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A FORETASTE OF REDEMPTION WHILE IN EXILE

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS SHMOS; 21ST DAY OF TEIVES, 5752

1. On the verse, “These are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt,” the Midrash comments that the names of the twelve tribes are mentioned in connection with the redemption of the Jewish people. This is seemingly difficult, for the verse mentions the descent into Egypt and similarly, the narrative which follows mentions the beginning of the Jews’ servitude, seemingly the direct opposite of the redemption. [140]

A second opinion in the Midrash states that the names of the twelve tribes are mentioned to emphasize that they descended into Egypt with the names Reuven, Shimon... and ascended after the redemption with these very same names. Thus the emphasis is on the merit of the Jewish people, that throughout the Egyptian exile, they did not change their names.

The implication of both of these passages is, however, that the purpose of the narrative is to emphasize that one must appreciate the descent into

Egypt as a phase in the redemption of the Jewish people, and indeed as connected with their ultimate redemption. [141] In that context, the obligation to recall—and relive—the exodus from Egypt every day serves as a catalyst to bring about the ultimate Redemption.

The relevance of this concept is reinforced by the following passage (from the conclusion of the first tractate of Brachos, quoted also in the Pesach Haggada):

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria said: I am like a person seventy years old and yet I did not merit (to understand the source for the obligation) to recall the exodus from Egypt at night until Ben Zoma explained: “It is written, ‘so that you recall the day you left Egypt all the days of your life.’ ‘The days of your life,’ this refers to the actual days. ‘All the days of your life,’ includes the nights as well.” Our Sages say: “‘The days of your life,’ this refers to the present era. ‘All the days of your life,’ includes the Era of the Redemption.”

Rashi emphasizes that Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria was not in fact seventy years old at the time. When he was eighteen, the Sages removed Rabban Gamliel from the position of Nasi and appointed Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria in his place. That night his beard sprouted grew hairs so that he appeared to be seventy years old. On the following day, Ben Zoma gave the above explanation. From this narrative, it appears that these concepts, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria’s appointment to the position of Nasi and his becoming “like a person seventy years old” relate to the concept of recalling the exodus from Egypt every day.

To explain: The exodus from Egypt “is a great fundamental principle... of our Torah and faith” and it represents the opening of the potential for all redemption. At that time, the Jews became designated as G-d’s “servants and not the servants of servants.” The freedom granted at that time, continues at all times.

In a spiritual sense, the exodus from Egypt represents the liberation of the

140. This question is further reinforced by the continuation of the Midrash which emphasizes a connection, not only to the Redemption from Egypt, but also to the

Future Redemption. It states that the name Yosef alludes to the time when G-d “will redeem Israel from the wicked kingdom as it is written, “G-d will again (yosif) extend

His hand a second time to take possession of the remnant of His people....”

G-dly soul from the boundaries and limitations (meitzarim in Hebrew) of the body and the animal soul and in general, of the entire material environment in which we live. This grants the potential for them to become united with G-d through the Torah and its mitzvos. Since these are fundamental concepts within the Torah and Yiddishkeit, we are obligated to recall the exodus every day.

In terms of our spiritual service, there are three different counterparts in regard to this obligation:

The obligation to recall the exodus during the day—i.e., each day of a person's life, he must go beyond his boundaries and limitations as mentioned above.

The obligation to recall the exodus at night—i.e., to carry out this service during the night of exile.

The obligation to recall the exodus in the Era of the Redemption^[142] — although the Future Redemption will surpass the exodus from Egypt. It will be a redemption that will not be followed by exile, for “I will cause the spirit of impurity to pass away from the earth,” in contrast to the redemption from Egypt when the potential for evil remained in the world.^[143] Nevertheless, we will recall the exodus from Egypt even in that era.

To explain: The exodus from Egypt opened the potential for all future redemptions. Furthermore, had the Jewish people merited they would have proceeded directly from the exodus from Egypt to the Ultimate Redemption.^[144] Thus the two, the

exodus from Egypt and the Ultimate Redemption are in essence a single entity. Indeed, in Chassidic thought, it is explained that the entire period of time from the exodus until the Future Redemption is described as “the days of your exodus from Egypt.” For the exodus will not be complete until the Ultimate Redemption is realized. Although many thousands of years have passed from the exodus, this is the

The goal of a Nasi is to establish a connection between the entire Jewish people and the Ultimate Redemption, to give the Jews a foretaste of Redemption while they are in exile.

result of external factors. Consequently, “all the days of your life” must be pointed to a single goal, “to bring the Era of the Redemption.”^[145]

Based on the above, we can understand why the exodus will be recalled in the Era of the Redemption. For as explained above, the exodus marked the beginning of the process

which leads to the Ultimate Redemption. Also, the service associated with the exodus possesses an advantage, for it reflects the power of the Jewish people to serve G-d even when the forces of evil continue to exist. Nevertheless, in the Era of the Redemption, the recollection of the exodus will be merely a secondary factor, because the Ultimate Redemption will be much fuller and more complete than the redemption from Egypt.

Therefore, the Sages add to Ben Zoma's statements by saying that the exodus from Egypt will be relevant to the spiritual service of the Jews, not only in the time of exile, but even in the ultimate perfection of the Era of the Redemption.

The expression *lehavi yemos ha'Mashiach*, translated as “to include the Era of the Redemption,” literally means “to bring the Era of the Redemption.” This implies that the Sages were not merely making a statement that will be relevant in the Era of the Redemption, but rather stated a concept relevant to the Jews at all times: A Jew must realize that “all the days of his” must be dedicated to a single goal, “to bring the Era of the Redemption.”

This implies two points: Firstly, one must anticipate the Redemption and experience a foretaste of it in his contemporary experience, i.e., bring the Era of the Redemption into “all the days of his life.” Secondly, that doing so will act as a catalyst and hasten the actual coming of the Redemption.

141. For our Sages have emphasized that all the exiles are associated with the Egyptian exile.

142. According to many opinions, Rabbi Elazar Ben Azaria and Ben Zoma also accept the concept stated by the Sages, the difference between them is merely the exegesis of the verse. Even according to the opinions that

they differ as to the obligation to recall the exodus in the Era of the Redemption, the concepts stated are relevant in regard to our spiritual service.

143. And similarly, the potential for evil remained within the Jewish people. Hence, it was necessary for them to flee from Egypt as explained in Tanya.

144. This is alluded to in the song sang after the crossing of the Red Sea, which concludes, “G-d will reign forever and ever” which is an allusion to the ultimate manifestation of His sovereignty in the Era of the Redemption.

145. See the Sichos Shabbos Parshas Toldos, 5752.

Based on the above, we can explain the connection between the above concept and Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria and his appointment to the position of Nasi. The goal of a Nasi is to establish a connection between the entire Jewish people and the Ultimate Redemption, to give the Jews a foretaste of Redemption while they are in exile. Therefore, on the day Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria was appointed Nasi, he dedicated himself to studying the concept of redemption.

On the basis of the above, we can also understand the miraculous phenomenon that occurred in regard to Rabbi Elazar's physical person, that in one night, he grew a grey beard resembling that of a seventy year old sage. Seventy is the normal span of a person's life as it is written, "The days of our lives are seventy years." For seventy is associated with the refinement of our entire emotional make-up (our seven emotional characteristics as they include all ten powers of the soul).[146] All of these qualities should be permeated by the ayin (the numerical equivalent of seventy, which also means "eye") of holiness, i.e., that it will be possible to see G-dliness. (This represents a glimpse of the Era of the Redemption, for it is in that era that we will merit the fulfillment of the prophecy, "All flesh will see that it is the mouth of G-d that has spoken.")

Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria accomplished this service in his youth. At the age of eighteen, he had already refined his emotional characteristics and his involvement with the world at large. He had experienced the exodus from Egypt at night, i.e., even before

the Redemption, he had internalized its service. As such, he was prepared to serve as the Nasi.[147]

The unique nature of Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria's contribution can be appreciated by the continuation of the narrative of the events which transpired on the day on which he was appointed Nasi. The Talmud relates that previously Rabban Gamliel had enforced restrictions on the students entering the House of Study. "Any student whose inner being was not equivalent to his external mode of conduct was prevented from entering." When Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria was appointed Nasi, the watchman at the entrance to the House of Study was removed and many more students entered.

To explain this narrative: Rabban Gamliel reflected a mode of conduct appropriate to the Era of the Redemption,[148] the age when "I will cause the spirit of impurity to pass away from this world." Therefore, he placed restrictions on the students who could enter the House of Study, allowing only those who could reflect that level to enter.

In contrast, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria was associated with the potential to "recall the exodus from Egypt at night," to allow the Jews in the night of exile to experience redemption. Therefore, he allowed many more students to enter the House of Study. Although their immediate level of refinement was not comparable to that of the Era of the Redemption, he was confident that ultimately this experience would allow these students to rise to this level.

(The success of his approach is

reflected in the fact that, as the narrative continues, for the entire period that Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria served as Nasi, Rabban Gamliel attended the House of Study. This indicates that Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria's approach gained the support and assistance of Rabban Gamliel.)

The Seifer Yetzira emphasizes that "the beginning is rooted in the end, and the end in the beginning." Thus there is a connection between the obligation to recall the exodus from Egypt at night (and in the Era of the Redemption) and the beginning of the tractate of Brachos, "From which time[149] should the Shma be recited?" For the recitation of the Shma and the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven associated with it is analogous with the exodus from Egypt. And both of these services can—and must—be carried out "at night," in the darkness of exile.

Similarly, there is a connection between these concepts and the conclusion of the entire Talmud:

Whoever studies Torah laws every day is assured of life in the World to Come as it is written, "Halichos (the ways of) the world are his." Do not read halichos, but halachos (Torah laws).

For the latter teaching indicates how through Torah study, one can anticipate the level of the World to Come at present.

Similarly, the above concepts relate to the conclusion of the entire Mishna: "The Holy One, blessed be He, did not find a vessel capable of holding blessing for the Jewish people except peace as it is written, 'G-d endowed His people with strength; G-d will bless His

146. In a larger sense, this refers to the refinement of the world at large and its seventy nations.

147. His unique potential is alluded to in his name Elazar ben Azaria. Both the names Elazar and Azaria can be broken up into expressions which mean that "G-d helps,"

i.e., he was granted a special dispensation of Divine assistance to bring the Jews to the Redemption.

148. We see a parallel to this in the relevance of the teachings of the School of Shammai. Although their halachic decisions are not accepted at present, they will be accepted in

the Era of the Redemption.

149. Me'aymasai, the Hebrew for "from what time," can also be interpreted to mean "With awe," alluding to the concept that the recitation of the Shma and the totality of our service of G-d must be carried out me'ayma, with true awe of G-d.

people with peace.” For the ultimate conception of peace will be in the Era of the Redemption. Then we will merit the manifestation in a full sense of the verse, “G-d will redeem my soul in peace.”

The above ideas relate to the concepts explained at the outset, that the descent to Egypt was intended to lead to the exodus. For the ultimate purpose of the exile in Egypt, and

Firstly, one must anticipate the Redemption and experience a foretaste of it in his contemporary experience, i.e., bring the Era of the Redemption into “all the days of his life.”

indeed the purpose of “all the days of one’s life,” is to “bring the Era of the Redemption.”^[150]

2. There is a connection between the above concepts and the Rambam’s yahrtzeit, the 20th of Teives, which fell on the previous Friday this year. (Thus it has an open connection to the spiritual service of the present day. Our Sages taught, “Whoever prepares on Friday, will eat on Shabbos.” This

includes not only the preparation of physical food, but also for the spiritual service, for the Shabbos day.)

The name Rambam is an acronym for the Hebrew words meaning, “I will multiply My wonders in the land of Egypt,” an allusion to the wonders associated with redemption. Similarly, the Rambam’s spiritual service involved giving Jews, in Egypt, in the night of exile, a foretaste of the Redemption.

Firstly, he lived in the land of Egypt and it was there that he composed his magnum opus, the Mishneh Torah. As he explained in the Introduction to that work, the Mishneh Torah was composed because of the difficulties of exile, because the Jews were unable to derive halachic rulings from the Talmud and needed an auxiliary source. Nevertheless, the text that the Rambam composed gave the Jews a foretaste of the Era of the Redemption. This is reflected in the fact that it includes laws which will only be relevant in the Era of the Redemption when the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt and in the conclusion of the text which focuses directly on the Era of the Redemption.^[151]

Thus since on the yahrtzeit of a tzaddik, “the totality of his deeds, teaching, and service is revealed and... ‘brings about salvation in the depths of the earth,’ “ it follows that the Rambam’s yahrtzeit, grants us further potential to anticipate the Redemption.

The above is particularly relevant in the present age when, to borrow an expression from the Previous Rebbe, the Jewish people have completed the service required of them and have even “polished the buttons.” Everything is ready for the Redemption and all that is lacking is that G-d open the eyes of the

Jews and allow them to realize that they are sitting at the feast of the Redemption.

There is no need for a further delay and without any interruption, we will soon proceed from the present era to the Era of the Redemption. The very next moment can be the last moment of the exile and the first moment of the Redemption. As a catalyst for this, we must reflect an attitude of Redemption in our lives, showing how within the exile, we can experience Redemption.

This should include a reinforcement of our study of the Rambam’s works according to the three

Secondly, that doing so will act as a catalyst and hasten the actual coming of the Redemption.

pronged plan of study: Three chapters or one chapter a day in the Mishna Torah, or the parallel portions of Seifer HaMitzvos. Not only should one study these works himself, he should also influence others to do so. (Similarly, an emphasis should be placed on the study of the final chapters of the Mishneh Torah which deal with the Era of the Redemption.)

May these efforts lead to the era when—as the Rambam states in the conclusion of that text—“The earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the ocean bed.”

150. Herein, there is also a connection to the concept of seventy years described above, for there were “seventy souls” who

descended into Egypt with Yaakov.
151. There is also a connection to the concept of

seventy mentioned above for the Rambam lived to the age of seventy.

IN MATTERS OF EMUNA, WE DON'T TOLERATE EVEN ONE SMALL DEVIATION

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



In honor of Chaf-Daled Teives, the day of the *histalkus* of the Alter Rebbe, we will relate a story about the Alter Rebbe which R' Mendel Futerfas, a"h, would tell.

Aside from the *chassidim* and *talmidim* who traveled to the Alter Rebbe, from time to time *misnagdim* (those opposed to *chassidus*) would come, too. They may have wanted to check out the Alter Rebbe for themselves to form their own impressions and to know precisely what they were opposing, or for other reasons. Sometimes they even came to ask certain questions of *emuna* which bothered them, which they couldn't ask (or receive answers for) anywhere else.

Once a *talmid chacham* who was known as a *tzaddik*, a *yerei Shamayim* (G-d-fearing), and punctilious in *mitzva* observance came to the Alter Rebbe. He was a *misnaged* who had a question to pose: "I don't understand how it is that the Torah differentiates between "*l'chatchila*" and "*b'dioved*" (between what was done initially and how we view something after the event). How is it that those things which the Torah says *l'chatchila* not to do, are not forbidden once they have been done?"

"If it was truly forbidden, then even if for some reason it was done, it should be forbidden just the same! And if the Torah says that *b'dioved* if the thing was done already it's okay, then it turns out that it wasn't truly forbidden in the first place! And so why wasn't it permissible to do it *l'chatchila*?"

The Alter Rebbe gazed upon the Jew standing before him. He looked at him with eyes that penetrated to the man's core. He saw where he had come from and where he was heading, and he saw that the man was not asking the question in order to gain understanding. He saw that this was a test of his animal soul to entice him to permit him to do things which were not in the spirit of Torah, with the pretext (which perhaps at that moment was subconscious) that *b'dioved* the thing was permissible anyway, and if so – it wasn't so terrible after all.

Instead of answering the question, the Alter Rebbe spoke with a *niggun* as he was wont to do, and said: The *neshama* resides in the treasury of souls, attached to the living G-d, and enjoys the radiance of the *Sh'china* (Divine presence). At some point, the *neshama* is told: the time has come for you to descend to *olam ha'zeh* (the

physical world), to enclothe yourself in a physical body, and to fulfill your G-dly mission to make a dwelling place for G-d in the lower realm.

The *neshama* complains that she doesn't want to go, for it entails a great descent from her lofty position. They tell her that she doesn't have a choice, that she must fulfill G-d's command and go on this mission.

So the *neshama* says: if that's the case – that it has been decreed that I must go down to the physical world – then I ask that at the very least you promise me that I will be enclothed in the body of a *tzaddik*, for then the descent won't be so great. Even when I will be in *olam ha'zeh* I will remain connected to G-dliness (although on a lower level than in the upper worlds).

They tell her: No! The whole point is "to make Him a dwelling place in the lower realms." A *tzaddik* is "upper" not "lower." Therefore, your mission and purpose is to be enclothed in the body of a *tachton*, and that's where you have to make for Him a dwelling place!

The *neshama* continues to complain: If it was already decreed, then I ask for a guarantee that the body I'm enclothed in belong to a *beinoni* "who never sinned and never will sin."

He is *like* a *rasha* since he lusts for all the pleasure of *olam ha'zeh*, but as far as actual deed, speech, and thought – he is 100%!

They tell her: No! You will be enclothed in the body of somebody who has free choice, who might be a *rasha* or even an absolute *rasha*!

The *neshama* pleads: If I can't even change that, then I ask that at least let me live in an environment of G-d-fearing Jews, so that if I don't do as I should at least my children will be in

Once a certain talmid chacham came to the Alter Rebbe. He was a misnaged who had a question to pose: “How is it that those things which the Torah says l'chatchila not to do, are not forbidden once they have been done?” ...

proper surroundings and will receive a suitable education.

They tell her: You must go to a place of *goyim*, an utterly unsuitable environment.

The *neshama* cries out: If all is lost and I can't even change that, then I ask, at least let me be buried among Jews and not among gentiles.

This was agreed to.

Thus ended the Alter Rebbe's words.

The man left the Alter Rebbe's room utterly perplexed. Instead of receiving an answer to his question, the Rebbe had been most mysterious. But as life went on, the Alter Rebbe's words became clear.

The man had been a *tzaddik* but the worm which had eaten away at him, continued to do so until he descended to the level of *beinoni* – he was still perfect in thought, speech, and action. Some time later, the Jew descended even further to the level of *rasha*, and even a consummate *rasha*. His decline didn't end there. He moved to dwell among *goyim* where his children did not receive the proper education. At the end of his life, with great difficulty, he merited to be buried among Jews.

The Alter Rebbe saw the future with his holy eyes when the man had been a *tzaddik* and had asked the seemingly innocent question: “What is the difference between *l'chatchila* and *b'dioved*?”

(By the way, the Rebbe pointed out in the *sicha* of Acharon Shel Pesach 5744 that the word should not be pronounced “*b'dieved*,” with the Hebrew vowel *segol* so that it sounds like *eved*, a servant, but with the Hebrew vowel *komatz*, which would make it “*b'dioved*,” which, translated from the Aramaic, means, “when he did.”)

* * *

One of the central points of *chassidus* in general and Chabad in particular is the emphasis placed not only on the framework but on the contents; not only on the “body” but on the “*neshama*” in particular.

The “body” is certainly vital – i.e. actual deed, for “action is the main thing” and the purpose of it all – but at the same time, we must remember and know that the body is greatly dependent on the “*neshama*.” We must invest a lot in educating and tending to this “point,” the point that is beyond all the details. We must ensure that it

illuminates openly and is an expression of all the details in their entirety.

It is possible, says *chassidus*, that a Jew might be a scholar, G-d-fearing and very punctilious in *mitzva* observance, but the point might very well be missing from the inner content – i.e. how devoted he is to Hashem, how great is his yearning to fulfill his G-dly mission, and how much he is willing to sacrifice for it.

It is very possible that he conducts

The man left the Alter Rebbe's room utterly perplexed. Instead of receiving an answer to his question, the Rebbe had been most mysterious. But as life went on, the Alter Rebbe's words became clear.

himself perfectly, and even goes beyond the letter of the law, and even his revealed *p'nimius* (inwardness) is all right, due to his education and his good environment, but deep within him there might very well be a worm eating away at him. He might lack the point, and in the end it might very well impact negatively on his actual practice.

Chassidim would say that the *para aduma* (the red heifer) had to be “*t'mima*” (perfect, unblemished), and

the commentators explain this to mean “perfect in its redness” to the point that if there were “two black hairs” it was invalid. But if it had only one black hair, it was not invalidated, though in matters of *emuna* – even one slight turn from the point, even with “one hair,” there is great danger, and it is possible that the whole thing could become invalid and ruined entirely.

A simple Jew who doesn’t have much wisdom and understanding in Torah still has a *neshama* that shines in its purity, with absolute wholeness and integrity, without any deviation from the point, not even in “one black hair.”

At the famous debate the Alter Rebbe had in Minsk in 5543, the *misnagdim* claimed that the *chassidim* had degraded the honor of the Torah and had uplifted the simple people. The Alter Rebbe responded with the Torah of the Maggid of Mezritch in the name of the Baal Shem Tov concerning what Moshe Rabbeinu said upon seeing the burning bush: “I will turn aside and see [why the bush is not being consumed].” Rashi comments: “I will turn aside from here to approach over there” for the “flame of the fire” is specifically in the “*sneh*” (thorn bush), i.e., in the simple people who *daven* and say *T'hillim* with simple faith.

The Alter Rebbe continued: This approach of the Baal Shem Tov is based on Hashem’s first revelation to Moshe Rabbeinu, the one Hashem chose to be the first redeemer and the final redeemer. This G-dly revelation to Moshe was not just a personal choice – i.e., because he served G-d – but it was a general revelation, an unparalleled revelation to the one Hashem chose to be the leader and redeemer of the Jewish people.

The G-dly revelation to the redeemer and leader of the Jewish people consists of being shown that a true leader of the Jewish people who is to become the emissary of redemption must find the “heart of the fire” within the “thorn bush,” among the simple

people. His job is to reveal the heart of the fire within the thorn bush, which is done through the *avoda* of “I will turn from here in order to approach there.”

R’ Yitzchok Isaac said that the Alter Rebbe repeated this teaching of the Baal Shem Tov with great enthusiasm, and concluded with a lesson to be learned:

“Really, whoever is a greater Torah

Even if I had been raised to think otherwise, and even though I knew that what I had been taught was according to Torah and chassidus, from the moment that the Rebbe proclaimed a “new era,” which requires a new sort of avoda, I put all my strength and abilities into this work.

scholar must be greater in *avoda* too, for if not, he is, G-d forbid, rebelling against Him, as it says “those who rebel against me, rebel against the king himself.” We must really repent from the depths of our hearts in order to uproot the “Amalek” which cools the path of G-d, and the ways of service of the Creator.”

In order for the point, which exists

within every Jew’s *neshama*, to come out in the open, be revealed and illuminated, *chassidus* establishes that we must have open *hiskashrus* (for essential connection exists within every Jew whether he wants it or not) and absolute dedication to the general point to the “general *neshama*,” to the “general *yechida*,” and even to the essence of all the Jewish people – to the Rebbe, **Rosh B’nei Yisroel**, the *nasi* “who is everything.”

Chassidus says that even in one’s *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe, one may not be satisfied with the “body” of *hiskashrus*. We have to place a special emphasis on the “*neshama*” of *hiskashrus*. It’s not enough to admire and esteem the Rebbe, in learning his Torah, in accepting guidance from him, and in fulfilling his directives. Although all these things are necessary, and *hiskashrus* is achieved by these means (just as *hiskashrus* with Hashem is achieved only through learning His Torah and doing His *mitzvos*), nevertheless, one still needs the “*neshama*” which is above the “body” of *hiskashrus*; it is “content” beyond “form.”

This utter self-nullification and absolute devotion, which is expressed in: I belong to the Rebbe, I give him my life, my being, and my existence without excluding even a single aspect of my existence, not even an existence of holiness, of learning, *davening*, and enhancing the performance of *mitzvos*. When I have no ego, it doesn’t occur to me to express my own opinion and viewpoint, not even when I think it stems from holiness, and even from that which I was taught and educated by the Rebbe himself. It is clear to me that only the Rebbe can establish the goal and the manner of *avoda*. Even if I had been raised to think otherwise, and even though I knew that what I had been taught was according to Torah and *chassidus*, from the moment that the Rebbe proclaimed a “new era,” which requires a new sort of *avoda*, I put all my strength and abilities into

this work

We all know that the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach *shlita* established, and repeated many times, that the only job left to do is to greet Moshiach

Tzidkeinu in actuality. And this must be done so that he can fulfill his mission and take all of us out of exile. In this work, which is now the point of everything, we must invest our entire lives, our very existence and being,

until we see the actualization of the true and complete Redemption immediately.

Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach l'olam va'ed!

NEVER HAS SO MUCH WISDOM TAKEN UP SO LITTLE SPACE!

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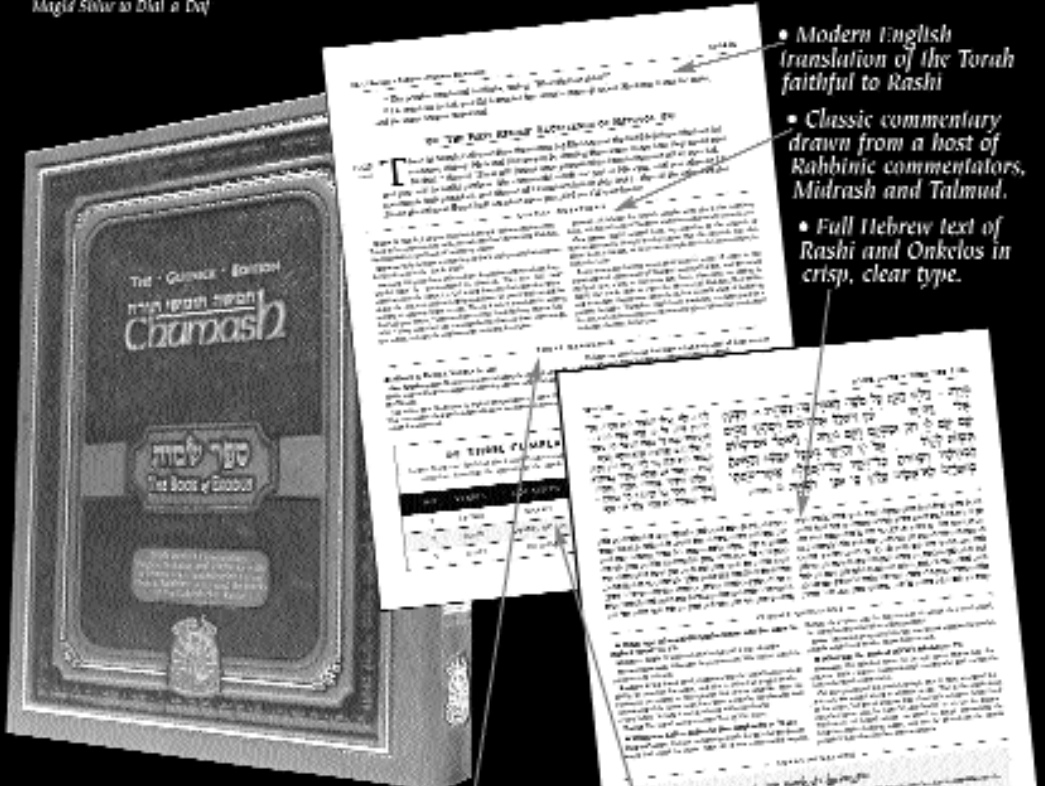
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“PERHAPS, NEVERTHELESS, G-D IS TO BE FOUND IN THE WORLD?”

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM



PART I

He wandered about for years but could find no peace. From time to time he would go to the court of the Alter Rebbe and would join the outstanding students and hear the Rebbe's teachings. He would stay there for a while, and then, just as he had arrived suddenly he would suddenly disappear. People knew nothing about him except for his name, Shlomo Feigen.

Occasionally his mysterious personality would be a topic of conversation among the students who tried to understand what he was all about. Despite their speculation, nobody got to the bottom of it.

Who was Shlomo Feigen?

PART II

The sound of Torah hummed in the bastions of the *misnagdim*. Topping the list of such *yeshivos* were those in Slutzk and Vilna, where hundreds of students sat, budding scholars, who delved deeply into the sea of Torah. These *yeshivos* produced Torah giants who possessed outstanding intellects. All respected them, and their names were praised by one and all.

His face burned with holy fire and his entire body shook in fear. He fixed his gaze upon Feigen and in a thundering voice he said, “Yungerman, yungerman, perhaps, nevertheless, G-d is to be found in the world?”

At a meeting that took place one day among the *roshei yeshivos* and leaders of the *misnagdim*, they made a weighty decision. They would send some of their choice students to the universities in Berlin and Paris so that they could master science and philosophy. Their goal was to establish a new generation of Jewish leaders.

It was known and accepted that just as great Jewish leaders throughout the generations – such as

Mordechai, the leaders of the Sanhedrin, the Torah Masters and Leaders in the Diaspora – were knowledgeable in the secular disciplines, their languages and sciences, and even knew magic, they too had to select their best students and send them off to obtain a secular education.

A few dozen of the best students were chosen and were sent to Berlin and Paris. The names of these students were mentioned reverently by the other *yeshiva* students, and their teachers derived great *nachas* from them.

One of those students was Shlomo Feigen, one of the best of the best.

PART III

Shlomo Feigen and his friends spent a few years at the universities. At first, their Torah study took precedence and they studied secular studies on the side, but as time went on they longed to delve into those subjects which had been off-limits to them all those years, and they threw themselves into their secular pursuits.

With time, some of them disregarded Torah and *mitzvos*. The Satan fought with them and spread

his net to trip them up, and he enjoyed a great measure of success. Within a few years, nearly all of them had left Judaism behind. These students were mocked by the "Berliners," and were spoken about in the *chassidic* courts. The *roshei yeshivos* were humiliated and didn't know where to turn to bury their shame.

Some of those students found no peace of mind. They decided to search for a new path in life. They wandered off and became acquainted

with the ways of life of other communities and groups.

Two of those students ended up in Liozna, at the court of the Alter Rebbe. Since they were open-minded, they didn't fear entering the *chassidic* world in order to become better acquainted with it from within, despite the hatred they had been inculcated with in their celebrated *yeshivos*. These two students eventually became ardent *chassidim* of the Alter Rebbe and took an honored spot among the *chassidim*. They were

Rabbi Moshe Meizlish and R' Pinchas, author of *Seifer HaBris*.

PART IV

Shlomo Feigen wandered about too, both within *chassidic* courts as well as, *l'havdil*, within the realm of heresy and *haskala* (the so-called Enlightenment). Now and then, he also tried his hand at business.

One day he arrived at the Alter Rebbe's *beis midrash* in Liozna. He was alone, dusty, wore long hair, and carried a walking stick in his hand. There were many such individuals in those days, so he didn't draw much attention. He sat quietly among the *talmidim* and listened to them learn, but he quickly felt the need to show off his learning prowess. As soon as he did so, all eyes were upon him and the *talmidim* realized there was more to him than met the eye.

He remained in the Alter Rebbe's *beis midrash* for a few days without anybody knowing who he was and what he was about. He would disappear every so often and then return and join the *chassidim*, then disappear again. He joined in the *farbrengens* in the evenings, listening and sometimes contributing. This they knew about him – that he was an outstanding scholar.

One day, as the Alter Rebbe sat with the greatest of the *chassidim* and the exceptional *talmidim* and said *maamarei chassidus* regarding the importance of *mayim acharonim*, a disparaging sound could be heard from the end of the table. All eyes turned towards Shlomo Feigen. A mocking smile still lurked on his lips.

The Alter Rebbe's face grew serious, he sighed, and then said in a low voice, "A worm eats at him from within." The few who heard this understood what the Rebbe meant. The Rebbe knew who this man was, what his goal was, and where he stood in G-d's world.



Shlomo Feigen was called into the Rebbe's room. He entered the Holy of Holies and closed the door. The Rebbe gazed upon him, deep into his soul, then the Rebbe's voice broke the silence.

"You are accustomed to wandering, to being one day here and one day there. Therefore I ask that when you reach Karlin, you should go to R' Shlomo the Tzaddik, and listen to what he has to say."

The Rebbe said nothing further, and Feigen nodded his consent and left the room. He realized that the Rebbe's request was not just a suggestion but an order, one which he would understand only afterwards. Since he was curious, and wanted to learn, he took up his bundle and left for Karlin, to the holy Rebbe, R' Shlomo.

It took a few days before he arrived at the home of R' Shlomo of Karlin. The servant sized him up, and since he didn't notice anything unique in Feigen that was different than the dozens of other Jews who wandered about in those days, he gave him an appointment to see the *tzaddik*.

At the designated time, Feigen waited in the antechamber before the *tzaddik's* room. He was still deep in thought when he heard a noise within the inner room. It aroused his attention and as he listened, he could hear the *tzaddik* walking about in his room, from wall to wall, in great emotion. From time to time, short phrases could be made out, but Feigen couldn't fathom what had caused this great turmoil.

As he stood there trying to figure it out, the door suddenly opened and R' Shlomo of Karlin approached him hurriedly. His face burned with holy fire and his entire body shook in fear. He fixed his gaze upon Feigen and in a thundering voice he said, "Yungerman, yungerman, perhaps,

nevertheless, G-d is to be found in the world?"

Feigen hadn't even digested what the *tzaddik* said, and the *tzaddik* had returned to his room and slammed the door. Feigen stood there thunderstruck. With pounding heart and in a turmoil of emotion, he continued to wait.

Apparently the *tzaddik* hadn't calmed down. He continued to walk

At first, their Torah study took precedence and they studied secular studies on the side, but as time went on, they longed to delve into those subjects which had been off-limits to them all those years, and they threw themselves into their secular pursuits...

back and forth in his room, and choked syllables could be heard every so often. It sounded to him like the threatening rumbles of a volcano about to erupt.

The Rebbe emerged from his room and painfully called out to Feigen, "Young man, listen well! Think, perhaps, nevertheless, G-d is present in this world?" and he returned to his room, though the storm hadn't died

down; it just grew stronger by the minute.

Feigen had nearly mustered up the strength to get up and leave, when the door opened for the third time and the blazing image of the *tzaddik* stood before him in all his glory. His eyes shot forth arrows of both strength and compassion. "Ah young man, perhaps, nevertheless? Perhaps still and all there's a Master of the world Who is to be found in this world?"

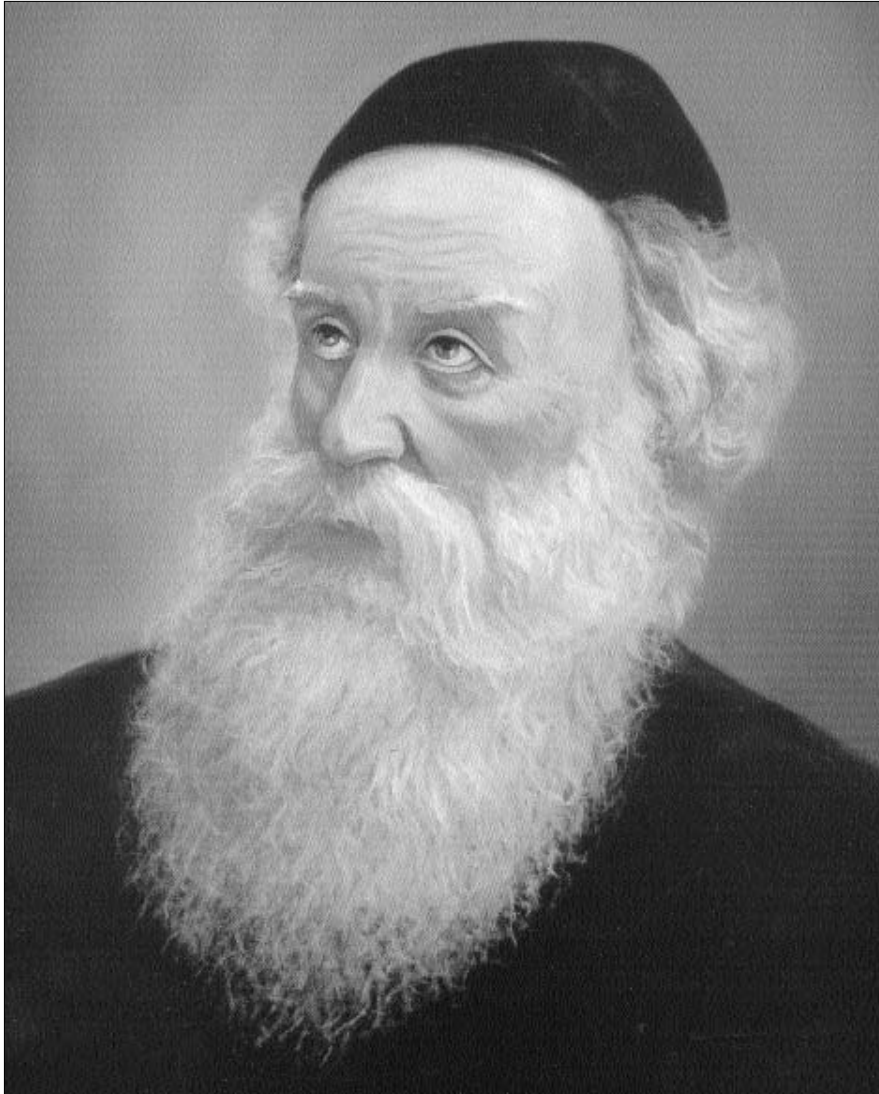
Shlomo Feigen was no fool, and he realized that he hadn't been sent to distant Karlin for naught, but to hear these words. He understood that this was the message that the Rebbe in Liozna had wanted him to hear.

However, the words didn't manage to penetrate his heart. Shortly thereafter, Feigen left the path completely, and in an act of *chutzpa*, he converted, throwing away a life of Torah and Judaism. Indeed, the Alter Rebbe had predicted his fate when he said, "A worm eats away at him."

Feigen quickly acclimated to his new life, and made it in the world of academia in Petersburg, the capital. His mighty mind and his lightning-quick grasp, aroused the wonder of the Russian scientists and philosophers, all the more so because he was a converted Jew, something which raised his prestige ten-fold among his new friends. Nobody doubted the fact that honor and glory within the Russian government were guaranteed him. Indeed, some time later, he was given a position as minister of transportation.

PART V

Many years passed. The *chassidic* movement grew and spread, attracting tens of thousands of Jews in Russia, Galicia, and throughout Eastern Europe. Even the *misnagdim* strongholds fell one after the other, and thousands of Torah scholars who



sat in the best *yeshivos*, joined the ranks of the *chassidim*. The black stain in the history of these *yeshivos* was nearly forgotten.

The Alter Rebbe had returned his soul on the night of Chaf-Daled Teives 5573, and was buried in Haditch. The golden chain of Chabad *chassidus* had continued with R' Dov Ber, the Mittlerer Rebbe, who expanded upon the teachings of his father.

Things were fine until one day when it was learned that the Russian government wanted to build a railroad line which would divide Russia in its length and breadth, to benefit millions of citizens. The news

He realized that the Rebbe's request was not just a suggestion but an order, one which he would understand only afterwards.

was fine in itself; it was just that the iron tracks would cut through the large cemetery in Haditch. This meant they had to remove the remains of those buried there, including the Alter Rebbe, something which was awful indeed.

The *chassidic* leaders and elders convened to discuss what to do. One of those present said that perhaps it was worth approaching the Minister of Transportation to request that he change the plan. When the young ones of the group raised their eyebrows in wonder, their elders told them the story of Shlomo Feigen, the *lamdan-meshumad* (scholar-apostate), who had come to the Alter Rebbe. "Who knows, maybe he'll remember the Rebbe and he'll be moved to do something about this."

They resolved to follow through on this plan and the job fell on the shoulders of the old Chassid, R' Moshe Vilenker, who had known Feigen and had even struck up a friendship with him.

R' Moshe set off, with the blessings of his fellow *chassidim* accompanying him on his way. R' Moshe knew that apostates usually tormented their former brethren. In addition, Feigen had converted out of anger and disappointment, and who knew what he could do?

Surprisingly, the minister was willing to meet with him, and this information was conveyed sooner than expected. With a heart pounding in nervousness, R' Moshe entered the opulent room of the minister in the capital city of Petersburg. The Minister of Transportation welcomed the old Chassid warmly, and with great respect he offered him a chair. R' Moshe didn't know whether the hearty welcome was artificial and would be followed by abuse, but his heart told him that he stood a chance at succeeding in his mission.

When the minister heard the

request of the *chassidim*, his eyes lit up. A broad smile rose to his lips, and he warmly placed his hand on those of R' Moshe. In an emotional voice, somewhat choked, he said, "It would be my great honor to do something for the great *tzaddik*. It would be a privilege for me to protect his honor and his peace, as is fitting. Don't worry. When the plans come to my office, I'll make sure to adjust them so that they won't go through the cemetery in Haditch."

Tears came to R' Moshe Vilenker's eyes, tears of emotion and thanks. He warmly shook the minister's hand, and was about to get up when the minister took his hands and motioned to him to keep sitting. The minister's smile disappeared and was replaced with a grave look.

"Moshe, do you remember the

Shlomo Feigen was no fool, and he realized that he hadn't been sent to distant Karlin for naught, but to hear these words. He understood that this was the message that the Rebbe in Liozna had wanted him to hear.

farbrengens at the Rebbe's court? The nights we sat together with the others and spoke about *chassidus*? If so, I request of you that if you've come here already, that you remain with me and that we *farbreng* together, like in the good old days."

The wise eyes of the old Chassid looked into the eyes of the minister sitting opposite him. As a veteran Chassid of the Alter Rebbe, knowledgeable in the Tanya, he knew the secret of the Jewish soul which flashed within. He knew that even if it seemed as though the *neshama* was extinguished like burnt-out coals, a wind could bring it to life again.

A servant was sent to buy *mashkeh un farbaisn* (liquor and refreshments), and the two men sat and discussed *chassidus* together, like in the good old days.



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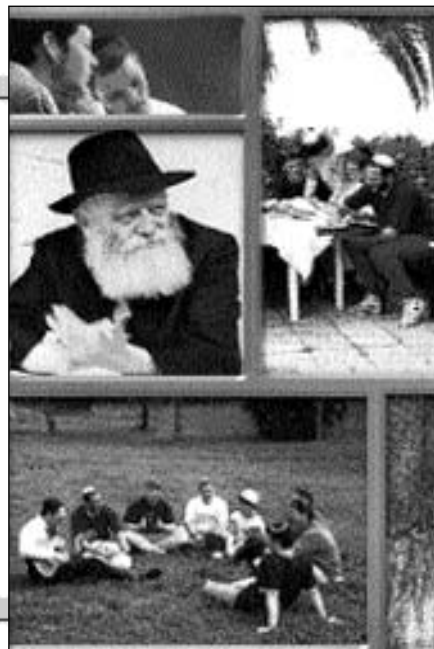

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THE JOB OF MOSHIACH: TO MAKE JEWS UNCOMFORTABLE

BY RABBI TUVIA BOLTON, MASHPIA IN YESHIVA
OHR TMIMIM OF Kfar Chabad

This week we are introduced to Moshe, the Faithful Shepherd of the Jewish people.

Moshe was a true leader. If it were not for his leadership the Jewish people would never have left Egypt (in fact the majority never made it out), and certainly would not have received the Torah.

The Zohar explains that Moshe was more than just a leader; he was also a Shepherd of Faith. That is, he inspired each and every Jew to be more trusting in G-d and enthusiastic in serving Him.

Every Jew automatically has faith in G-d the moment he is born, that is the essence of the Jewish soul. Moshe's job was to supply this faith, as it were, i.e., to make it stronger and more active until it becomes the deciding factor in every facet of each and every Jew's life.

So we see that Moshe redeemed the Jewish people not only physically but also spiritually from the exile in Egypt.

This was no small task. It says in the Midrash that the Egyptians were very spiritual people; they had great mystical powers, and even the little school children had the ability to

turn sticks into snakes.

Judaism, even in the time of Moshe, never was able to promise its adherents such spiritual

The job of Moshiach will be essentially to make Jews uncomfortable. That is, to take them out of their present states of mind, no matter how holy and righteous, and bring them to a totally new awareness and service of G-d.

achievements.

If so, what does it mean to go spiritually out of Egypt, and why is it

such a necessary thing? Couldn't G-d just have made peace between the Jews and their taskmasters? They could learn from us and we from them, etc., and spare all those nasty plagues?

The answer is like this: the word for "Egypt" (Mitzrayim) also means "limitations." When Moshe strengthened the faith of the Jewish people and took them out of Mitzrayim, he actually took them out of all limitations – even spiritual ones.

He connected them to the Creator and not the creation, and the spiritual, no matter how high, is only part of the creation.

This, then, was the birth of the Jewish people: they realized that they all were really the special "sons of G-d." This is also one of the reasons that, to this very day, every Jew has faith in G-d somewhere deep in his soul. It is the job of the "Moshe Rabbeinu" in every generation (the Zohar and Midrash tells us that in every generation there will always be a leader like Moshe) to awaken and nourish this faith.

This is the secret of the Burning Bush. You may have wondered why

G-d didn't introduce Himself to Moshe in a more impressive way, like speaking to him from a burning mountain or a tornado. The Baal Shem Tov explains that G-d wanted to show Moshe the unquenchable and burning Faith that is found only in simple Jews.

Intelligent or successful Jews can be likened to mountains or such, but the simple Jew, who, like a lowly bush, has no "fruits," i.e., achievements to boast of, nevertheless possesses a love of G-d that can be found nowhere else. This was what made Moshe "turn aside to see." Namely to leave his own personal, albeit holy, considerations, (because Moshe was already a *tzaddik*, a completely righteous Jew) and dedicate himself totally to being the shepherd of the Jewish people, even against Pharaoh's will (as well as their own!).

Now we are ready for the next step:

What happens when a person goes out of his own Mitzrayim and gets attached to the Creator?

First of all we must get one thing clear: whoever made up that song: "Let my people go" made a big mistake. (It also was printed on the Israeli ten shekel note.)

What G-d said really said to Moshe was that he should go tell Pharaoh "Let my people go *and they will serve Me.*"

This last clause is the part that everyone likes to forget. The reason that we got out of Egypt is not only to stop being the slaves of Pharaoh but also to start being the servants of Hashem.

This is what people do when they are really free; they begin to do what Hashem wants. And this was Moshe's main job: to feed the faith and thereby encourage the Jews to serve G-d.

This is why Moshe is compared to

Moshiach and not to Yosef. Although they were both kings and both ruled over the Jewish people, and although only Yosef is called "HaTzaddik" because of his righteousness, nevertheless only Moshe is called the "first and last redeemer."

(The idea of Moshiach ben Yosef which appears in Midrash and *kabbala* is shrouded in mystery, and is interpreted many ways. For instance, some say that Moshiach

What does it mean to go spiritually out of Egypt, and why is it such a necessary thing? Couldn't G-d just have made peace between the Jews and their taskmasters? They could learn from us and we from them, etc., and spare all those nasty plagues?

ben Yosef was Rabbi Issac Luria, the Arizal, others say that it will be one stage in the life of Moshiach ben Dovid.)

I think that this can be explained simply: The job of Moshiach will be essentially to make Jews uncomfortable. That is, to take them out of their present states of mind, no matter how holy and righteous, and bring them to a totally new

awareness and service of G-d. Thus, it states in the Zohar that Moshiach will bring even the *tzaddikim* to *t'shuva!*

This was the work begun by Moshe. Yosef, however, did the opposite. He made the Jews feel comfortable in Egypt, and as long as he lived no Jew thought of leaving.

* * *

The Midrash tells us that Pharaoh was so worried by his fortune tellers' predictions that he would lose his throne to someone born in the near future that he actually had all male children drowned – including those of his own people! (The Rebbe said that this is still happening today. Jewish parents throw their own children into the river of making money (the Nile was the source of Egyptian commerce) in an often subconscious effort to "drown" them to Judaism.)

Interestingly enough, not only did Pharaoh's efforts fail, but in addition to making one of the worst P.R. moves in history, he ended up protecting and bringing up (in his own home!) the very man that he so feared. This shows us that Hashem always keeps His promises, in this case, the promise that he made to Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov – that He would redeem His children, the Jewish people, from Egypt against all odds.

So too with us today. The Rebbe, who made and publicized scores of major prophesies which all came true, said just less than ten years ago, "The time for your redemption has begun." The Gulf War was only the beginning of a series of miracles which will show the Jews, as well as the rest of the world, how much G-d loves His people.

Moshiach will be revealed any day. And just like back then, we will go out of all our problems with great miracles.



A STORMY JOURNEY AMONG THE SILENT TOMBSTONES

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

It's hard to believe, but the Ohel in Lubavitch over the gravesites of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash lay neglected for decades, broken and smashed among the wild shrubs, almost completely disappearing into the depths of oblivion. With daring courage, HaRav HaChassid R. Dovid Abba Gurevitch went on a thousands-mile trip together with his nine-year old son to restore the Ohel. On a journey filled with dangerous obstacles, he spoke with old people who saw Lubavitch in all its splendor with their own eyes, nearly drowned in the Rodania River, and met the last remaining Jew in Lubavitch after the horrible massacre... In this exclusive and unprecedented account, Rabbi Gurevitch gives a detailed description of the events that occurred during his historic venture thirty-five years ago, when the eyes of "Father Stalin and Mother Russia" searched and penetrated every corner.

Thousands of people every year visit the holy *Ohel* in Lubavitch, well-known as the gravesite of our *Rebbeim*, the Tzemach Tzedek and his beloved son, the Rebbe Maharash. This place was sanctified while Lubavitch was still in its time of glory, when thousands of *chassidim* would stream into Lubavitch annually, to take refuge under the sheltering wings of our *Rebbeim*, the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. The eyes of tens of thousands would look longingly to this holy place.

Since our *mikdash* in Lubavitch has been destroyed and the honor of *Beis Chayeinu* has been revealed, not many people know that there was a time when this place almost completely disappeared into the depths of oblivion. The two tombstones were broken and crushed, hidden among the high wild shrubs, with their location known virtually to no one.

The fact that today this place is now the site of a large house, new tombstones, lanes, and even a nearby hostel – is due in no small measure to the resourcefulness and courage of HaRav HaChassid R. Dovid Abba Gurevitch. Today, Rabbi Gurevitch serves as the Chief Rabbi of Uzbekistan and Central Asia, but then, he was merely a simple *chassid* blessed with the powers of resourcefulness and courage.

This is the first time that Rabbi Gurevitch has retold in detail the events that occurred during his historic venture thirty-five years ago, when the eyes of “Father Stalin and Mother Russia” searched and penetrated every corner. Yet, despite all this, a fitting resting place for our *Rebbeim*, may we be protected in their merit, was cleaned and marked off right under their noses.

Lubavitch, the capital of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, was abandoned during the days of the

First World War, when the Rebbe Rashab left Lubavitch, followed by the students of *Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim*, and leaving behind them the royal courtyard of the *Rebbeim* and the *Ohel* of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash – the very *Ohel* where the Rebbe Maharash, the Rebbe Rashab, and the Rebbe Rayatz



Rabbi Dovid Abba Gurevitch

When I told him about the printing of the Rebbe Rayatz’s ‘Likkutei Dibburim’ which included a story about Chai Elul, the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe, he “went out of his keilim” and said, ‘We never heard about this in Lubavitch.’

pleaded for mercy on behalf of *Klal Yisroel*, and shed many tears.

During the Second World War, when the Nazis, may their names be erased, murdered all the Jews of Lubavitch, they also destroyed the holy *Ohel*.

Two *chassidim* who were in Russia decided that this site could no longer be left so neglected and dishonorable. On a brilliant sunlit morning during Tammuz, 5728, Rabbi Mordechai Kozliner, of blessed memory, and Rabbi Dovid Abba Gurevitch, may he merit many long and happy years, set out to find the place that had been neglected for half a century, to clean it, remove all signs of destruction, and mark off a boundary out of respect, so that every *chassid* who comes to Lubavitch will know where the holy gravesites are.

Such a project during the days of the Soviet regime was in the realm of an unrealistic dream. However, Rabbi Dovid Abba Gurevitch remained steadfast towards this objective and showed neither fear nor submission. He knew that it was a job that must be done – and so it was.

“The truth is that we were very frightened,” Rabbi Gurevitch began, “but we pushed aside the fear since we knew that in another few years, no one would know where the graves of our *Rebbeim* are.

“After we attained a large sum of money towards this project, I began to collect information regarding the estimated location of the *Ohel* (in addition to all the many other details I obtained several years earlier from Rabbi Avrohom Zaltzman, who learned in Tomchei Tmimim during Lubavitch’s glory days). I turned to a number of elder *chassidim* and asked them for specific details regarding the *Ohel*’s location and the tombstones’ appearances to assist me in my search to identify them. It became apparent that that the main reason for the neglect was that virtually no one had

come to the *Ohel* for years. They explained that as long as the Rebbe Rayatz was in the Soviet Union, there was someone to whom to travel – the Rebbe. Afterwards, people began to feel ever more the brutal hand of Communism. All this, together with the Nazi conquest of Lubavitch during the Second World War, prevented *chassidim* from coming to Lubavitch.

“In Tammuz, 5728,” Rabbi Gurevitch continued, “my nine-year-old son, Boruch, and I set out on our journey. I took leave from my official work at Rabbi Yosef Motchkin’s factory, where I worked for only three hours a day. My real work was teaching Torah and *chassidus* to Jewish children in great secrecy. We told our friends and neighbors that we were traveling to Lvov, where my son lived with my parents.

“This was not true. Nine-year old Boruch lived with us at home, but for purposes of school registration, it was recorded that he lived with his grandfather and grandmother in Lvov, so he wouldn’t have to learn in Communist school.

“This ‘maneuver’ had been arranged many years before, immediately after the great earthquake which caused massive destruction in Tashkent. Confusion reigned in the city. Many left or at least sent their children to relatives in distant locations, since many had no roof over their heads. We proclaimed at the time that we had sent our son, Boruch, to my parents in Lvov, and similarly stated as such during school registration. The truth was that my parents had traveled several years earlier to *Eretz HaKodesh*.

“Our son, Boruch, actually lived in our home. This fact proved extremely difficult for him. He was forced to remain indoors and not go outside. Even when he did go into the courtyard, he knew that he was not allowed to speak out loud, lest

one of the neighbors recognize his voice.

“It is no wonder that he was very mature for his age, and he understood quite well what adults did about the need to keep secrets from others. As a result, I decided to take him with me on the trip to Lubavitch. Another reason was to reduce the suspicion against me when I was traveling to various places. Since I was traveling with a child, it would appear less suspicious.

“Together with my wife, Malka, and our three little children, we flew to Lvov. On Thursday night, while the plane made a stopover in Rostov, Boruch and I got off the plane in order to visit the *Ohel* of the Rebbe Rashab, while the rest of the family continued on its way to Lvov.

“Today, it’s possible to tell about this as a unique experience, but the fear that engulfed us during the flight is impossible to describe. You could literally feel it.

“We had just entered the airport and my long-time friend, Rabbi Hillel Zaltzman, who was also going to the Rebbe Rashab’s *Ohel* in Rostov, passed by me. Out of great fear, we continued on our separate ways, as if we were strangers to one another.

“When we arrived at the cemetery, we met the guard, but he didn’t have the key to the *Ohel*. The *tzion* was in a courtyard, surrounded by a wall. One grave among many without tombstones, only mounds of dirt marking the places of the graves. We had to climb over the unsteady gate and jump in.

“When I made the arrangements

“NO HARM COMES TO SHLUCHEI MITZVAH”

The checking of documents, follow-ups, finding the *Ohel*, erecting the fence – these were really Rabbi Gurevitch’s primary concerns. Other “minor” problems did not present major obstacles for him.

Over a week and a half, he and his young son, Boruch, wandered on the roads.

What did you eat?

“My wife prepared a large quantity of food. However, the trip took longer than was anticipated. So when the food ran out, we had to settle for vegetables purchased in the marketplace. I can testify to the fact that my young son, Boruch, acted like an adult and handled the situation.”

How did you put on *t’fillin* during your journey without getting caught?

“I solved the problem every time a different way. However, one such incident especially sticks in my mind. When we were near Moscow, the time came to *daven Shacharis*, so we went to the side of the road to conceal ourselves in the groves. I put on *t’fillin* while Boruch was still *davening*. I was still putting them on, when suddenly, I saw a gate opening and a military vehicle pulling out. My heart began to beat intensely. I then understood that we were near an army base. The vehicle moved towards us, and I already thought that we would be apprehended. I was also afraid that they would suspect that the *t’fillin* were cameras in order to take pictures of the base. However, no harm comes to *shluchei mitzvah*, the vehicle continued on its way, with none of its passengers suspecting a thing.”

for this dangerous journey, I considered bringing one of the elder *chassidim* who learned in *Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim* in Lubavitch to join us. The person I had in mind was Rabbi Shneur Zalman Skoblo, who lived at the time in Charkov.

"The following day, we traveled to Charkov and went straight to the home of Rabbi Eliezer Felzenstein, of blessed memory, whom I knew from his visits to Tashkent at the home of his son-in-law, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Klein.

"The visit was an experience unto itself. We went to *shul* on Shabbos. The need for caution was very great. Apart from saying '*Sholom Aleichem*,' we acted as strangers to one another. After the Shabbos meal, we went with R. Eliezer Felzenstein to Rabbi Skoblo's house. The elderly host sat by the table, learning intensely from the *seifer* that was placed before him. R. Eliezer hastened to tell him, 'He's one of us,' pointing in my direction, in order to relieve the unpleasant feeling when a strange guest enters.

"I knew that I had a difficult task before me. Rabbi Skoblo was an elderly *chassid* who had experienced much suffering. He had sat for many years in prison and was even sent to Siberia for being a Lubavitcher *chassid*. When he finally merited to receive an exit visa from Russia, he was stricken with a heart attack and was confined to bed. When he recovered and was fit for travel, it was after the Six Day War. The Soviet Union had broken off diplomatic relations with Israel, and he was told that it is dangerous to travel there. His visa was cancelled.

"After I introduced myself to him, we opened a conversation about our mutual friends in Tashkent and nearby Samarkand. With much emotion, he began to relate his memories from the shining days of Lubavitch. He told beloved stories about the *mashpia*, R. Gronem. When

I told him about the printing of the Rebbe Rayatz's '*Likkutei Dibburim*' which included a story about Chai Elul, the birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe, he "went out of his *keilim*" and said, 'We never heard about this in Lubavitch. Most of the memoirs of the *Rebbeim* have only recently been revealed, and few of them have reached us, similarly, the Rebbe's *maamarim*, a *T'hillas Hashem siddur*, and a *seifer Tanya*.'"

"When he said this, he showed us a *seifer Tanya* that was printed in

"It's not every day that Jewish guests happen to pass through, especially young ones," he told us with undisguised happiness."

Vilna, which bore the holy signature of the Rebbe Rayatz. Exultation and fear grasped us as we held this *Tanya*.

"The time had come to talk about the trip. His state of health showed me that there was nothing to talk about. However, on the other hand, I could see his longing for Lubavitch and his strong desire to be my traveling partner so he could return to the place where he took refuge in the shadow of the Rebbe Rashab, together with his fellow *Tmimim*. The *chassid* was stricken with anguish when I told him why I had come to him. Heavy sadness poured down from his face when he unburdened his heart: 'You see that even to go to *shul* on Shabbos, which is only two blocks away, creates a great problem for me. How can I possibly travel

such a distance to Lubavitch?' He began to cry bitterly.

"In our courtyard," he continued, "lived a Jewish woman named Sara Pessia, who was originally from Rodania [a town not far from Lubavitch]. It's quite possible that she will agree to join you.

"After Shabbos, I went to Sara Pessia and made the offer, but she also was not up to the trip. However, she was extremely helpful with mapping out the location for me. She also gave me the address of a gentile woman named Elizabeth Granskai, who knew well where the *Ohel* was and could help us if there was a need. Sara Pessia gave us another address of her relative in Rodania, R. Nachum Labkowski. 'He will certainly help you,' she said.

"I thanked her warmly and left on my way, praying that I will find the location of the *Ohel*, so we may properly complete our mission. Almost everyone sent us *panim* in order to read them there.

"In the wee hours of the morning, we arrived at the train station in Rodania, near Lubavitch. We were told beforehand that R. Nachum's home was at the edge of the city. My young son and I decided to go to his house. On each side of the main street, there were small houses and shacks surrounded by gardens. The crowing of roosters could be heard, here and there, with the break of dawn. I thought to myself that this place was once filled with *Yiddishkeit* – where has it gone?"

"As I am searching for R. Nachum's house, I see before me a Jewish face. I greeted him and then quickly realized that this was R. Nachum. Due to illness, he would go out in the early morning hours to get a breath of fresh air. When he saw us, he was taken with emotion and the joy on his face was clearly visible. He invited us into his house. 'It's not every day that Jewish guests happen

to pass through, especially young ones,' he told us with undisguised happiness.

"R. Nochum's shack was low and its ceiling was made out of porcelain. This gave the clear feeling of the village atmosphere. His wife came in from the barn with a bucket of fresh milk in one hand, and a basket of cucumbers, tomatoes, and other vegetables in the other. She also had green apples, freshly picked from the tree branches that grew into the window.

"Boruch and I stopped to *daven Shacharis*. R. Nachum sat by the side with tears streaming from his eyes. 'I had already begun to think that *Yiddishkeit* had been forgotten, *ch"v*,' he said quite emotionally, 'but when I see you, particularly a small child learning a chapter of Tanya before *davening*, as is proper, there is still hope for *Yiddishkeit* in the Soviet Union.'"

"Afterwards, he told us that they are no longer able to organize *minyanim* on Shabbos, only on Yom Tov. 'The elderly are dying, and the young are staying away from *shul*,' he said with a heavy sigh.

"We told him that we came to pay our respects to the forefathers in Lubavitch. He understood immediately which 'forefathers' I meant. I said that I wanted to erect a fence around the *Ohel*, and I asked him for details. Who could help me? Where could I find the workers to make the fence? Where could I obtain access to a vehicle to deliver the fence to Lubavitch? Naturally, all this had to be done in the utmost secrecy with people who could be trusted. He responded that his friend, R. Shmuel HaSandler, has a non-Jewish acquaintance who deals with work of this type. I should also contact the car station, run by a Jew named Skabla, about getting the fence delivered to Lubavitch.

"He told me that R. Shmuel

HaSandler is the last Jew who lived in Lubavitch, after the Nazis, may their names be erased, murdered all the city's Jews in cold blood during the Second World War. He was forced to escape after the gentiles libeled him. When I came to him, he was very happy to meet another *chassid*, and recalled his own memories of Lubavitch. 'I learned my profession from my father,' he told with open pride. 'My father was the shoemaker in Lubavitch, and the *Rebbeim* used to order their boots from him.'"

"He brought us to the coal factory where metal work jobs are done. They expressed their willingness to do any work I wanted, provided that I pay them accordingly.

"The bus from Rodania to Lubavitch traveled twice a day at set hours, but before the trip to the holy *Ohel*, we had to go to the *mikveh*, something that was not available in the town. On the way to the bus station, we saw something resembling a river. R. Nachum understands our intentions and immediately warned us: 'Last week, two children who came here to spend a vacation with their relatives drowned in the river. The mud on the river bed sucked them in, and it was impossible to save them.'"

"Nevertheless, we decided to go in – first Boruch with me holding his hand, and then I would go in. When I immersed in the river, I really did feel that if I would stand in one place for more than a minute the mud would draw me in. I immersed myself quickly and jumped out."

* * *

"We get on the bus. Except for us, all the passengers are gentiles, who looked at us with wonderment, though without hostility.

"Not long afterwards, we arrived! The excitement I felt was great. Only then, a few of the passengers turned to us and asked us who we are

looking for. I explained to them that we have come to our fathers' graves.

"Excitement. We are standing in front of the 'courtyard.' According to our estimate, this is where it was during the glory days of the past. The town's elders begin to show us a certain area that was the courtyard of the *Rebbeim* in their generations. Based on the description of R. Shneur Zalman Skoblo, this area was empty ten years ago. Now, it is filled with new houses.

"From out of a nearby tavern comes a drunken old man. He can't even walk straight for more than two steps. He comes towards us, listening. When he hears to whom we belong, he suddenly sobers up. 'Ah! I still remember Rabbi Schneersohn well!'"

"More and more people gather around. They explain to us that we are facing the post office building, and the building next door is a police academy dormitory. As soon as we heard the word 'police,' we concluded the warm welcome, and left the area.

"We are still progressing onward, when a middle-aged man walks out of one of the stores and directly approaches us. My guess was right – this was Mr. Granski, husband of Elizabeth Granski, whose name Sara Pessia had given us in Charkov. He immediately offered to show us the way to the cemetery.

"We walked almost without speaking. We reached the forest and stood before a thickly-filled area of trees and shrubbery, so thick that it was difficult to pass through them. The branches were very thick and we used our hands and feet to make our way through.

"We were looking for the *Ohel*, but we couldn't find it. The gentile then called to his wife and she assuredly walked in the direction of several shrubs, separated them, and



Rabbi Dovid Nachshon (left) and Reb Avi Taub, who refurbished the new *Ohel*

there before our eyes two tombstones were revealed – those of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash. Their appearance was so sudden that my son, Boruch, who in the last few days had heard so much about the holiness of the *tzion* of the *Rebbeim*, fainted from all the excitement. After a few tense moments, he awoke by himself.

“It was sad to see how neglected this place was. The tombstones stood among thick shrubbery in an old cemetery that had not been used for decades. I could see that the Tzemach Tzedek’s *tzion* was made from a bright white gravestone. The slanted stone had been broken in two from the shrapnel of a bomb that fell here during the Second World War. The Rebbe Maharash’s tombstone was intact. A short distance away, we noticed a pit that was covered in high bushes. ‘If you want,’ said the gentile, ‘you can go near the pit. It is filled with many Jewish holy books and also Torah scrolls (*“bor ha’sheimos,”* as the *chassidic* elder, Rabbi Yehuda Chitrik, told me several years later).

“At this point, we politely

suggested to our guides that they can go home. ‘It’s noontime and it’s hot,’ I told them, ‘we’ll stay here to be alone with our forefathers’ graves.’ They went on their way and we began to pray. We said Chapter 67 of *T’hillim*, the Rebbe’s *kapitel*. Afterwards, we read all the *panim* that we brought with us, and then we started to clean the engraved letters on the tombstones and wrote down the words written on each of them. We cleaned all the surrounding plant growth so the stones would stand visible.

“After this extensive work, we started to arrange measurements around the *tzion*. In our knapsacks, we brought rulers of about a meter and a half in length. The grown trees close to the tombstones created a problem for any future fence. However, despite all the obstacles, I succeeded in creating a diagram of a fence.

“Once we finished the measurements, we returned to the Granski home. The woman said that we appear ‘different’ from the Jews that used to come to visit Lubavitch. She said that she remembers well the Rebbetzin’s funeral (based on when it

happened, this was the Rebbetzin Rivka, wife of the Rebbe Maharash). Many people participated and afterwards, they erected a black gravestone that was so brightly polished that the local women would come to use it as a mirror. During times of trouble, she was accustomed to come to the old cemetery and ask for the blessings of the holy righteous people that were buried there. She even ordered the town’s gentiles to be careful not to touch the gravestones (even though these stones, in her words, were good for sharpening knives.)”

“Lubavitch is a small town that has no place that produces fences. So we went back to Rodania (also a small town, though larger than Lubavitch), and there we approached the manager of the factory to whom R. Nachum Labkowski referred me. The man said that he will make the fence as per my request, but he will only be able to finish it at the end of the week.

“It was Sunday, and to stay in Rodania until the work was done was out of the question. It would be impossible to go unnoticed for a whole week in such a small town.

“So we traveled to Moscow, where I left my son, Boruch, with my friend and fellow *chassid*, Rabbi Naftali Kravitzki, of blessed memory, who learned with me in the underground during the war.

“After Shabbos, I went back to Rodania, and to my dismay, I discovered that the workers had yet to complete the job. I stood over them for several hours until they finished assembling the fence properly.

“Now we were faced with the delivery problem. I met with the person in charge of the delivery station, a Jew named Skabla, and tried to convince him to deliver the fence to Lubavitch. (During the meeting, his uncle, a middle-aged

Jew, came in. He said that close to the *Ohel* is the grave of his uncle, the *chassid* R. Yaakov Leizer Skabla, who was the *rosh yeshiva* in Lubavitch. He was a great Torah scholar who studied in the *yeshiva* of the Tzemach Tzedek, as is related in *Seifer HaSichos 5705*, p. 20).

“At first, the delivery station manager agreed to travel with me to Lubavitch, but when he understood that I was involved in erecting an *ohel* for the gravesite of the *Rebbeim*, he stubbornly refused to accompany me. He was simply afraid. Despite my urging, he steadfastly refused. He also knew about the pursuits and the persecution of the secret police against many good and decent people. In the end, he agreed to my request to try at least to convince his nephew to arrange the delivery, however, the nephew also refused.

“Finally, I came to an agreement with one of the workers, who took me in his car to Lubavitch. The trip was successful and in G-d’s kindness, we arrived in Lubavitch without delays.

“I personally started the digging. I felt a great merit in taking an active role in the erection of the fence. We put up the fence honorably and with splendor.

“Immediately after the work, I traveled to Rodania in order to catch the bus to Smolensk, and from there to Moscow. I also wanted to get away from the location as quickly as possible so no one could pick up my trail.

“So, despite all the many difficult obstacles, I had the opportunity to erect a befitting and proper fence, with the help of G-d.

“When I arrived in Tashkent, I told R. Mottel Kozliner, my partner in the project, that the mission had been successfully accomplished. We thanked G-d together for the great miracles I had experienced on the way towards completing the task.

“Only the two of us knew about

this secret. Until I safely left the Soviet Union in 5731, we told the secret to no one. Even my son, Boruch, who was an active partner, kept his mouth shut and did not tell his younger brother and sister. It was made known to them only after we emigrated to *Eretz Yisroel*.

“In 5731, I left the Soviet Union and emigrated to *Eretz HaKodesh*. Just before Tishrei 5732, I traveled to 770 to be with the Rebbe. Immediately upon my arrival, I wrote a *duch* about everything that happened to me in connection with the erection of the

That visit marked a wondrous denouement for Rabbi Gurevitch: once, he came in secrecy and fear, but this time he arrived with his head held high, leading a group of Jewish children.

fence in Lubavitch, and I brought the *duch* into the secretariat. On the 4th

of Tishrei, I went into *yechidus* with the Rebbe for the first time. The Rebbe asked me many questions about Russia, however, not a thing was said about the *Ohel* in Lubavitch.

“After Tishrei, I traveled on the Rebbe’s *shlichus* to a number of American cities together with Rabbi Shimon Lazeroff, in order to tell Jewish communities about the life of Chabad *chassidim* in the Soviet Union. The *shlichus* went on for an extended period of time. At one point, I received a letter from R. Mottel Kozliner in which he says that the *chassid* R. Leibel Chatzarnov went into *yechidus* with the Rebbe and said that he was just in Lubavitch and was shocked to find a fence around the tombstones. He asked the local gentiles and they told him that a Jew came to Lubavitch with his son, and they erected the fence. The Rebbe reacted to this story with great surprise since several years earlier, in the Rebbe’s words, a reliable person had said that he had been in the old cemetery in Lubavitch, and the tombstones were not there.

“I realized that the *duch* had simply not reached the Rebbe, so I immediately wrote a new *duch* and added that this Jew had apparently visited the old cemetery, but the *Ohel* of the *Rebbeim* is in an even older cemetery that had not been used in many years. The Rebbe responded to this letter with ‘*T’shuos chein*’ (much appreciation).”

More than twenty years passed. The Soviet Union had collapsed after

A SPECIAL FEELING

Rabbi Gurevitch provided another aspect to his feelings during those dangerous days while he was in Lubavitch:

“I had a most special feeling during those days. All at once, I went back several generations, meeting with history, relatives of *chassidim* from the previous generation. I met the son of the shoemaker who made the *Rebbeim*’s boots, and people who saw the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab with their own eyes.”

a series of major reforms. Rabbi Gurevitch returned to Tashkent, and this time, on the Rebbe MH" M's *shlichus* to spread *Yiddishkeit* there.

In the summer of 5751, he traveled with *yeshiva* students and a group of children from the Chabad camp in Tashkent to the *Ohel* in Lubavitch. Rabbi Gurevitch no longer saw the iron fence. Instead, Rabbi Dovid Nachshon and R. Avi Taub had built a large and spacious *ohel* out of stone, most becoming for the *tzion* of our *Rebbeim*.

That visit marked a wondrous denouement for Rabbi Gurevitch: once, he came in secrecy and fear, but this time he arrived with his head held high, leading a group of Jewish children.

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HELLENIZERS WHO PUT ON T'FILLIN

BY SHAI GEFEN



HELLENIZERS WHO PUT ON T'FILLIN

When you look around at what's going on here in Eretz Yisroel, you don't know where you are. Sometimes it seems like you're in Caracas; sometimes you're playing Russian Roulette; and sometimes with all the "Yiddishkeit" that is being promoted, you can't know what's happening. So it goes in a country that doesn't know what it wants of itself, at a time when her enemies are intent on destroying it. This is the only clear fact.

At the beginning of this week, the government's legal advisor, Elyakim Rubinstein, a Jew who wears a *kippa*, puts on *t'fillin*, and *davens* three times a day, decided to invalidate Boruch Marzel of Chevron from running for the Knesset. The reason he gave was that Marzel is a member of a movement which was declared a terror movement eight years ago.

It makes no difference that sitting in the current Knesset are declared members of terror groups such as Achmed Tivi and his cohorts, as well as Knesset members who are in favor of the Hezbollah. These Knesset members openly support the murder of citizens and soldiers.

Over the last two years, the Arab members of the Knesset have gone totally overboard as never before in history, but the Attorney General is afraid and doesn't dare to invalidate them. In contrast to them (*l'havdid elef alfei havdolos*) is a Jew who has not been shown to have any involvement with any terrorist act, a Jew with *mesirus nefesh*, who was not only expelled from his home a month ago for half a year without trial, but is now invalidated from the elections, a basic right granted every Israeli citizen.

We have no complaints against Rubinstein, who simply wants to advance to the position of judge on the Supreme Court, but we must also remember that Rubinstein was involved in the signing of the hastily crafted peace accords. He was a member of the first Camp David group, where the mother of all the suicidal concession agreements was signed. Rubinstein, in his submission to the Left, never put Leftist inciters on trial; he did this only to settlers and those on the Right.

In the same breath as his demand that Marzel be invalidated, he said that he would "consider" a request that the Arab Knesset members be invalidated.

Let's try and understand what has happened here these last two years. Hundreds of Jews have been killed. The Arabs and their representatives in the Knesset openly announce that they are in favor of murdering Jews. The Arab Knesset members say, in speeches in the Knesset, that they are in favor of killing Jews. Others support Hezbollah actions against Israel. Israeli Arabs have become collaborators in the murder of Jews. Quite a few Israeli Arab cells have been discovered, and the connection between terror and Israeli Arabs is a lot stronger than we thought. But what bothers Rubinstein is Marzel's terror.

Rubinstein's problem doesn't start with Marzel. This man, as well as all those he represents, have a problem with themselves. It's called self-hate. They always followed the principle of "be a Jew at home, and a man outside," and this is how they act towards the *goy* when Rubinstein represents Israel in talks with the Arabs.

They lack self-respect and have prostrated themselves before the *goy* in order to show how nice they are. Rubinstein is actually the mirror image of the *Misyavnim* (Hellenizers) who were always worried about showing everybody how good it was with the

Greeks. Invalidating Marzel (and in general, all his dealings since he began serving in public positions) exemplifies his approach of debasement and capitulation.

It is interesting to see what the Rebbe MH" M had to say about those Misyavnim who put on *t'fillin*, in a *sicha* of Mikeitz 5740:

Unfortunately there are Jews today who follow the approach of the "Misyavnim," and they are the ones who caused all the various failures, whether in the Yom Kippur War, the Camp David Accords, the Peace in Galilee War, and other things that

Rubinstein's problem doesn't start with Marzel. This man, as well as all those he represents, have a problem with themselves. It's called self-hate.

happened in the meantime.

Surprisingly, in all these instances, the Misyavnim managed to turn the tide, and to influence, and get everybody to agree with them.

Those Misyavnim can be Jews who put on *t'fillin* every day, but in this – they are in the category of "*tinokos sh'nishb'u*" [captive children], since they were educated to be impressed by the *goy*, to capitulate to him, and to try to find favor in his eyes. As they put it: be a Jew at home, and a man when you go out.

So even though in this matter they

are *tinokos sh'nishb'u*, this does not justify the fact that they appoint a Jew like this for the role of minister and leader in Israel, when we see that his conduct and approach causes debacle after debacle.

Mr. Rubinstein! You are counting on being appointed a judge in the Supreme Court, and for this you are willing to sell everything for a bowl of lentils. In the end, you won't get even that. Remember that after the dirty work is done, you'll be sent home with nothing. We are waiting.

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

The same week that the Yossi Ginossar story about the millions being made over the bodies of our murdered brethren broke, yet another Oslo senior official paid the price. Yossi Beilin, the man who over the years, backed by the monetary aid of the European Union, ran a campaign to frighten the Jewish people into believing that they must concede to the Palestinians, began to pay the price this week. His party, the one which he was a senior member of, threw him out.

They always told us that Beilin was not motivated by personal ambition, *chalila*, and everything he did was based on ideology, of course. Surprisingly, though, when the man wasn't elected to a realistic slot on the ballot, he immediately jumped into a more Leftist party in order to find himself work. Beilin was ready to humiliate himself as long as he didn't lose a seat in the Knesset.

There are those who are counting on getting into the history books if they betray their people and their homeland and flatter the non-Jews. They should learn their lesson from Beilin, the man was kicked out, not by the Right, but by members of his party who also realized that Beilin was only causing them harm.

This is the lesson that ought to be

learned by those who collaborated with the government these last two years, who not only did not do anything to prevent terror, but tried to convince the Israeli public that the only solution is a Palestinian state.

The Rebbe himself said that only fear of elections would frighten the politicians into not giving in to the Arabs:

They won't elect him (and not his disciples and his party) in the elections for the next Knesset! They won't let him speak in the name of the Jews of Eretz Yisroel. He and his friends can speak on behalf of the Arabs, etc.,

Mr. Rubinstein! You are counting on being appointed a judge in the Supreme Court, and for this you are willing to sell everything for a bowl of lentils.

whom they benefited ... but not in the name of Jews! Apparently, this is the only thing that will work with them!

And after all that, perhaps this "threat" will have an effect on the politicians who want to continue sitting on their seats and grab a position within the political life of Eretz Yisroel, so that they stop playing political games while risking the security of Jews who live throughout Eretz Yisroel.

Let's hope that the lesson from Beilin will be learned by all the other politicians – that there's a price to be

paid for every misdeed, even if it's late in coming, for it does come in the end.

FAILURE UPON FAILURE

Twelve men were massacred a month ago, including soldiers and the Commander of the Chevron Brigade, after IDF forces retreated for the second time from Chevron. The army warned the politicians, but nobody bothered to listen. Fuad was busy with the primaries of his party (and in the end he fell prey before someone even worse than him).

The army had long since decided

The cruelty of the legal experts and the Supreme Court towards their fellow Jews, leads them, time and again, to kindness towards Arabs, and then we pay the price.

that they had to take down the houses from where the Arabs were shooting, and flatten the area. The army began taking down buildings. The government hesitated. This week, following a petition to the Supreme Court, the government decided to pass on taking down the Arab buildings and installing a new Jewish presence there, despite Sharon's promises.

Two days after the impetuous decision by the Supreme Court, the results came in: another two soldiers were killed, shot at from those very same buildings. The falsely

compassionate act towards Arabs led, once again, to the deaths of Jews. The cruelty of the legal experts and the Supreme Court towards their fellow Jews, leads them, time and again, to kindness towards Arabs, and then we pay the price.

In contrast to this, the persecution of Jews because of their moral positions has increased to an unbelievable extent. Mrs. Kineret Rosenthal, daughter of Rabbi Moshe Levinger and mother of eleven children, the youngest of whom is two years old, was sent to jail for four months because policemen claim that she deliberately ran her car into them.

And Boruch Marzel was expelled from his home and nine children for six months. Dozens of Jews from Yesha are under house arrest following the opening of fictitious investigations against them, simply for the purpose of making life in Yesha miserable. Noam Federman has been under house arrest for months, with nobody raising a hue and cry.

From afar we see the compassion towards Arabs in the rats' nest of the country's so-called Justice Department. They know it will lead to the deaths of additional Jews, but their primary goal is to avoid harming Arabs and their possessions, even if it means death to Jews. It's hard to understand, and even harder to believe.

Until "return our judges as at first, and our advisors like in the beginning" is fulfilled, by the removal of the kingdom of wickedness, like that of the Israeli government, Jews will continue to live in *Galus*, even Jews who actually came to Eretz Yisroel and give their lives for the security of our people.

"CANTONIM"

The National Unity party wrote a proposal in which they put forth the idea of "Cantonim" in Yesha. The idea is to divide Yesha into four districts, and to hand over those districts to the

civilian rule of the Arabs.

This idea isn't new. Sharon proposed it eleven years ago. When Shmuel Shmueli editor of *Yisroel Shelanu* asked the Rebbe about this idea, the Rebbe negated it outright and explained the dangers inherent in it, for it is like autonomy which will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state.

It's unfortunate that even the Right, instead of being original and sticking to a position of strength without

Any compromising idea which benefits Arabs, no matter how tiny the compromise, will lead to concessions on the most essential matters. As the Rebbe noted, when you begin conceding, there's no way to stop.

compromise, feels it has to show that it too has a political agenda. Whoever supports "Cantonim" in Yesha is actually supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state. He's just coating his words with nicey-nice, so the voters will fall for it. Any compromising idea which benefits Arabs, no matter how tiny the compromise, will lead to concessions on the most essential matters. As the Rebbe noted, when you begin conceding, there's no way to stop.

CHASSIDISHE NACHAS IN YESHIVAS HA'BUCHARIM

One by one the names of the talmidim were announced, calling upon them to come forward and receive their diplomas. Grandparents, parents, graduates and students stood up and proudly watched as the newly ordained boys went up to the dais. They had invested long days and nights of hard work beforehand, and now their work was being acknowledged.

“Many speak of *nachas* and wish each other *nachas*, but real *nachas* is Chassidishe *nachas*, and there’s no greater Chassidishe *nachas* than seeing dozens of Tmimim with *yiras Shamayim* written all over their faces, going up to receive their diplomas for *rabbanus*, *sh’chita* and *safrus*.”

That is what Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi said at the event at which the diplomas for *rabbanus*, *sh’chita*, and *safrus* were awarded on Chanuka, at the Yeshivas HaBucharim in Kfar Chabad. R’ Ashkenazi has been involved with the *yeshiva* since its inception, and serves as examiner and the one who gives ordination, so he is well acquainted with the boys.

This festive occasion was also the first in a series of events which will take place throughout the year to mark 30 years since the Yeshivas HaBucharim was founded in 5733 by Rabbi Gershon Dov Ber Schiff and other *chassidim*. Over the years, hundreds and thousands of *talmidim* learned the fundamentals of a Jewish, *chassidic* home, and its many graduates live all over the world.

Fifteen years ago, R’ Schiff also

opened a *yeshiva k’tana*, and then a *yeshiva g’dola*, which have become success stories. About 200 students study in these schools, which have earned an excellent reputation. In addition to the *nigleh* and *chassidus*

that are taught, the school is unique for its courses in *smicha* for *rabbanus*, *sh’chita*, and *safrus*. Thus, just about every year, a beautiful ceremony is held in which diplomas are awarded to dozens of new *rabbanim*, *sofrim*,



A group of Tmimim who were given *smicha* for *sh’chitas gasos*, with the staff of the *yeshiva*



A group of Tmimim who were given *smicha* for *sh’chitas ofos*, with the staff of the *yeshiva*



The dais, Rabbi Moshe Levin speaking

and shoctim who passed their tests the previous year.

Since this most recent event also marked 30 years, the *hanhala* decided to include an alumni reunion. The school's staff worked hard to locate all previous graduates in order to invite them to this special event.

By early afternoon, many graduates had shown up from all over the country, excitedly greeting each other after years of separation. The program began in the early evening with the fifth Chanuka light being lit by R' Yosef Ledaiov who does so much to register students from all



Director Rabbi Gershon Schiff with graduates of the *yeshiva* – brothers, Rabbi, Shliach Asher Veknin and Ronan Veknin; on the right, friend of the *mosad*, Rabbi Ben-Tzion Chein



Rabbi Yosef Ledaiov, friend and activist on behalf of the *mosdos*. Rabbi Yitzchok Muzgerlshvili, *r"m* of the *yeshiva g'dola*



Some of the graduates sitting with *mashpia* R' Tuvia Yakabovitz



Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi, *mara d'asra* of Kfar Chabad

over the country in the school. After HaNeiros HaLalu was sung by Rabbi Lippa Klein, a member of the *hanhala* from day one, the emcee and *mashpia* of the *yeshiva*, R' M.M. Gurevitz spoke. He greeted the graduates, wished the new *rabbanim*, *shochtim* and *sofrim* "mazal tov," and called upon the first speaker, the one responsible for the great success of the *yeshiva*, the *rosh ha'yeshiva ha'g'dola*, Rabbi Moshe Zalman Levin.

Rabbi Levin spoke simply and to the point, emphasizing that the *yeshiva's* main goal is to prepare *Tmimim* for *shlichus* and to be

devoted to the Rebbe's work. He called upon the *yeshiva's* students to learn from the graduates, and upon the graduates – to look upon the *talmidim* to remember their *yeshiva* days and to renew their commitment for the future.

The next speaker was the Rosh Kollel "Ohr Zarua" in Rechovot, Rabbi Meir Aaron, who was a former examiner in the *yeshiva*. R' Aaron spoke about how impressed he is by the *yeshiva*, mostly thanks to "the unusual devotion of the staff to the students, an unparalleled devotion. When there's this connection between *rav* and students, there's no

possibility for the *talmid* not to heed his *rebbe*."

There was a musical interlude, presented by R' Arale Lipsker, a graduate, and this was followed by a telephone hook-up with Rabbi Meir Brook, a graduate of the *yeshiva* who is presently in Baku in Azarbeidzan, who is a *shliach* and a *shochet* for the Jewish community. R' Brook described his work and attributed his success to the dedicated staff of the *yeshiva*. He put it simply and movingly when he said, "Rabi Gurevitz, I miss you." As many related to these sentiments, applause could be heard throughout the hall.



R' Eliezer Brod, *rav* in Karmei Yosef and *rosh ha'machon l'smicha l'rabbanus*



R' M.M. HaLevy Gurevitz, *mashpia*



R' Shneur Zalman Moshe Levin, *rosh yeshiva*



R' Gershon Ov Ber Schiff, executive director



R' Y.Y. Krishevsky, *mashgiach klali* of the *yeshiva k'tana*



Mashpia R' Meir Taviv, a graduate of the *yeshiva*



R' Shlomo Zalman Alperowitz, *rosh ha'machon l'sofrus*



R' Y.Y. Mirlshvili, *rosh ha'machon l'sh'chita*



R' Michael Schiff of the *hanhala*



Rabbi Yona Lenenhertz, member of the *hanhala*



R' Meir Aaron, *Rosh Kollel* Ohr Zarua, presenting his son Mordechai Aaron with a diploma for *sh'chita*

Through playacting and pantomime, Michael Vigel humorously depicted how he was a *mekurav* to Judaism and *chassidus Chabad*. Then the highlight of the evening, the awarding of diplomas, began. To the sounds of music and applause, the *talmidim* were called up, one by one, to receive their diplomas from the guest *rabbanim* and members of the *hanhala*. Family members and graduates watched proudly, as the *talmidim* rose to the dais. It was difficult for the emcee to quiet the crowd down after such excitement, but the name of the next speaker hushed the crowd.

Rabbi Mordechai Shmuel Ashkenazi greeted the *talmidim*, and then described the great responsibility and *yiras Shamayim* required of a *chassidic rav*, *shochet* and *sofer*.

He praised the *yeshiva's* graduates and

testified that on his many travels around the world, he met many of them "and I hear only high praise and good things about them."

"We must also single out and praise the one responsible for all these achievements, and that is R' Gershon Ov Ber and his son Yosef,

Schiff."

The final speaker was the *rav* of Karmeil Yosef and the *Rosh HaMachon L'Horaa* at the *yeshiva*, Rabbi Eliezer Brod. R' Brod thanked the *hanhala* for the great efforts on behalf of the *yeshiva* and its success, and he praised the *talmidim* for their



Executive Director Gershon Schiff presenting a diploma for *sh'chita* to Tamim Chaim Moshe Jacobson. On his right, his father Sholom Jacobson, and his grandfather Yechezkel Springer

achievements and their passing their exams with great success.

The lights were dimmed and a video that was produced especially for the evening was shown. The Rebbe was seen describing the *maalos* of the *rabbanim* and their responsibilities, and then there were scenes from *menora* lighting with the Rebbe.

The official program was over, but many of the *talmidim* refused to leave. They remained to farbreng with the *hanhala* and with some of the graduates. The *mashpiim* and members of the staff did their utmost to prepare the newly ordained young men with spiritual fortitude for their future *shlichus*. With dawn's early morning light, all left Yeshivas HaBucharim tired but ready to begin their new role in preparing the world for *Malchus Shakai*.

SENATOR C. SHUMER VISITS 770

Senator C. Shumer visited 770 putting on *t'fillin* with Chanina Sperlin.

After leaving 770 he went to the home of Sperlin meeting with the Vaad HaKohol and other *askanim*.



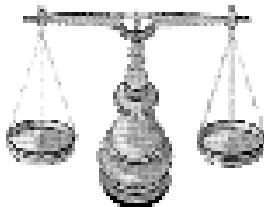
In City Hall, Comptroller Bill Thompson honoring Chanina Sperlin



Eli Slavin, Yanky Herzog, Chanina Sperlin, Senator Shumer, Nuchie Gross, and Daniel Botnik.



Leibish Nash, Bill Thompson, Chanina Sperlin, Yanky Herzog, & Nuchie Gross

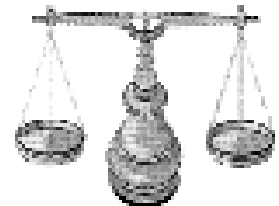


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