garti*), and 613 *mitzvos* I kept (*shamarti*)." The terminology used here is exact. It does not say, that Yaakov "fulfilled" (*kiyamti*) or "performed" (*asiti*) all of the *mitzvos*, but simply that he "kept" them. "Keeping" the *mitzvos* suggests that he abided to its laws without transgression its rule. True, Yaakov did indeed marry two sisters, but this was by no means a transgression, for the Torah itself demanded that he do so according to the universally-binding Noachide laws.

The Torah itself allows for and requires prioritizing whenever its laws seem to conflict. Thus, we find that due to extenuating circumstances, Eliyahu HaNavi offered a sacrifice outside of the Temple grounds (an act which is usually forbidden). Also, the general rule is that positive commandments overrule prohibitions

when there is a conflict, and in the case of *pikuach nefesh*, to save a life, all prohibitions are overruled. (A teacher of mine once told of the time that his wife went into labor on Shabbos - a case of *pikuach nefesh*. He was forced to drive her to the hospital in his car whose bumper sticker read, "Don't drive on Shabbos!")

Finding a true balance and the correct path to guide one's behavior is the special quality of Yaakov Avinu, who represents the middle pillar, the *s'fira* of *Tiferes*, beauty and harmony, the way of the Torah.

***"Your article contained some of the most convoluted, obscure reasoning I have ever encountered," the email read. I started to panic: did I completely fail in explaining myself? But the panic quickly segued into confusion as I read the next letter...***

Seeing that the house and its surroundings were blazing furiously, he gave orders to extinguish the fire. But they were unable to approach the house on account of the flames and the heavy smoke.

Napoleon had his men announce to all of the townsmen and all the people of the surrounding villages the following proclamation: "Any man or woman who brings any item or possession of the Rebbe, or even a coin that they received from his hand, will be paid in gold rubles."

They searched throughout the town, but they did not find anything.

*(Likkutei Dibburim I, pg. 26-7)*

### FIGHTING OVER A BUNCH OF SMALL JARS

A similar story is found in the *Chumash*. Yaakov Avinu, in his departure from Charan, the place where he dwelled for twenty years, is forced to cross a river *en route*, yet – like the Alter Rebbe – he returns to retrieve petty items...

Yaakov got up that night and took his two wives and his two maidservants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the river, Yabok. He took them and brought them across the stream, and he brought that which was his, his herds and his belongings. He then went to retrieve

***At times, the righteous put themselves in danger to regain even their most petty possessions, small jars or worn-out slippers, and the like.***

some small jars which he had forgotten on the other side. There Yaakov was alone, but the ministering angel of Eisav, Yaakov's wicked brother, appeared in the form of a man, and wrestled with Yaakov until the break of dawn.

*(Chumash with Rashi)*

It says in the Gemara that the fact that Yaakov went to retrieve small and (seemingly) insignificant jars, illustrates how the righteous meticulously care about their property. Indeed, from this story, and also from the story of the Alter Rebbe, we see that at times, the righteous put themselves in danger to regain even their most petty

possessions, small jars or worn-out slippers, and the like.

Although Judaism emphasizes the predominance of the soul over matter, it is specifically through the interaction with the material – using physical things in a holy way, such as giving charity, and so on – that the soul experiences its ultimate elevation and fulfills its purpose, namely, to make for the Alm-ghty a dwelling place in the physical world. It is specifically through interacting with the world that we become complete, as Yaakov says, "I have everything."

We are presently assured that everything is ready. Through the combined efforts of all of the previous generations, the world has become permeated with holiness and all the nations – including France – have been refined. All we have to do now is open up our eyes to this reality, and immediately we will see everything working like clockwork according to unprecedented standards of justice and fairness throughout the world, under the leadership of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*, who will usher in the true and complete Redemption, a time when "delicacies will be as common as dust," and "the knowledge of G-d will fill the world like water covers the ocean."



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# NOT REALLY HE WHO IS DAVENING

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK GINSBERG, MASHPIA, YESHIVAS  
TOMCHEI T'MIMIM - LUBAVITCH, Kfar Chabad



*The time is coming when we will look at the world and see only “the knowledge of G-d,” the G-dly vitality that sustains Creation, whereas perceiving individual creations will require effort.*

*\* At present, things work in the opposite direction: Physical reality is easy to perceive, whereas the G-dliness in Creation is hidden below the surface. \* The reason we are sent into the world is to bring it to the stage of development where its true reality becomes evident.*

In connection with Yud-Tes Kislev, I bring the following story of the Alter Rebbe, which was often told by Reb Mendel Futerfas, o.b.m. The story illustrates one of the main innovations of *chassidus Chabad*.

The Alter Rebbe was once out walking with the *Chevraya Kaddisha* (his fellow disciples of the Mezritcher Maggid) when they came upon a *chassid* of the famous Reb Chaim Chaikel of Amdura in the middle of *Sh'moneh Esrei*. Everyone could see that the *chassid* was *davening* “with an *emes*,” that his G-dly soul completely illuminated

his being and was directing communing with its Creator.

“Nu, what do you say to that?” the members of the *Chevraya Kaddisha* asked the Alter Rebbe. “Just look at how he *davens*!”

“Yes,” the Alter Rebbe replied, “he *davens* very well. But it is not really he who is *davening*, it is Reb Chaikel of Amdura. He is not functioning under his own power, but only because of his *hiskashrus* to his Rebbe.”

The Alter Rebbe then concluded:

“I will never do that with my *chassidim*. They will never be able to rely on free gifts. My *chassidim* will have to work hard on themselves and perform their *avoda* with their own power. They may attain only a little, but whatever they obtain will truly belong to them.”

One of the underlying principles of Chabad is that a person mustn't rely on “free gifts” from Above, or “supernal revelations” that illuminate at auspicious times. A Chabad *chassid* cannot content himself with what he receives from the Rebbe, but must actively exert himself.

As is known, Polish *chassidus* is very different from *chassidus Chabad*. As Reb Shlomo of Karlin commented on the words “*tzaddik b'emunaso yichyeh*” (“the *tzaddik* lives by his faith”), among Polish *chassidim* the words are read “*tzaddik b'emunaso yechayeh*,” (“the *tzaddik* enlivens [others] with his faith”). If a Polish *chassid* is *mekushar* to his Rebbe, the Rebbe gives him everything he needs spiritually.

Of course, working under one's own power is much harder, and the results are much less impressive (at



least in the beginning). But the best way to construct a building, even a spiritual one, is to make sure it is built on firm and solid ground. The resulting edifice of *avodas Hashem* will be much stronger and hopefully, stand forever.

In “*Chinuch Katan*” (the introduction to *Shaar HaYichud VeHaEmuna*) the Alter Rebbe interprets the verse in *Mishlei* (22:6), “Train a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it,” in a similar vein: The “training” (*chinuch*) a child receives must be age-appropriate, taking into consideration that he is just beginning his *avodas Hashem*. A child starts out on the first rung, and his progress is often slow and unimpressive. Nonetheless, it is only by working hard that the youngster will establish the right kind of foundation for the rest of his life – “and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Several years ago I received a personal directive from the Rebbe MH”M *shlita* in which he underlined the words “*Siyum HaRambam*” (with two lines!) on a *duch* I had submitted about a *shiur* I was giving to women and girls. From this I understood that the Rebbe not only wants us to celebrate the completion of the yearly cycle of Rambam “in a big way,” but also, more fundamentally, that as many people as possible actually learn Rambam.

In this light, and in connection with the completion of learning *Mishneh Torah*, I present the following *hadran* on the Rambam, based on the *sichos kodesh* of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach:

The theme of “*avoda* with one’s power,” which is so central to Chabad *chassidus*, is emphasized both at the very beginning and at the end of the Rambam’s *Mishneh Torah*.

The Rambam opens his *Mishneh*

*Torah* as follows: “The foundation of all foundations, and the pillar of all wisdom” consists of “knowing” (not merely believing with full and complete faith) “that there is a First Cause” (“*Matzui rishon*”), i.e., that G-d exists, Who is the Creator of everything.

As limited human beings, we cannot say anything about this “Cause” with certainty other than that it “exists” or literally, “is found” (“*matzui*”). But even this terminology is inaccurate. Any

**“Nu, what do you say to that?” the members of the Chevraya Kaddisha asked the Alter Rebbe. “Just look at how he davens!”**  
**“Yes,” the Alter Rebbe replied, “he davens very well. But it is not really he who is davening...”**

word, in any human language, that we can apply to Hashem is going to fall short of what He really is. G-d is beyond anything we can imagine, and is also beyond being higher” than any of these concepts.

This does not mean that what we say about Hashem isn’t true, it is just that, in a rough translation of the Rambam’s words, “He is found – even in the absence of existence He exists.” The fact that we refer to Him as existing is basically because we

don’t have any choice! How else are we supposed to describe G-d? What we’re trying to emphasize, however, is that G-d’s existence is the true existence, which is why we call Him “*Matzui*.” The word itself also illustrates G-d’s connection to all His “*nimtza*im,” literally, “all those who are found” (His creations). G-d brought Himself down to our level, as it were, by also being “found.”

The point is that we are supposed to “know” and understand that G-d is the “First Cause” of everything. He is “before” everything and “above” everything. At the same time, He is also connected to and involved with everything in the world, as the word “First” implies.

Moreover, Hashem not only created all that exists (“*mamtzi kol nimtza*” – literally, “causes to be found everything that is found”), but He continues to create, in the present tense, all of existence out of nothingness, as the Baal Shem Tov interpreted the verse, “Forever, O L-rd, Your word is fixed in heaven.”

“All of Creation,” the Rambam writes, “from the sky to the earth, and everything in between,” does not exist by virtue of itself; the only reason it does is that G-d wants it to. And if G-d didn’t exist, *ch”v*, nothing else would, either.

As the Rebbe *shlita* explained (in the “*hadran*” of 5735 and elsewhere), the Rambam’s expression – “the foundation of all foundations, and the pillar of all wisdom” – is not just a nice expression or way of putting things. Rather, it contains a practical and fundamental rule that pertains to all of Torah: Not only are we supposed to be conscious of G-d’s existence, but this knowledge must be the basis for everything we do, in the same way that the foundation and pillars of a physical building must always remain in place if the building is to remain standing.

When a soldier goes into battle, it is absolutely crucial that he obey every order he is given by his commander. Yet simply obeying orders is not enough. In order for a soldier to be truly motivated to win, he has to understand the ultimate objective of the war. Otherwise, although the commander's orders will still be carried out, an important element will be missing.

The Jewish people are called "Tzivos Hashem," the "army of G-d." We are sent into the world for the purpose of "conquering" it – bringing it to a state when the whole world "will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea." When that day comes, every created being will realize that its existence comes only from G-d.

But what does the Rambam mean when he says that we have to "know" that G-d is the First Cause? How can we know something that completely transcends the human mind, and can only ultimately be accepted on faith?

The answer has to do with the underlying purpose of Creation: the establishment of a "dwelling place for G-d in the lower worlds." G-d's intention is that the human intellect should be filled and permeated with G-dliness, rather than "only" nullified to G-d through faith alone.

(It goes without saying that *emuna* and *kabbalas ol* must precede all of the above. Faith and acceptance of the yoke of heaven are the unquestioned essentials, after which a Jew can then proceed to intellectual contemplation and understanding. A Jew must have *emuna* and *kabbalas ol* before he even begins to learn Torah and perform *mitzvos*. In his *Mishneh Torah*, the Rambam is addressing someone who is already prepared to accept commandments. Based on this premise, the first *mitzva* is to bring

everything down into the realm of the human mind.)

The same point that the Rambam makes in the beginning of his work – that a Jew must know that there is a First Cause, and that "all of Creation, from the sky to the earth, and everything in between" has no objective existence – reaches its climax at the very end, at the conclusion of his "Laws of Kings." There the Rambam describes the

***When a soldier goes into battle, it is absolutely crucial that he obey every order he is given by his commander. Yet simply obeying orders is not enough. In order for a soldier to be truly motivated to win, he has to understand the ultimate objective of the war.***

world as it will be in the Messianic era, when the ultimate objective in Creation will be attained.

At that time, he writes, there will be no hunger or war, no jealousy and no competitiveness. Goodness will be plentiful, delicacies will be as common as the dust of the earth, and man's only occupation will be "to know G-d." The Jewish people will be very wise and have

knowledge of hidden things. Every person will understand his Creator to the best of his ability, "and the earth will be filled with knowledge as the waters cover the sea."

Why specifically "as the waters cover the sea"? In the same way that the waters of an ocean conceal everything within it, and it takes a great deal of effort to see the fish and plants and rich sea life under the surface, so too, the first thing we will perceive in the Messianic era will be the G-dliness that sustains the world. Only afterward, if we look very hard and dig beneath the exterior, will we notice individual creations as such.

At present, things work in the opposite direction. It's easy to perceive physical reality, whereas one really has to labor to see the G-dliness in Creation. Today, G-dliness appears "b'hischadshus," and the world "b'pashtus." However, this is why we are sent into the world to perform Torah and *mitzvos*: to bring the world to a stage in which its true reality becomes evident.

In effect, the Rambam is teaching us to take this approach to all of Torah and *mitzvos*. Together with absolute and unquestionable *kabbalas ol*, we must also involve our minds and make a conscious effort to "establish a dwelling place for G-d in the lower worlds."

Everything the Jew does, every detail of his observance, must be permeated with this awareness. Why do we learn Torah? To allow G-dliness to enter our minds. Why do we give *tzedaka*? To make our money "G-dly." Why do we put a *mezuzah* on the doorpost? To bring G-dliness into the home. Why do we keep Shabbos? To bring G-dliness into the dimension of time. Why do we eat only kosher food and make a *bracha* before eating? To bring G-dliness into what we eat. Why

do we observe *taharas ha'mishpacha*? To bring G-dliness into our family lives. In other words, all of our actions and deeds must be performed for the sole purpose of bringing the world to its ultimate stage of development, when "the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea."

This is also the reason, as the Rebbe *shlita* explained on Yud-Alef Nissan 5743 (*Hisvaadyos* Volume 3, page 1206), that in the section where the Rambam enumerates the *halachos* of *Melech HaMoshiach*, the *halachos* of the *Sheva Mitzvos Bnei Noach* come first! For the Divine intention is the transformation of the entire world into a "dwelling place" for G-d, not just the "Jewish world." "It is, therefore, understood, that [influencing the nations of the world to observe the Seven Noachide Laws] is the natural preparatory step to the correction of the world through *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*."

The Rebbe stated (free translation):

Establishing a "dwelling place for G-d in the lower worlds" means making the entire world a dwelling place for Him. This is the intention of the verse "And the glory of the L-rd will be revealed...and all flesh shall see, etc.," which implies all of Creation. This is also in keeping with the *psak din* of the Rambam that "*Melech HaMoshiach* will bring the entire world to worship G-d together, as it states, 'For then I will convert the peoples to a clear language, that they may all call upon the name of the L-rd, to serve Him with one accord.'" From this it is understood that the Jewish people must act in this direction, as well (i.e., having an effect on the world at large), to avoid a situation of "unwarranted bread," G-d forbid.

One may also conclude that this is why the Rambam, in "*Hilchos*

*Melachim*," precedes his description of *Moshiach Tzidkeinu* as "correcting the world, etc." with the *psak din* that "Moshe Rabbeinu was commanded by G-d to compel all the inhabitants of the world to accept upon themselves the *mitzvos* that were commanded to the descendants of Noach." This means that non-Jews must observe these laws "not because they are dictated by logic," but "because the Holy

***All Jews have the obligation to influence gentiles to observe the Seven Mitzvos of the Children of Noach. This does not mean only when the subject happens to come up, but implies a continual, ongoing commandment to exert an influence on the gentile in this direction.***

One, blessed be He, has so decreed in His holy Torah, as conveyed to us through Moshe Rabbeinu."

...It is G-d's desire that the nations of the world be brought to this consciousness through the Jewish people, as "an emissary stands in the Sender's stead"...as a preparation to the *tikkun* of the entire world through *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*, when the prophecy of, "For then I will

convert the peoples to a clear language, that they may all call upon the name of the L-rd, to serve Him with one accord," will be realized.

It is also understood that [influencing the nations of the world to observe the Seven Noachide Laws] is the natural preparatory step to the correction of the world through *Moshiach*."

This pertains to every single member of the Jewish people, as opposed to the misconception that it only relates to a "certain kind" of Jew, such as those with special ingress to political authority, etc. All Jews have the obligation to influence gentiles to observe the Seven Mitzvos of the Children of Noach. This does not mean only when the subject happens to come up, but implies a continual, ongoing commandment to exert an influence on the gentile in this direction.

To conclude with an excerpt from the weekly *D'var Malchus*:

"May it be G-d's will that the very resolve to take action to bring about its immediate reward: the actual fulfillment of Rambam's words at the conclusion of his work – that after 'a king shall arise from the House of David, who studies Torah and performs *mitzvos* as David his forefather...and compels all of Israel to go in the Torah's way, strengthening scrupulous observance and waging the battles of G-d," we proceed from the presumed *Moshiach* [who already exists] to the certain *Moshiach*, who will 'succeed and build the *Mikdash* in its place, gather in all the exiles of Israel...and bring the entire world to serve G-d together, etc.,' leading to the ultimate objective: 'And the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d, as the waters cover the sea.'"

*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach L'olam*



# THE ALTER REBBE: THE EARLY YEARS

FROM THE RESHIMOS OF R' MORDECHAI SHUSTERMAN



## PART 1

“*Batlan*” is what the Alter Rebbe’s mother-in-law often called him. This is because he would remain secluded while he studied Torah in the attic in the early years of his marriage, when he lived with his in-laws.

They would put his meals through the narrow opening of his door, but he would as often as not, return them uneaten, whether because of fasting and self-mortification, or because he had no time to “wash for bread,” which would take precious time away from his studies. He once asked the servant to cook a spelt cereal for him, as its *bracha* is *mezonos*, so that he wouldn’t have to wash and say the *Birkas HaMazon*. When his mother-in-law found out, she was furious.

“I forbid you from cooking spelt cereal for him!” she yelled at the servant. The unfortunate servant girl cowered. How hurt she was! But she resolved to continue nourishing the young son-in-law who studied so assiduously.

His “*batlanus*” went even further. His *davening* was loud and accompanied by handclapping and vigorous body movements. Matters

of this world meant absolutely nothing to him. This is why his mother-in-law hated him, and she harassed him whenever she had an opportunity. She withheld what he needed, thinking this would rouse him from his *batlanus*.

The following incident took place one Friday night. When *Kabbalas Shabbos* was over, the residents of Vitebsk returned home. Only the young married man, R’ Shneur Zalman, son-in-law of R’ Yehuda Leib Segal, the magnate, tarried in *shul*. He *davened* longer than he usually did and when he returned to his in-law’s home the entire household was asleep.

R’ Shneur Zalman was exhausted from his efforts in *t’filla* and from fasting that day. He glanced calmly at the darkened windows. He was used to this, and as he often did, he went to the kitchen to take a bottle of wine and a cup, but this time the drawer was locked. Surprised, he tried to open other cupboards, but they were all well secured. He realized that his mother-in-law was behind this, as she had decided to withhold all food from him.

A cold sweat broke out on his

forehead, a consequence of his extended fast. His hands and feet trembled, and dark circles danced before his eyes. With great difficulty he dragged himself to the still at the edge of his father-in-law’s property. He hoped that some whiskey remained there, and perhaps some scraps of food left over by the workers.

With the last of his strength, R’ Shneur Zalman reached the still and felt around in the darkness for a cup large enough for *Kiddush*. He couldn’t find an ordinary cup, but he did find an earthen vessel in which milk was placed to separate the cream for butter and cheese. This vessel was far larger than the cup he needed for *Kiddush*.

Without thinking too much about it, he filled the cup to the brim with whiskey, closed his eyes in *d’veikus*, and sang out the *Kiddush* into the stillness of the night.

When he finished reciting the *Kiddush*, he drank the cup “bottom’s up.” Those who knew, said that he nearly died in doing so. He then felt around and found a large pot in which the workers had cooked a dairy cereal. With his last strength he



scraped off the remaining crumbs of cereal that had stuck to the sides of the pot. This revived him.

*Chassidim* relate that from that time on, R' Shneur Zalman ate a dairy cereal every Motzaei Shabbos, to recall the miracle that happened to him in the whiskey distillery that Friday night.

## PART 2

A silent figure flitted about in the narrow alleyway which wound its way near the home of the magnate, R' Yehuda Leib Segal. It was hard to identify the man in the darkness of the night.

The figure passed by quietly and then suddenly stopped. A sweet, captivating tune could be heard wafting through the air. The man, who was none other than the *rav* of the city, was riveted to his place. He stood and listened with intense concentration to the clear explanations that flowed forth from the mouth of the scholar.

He recognized the voice of the scholar. It was R' Shneur Zalman, son-in-law of R' Yehuda Leib Segal, the magnate. He had been monitoring the prayers and general conduct of the young man, and knew he was a budding scholar, but that he had achieved such prowess in Torah study was something he had yet to discover.

The young scholar continued to analyze the question of Rava, explaining and commenting; then delving into understanding Abaye's explanation, and joyously singing out when things were clarified and the topic was thoroughly understood.

The *rav* listened in wonder, amazed at the ingenious logic of the young man. The *rav* yearned to remain in his hiding place, but he hurried on his way, promising

himself that he would return the next night.

As the hours passed the next night, the *rav* grew more and more astounded. He felt that the young man had a unique approach to learning, clear and simple yet remarkably profound.

The *rav* closely followed the young man's ways and quickly discerned that his ways and customs were wondrous and pure. The *rav* kept this all to himself.

***“I’ve seen from afar  
his ways of prayer  
and avodas Hashem,  
and I know he is no  
ordinary man.”  
The rav lowered his  
voice, “He is way  
beyond the two of us  
put together.”***

## PART 3

Erev Pesach. Vitebsk was humming with activity, with each person busy with his holiday preparations. The ladies of the town toiled over their polishing and scraping. When this was done, they feverishly began cooking for *yom tov*. They tasted the simmering food, adding salt and whatever they felt was lacking.

Suddenly, a question arose regarding a slaughtered calf which

had been brought to R' Yehuda Leib Segal's kitchen. They had to consult with the *rav* as to its *kashrus*. Suddenly the lady of the house had an idea. “I have a learned son-in-law here in the house who studies Torah day and night, to the point that he doesn't even have time to wash his hands for a proper meal. I'll send the question to him and hear his *p'sak* before I ask the *rav*.”

The son-in-law was called down from the attic to the bustling kitchen, and within half a minute of examining the meat, he pronounced it kosher and fitting for the *yom tov* meal. Then he quickly resumed his usual place up in the attic.

Despite his confident pronouncement, the *balabusta* sent her servant to the *rav* to ask him about the meat. The *rav* examined the meat, poked it here and there, and pronounced it *treif* and utterly forbidden.

The mother-in-law's fury was boundless. Her patience was at an end and without censoring herself in the slightest she spewed forth her bitterness, “I have a tremendous *batlan* in my house. All along I thought that he was removed from matters of this world, but I consoled myself by thinking that at least he was diligent in his Torah studies. I hoped that at least he'd become a *rav* or *dayan* and would support his household, but now I see he's an ignoramus who knows nothing of *halacha* and Torah – an utter fool. Why am I supporting him? Let him go wherever he desires, just let him not make my daughter unfortunate all her days.”

The *rav's* *shamash* saw how upset she was and that the son-in-law would soon be chased away in ignominy from his father-in-law's home, so he hurried back to the *rav's* house and told the *rav* what had happened, about the son-in-law's

*p'sak* differing from that of the *rav*, about the mother-in-law's anger, and about the son-in-law's impending divorce.

A furrow etched itself deeply in the *rav's* forehead. He knew how great the young son-in-law was, as well as the fact that nobody in the town but him knew this, and that he had to rescue him from the shame of divorce and expulsion. Time was pressing, and the *rav* put on his coat and hat and left for the magnate's

***"I see you are men of substance," said the tzaddik, "and therefore, I have a tikkun for you with which you can achieve lofty levels in Torah study. If you properly fulfill the tikkun, I guarantee you, you'll achieve something special."***

home.

He was greeted by a tumult. The maids were busy in the kitchen and the servant rushed in and out on various errands. In the center of the hallway stood the mother-in-law, her face flushed in anger. The son-in-law stood facing her, deep in thought, wondering how to handle the situation.

"Good afternoon," began the *rav* pleasantly, as though he didn't know

what had been going on. "I rushed over here because of some doubts I had regarding the meat that was brought to me. Don't rush to sell it to Vasolof, the butcher. I'd like to give it some more thought."

The surprising appearance of the *rav* in the magnate's home broke the tension. The mother-in-law disappeared into a side room, while the son-in-law sat with the *rav* for a few minutes in polite conversation.

The *rav* then left the house and went to the home of Rav Kalman, the second *rav* of the city who lived over the river. The two *rabbanim* began to discuss the matter, raising different points and bringing additional proofs supporting each position. However, even after all their efforts, they could barely find room to permit the meat. It seemed clear that the son-in-law had not relied on this ill-founded view to permit the meat.

"Perhaps we should call the son-in-law," suggested R' Kalman, "and ask him to explain why he declared the meat kosher." The *rav* thought for some time, his gaze fixed in thought, and then said, "It's been a long time now that I've been following that young man. I've listened to his style of learning for many hours. I've heard his logical reasoning and the depth that comes forth with such clarity. I've seen from afar his ways of prayer and *avodas Hashem*, and I know he is no ordinary man."

The *rav* lowered his voice, "He is way beyond the two of us put together. I suggest we go to the magnate's house, and ask the young man to explain his answer."

R' Kalman humbly nodded his head, put on his coat and hat, too, and the two distinguished *rabbanim* went to the home of R' Yehuda Leib Segal.

You can well imagine the reaction

upon the appearance of both *rabbanim*. The *baal ha'bayis* greeted his illustrious guests and seated them with great honor. At their request, he sent for his son-in-law.

R' Shneur Zalman soon appeared in the doorway. The light that shone from his refined countenance immediately impressed the onlookers. It was obvious that this young man was out of the ordinary.

The *rabbanim* presented their doubts before the young son-in-law,

***"Take on a fast that will last a complete week. You may only drink a little water each night. No one may know that you are fasting. During this week, go about your usual avoda in Torah and t'filla. I warn you, do not fail!"***

explained the different positions, and then ended with a question, "How did you arrive at your *p'sak*?"

The son-in-law maintained his placid composure. He was clearly confident of the correctness of his *p'sak*. He quietly opened the *Shulchan Aruch* to the right place and pointed to some lines in the Shach's commentary, while his quiet voice read the words in a pleasant singsong.

As soon as he began explaining the Shach's reasoning, the two *rabbanim* realized they had made a terrible mistake in their understanding of the Shach's explanation, and that the correct, simple, and scholarly understanding of it, given by the young man, perfectly clarified the subject.

Rav Kalman was moved and tears came to his eyes as he kissed the young man's head.

The mother-in-law peered from the doorway, her eyes opened wide in amazement.

The two *rabbanim* did not budge from the magnate's home until the *balabusta* broiled the liver of that cow and they tasted it to demonstrate that the young man was right.

#### PART 4

R' Shneur Zalman, later to become the Alter Rebbe, sat alone in

the attic for many months with his *s'farim*. His solitude came to an end when a man by the name of Rav Yisroel Gutman of Glubaka joined him. R' Yisroel was a young man with a quick grasp and a clarity of thought.

The Alter Rebbe's young wife rejoiced as this marked the end of the wearisome isolation of her husband, ensuring that he wouldn't be completely cut off from the world around him. Twice a day, his righteous wife sent food to the two young men.

The two men sat and learned together day and night, only rarely conversing with others.

\* \* \*

One day, word got about that the *tzaddik*, R' Menachem Mendel of Horodok, would be coming to town. R' Menachem Mendel's reputation as an outstanding scholar and *tzaddik* had spread far and wide, so the scholars of the town rejoiced, as did even the simple householders and women. All waited expectantly for the day when they would be able to greet the *tzaddik* and enjoy his presence, whether with a scholarly exchange, a nice *vort*, or even just by seeing his glowing face.

Even the two ascetics, R' Shneur Zalman and R' Yisroel, went to greet R' Menachem Mendel, and to hear his lecture in the large *shul*. The two squeezed in with everybody else, and listened in silent concentration to R' Menachem Mendel's sermon.

At its conclusion, they stood in a long, winding line, waiting their turn to personally greet the *tzaddik*.

When they reached R' Menachem Mendel, he gazed at them with his pure eyes and plumbed the depths of their souls.

"I see you are men of substance," said the *tzaddik*, "and therefore, I



have a *tikkun* for you with which you can achieve lofty levels in Torah study. If you properly fulfill the *tikkun*, I guarantee you, you'll achieve something special."

The two men looked back at the shining visage of the *tzaddik*. Silence prevailed. Then R' Shneur Zalman said, "We promise to commit to it and succeed!"

"It's a great and difficult *tikkun*," warned the *tzaddik*.

"We have already accepted it," replied R' Shneur Zalman.

"So listen to what I have to tell you. Take on a fast that will last a complete week, starting from this Motzaei Shabbos and ending with the start of next Shabbos. You may only drink a little water each night. No one may know that you are fasting. During this week, go about your usual *avoda* in Torah and *t'filla*. I warn you, do not fail! Withstand this with all your strength and then you will achieve incredible spiritual heights."

The two men heard what he said in silence, ready and determined to fulfill the *tikkun* they had accepted upon themselves.

As soon as Shabbos was over, they secluded themselves in the attic and began purifying themselves for the holiness the *tzaddik* had promised them. They barely slept, and they increased the *d'veikus* in their *davening* and their toil in Torah study. They hid the food the Rebbetzin put through the door, for the two made sure that all they did was done in secret.

It was first Friday afternoon that they opened the attic door and went outside after a difficult and tiring week of *avodas Hashem*. Their bodies shook from weakness, and their pale faces testified that the extended fast had left its mark. The two men went

to purify themselves in the *mikva* in honor of Shabbos, which was fast approaching.

When they returned to R' Segal's house, they encountered R' Yehuda Leib, who immediately noticed their weak state, saying, "Go into the kitchen and have a taste of the Shabbos food. You look weak and tired from your toil and study."

R' Shneur Zalman didn't respond. He quietly went back up to his place in the attic in order to maintain the

***The Alter Rebbe said,  
"Chassidim would  
bless themselves that  
they should have the  
same kavanos while  
saying Krias Shma as  
the kavanos R'  
Pinchas had when he  
spoke to his wife."***

fast throughout the last few hours before Shabbos. R' Yisroel, though, couldn't go on. He was suddenly overtaken by a powerful desire to eat, the good smell of the Shabbos food making him dizzy. In his weakness, he tasted the food served to him.

The next day, Shabbos Kodesh, the two men sat and learned, and continued where they had left off the day before. R' Shneur Zalman began explaining the topic, bringing many

commentaries to support his position.

R' Yisroel stared at the little words, trying to understand the deeper meaning, but the lines danced before his eyes. He listened to his colleague's explanations but couldn't quite follow them, and was unable to understand the reasoning his friend was trying to explain to him.

R' Shneur Zalman, on the other hand, delved ever deeper, drawing precious stones from the waters of Torah, polishing them until they shone with the light of Torah. His eyes shone and a pure light radiated from them, and he soared far beyond his friend who sat opposite him.

The more R' Shneur Zalman achieved in his learning, the more R' Yisroel fell behind, the gap growing ever wider.

Three long, sad days passed for the two friends, three days in which they tried to recapture the mutual understanding they had had throughout their study period together, an understanding which had enabled them to learn and teach, to rise in levels of Torah study – but it was all for naught.

They both realized the reason for the gap between them. Only R' Shneur Zalman was able to attain new understanding given to him by the *tzaddik*, R' Menachem Mendel.

On the third day, R' Yisroel realized he would not achieve the levels which R' Shneur Zalman had attained. The two men parted in great sorrow, and R' Yisroel returned to his home in Glubaka, eventually becoming a successful businessman.

R' Menachem Mendel sent for R' Shneur Zalman and taught him the pathways of the heavens, after the gates of wisdom had been opened for him.



“Go to the Maggid of Mezritch and he will guide you on the proper path.”

Years later, when R' Shneur Zalman became an *Admur* and leader to thousands of *chassidim* throughout Lithuania, R' Yisroel would humbly come to see him and learn Torah from him like any other *chassid*.

\* \* \*

R' Yisroel himself related what had happened shortly before he passed away. And when he did so, he burst into bitter tears, for he had been on the same level as the Alter Rebbe, but lost it in one brief moment.

## PART 5

R' Shneur Zalman was at a crossroads in his life. After learning Torah in isolation, he wanted to learn how to serve Hashem properly from one of the *g'dolei ha'dor*.

At a later point, the Alter Rebbe himself related, “I heard that in Vilna one could learn better, while in Mezritch one could pray better. I didn't know where to go. After much thought, I decided to head for Mezritch. I said to myself: I know how to learn, but how to daven is something I still need to know.”

So R' Shneur Zalman headed for Mezritch in order to improve in his *avodas Hashem*. Before he left, R' Leib of Turkish Mohilev accompanied him. “Two are better than one,” say *Chazal*, and the two men spent the trip to Mezritch learning together.

On the way, they entered the city of Koritz, where they went to see the *tzaddik*, R' Pinchas, a *talmid* of the Baal Shem Tov who had studied together with R' Dov Ber, the Maggid of Mezritch, in Mezhibozh.

The two men entered the simple home of R' Pinchas. The *tzaddik* sat near the oven, deep in thought. They

looked silently at the *tzaddik*, but didn't dare disturb him in his *avoda*. It was only the occasional popping of the coals in the oven that broke the silence in the room.

“*Boruch ha'ba, R' Shnei-Ohr*,” said the *tzaddik* suddenly. R' Leib looked in wonder at R' Shneur Zalman, who returned the look of surprise. R' Leib thought that R' Pinchas meant the two of them, calling them both “*Shnei-Ohr*” (two lights).

**“Zalmanke, you are going to Mezritch to learn a new path in *avodas Hashem*. I guarantee you that if you stay with me, I will teach you the language of animals, birds, and trees, and even the secret conversations of the angels!”**

The *tzaddik* was silent once again, deep in thought. The two men realized that R' Pinchas knew them and had plumbed the depths of their souls.

R' Pinchas began speaking silently, as though to himself. “There was a chariot that had many horses, all sorts of horses. There were black horses, white ones, even reddish ones.”

The *tzaddik* went on and on,

explaining the different types of horses, elaborating on the qualities of each horse separately. R' Shneur Zalman focused his gaze on the pure face of R' Pinchas and listened closely, while R' Leib looked at R' Shneur Zalman in astonishment, wondering what the *tzaddik* meant by his mysterious words.

Then R' Pinchas looked up and gazed penetratingly at the two men before him. He saw the wonder on R' Leib's face and the look of concentration on the face of R' Shneur. He got up, his face shining, and said, “*Shalom aleichem, R' Shnei-Ohr*,” in great joy, holding out his hand to R' Shneur Zalman, completely ignoring R' Leib, as though he didn't even see him.

That's when R' Leib realized that from the very first, R' Pinchas had sensed the greatness of his friend R' Shneur Zalman, and had called him “R' Shnei-Ohr.” He also realized that it wasn't for naught that R' Pinchas related the story of the horses, but to test him to see if he would be able to fathom the secrets contained therein. Now R' Leib knew that although the two of them were going to learn a pathway in *avodas Hashem* in Mezritch, his colleague and friend was far greater than he.

R' Pinchas called his wife and said, “We have distinguished and honored guests today. Please prepare a proper meal in their honor.” His wife nodded as she glanced at the two men standing in a corner of the humble home.

Later, the Alter Rebbe said, “*Chassidim* would bless themselves that they should have the same *kavanos* while saying *Krias Shma* as the *kavanos* R' Pinchas had when he spoke to his wife.”

The two men sat down to a festive meal, with R' Pinchas himself serving them, and eating with them joyously, as though partaking of a *seudas*

mitzva.

In the middle of the meal, R' Pinchas asked R' Shneur Zalman, "Zalmanke, you are going to Mezritch to learn a new path in *avodas Hashem*. I guarantee you that if you stay with me, I will teach you the language of animals, birds, and trees, and even the secret conversations of the angels!"

R' Shneur Zalman thought briefly and replied, "I was sent to Mezritch by R' Menachem Mendel of Horodok. I promised him that I would go to Mezritch in order to gain in understanding. I must fulfill my promise."

The *tzaddik* understood that R' Shneur Zalman's soul wasn't his, as it were, and so he ended the discussion. They parted in peace, love, and friendship.

When R' Shneur Zalman entered the Maggid's room for the first time, the Maggid prophetically said, "R' Pinchas wanted to teach you the secret conversations of animals, birds, trees, and even that of the angels, but I will teach you *yichuda ilaa and yichuda tataa*."

## PART 6

After the passing of the Maggid of Mezritch and before the revelation of the Alter Rebbe, many of the ordinary folk were unaware of the Alter Rebbe's greatness. Even some of the Maggid's own students were unaware of his holiness, and considered him the youngest of all,

young in years as well as in greatness.

The amazing incident which took place publicly at the wedding of the son of a villager who had come to the Maggid, revealed a fraction of the holiness and vision of the Alter Rebbe.

\* \* \*

One of the simple Jews who lived in the environs of Mezritch, who would come from time to time to the *beis midrash* in Mezritch, married his son to a simple village girl. The Alter Rebbe agreed to participate in the wedding, and was given the honor of being the *mesader kiddushin*.

Before the *chuppa*, the Alter Rebbe, the *chassan*, and his father, sat down to write the *t'naim* and the *k'suba*. Suddenly the Alter Rebbe's quill fell from his hand. He thought for a while and then sighed a heartbroken sigh.

The *mechutanim* and guests looked at him in surprise. The Alter Rebbe finally said, "In honor of the wedding you invite relatives and friends to share in your *simcha*. In addition, you invite people whose job it is to arrange the wedding properly. You even pay them.

"You pay the musicians for their work. You pay the *shamash* for inviting the guests, and you pay the *chazan* for singing. But for some reason you call the *rav* to the wedding but don't pay him!"

The guests stared at the Alter

Rebbe in a strained silence. What was he getting at, they wondered.

After a moment of uncomfortable silence, the Alter Rebbe said, "If you don't answer, I will. The people who are invited come to the wedding and don't ask about the *chassan* and *kalla*. But the *rav* who is the *mesader kiddushin*, must question the background of the bride and groom, because sometimes there could be a situation of a forbidden relationship. For example, perhaps the *kalla* is a *yevama* and is forbidden to marry before undergoing *chalitza*. Call the *kalla* and let us question her."

The village girl stood before the Alter Rebbe in fear and confusion. The Rebbe began questioning her. Had she even been married before?

"Yes, Rebbe. I am a widow. A month after my wedding, my first husband suddenly died."

"Did you have a child with him?" asked the Alter Rebbe.

"No."

"Did your first husband have any brothers?"

"No. He had no brothers, except for a younger brother who disappeared many years ago. Nobody knows what happened to him."

The *mechutanim's* faces fell, and silently, all the guests filed out. It wasn't long afterwards that the fame of the farsighted Rebbe became known to all.

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# THE ALTER REBBE: FOLLOWING IN THE PATH OF YAAKOV AVINU

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



Yud-Tes Kislev is a holiday that holds a very deep and vital message. On this day, over 200 years ago, the Alter Rebbe was released from prison. On this day, the meaning of life was revealed to the world.

First let us look at exactly what happened.

In the year 1799, the day after the holiday of *Simchas Torah*, the Czarist Government imprisoned the Rebbe on charges of high treason.

Very conscientious and religious Jews who hated The Alter Rebbe because of his devotion to the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov brought these false charges.

The Baal Shem preached, one generation earlier, that every Jew is holy regardless of his accomplishments, and that one good deed in this world is more important than the spiritual rewards of the World to Come. These and similar ideas, together with his emphasis on Moshiach, were the antithesis of the accepted elitist philosophy of the Torah scholars of his time, and the Alter Rebbe went even further.

Based on his astoundingly complete knowledge in *kabbala*,

Talmud and Jewish Law, he expanded and codified these ideas and applied them to every aspect of the Torah and every facet of life. He taught that the Jewish people can hasten the coming of the Messiah, reveal the Creator's purpose for His Creation, and bring peace and blessing to the world. He explained how each and every Jew can use his entire personality – mind, emotions, action, speech, and thought – in the way that G-d wants, i.e., according to the Torah, in a spirit of true happiness and joy, and actually cause a massive change for the good in the entire world.

When his work was finished and virtually no question remained unanswered, hundreds of the most outstanding scholastic minds in Russia decided to cease their opposition and become his pupils.

But his flawless logic and his success only angered his enemies all the more; they were certain that he was a threat to the entire edifice of Judaism. They decided they had no choice other than to forge documents as evidence that the Rebbe, in his desires to be declared Messiah, was collaborating with Turkey to overthrow the Czar in exchange for their promise to make him the king of the Jews.

The Government took the story very seriously and even sent the dreaded 'Black Coach', reserved for the worst political enemies, to arrest him. The Rebbe was imprisoned and for the next 53 days sat with a death sentence hanging over his head.

But gradually things began to change. He was subjected to severe interrogation, but all the questioning that he underwent only indicated to them that he was not only innocent, but that he was a truly unique and G-dly man.

In fact, he answered all their questions either verbally or in writing except for one; when he was asked to explain what he wrote in the end of the first chapter of the *Tanya* – that only a Jew can be 'good' in the true sense of the word – he replied with only a smile. Suddenly they understood that a Jew is truly a "chosen" being.

Higher and higher officials came to question the Alter Rebbe or just to look at the holy Jew, until the Czar himself appeared, disguised as a simple soldier. But as soon as the disguised Czar entered, the Rebbe stood and made the appropriate blessing upon seeing a king, then he proceeded to give the Czar an explanation.

After his miraculous release on Yud-Tes Kislev, the Alter Rebbe increased his work, publicizing *chassidus* more than ever before.

\* \* \*

We can gain even a greater insight into this Chassidic holiday by taking an inquisitive look at this week's Torah section, VaYishlach. The Torah tells us that Yaakov Avinu experienced encounters with angels. In the beginning of our Torah section Yaakov sent angels to his brother, Eisav, and later in the section he fights with an angel.

What does this mean to us? How

***Higher and higher officials came to question the Alter Rebbe or just to look at the holy Jew, until the Czar himself appeared, disguised as a simple soldier.***

can we possibly benefit from or even understand this information? How can a physical man fight with a spiritual angel? What is an angel? Are there really such things today?

The mystical books of Judaism explain that angels are messengers from G-d. They are the mean through which G-d runs the world – something like the way that emotions and thoughts are the messengers of the soul to affect one's physical body.

There are angels that direct the spiritual life-force for plant growth, others for animal growth, for human life, for each religion and nation, etc.

Some angels are purely spiritual, like those spoken about in the visions of Ezekiel and Isaiah, but many have a specific purpose in the world, like the angels that destroyed Sodom and that spoke to Lavan and Bilham.

What they all have in common is that they are a link between the spiritual and the physical, or more precisely, spiritual links between the Creator and His Creation.

Yaakov ruled over the angels because he was G-d's representative in the world; he was connected only to the Creator.

He rose above even the spiritual, and was only involved in G-d's plan: bringing the spiritual down into the world and raising the physical up according to the dictates of Torah. (That is what the Midrash means when it says that Yaakov did all the commandments hundreds of years before they were given on Mount Sinai.)

This is also indicated in Yaakov's name: it begins with the letter Yud, the first and highest level of G-d's name (representing *Chochma*, the highest of G-dly levels), and ends with the word for heel (*eikev*), i.e., the lowest of mundane levels.

Yaakov our Father gave us the ability to always be devoted to the purpose. (*Kabbala* calls it "Tiferes," the middle pillar.)

Thus, Yaakov was able to send angels, defeat others, and had his name changed to Yisroel, which, among other things, means: straight (*yashar*) to G-d, because he was totally connected to G-d's purpose in the world, as he remarked to his brother "Avo adoni S'iera" – I'm trying to bring Moshiach!

For that reason, when Yaakov sent the angels to Eisav, he only sent their physical part ("mamash") to impress him, but the spiritual side, their true

purpose, remained with him. Similarly, when he fought with the angel, although the angel assumed a physical form, Yaakov remained spiritual, seeing the situation and drawing energy from G-d's perspective. Consequently even after these feats of prowess, Yaakov said "Katonti" (I am very small); he was looking from G-d's perspective, and therefore, knew and actually felt that all his victories were purely the kindness of the Alm-ghty.

Yaakov (Yisroel) was also one of our forefathers, in fact the main father of the Jews (*B'nei Yisroel*), and therefore, he bequeathed this trait to

***What does this mean to us? How can we possibly benefit from or even understand this information? How can a physical man fight with a spiritual angel?***

us, as well.

The Alter Rebbe continued the legacy of Yaakov by teaching: pay no attention to external occurrences (as he himself had done) but to the G-dly purpose behind them, and do all that we can to finish the work that Yaakov began and reveal Moshiach. Only then will we be able to act, and react, in a way that will take this dark exile and transform it into the beautiful symphony of joy and G-dliness, and may it happen NOW!

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# GREAT WOMEN IN THE ALTER REBBE'S FAMILY TREE

BY MALKA SCHWARTZ



*In honor of Yud-Tes Kislev, Beis Moshiach  
presents a report containing biographical  
material about great women in the Alter Rebbe's  
ancestral family tree. \* Part 1*

## REBBETZIN PEARL, THE WIFE OF THE MAHARAL, AND ANCESTOR OF THE ALTER REBBE

The Alter Rebbe was a seventh generation descendant of the famous Maharal of Prague, who was a direct descendant of King David. Born in 1512, the Maharal was already so brilliant and learned, by the age of seven he frequently discussed matters of Torah on par with some of the greatest scholars who came to visit with his father, Rabbi Chaim. Rabbi Chaim was very poor. He sought a match for his young son, the Maharal, with a wealthy family so that his future father-in-law would financially support him in his Torah learning without concerns for livelihood.

And so it was, at the age of ten the Maharal became engaged to the daughter of Reb Shmuel. Reb Shmuel was not only wealthy; he was a Torah

scholar. His bride-to-be, Pearl, was only six years old at the time of the engagement. At various times over the years of the Maharal and Pearl's engagement, the Maharal asked his future father-in-law and future wife for permission to spend additional time learning at distinguished *yeshivos* in other cities. Pearl and her father agreed, and by the time the Maharal actually married, he was thirty-two years old – they were engaged for twenty two years!

When Pearl became engaged to the young Maharal, she realized his great genius and decided that she too would learn Torah. In those days it was very uncommon for a girl to learn Torah. She decided it would be best to keep her Torah study a secret. She began studying Torah, and from the time Pearl was eight years old, not a day passed that she did not study for at least five hours!

Later when the Maharal was

discussing Torah matters with his young fiancée, she let him in on her secret that she had been learning Torah. Not only did he approve, he was amazed and delighted to discover what a Torah scholar she was. He encouraged her to continue her studies, and before leaving to another *yeshiva* (for no less than five years), he prepared a syllabus for his future wife. She diligently studied the Torah topics he suggested while he was away and continued to study during the subsequent period that the Maharal was studying in different *yeshivos*.

As the years passed, Reb Shmuel's finances took a downturn and he became poor. He had to sell all his possessions to pay off his debts. Pearl's once wealthy father was now impoverished. Someone had to support the family, and it was Pearl who volunteered to bear the responsibility. Soon after her father became poor, she bought a food store. Pearl managed it well and through her hard work was able to modestly support her parents and herself.

It was with pain, that Reb Shmuel realized he would not be able to live up to the financial commitment he

had made to the Maharal and his father prior to his engagement to Pearl. He, therefore, wrote a letter to the Maharal releasing him from his obligation to marry Pearl.

If the Maharal had accepted his father-in-law's offer to cancel his engagement to Pearl, there is no doubt he would have received subsequent proposals from wealthy families interested in marrying their daughters to him. He refused this opportunity, for the Maharal looked forward to life with Rochel, his destined soulmate. He immediately

***Though Pearl bore the responsibility of supporting four people (her parents, her husband, and herself) She did not let it consume her. She knew that material sustenance is a blessing from G-d.***

sent a reply saying he still wanted to marry Pearl.

Pearl could now look forward to life with the Maharal, whom she envisioned her life with, despite her family's loss of wealth. After a twenty-two-year engagement, Pearl and the Maharal were finally married and they began to live their life together. The Maharal was amazed when he saw how much progress his bride had made in her Torah studies during the

time that he was away learning.

The Maharal was ready to work to support his new wife. However, Pearl insisted on supporting the Maharal so that he would be free to continue his studies. Being from a wealthy family, Pearl was accustomed to certain conveniences and luxuries. However, she knew that true Jewish wealth is a spiritual one, a wealth comprised of a life full of Torah and *mitzvos*. She did not mind foregoing luxuries. They were happy in their life together – he studying, and she working.

Though Pearl bore the responsibility of supporting four people (her parents, her husband, and herself) She did not let it consume her. She knew that material sustenance is a blessing from G-d. Her work at the store, which she conducted according to Torah, was in order to provide a pure vessel which would draw down blessings for material sustenance from Hashem. Everyday after she finished her work she would study, and managed to keep her *seider* of learning five hours a day.

Pearl had succeeded in properly serving Hashem both with and without riches. It was decreed that wealth should now return to her family. This is how Hashem orchestrated His plan:

One day an armed soldier<sup>1</sup> entered Pearl's store, demanded that she give him bread, and other foods. He loaded everything into his carriage, and when Pearl asked for payment, the soldier said he had no money. Bravely, Pearl explained to the armed soldier that this store was her family's only means of sustenance and support. Her sincere words touched the heart and conscience of the soldier. He asked her to accept a beautifully embroidered tunic as a

pledge for payment, saying, "If I fail to return within the next two or three days, then this garment is yours."

Pearl accepted his pledge. Days passed and the soldier did not return. The Maharal suggested they investigate the tunic. When Pearl opened the lining she found many

***In no less than eight places, she found errors in her husband's writings, a misquote of one of the Sages or of Rashi. The Maharal was pleased with his wife's sagacity and he praised her for pointing out the errors. He applied to her the quotation from Eishes Chayil "Many daughters have done well, but you surpass them all."***

precious stones. They waited for a while longer but the soldier never came back to the store. As the soldier instructed, they were entitled to keep the garment and its contents,

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<sup>1</sup> It was during the Bohemian war

especially since they had no idea who the soldier was or who his relatives were. Thus the Maharal, his wife Pearl and her parents, were in a much better financial position. Reb Shmuel began doing business again, he became quite wealthy and once again distributed charity generously.

The famous and brilliant Maharal, was now able to continue his studies without worrying about the burden his wife had to shoulder in order to support him. Now even Pearl felt more free time to study. Everyday she had a lesson with her husband. Amongst the subjects they studied were Talmud, ethics, and mysticism.

The Maharal's reputation as a Torah scholar was well established. People from various communities would send questions to the Maharal about their problems. It was Pearl who would read the letters to the Maharal and it was she who wrote his replies. In addition, she arranged and edited all of her husband's literary works. In no less than eight places, she found errors in her husband's writings, a misquote of one of the Sages or of Rashi. The Maharal was pleased with his wife's sagacity and he praised her for pointing out the errors. He applied to her the quotation from Eishes Chayil "Many daughters have done well, but you surpass them all."

### THE ALTER REBBE'S GRANDMOTHER

The Alter Rebbe's paternal great-grandfather, Rabbi Boruch, was a great Torah scholar and a wealthy businessman. He lived in Posen and was a follower of the *tzaddik*, Rabbi Yoel Baal Shem, and he conducted his business, his personal life, and the conduct of his household according to advice he received from him. He was very modest about his Torah

scholarship. No one ever saw him learning. He would study in his room behind closed doors, and when someone knocked on the door he would close the book he was studying from, put it on the shelf, and then afterwards he would open the door and greet the person with his smiling countenance. He loved to hear novel Torah insights from others. He was liked and honored by everyone, great scholars, simple people, rich people and poor people.<sup>2</sup>

***This carefulness she had with washing the hands was according to the teaching of the tzaddik Rabbi Yoel Baal Shem, who said that in addition to this being the fulfillment of halacha, this also affects the health of a child.***

He and his wife had nine children, but only two survived: Rochel and Benjamin. Rabbi Boruch's wife was from a known family in Posen. She was a descendant of the famous Kabbalist, Rabbi Shlomo Luria. She was a very special woman, very learned and very saintly. She taught her children including her daughter to be very careful with *mitzvos* and to have awe of Hashem. She instilled her

children with love for Judaism from the time of their birth.

She was especially careful with the ritual washing of her children's hands in the morning. By the time her babies were one month old, she was washing their hands every time they awoke from their sleep, whether it was at night time or in the day. At night time she would place a vessel with water in it next to her bed. When she needed to nurse her baby she would first ritually wash her hands and then the hands of her baby, and only then would she nurse her baby. This carefulness she had with washing the hands was according to the teaching of the *tzaddik* Rabbi Yoel Baal Shem, who said that in addition to this being the fulfillment of *halacha*, this also affects the health of a child.

From birth, she and her husband would carry their children, twice daily, to kiss the *mezuzah*: when they awoke in the morning, and next before going to bed. (Children are naturally drawn to kiss the *mezuzah*. We should lift them up so that they will be able to reach the *mezuzah* and kiss it, especially at the beginning of the day immediately after the child awakens (and of course, says "*Modeh Ani*" and washes *neglevasser*), and at the end of the day before the child goes to sleep. It is also good for children to kiss the *mezuzah* throughout the day.)<sup>3</sup> Together, they imbued their daughter, Rochel, who would be the grandmother of the founder of the future Chabad movement, with the spirit and style of service to the Creator of the *tzaddik*, Rabbi Yoel Baal Shem of Zamostch.

In those days, amongst the many differences in approaches between the *misnagdim*, and the followers of *kabbala* was the vast difference in the

<sup>2</sup> Ateres Malchus p. 178-179

<sup>3</sup> See Seifer HaSichos 5752 p. 89

training of their children, especially where the education of girls was concerned. The Misnagdim believed that it was wrong to teach girls Torah. In contrast, the disciples of Baal Shem of Zamostch, and other Kabbalists, thought it was as important to give their daughters a Torah education as it was to educate their sons. To make the learning most effective, they adapted the course of study to the girl's needs and capacity.

Rochel's father, being a dedicated student and follower of this way of

***“We men are so busy studying Gemara and other such courses of study, that when we are faced with deciding upon a actual article of law, we do not know it. We are therefore, left with no choice but to turn to Rochel.”***

*kabbala*, made sure that his daughter was taught Torah.

Practically from the day she could speak. Rochel began to learn Torah. First, she learned “*Modeh Ani*,” and then all of the *brachos* that Jewish children should know. At the age of five, Rabbi Boruch himself started to

teach her. She proved herself to have unusual learning capabilities. Her father taught her himself, and later he hired a tutor for her. Rochel mastered the Tanach quickly, then Mishna. When she was fifteen years-old, she was learning Gemara and Rambam. Reb Boruch kept a keen eye on the education of his daughter. He regularly tested him on her progress.

Rochel particularly applied herself to the in-depth and thorough study of *Shulchan Aruch*, and was perfectly versed in all the laws (later, the Alter Rebbe said that if everyone was knowledgeable in *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* like Rebbetzin Rochel was, he would not have needed to add explanations to it.)<sup>4</sup> Her knowledge of Torah law was so extensive that she even knew the differences in customs prevailing amongst the various Jewish communities. She knew that what was regarded as a strict law in one town might be treated more leniently in another. For instance, in the region of Posen, the Jews followed the ruling of *Shiboel Leket*, wherein it is stated that gloves should be worn on Shabbos only when they are attached or sewn to the sleeves (this was naturally done before Shabbos came in). In Posen itself there was an *eiruv*, so Jews wore gloves there even when they had not been attached to the sleeves.

Throughout the years of Rochel's serious study, Reb Boruch chose to keep his daughter's learning and scholarship a secret. Perhaps he kept it a secret for reasons of modesty, so as not to draw attention to his daughter (albeit for reasons he himself deemed commendable), or perhaps because Posen (or the world) was not ready for unabashed female

Torah scholarship. What if people would regard her as odd. Like the wife of the Maharal, Rochel also kept her learning a secret for many years, until after she was married.

Rochel wanted to learn a craft, and decided to learn sewing. This is how she became friends with Freida, the daughter of the wealthy Torah scholar and head of the Jewish community of Posen, and ardent opposer of the ways of *kabbala*, Rabbi Moshe. Rochel and Freida spent a lot of time with each other. During this time, Rochel heard a lot about

***He once remarked “The Gemara says the wife of a Torah scholar is like a Torah scholar, but in my case it would seem that I must be satisfied to reach the equal status of my wife.”***

Freida's younger brother, Schneur Zalman. Schneur Zalman was a very learned young Torah scholar who had a talent for teaching.

Throughout this time, Rochel blossomed into a fine young lady with all the virtues of praiseworthy Jewish women. Divine Providence caused that Fred's brother, Schneur

<sup>4</sup> Seifer HaSichos 5704 p. 64

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs III* p.186 At the engagement of Rochel's brother Benjamin, his kalla's father announced “It was only because our holy

*Rebbe and guide Rabbi Yoel Baal Shem of Zamostch directed us to join our children in marriage, that our children have come together. Our holy teachers' words are sacred*

*and we are following his directives.” Based on this it is likely that Reb Boruch also consulted the Baal Shem regarding whether or not Rochel should marry Schneur Zalman.*



Zalman, was suggested as a marriage partner for her. Rochel met him and felt he was the right shidduch for her.<sup>5</sup> She wanted to marry Schneur Zalman and build a life and family together with him.

She knew that her intended belonged to the Misnagdim, and therefore, would not approve of women studying Torah. She decided it was best to reveal nothing to him about her Torah knowledge. Perhaps she would reveal the secret to him after years of marriage when their relationship was more established. She was nineteen years old when she became engaged to Schneur Zalman.

She smiled when, after the wedding ceremony, Shneur Zalman told her that he assumed that her mother had taught her all the laws that a Jewish woman is required to know. However soon after her marriage, Rochel's Torah knowledge would no longer be a secret from her husband.

One Shabbos, soon after Rochel's marriage to Shneur Zalman, Rochel's entire family, was walking home from the *beis ha'midrash*. The men, Reb Boruch (Rochel's father), his son Benjamin, and Shneur Zalman, were walking in front. The women, Rochel amongst them, followed behind. They were wearing gloves in honor of Shabbos, and since they lived in Posen, which had an *eiruv*, it was not necessary for them to have their gloves attached to their sleeves. Benjamin was also carrying some books, which he had borrowed from the *beis ha'midrash*, so that he could study them at home.

Suddenly the *Shamash* ran up to them out of breath. He told them that the *eiruv* had fallen. They all stopped, and looked at each other in bewilderment not knowing what to do with their gloves or the books that Rochel's brother Benjamin had under his arm. Should they discard

everything or just remain where they were?

Reb Boruch, who for all those years intentionally kept his daughter's Torah learning and scholarship a secret, called out to his daughter. "Rochel, you are an expert in the laws of *Shulchan Aruch*, tell us what we are to do now." Turning to the men he remarked with a smile, "We men are so busy studying Gemara and other such courses of study, that when we are faced with deciding upon a actual article of law, we do not know it. We are therefore, left with no choice but to turn to Rochel."

***Schneur Zalman told his father, "I prefer to be a teacher and remain poor, even lacking bread, than a wealthy businessman basking in wealth."***

Rochel's husband opened his eyes at her in wonderment! Was this some sort of a joke? How could a mere woman come to such knowledge? He had regarded Rochel as a fine woman but naturally uneducated, like anyone else of her gender.

Rochel began to blush. Suddenly her Torah scholarship might be revealed. She was worried. She feared her husband might be displeased with her. What should she do? If she answered her father she would be jeopardizing her relationship with her husband. On the other hand, her father had already put her on the spot. She saw that under the

circumstances, she had no choice but to answer.

The question was quite easy for Rochel to answer. "There is no need to take off the gloves," she said, "for this is an accidental case and there is no likelihood of any of us taking off our gloves and carrying them, for we are in a group and it would be immediately noticed, and that person would instantly be reminded. As for the books, these should be transferred from hand to hand until we reach the yard of a non-Jew, where they would be handed over from the zone of public property into that of private property."

None of those present knew whether or not Rochel had quoted the law correctly, but under the circumstances, Reb Boruch said they had no alternative but to accept Rochel's ruling in the matter. When they reached home, they looked up the case in the *Shulchan Aruch* and found it exactly as Rochel had stated.

Unfortunately, Rochel was also correct in foreseeing that her husband would be unhappy with the discovery that she was a scholar, and that it would put a strain on their relationship. Schneur Zalman acted as if his wife had done something terribly dreadful. At every opportunity he made sharp and cutting remarks to his wife.

He once remarked "The Gemara says the wife of a Torah scholar is like a Torah scholar, but in my case it would seem that I must be satisfied to reach the equal status of my wife." Rochel was incredibly pained by her husband's attitude. In her defense, her father replied to these remarks, "The *Yerushalmi* says that the wife of a criminal is also considered so! I have given my daughter into your hands. It now remains to be seen what you will make of her. She can either become the wife of a Torah scholar or the wife of a criminal. It is entirely up

to you.”

Shneur Zalman's father in-law's words pierced through and shattered his harsh and critical attitude towards his young wife. From that time forward, Schneur Zalman changed. He even began to take pride in his wife, at last appreciating her vast knowledge of Torah, as well as her wonderful qualities.

Though Rochel succeeded in gaining acceptance and respect as a learned woman from her husband, she did not flaunt her abilities or knowledge in front of him. On the contrary, perhaps as a natural expression of her modesty, or as a wise decision towards *shalom bayis*, it was only after her husband left for the *beis ha'midrash* that Rochel took the large Gemara in their home and began to study in depth. When she learned she studied with the same tune that men customarily learn Gemara. Though Rochel had applied herself for all those years to intense Torah study, both before and after she was married, her parents had made sure that she was trained and capable of fulfilling the duties of running and keeping a household. Throughout her marriage she was a perfect housewife and housekeeper!

After some years passed, Schneur Zalman and Rochel moved away from Posen to Vitebsk. There Schneur Zalman worked as a *melamed*. They lived a very poor life. Schneur Zalman's father, Rabbi Moshe had wanted his son to emulate his own example by combining Torah scholarship with worldly success. He wanted him to become a businessman like his two older brothers. He even wanted to give him a large sum of money so he could establish himself in business. However Schneur Zalman made it clear to his father that he was unsuited to business and also not interested in it. Furthermore he wanted nothing to do with the secular world, he wanted to become a Torah teacher. Rabbi Moshe was shocked; he did not want his son to be a poor Torah teacher all of his life. However, Schneur Zalman told his father, "I prefer to be a teacher and remain poor, even lacking bread, than a wealthy businessman basking in wealth."

His father kept trying to find a way to convince him. Finally, he thought he had found a way to convince him to take up business. He told him, "But what about your wife, Rochel? She's from a wealthy home and is used to having all her needs met. Your teaching will not even

provide her with enough bread to eat!"

To this Schneur Zalman responded, "Rochel is a pure and upright soul. I have no need to convince her. She agrees with me in everything, for she is an example of the truly righteous woman who does the will of her husband."

Rochel and her husband had a close relationship. She was able to confide in her husband and they trusted each other implicitly.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, Rochel his faithful wife, passed away suddenly and at a young age. Her passing devastated Schneur Zalman to the point that it affected his health. His strength dwindled, he had to stop teaching and eventually could not manage to work.

Rochel and her husband had two children: Boruch, who would later become the Alter Rebbe's father, and Devorah Leah, the Alter Rebbe's Aunt.

*(To be continued.)*

*Malka Schwartz is the author of publications about our Chabad Rebbetzins. Her books can be found in your local bookstore, or at Merkas Stam (718-773-1120) or Judaica World (718-604-1020).*

<sup>6</sup> *Memoirs III p. 195-196*

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# DELEGATION FROM L.A. VISITS YESHA

BY SHAI GEFEN

***Three Lubavitcher businessmen from Los Angeles raised large sums of money to help the victims of terror in Eretz Yisroel, and personally went to distribute it. They had an incredibly moving experience, visiting families throughout Yesha. \****

***Larry Siegal, Ami Feikovsky, and Motti Slodowitz, along with Rabbi Amitai Yemini, tell their story.***

Three distinguished businessmen, Lubavitcher *chassidim*, left their businesses and families for a ten-day trip to Eretz Yisroel in order to help families that are victims of terrorism, as well as to adopt families for monthly support. The delegation consisted of Larry Siegel, Ami Feikovsky, and Motti Slodowitz, who were accompanied by *shliach* for Israelis in Los Angeles, Rabbi Amitai Yemini.

They did all they could so that as many Jews as possible would be helped. They raised the funds themselves with the assurance that they would personally distribute the money with no middleman involved.

The experiences they had were incredibly moving. The members of

the delegation said they were returning home completely different than the way they left. "Our lives have changed from one extreme to another," they said, and one can certainly understand them. One cannot forget meeting with families affected by terrorism, who continue to display determination and *mesirus nefesh*.

We met with two members of the delegation, Siegal and Feikovsky (M. Slodowitz was called home suddenly towards the end of the visit). We met them in Yerushalayim late at night, after a tiring day of rounds. That day they had visited Gilad Farm, Chevron, and at Maon Farm with Yehoshafat Tor. They returned laden with experiences and emotions on this

Soldier in Chevron with a dollar from the Rebbe



third day of their tour.

As businessmen they are concerned about the bottom line, how to help another Jew, how to do the Rebbe's holy will to strengthen the settling of the Holy Land, and mainly those who live on the border, who psychically stand in the way of terrorists who seek to gain control over all of Eretz Yisroel.

Feikovsky takes with him a copy of the book *Karati V'Ein Oneh* (I Called, But No One Answered) as well as *Seifer HaNevuos shel HaRebbe* (the book of the Rebbe's prophecies about *shleimus ha'Aretz*). They went out each day, traveling through the mountains of the Shomron and Yehuda for the purpose of meeting terror victims and their families, to encourage and strengthen them, to bring them the Rebbe's blessings and dollars, and to help them monetarily.

**Larry Siegal, where did the idea for a trip come from?**

We all hear the news from afar, and see the terrifying sights of what's going on in Eretz Yisroel to our fellow Jews these past two years. We felt that we could no longer be silent and that we had to get up and do something. We were told by the Rebbe that in situations such as these, "*lo saamod al*

*dam reiacha*” (do not stand by your brother’s blood), and as *chassidim*, I said to myself that we must get up and help Jews.

So we decided to join forces and raise funds in the community, and go together to Eretz Yisroel to distribute the money to the victims of terror. The point here was that we told people that we would personally distribute the money.

**How did people respond?**

Very enthusiastically, far more generously than we expected. Jews opened both their pocketbooks and their hearts.

In order to know who to give the money to, we met with Knesset member Michoel Kleiner, who works a great deal with families that are

***I asked the wife of Amihud Chassid whether she had a dollar from the Rebbe. She said that she had had one, but had given it to someone who needed a bracha. Then I took out a dollar for her and she was thrilled.***



At Maon Farm with Yehoshafat Tor and Boruch Marzel

victims of terror, and he referred us to those families in need. He even prepared a list of addresses.

**It’s not a simple matter for a businessman and his friends to leave home for ten days to distribute money...**

Not only is it not simple, my wife Hinda was terrified. We all hear what’s going on in Eretz Yisroel...I decided to ask the Rebbe about a trip to Eretz Yisroel. When we opened to a letter in the *Igros Kodesh*, we were certain we had to go. The answer is in volume 5, letter 1328:

“And the necessary *tikkun*, especially now in *ikvesa d’Meshicha*, is *ahavas chinam* – i.e., love that has no rational basis, and furthermore, is the opposite of rationality – and lengthiness in this is unnecessary... May Hashem bless His nation in peace, which is the vessel which holds blessings, the *bracha* of Hashem, which is without limit, and all the more necessarily for \_\_\_\_, since Hashem has given him the privilege that he is involved in matters of *maamad*, whose inner meaning is to bind all *chassidim* together in true unity...”

When my wife saw the letter, she gave me her enthusiastic blessings for the trip. We knew that the Rebbe is with us and we were thrilled about having a share in this vital matter.

**Ami Feikovsky:** When we left, we had no way of knowing how it would all work out, but the results, and the Rebbe’s *brachos* that we saw every step of the way, put us on another plane entirely. The goal of the visit was to aid families that are victims of terror, primarily those who physically protect the Jewish settlements in Eretz Yisroel.

The help and encouragement we gave them contributed tremendously, and I am sure that after such success this won’t be our last visit, but our first in a long series of visits to help victims of terror. Suddenly we saw



how much we can contribute; what strength *chassidim* of the Rebbe have. Even though we do not live in the Holy Land, we can do so much for those who struggle here day in and day out.

**I think this is the first time that businessmen, with no middlemen, personally came to distribute money.**

We wanted to distribute all the money with none of it “leaking” out via committees and organizations, so that as many needy Jews as possible would benefit from the money.

I can tell you that we don’t regret a minute spent on this visit. It changed out lives dramatically.

**What moved you most of all?**

To see *mesirus nefesh* that defies description. To see terrifying things which in the Diaspora one has a hard time believing. We sat with families and cried, and it was they, the families who lost their dear ones, who calmed us and strengthened us.

In a phone call from the U.S., my son, Eliyahu, asked me what moved me the most. I told him that this visit changed my entire perspective on the subject of the war for *shleimus ha’Aretz*. My life literally changed; I’m going home a different person.

You see things with your own eyes, *mesirus nefesh* that you’d be hard-pressed to find even in *Tanach*. It’s only in the final generation of *Galus* and the first generation of *Geula* that you see heroism like this.

Motti Slodowitz simply broke down when we were with the family of Amihud Chassid (may Hashem avenge his blood), who was murdered in Ariel after going to rescue Jews. Some of those we visited were still in the middle of *Shiva*. Ami gave each one a dollar from the Rebbe.

**Ami Feikovsky:** I gave each one a dollar from the Rebbe, and I can tell you that it moved them tremendously. I asked the wife of Amihud Chassid whether she had a dollar from the Rebbe. She said that she had had one,

but had given it to someone who needed a *bracha*. Then I took out a dollar for her and she was thrilled.

When we visited Shlomo Bechor of Emanuel and he got a dollar from us, he burst into tears. I suddenly saw how a spark from the Rebbe ignites everybody’s heart. We gave out dollars from the Rebbe to soldiers and to the people living in Chevron, too.

**How was Shabbos in Chevron?**

**Ami Feikovsky:** It’s hard to describe the *mesirus nefesh* of the Jews in Chevron. It’s indescribable. There were tens of thousands of Jews in Chevron.

***Tivi saw this, got angry, and asked that I be removed from the Knesset. Security men asked me to leave the building, but in the end, after some back and forth, I remained.***

I want to bless Boruch Marzel and all the other heroes of Chevron for their *mesirus nefesh*. We did *Mivtza T’fillin* with the soldiers there. The visit strengthened us tremendously, and, *b’ezrat Hashem*, we’ll go there every few months in order to help Jews.

**Larry Siegel:** We saw an interesting difference in Chevron. Five years ago we saw lots of Arabs walking around, but now there are hardly any Arabs in the streets, and the Jews and soldiers feel much better.

We were guests of Boruch Marzel, who helped us and guided us on a tour. We learned *ahavas Yisroel* and dedication to protecting our Land from him. We gave out dollars from the Rebbe to all the soldiers we met, for their protection.

**How was your visit to Gilad Farm, which was recently in the headlines?**

**Ami Feikovsky:** We visited Gilad Farm and heard what went on there. I can guarantee you one thing: by the next visit there’ll be a *shul* and *mikva*, *b’ezrat Hashem*. You see the *mesirus nefesh* of these Jews, how despite the difficulties from within and without, they stand strong, and then you say to yourself that you must help these people!

My father, R’ Shlomo, z”l, was a

## REAL BRACHA FOR REAL ESTATE

Larry Siegel told one of many stories that explain his soul connection with the Rebbe:

“When I became a *baal t’shuva* 25 years ago, *shliach* Rabbi Shlomo Cunin asked me to write to the Rebbe about moving to a more religious area so it would be easier for us to live religious lives. At that time it was extremely hard to sell our home in our area. R’ Cunin begged me to write to the Rebbe, but I said it was a waste of his time. Finally, I agreed to write.

I went to the post office to mail the letter, and a few hours later I got three offers for the house, all at the same price.

I see the Rebbe’s *brachos* today as well, coming in a way of “before they call, I answer,” especially regarding this last visit, when we received an amazing answer for the trip.



The delegation at the Kahane home



Larry Siegel with Ami Feikovsky



Soldiers in Chevron with a dollar from the Rebbe

member of Lechi (who fought together with the Irgun to overthrow the British rule). When I go around Chevron and see Boruch Marzel and Noam Federman with their tremendous workload, I think about how they are perpetuating the *mesirus nefesh* of the members of Lechi in defending the existence of Jewish life in Eretz Yisroel. They protect the land so that it doesn't fall into the hands of our enemies. Without these stubborn people, who knows what Eretz Yisroel would look like today?

**Larry Siegel:** We also visited Maon Farm with Yehoshafat Tor, who lives in the caves like back in history. We saw the *mesirus nefesh* these Jews have to guard every foothold of the Land.

**Did you also visit members of Anash?**

Unfortunately, Lubavitcher families have also been affected by terrorism, and of course we helped them, too. We also adopted some families for ongoing aid. We visited a number of them, among them the families in Emanuel. When I entered the homes of Lubavitchers my eyes lit up when I saw the pictures of the Rebbe. I said: here I feel at home.

**How many families did you visit in all?**

We visited many families in dozens of *yishuvim* within the Green Line and Yehuda and Shomron. We encouraged those squatting on the hilltops and had the privilege of being at Gilad Farm, where we encouraged them in their future battles.

To be at Maon Farm with Yehoshafat Tor and to see a Jew work the land like it was done in the times of the Gemara... It's really moving. You'll remember that Yehoshafat's friend, Dov Drebin (may Hashem avenge his blood) was killed and he himself was wounded. You literally see the *mesirus nefesh* of those wonderful Jews.

**What's next?**

This visit dramatically changed

our thinking. I see a personal need to visit Eretz Yisroel from time to time, and to send money to Jews, most of which is raised from good Jews in Los Angeles who understand the great importance of this work.

I call upon *shluchim* around the world: *Boruch Hashem*, you've succeeded in building up an empire in the *z'chus* of the Rebbe MH" M. Take your *baalei battim* for a week in Eretz Yisroel so they can support needy Jews. I guarantee you that any *shliach* who does this, will see a great change in his *shlichus* and in his donors. I am sure that by doing this you will give the Rebbe tremendous *nachas*.

#### Did you visit the Knesset?

**Ami Feikovsky:** We went to the Knesset at the invitation of Knesset Member Michael Kleiner. We met with the Minister of the Treasury Silvan Sholom, with Transportation Minister Ruby Rivlin, and with other Knesset members. I asked them all to establish a narrow government for the sake of our security and to take the direction the Rebbe gave us.

To my delight, the next day, the Unity government was dismantled. The one who sent Jews out of Gilad Farm, found himself out of the government.

**We heard that you had an unpleasant experience in the Knesset when Arab Knesset member Tivi spoke.**

**Ami Feikovsky:** Yes. While we were at the Knesset, Knesset member Tivi spoke (I don't understand how a person who serves our enemy is allowed in the Knesset). He said that if there would be a narrow government of the Right, Boruch Marzel would be the minister of justice. I sat in the guest gallery and applauded at this statement. Tivi saw this, got angry, and asked that I be removed from the Knesset. Security men asked me to leave the building, but in the end, after some back and

forth, I remained.

**As the son of an ardent Lechi member who is now in Eretz Yisroel, what do you think about what's going on?**

Until we see the Rebbe, we have to see how the Rebbe's prophecies are being realized one by one. I have the book *Karati V'Ein Oneh*, and I am amazed by the Rebbe's warnings of thirty and more years ago about what would happen here. As you read it, you wonder whether the Rebbe said them yesterday!

Whoever calls himself a *chassid*, has to work on behalf of *shleimus ha'Aretz*. This is of utmost importance to the Rebbe, because it's about saving Jewish lives. This is why we felt it vital to come here and help Jews victimized by terrorism.

I recommend that the government ministers adhere closely to the Rebbe's guidance in every detail. A few weeks ago, I called Ariel Sharon and told him that he was one of our biggest disappointments. I told him that he is no less responsible than the Labor party for what's going on here.

He got angry and asked why I spoke to him that way, and I said, "Your problem is that you are afraid of the Americans, of what they might say. This is the source of our *tzaros*. You have to understand that 700 killed and thousands of wounded within two years, cannot become our daily routine, especially when things keep on deteriorating."

I hope that now that Labor has left the government, the prime minister can realize that his success won't be based on further concessions and the establishment of a Palestinian state. There's a strong connection between fighting concessions and helping terror victims, because when we do what the Rebbe told us to do, and the politicians do the right thing, we'll prevent further *korbonot*, and with Hashem's help, we'll march towards the true and complete *Geula*.

I'd like to thank the families with such *mesirus nefesh*, because more than we encouraged them, they encouraged us. They uncovered new *kochos* within us. Helping Jews here affected us more than we helped them.

### "I HADN'T CRIED LIKE THAT IN TWENTY YEARS"

Rabbi Amitai Yemini, *shliach* for Israelis living in Los Angeles, accompanied the delegation to Eretz Yisroel. In a conversation with *Beis Moshiach*, he said that Larry Siegel, Motti Slodowitz, and Ami Feikovsky ought to be thanked for their wonderful initiative in helping Jews in this special way.

"They received an amazing answer in the *Igros Kodesh* from the Rebbe MH" M, and they raised large sums of money for the important goal of helping victims of terrorism.

"At one of our visits, Motti Slodowitz had prepared a *d'var Torah*, but he couldn't say it because he burst into tears. He said he hadn't cried like that in twenty years. All this certainly comes from the Rebbe. Thank you to these *baalei mesirus nefesh* who gave the Rebbe MH" M much *nachas*."



Motti Slodowitz, R' Yemini, and Larry Siegel's son

# CHASSIDISHE ELECTIONS

BY SHAI GEFEN



***As Chabad chassidim who received clear instructions from the Rebbe MH”M as to how to conduct ourselves regarding shleimus ha’Aretz and preparing to greet Moshiach, we cannot mix in to issues that have nothing to do with us.***

## IT’S “GOOD FOR THE JEWS”

Prime Minister Sharon has called for early elections. We have no reason to rejoice over early elections, and actually, we can say that we are deeply pained, because our salvation won’t sprout from Israeli politics. We are well acquainted with the players, the contenders, and their intentions. We have no interest at all in inside squabbling within the big parties.

But there’s one thing we have to be grateful about. Since the elections of 1996, we’ve been able to vote directly for the position of prime minister. The religious population was forced to vote for people who are not religious, and unfortunately these individuals have seriously hurt our security by giving away large portions of Eretz Yisroel to our enemy, whose sole goal is our annihilation. Abolishing the direct vote for prime minister after being forced, three times, to vote for candidates who

did not prove themselves, is definitely a reason to be thankful that we don’t have to vote for unsuitable leaders.

Now that we’ve taken care of the political end of things, we need to examine whether we are permitted to vote for a prime minister when we know ahead of time, what his views are

***“I don’t mix in to politics. Furthermore, and most importantly, I hope that the prime minister there will be Moshiach Tzidkeinu...”***

regarding Judaism and Eretz Yisroel, and we know with certainty that he will do things that oppose *Shulchan Aruch*.

At this point, when we’ve freed ourselves from the pointless and irrelevant debate over who is “good for the Jews,” let’s expend every effort to ensure that the prime minister of Eretz Yisroel be *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*. As the Rebbe *shlita* put it to the *Kol Yisroel* journalist, Oded Ben-Ami (6 Nissan 5750), “I don’t mix in to politics. Furthermore, and most importantly, I hope that the prime minister there will be *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*...” As the Rebbe MH”M answered Knesset member Shmuel Halpert when he passed by for “dollars,” (26 Adar I 5752), that now we need, “and He chose Dovid His servant.”

We *chassidim* who received instructions from the Rebbe about how to conduct ourselves regarding *shleimus ha’Aretz* and preparing for Moshiach, cannot mix in to things that don’t concern us and all things that are merely political, with no practical results. We must focus on those things about which we received clear and eternal instructions from the Rebbe MH”M about our primary purpose to greet Moshiach. The topic of who is “good for the Jews” is of no interest to us.



**"TO SERVE FROM HERE,  
UNTIL MOSHIACH  
TZIDKEINU"**

We have no faith in this government. Because of political compromising, we experienced the greatest wave of terror ever known to us. Not because the government had no choice, but because it did not want to eradicate terror due to "considerations of unity," *r"l*. This government established the foundation of a future Palestinian state, while the prime minister announced quite clearly (and continues to announce) that he will establish a Palestinian state. This government uprooted Jews from their land and property. This government did too little, too late. We have no faith in it.

Nevertheless, we can point at two good things that happened at the end of this government. The first thing is that elections were moved up, and the one who was responsible for many of the failures paid (and will continue to pay) the price.

The second thing is the appointment of Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz. The appointment is only for three months, and there's no guarantee that it will continue into the next government, but his sharp statements about how terrible it would be to agree to the American "roadmap," which is synonymous with uprooting outposts and a significant move towards the establishment of a Palestinian state, were comforting. They gave us the sense that the new defense minister is ready to say the bitter truth while facing the prime minister who is ready to sell all and to cave in unconditionally to the White House.

Sharon himself said that he is not ready for any conditions that would break agreements with the White House. We all know what

"agreements" Sharon is talking about.

On the other hand, another appointment Sharon made was Netanyahu as foreign minister. There's no question it's a good appointment, and if it turns out to be permanent, he would definitely be an asset. Unfortunately, we've seen how Netanyahu acted as prime minister, and we all know which

***This government established the foundation of a future Palestinian state, while the prime minister announced quite clearly that he will establish a Palestinian state. This government uprooted Jews from their land and property. This government did too little, too late. We have no faith in it.***

way he would go were he to reclaim that position..

The role of foreign minister definitely suits him, especially when Netanyahu had a special talk with the Rebbe about his role as Israeli ambassador to the U.N. The Rebbe saw Netanyahu as a terrific spokesman and asked him (on Hoshana Rabba 5748) to continue

in that post at the U.N. until the coming of Moshiach.

**Netanyahu: I am planning to leave soon for Eretz Yisroel, and to fight for things there and try to make an impact.**

**The Rebbe MH" M: But there's still much to impact here.**

**Netanyahu: It's also possible to fight in Eretz Yisroel. It's important to ensure there are good substitutes.**

**The Rebbe MH" M: There's nobody to rely on.**

**Netanyahu: There are a number of good candidates.**

**The Rebbe MH" M: That's doubtful, and a doubt doesn't supersede something definite.**

**Netanyahu: I didn't forget our first meeting, and I did what the Rebbe told me, to stand proud and strong. That became bedrock for me, and I acted accordingly.**

**The Rebbe MH" M: You certainly know that Binyamin was the only tribe to be born in Eretz Yisroel and he impacted on the gentiles, and was the leader of the gentiles [an allusion to the U.N.] with the proper strength and the pride of Yaakov.**

**Netanyahu: I've served five years already.**

**The Rebbe MH" M: You can continue to serve until the coming of Moshiach.**

*Chazal say, "Who is wise? He who knows his place."* Apparently the best place for Netanyahu is in the role of foreign minister, which he can fill loyally. We hope that in the short amount of time left to him, he won't hesitate to attack the "roadmap" (as did Mofaz) and to warn of the impending dangers faced by the Jewish people. I hope that he'll go out to the entire world and present the truth of Palestinian anti-Semitism, that he'll explain Israel's position just as he did in America during Operation Defensive Shield.

## THE RIGHT IS “YEMIN SHEKER”

We have no business mixing in to what's doing within the parties, but it just isn't possible that all of a sudden the parties that always supported the government are now presenting a false show of “extreme Right” just in order to garner additional votes from the G-d fearing Jews who want to vote for a party that champions *shleimus ha'Aretz* and *shleimus ha'Torah*.

Sad to say, one of the parties that had a role in the Sharon government up until half a year ago, and left only after tremendous pressure, is the one that brought about elections for electoral reasons and for the sake of narrow interests, which may or may not prove themselves. Behind the so-called ideology of those parties, we see that the difference between Left and Right is merely semantic.

One of the parties that comprises the National Unity-Yisroel Beiteinu party, which also turns to the religious sector for votes, is the Yisroel Beiteinu party, led by Avigdor Lieberman. We have nothing against him personally, but there's no way that after the leader of the party announces that he's in favor of a Palestinian state, having no other choice, that he can expect the support of those who are loyal to Eretz Yisroel and the Torah.

This week, someone showed me what Avigdor Lieberman said on his website. It's all quite clear: “Ideologically, I believe in the vision of a complete Eretz Yisroel, but pragmatically, I need to have my two feet solidly planted on the ground of reality, and the reality is, whether we want it or not, that a Palestinian state is a fact which cannot be ignored. It is known to the world as a country, and it has all the trappings of authority. So any political resolution with the Palestinians, if attained, will have to be based on this reality, of a Palestinian state...”

Lieberman goes a step further and

explains that if the Israeli politicians were educated with a vision of a complete Israel, the vision would be realized, and “the establishment of a Palestinian state would not be a historical imperative. The problem could be solved by making an agreement with Jordan, or implementing autonomy, whether on the basis of an “Alon plan” or the autonomy plan of Begin and Dayan...”

So the question is, why then did you topple the Sharon government? Why didn't you join it in making a Palestinian state? Explain to us, what is the difference between *your* Palestinian state and Sharon's Palestinian state? Aside from your political problems with

## ***What's important is to uproot the illness, of “what will the goyim say.” Simply put, I mean, to take the Galus out of the Jews!***

Sharon, there is no other apparent reason to explain why you didn't join Sharon's faltering government, which you had been a part of for over a year, with a high-ranking portfolio.

There are no words...and this is called a party of the Right. The verse is apropos, “their mouths speak vanity, and their right hand is *yemin sheker* (the right of falsehood).”

### **TO UPROOT THE ILLNESS OF WHAT WILL THE GOYIM SAY**

Sharon continues to stick to decisions that he agreed to with President Bush and the White House, and he's willing to go all the way for

this. This is the agreement of the “roadmap” which recognizes a Palestinian state within three years, *r”l*. Sharon announced that he will not break any agreement made with them. This is what he said, but what he *didn't* say is what else was included in these agreements.

We'd really like to know why he didn't react after the massacre at the Dolphinarium. Why has he allowed blood to be spilled in our city streets? The Jewish people would really like to know what the Americans demanded of him. What agreements with them won't he break? Perhaps he will tell us of our future so that we can know what else was decreed as a result of his agreements with the Americans, which he won't break no matter what the cost.

In a *yechidus* he had with the Rebbe a year after the Six Day War, the Rebbe said things which are pertinent to Sharon's situation today. If he would only internalize the message, our situation would be a lot better.

This is an excerpt from the *yechidus*:

The Rebbe expressed his view decisively about the utter necessity to settle all of the territories. He also strongly negated the Alon plan of giving Jordan limited sovereignty over part of the West Bank, and said it would cause additional wars. He went on at length, analyzing the political problems, Israel's foreign relations, and the position of the superpowers, and among other things, the Rebbe said that since holding on to the territories was dependent on international pressure, what was needed was not to be fazed.

**What's important is to uproot the illness, of “what will the goyim say.” Simply put, I mean, to take the Galus out of the Jews!**

**Every terrorist act on the part of the Arabs must be responded to strongly and without delay.**

If Sharon had carried out what the Rebbe told him then, we would not be concluding two years with 700 murders and thousands of wounded.

# A NEW CHABAD COMMUNITY WITH OLDER ROOTS

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN LEVIN

It is rare that a person is present at historic moments. I had an experience like this when I participated in the Shabbos *davening* in the Beis Menachem – Chabad Shul in Passaic, New Jersey. Twenty-five Lubavitchers gathered in the Ziegelboim home, where a *minyán* regularly takes place on Shabbos.

After *Krias ha'Torah*, Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Smith, *mashpia* of the *k'hilla*, banged on the *bima* and gave a brief synopsis of the development of the new community. "This place is too small for us. In recent months a number of families have joined us, and the time has come to establish a *shul* with room for *davening*, *farbrengens*, and activities. There will be a meeting about this during the week, which everyone is asked to participate in as it's your *z'chus* and responsibility.

"The next step in the establishment of the fledgling Chabad community had been taken. Who knows? Maybe in another twenty years, when I happen to be in Passaic again, I'll *daven* in a big, beautiful *shul* with hundreds of *mispaelim*. Then I'll be able to tell my children and grandchildren, "Ah, I was there at a historic period in the history

of this community ..."

\* \* \*

Just fifteen minutes from greater New York, and you're in Passaic, which is in northern New Jersey. The city is on

*shlichus* by the Rebbe Rayatz, who told him to disseminate *chassidus* to the Jews of the city. Rabbi Babruiski started a small Chabad *shul* called, Anshei Lubavitch, and as the sole Chabad *chassid* in the city, he worked all alone in disseminating *chassidus*.

This modest Chabad *shul* had the privilege of hosting the famous *chassid*, R' Itche der Masmid, a number of times, whenever he came to town for the purpose of fundraising for *maamud*.

Jewish Passaic went through various stages. Its golden era was forty years ago, when about ten thousand Jewish families lived there, but this was followed by many Jews abandoning the area. In recent years there has been a revival of Jewish life in the city, with many religious families looking for quality of life in close proximity to New York, moving in. About 1200 religious families live in Passaic today, and Judaism has blossomed with 12 *shuls*, a *yeshiva g'dola*, which attracts hundreds of boys, a *mikva*, and an *eiruv*. On Shabbos afternoon the streets are full of religious families, giving Passaic a special Jewish aura.

Naturally, Passaic has all the services one needs in a Jewish city

ב"ה, אדר"ח אד"ר, תשכ"ב  
ברוקלין.

מתפללי בית הכנסת אנשי ליובאוויטש בעיר פאסיק,  
הי עליהם יחיו

שלום וברכה:

איך בין געווען צופרידען צו באקומען אַ גרוס פון אייך דורך הרה"ח  
איי"א נוי"נ עוסק בצ"צ מו"ה אהרן משה שיי באברויסקי, און האָט אויך  
איבערגעשיקט אייער ביישטייערונג, אויף וועלכעס איז דאָ די קבלה.

און לויט דער סדרה פון היינטיגער וואָך, וואָס דער אָנהויב פון איר  
איז, דער אָנזאָג פון השי"ת, וואָס תרומה אשר תקחו מאתם זהב וגוי  
ווערט געבראַכט אין מדרש (תרומה פי ל"ה) דער מאמר אמר רשב"ל לא הי  
העולם ראוי להשתמש בוהב ולמה נברא בשביל המשכן, ובשביל בית  
המקדש.

„די וועלט איז ניט ווערט צו באַנוצען זיך מיט נאָלד, נאָר סאיז  
באַשאַפען געוואָרען צו באַנוצען זיך דערמיט פאַרן משכן און בית  
המקדש“ —

דער רמז — מיינ דערפון איז, אַז ווען מען גיט זהב פאַר ענינים פון  
תורה ומצות, בריינגט דאָס אַראָפּ זהב אין וועלט.

אַזוי זאָל אויך זיין צו יעדערן וואָס גיבען תרומה אויף עניני צדקה,  
זאָל צוקומען אין דער ברכה פון השי"ת אין דעם וואָס מגיט און אין אַלע  
זיינע ענינים בכלל.

בברכה לבשו"ט.

A letter from the Rebbe MH"M to the *mispaelim* in the Chabad *shul* in Passaic in 5722, printed in volume 22 of the *Igros Kodesh*

the Passaic River, has greenery wherever you look, and is peaceful and quiet.

The nucleus of a *k'hilla* was actually formed about seventy years ago. Rabbi Shimon Babruiski lived in Passaic on

including kosher shops and a huge supermarket which carries kosher products. Nearby Monsey, which is thirty minutes away, has a Chabad school for boys and for girls. At a similar distance, Morristown has just about anything a Lubavitcher might need.

Because of the high prices of real estate in Brooklyn, and due to Passaic's being that close to New York with a better quality of life, many more families are expected to move in. Thus far, quite a few Lubavitch families have moved to the area. Another ten families recently joined the twenty-five families already there.

The Chabad *shul* was opened almost immediately. At first it was in the basement of R' Moshe Saler's home, and then it moved to a wing of the Ziegelboim home. Within a few weeks they acquired a Torah and suitable furniture, thanks to the tireless efforts

of the head of the *k'hilla*, R' Reuven Davis. The number of *mispalelim* grew considerably since the *shul* moved, including non-Lubavitchers who enjoy the atmosphere. Thus the circle closes, with the Rebbe Rayatz's desire that *chassidus* be disseminated in Passaic taking place once again.

R' Reuven Davis: "It's amazing to see people who come to the Chabad *shul* saying they can still remember Rabbi Brobuiski's work. He represented Chabad and made a *kiddush sheim Chabad* with his work."

Many people have started joining the *farbrengens* that take place on special holidays. Rabbi Leibel Groner once came and *farbrenged* in order to strengthen the new *k'hilla*. Among other things, he told about private audiences that the founder of the *k'hilla*, Rabbi Aharon Moshe Bobruiski had with the Rebbe, in which the Rebbe told him, "You need to make

sure there's a *Nusach Ari minyan* in Passaic."

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The Chabad community in Passaic is an interesting one. Very few of the families are originally Chabad families. Most are young *baalei t'shuva* who work at various professions. There are five lawyers, two accountants, and businessmen – each one with his own fascinating life story. With the academic and intellectual background of the *mispalelim*, it's especially interesting to sit in on a *shiur* on the weekly *D'var Malchus* or any other *chassidus* class, and hear how they learn a *sicha* or *maamer* with deep understanding and clarity.

These *shiurim* are given by Rabbi Smith who himself is a lawyer and who simultaneously spurs on everything having to do with *shiurei chassidus* and the development of the *k'hilla*.



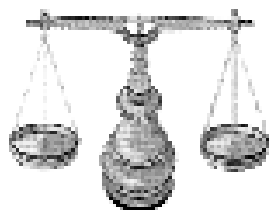




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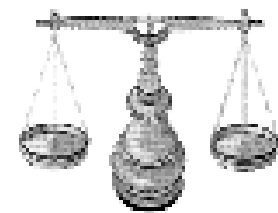
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# AISH HA'TORAH GROUP SPENDS SHABBOS AT ASCENT

On Shabbos Parshas Noach, Ascent of Tzfas hosted a unique group. About thirty people, supporters and *mekuravim* of Aish Hatorah of Toronto, came to spend a *chassidic* Shabbos with Chabad!

Rabbi Ayal Reiss, program director relates: "When director of Ascent, Rabbi Shaul Leiter, was requested by a Rabbi at Aish Hatorah to organize a Shabbaton, we thought an error had been made, or maybe they didn't know we are Chabad. Nevertheless, we immediately got to work on preparing a terrific program."

On Thursday, R' Leiter gave the group a *shiur* at the Lavi Hotel, where the group was staying before going to Tzfas. On Shabbos, Ascent had another group, and so the Aish group stayed at the exclusive Rimonim Hotel, arriving on Friday.

On Friday afternoon they immersed in the Arizal's *mikva*, *davened* in the Old City, and had the Shabbos meal with Lubavitcher families in Kiryat Chabad. After the meal there was a *farbrengen* at the home of *shliach* Rabbi Alter Eliyahu Friedman,

where the guests heard *divrei Torah* and *chassidus* from their host and Rabbi Chaim Kaplan.

On Shabbos, before the *davening*, R' Reiss gave a *shiur* in *chassidus*, and after Kiddush and the meal, the group toured the Old City with

Rabbi Mordechai Ziv. At the third meal, Rabbi Y.Y. Chitrik, dean of Beis Chana, delivered another *shiur* in *chassidus*.

On Motzaei Shabbos there was a *Melaveh Malka* with music and dancing at Bat Yaar, on the edge of Tzfas. Later that night, R' Simcha Triaster taught a class on *Zohar* in the Idra cave near Tzfas.

On Sunday the group toured the cemetery with Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles. The finale of the weekend was a personalized computer code workshop with Rabbi Eli Kaye.

The guests loved it all. This was their first acquaintance with the inside world of Chabad, and they were very favorably impressed. Says R' Reiss: "These were fresh *mekuravim* of Aish HaTorah who came on a trip to identify with Eretz Yisroel, and who left very enthused. It was great to see that non-*chassidic* groups were not afraid to send their people to us. They told us that after such a fantastic weekend, they would send us other groups. No doubt, the Rebbe is pleased."



R' Leiter giving a *shiur*



Sancing at the *Melaveh Malka*

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