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The International Weekly heralding the Coming of Moshiach

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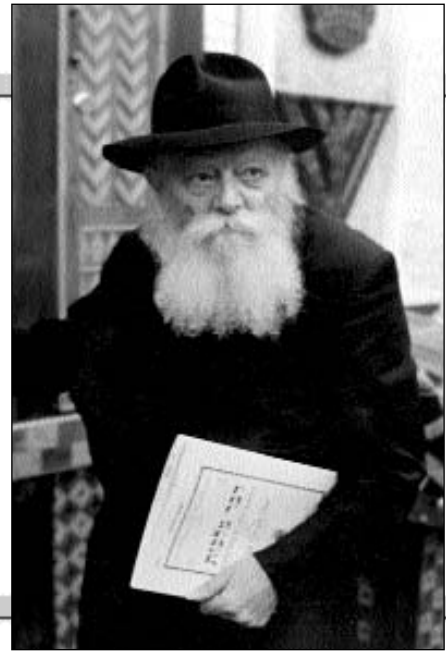
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HOW WE HAVE SURPASSED THE AVOS

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'EIRA; 28TH DAY OF TEIVES, 5752

1. This week's Torah reading begins, "I appeared to Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov as Keil Shakai, 'G-d Almighty,' but My Name Y-H-V-H, I did not make known to them." Among the questions which this verse raises are:

a. The Torah continues, "Therefore, tell the children of Israel..." On the surface, with the previous verse, the Torah is implying that the revelation being granted to the Jews is greater than that to which the Patriarchs were privileged. Hence, it is difficult to understand why "I appeared to Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov..." is a reason why Moshe should "tell the children of Israel..."

b. Since the Torah reading emphasizes that the revelation being granted to the Jews is greater than that to which the Patriarchs were privileged, why is the name of the

Torah reading VaEira which refers to the revelation to the Patriarchs?

As a preface to the resolution of these difficulties, it is worthy to cite Rashi's commentary. On that word VaEira, "And I appeared," Rashi adds "to the forefathers," implying that the revelations appreciated by Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov were granted to them because they were "forefathers." They represented the source of the spiritual legacy given to the Jewish people. Indeed, the revelation to the Patriarchs is the source and the cause of the higher revelation granted to the Jewish people afterwards.[152]

To explain: *Chassidus* explains that the revelation of the Name Y-H-V-H, the level of G-dliness which transcends the world, was granted to the Jews at the giving of the Torah. Thus the Patriarchs were not exposed to this level. Nevertheless, the Patriarchs "observed the entire Torah before it was given," and the Zohar explains that the service of the

Patriarchs anticipated the giving of the Torah.

This is reflected in Avrohom's command to Eliezer, "Place your hand below my thigh." Although the fusion of spirituality and material reality did not begin until the giving of the Torah, Avrohom experienced a foretaste of this level. His circumcision became transformed into an object of holiness on which an oath could be taken.[153]

There is, however, a distinction. Through the giving of the Torah, unlimited G-dliness was drawn into the world. Thus every Jew, through the performance of a mitzvah, draws G-dliness into the material environment in which the mitzvah was performed. In contrast, Avrohom was able to draw G-dliness down merely into his own body and not into the world at large.

Nevertheless, since Avrohom's body was also a material entity, the

152. The uniqueness of the Patriarchs' spiritual level is also reflected in the Agada which Rashi quotes in which G-d compares Moshe to the Patriarchs, chiding Moshe for questioning G-d's attributes although the Patriarchs did not.

153. The connection between this oath and the transformation of material reality into holiness

is further reflected by the fact that:

a) The oath led to the shidduch between Yitzchok and Rivka. Their bond reflects the union of Mah and Ban which is indicative of the ultimate union of spirituality and material reality. See *Sichos Shabbos Parshas Toldos* 5752. b) The oath was taken by Eliezer.

Although Eliezer was a slave, "cursed," this oath was able to transform him into the medium which allowed the above mentioned union to be realized. The fact that he served such a purpose represents a process of transformation of darkness into light.

fact that G-dliness was able to permeate it, also reflects the revelation of an infinite potential. It was not, however, until the giving of the Torah, that it became possible for this potential to affect the world at large.

From a different perspective, it can be explained that it was the service of the Patriarchs which tapped the essence of the Jewish soul. Thus Avrohom is described as “the first of the believers,” and it was he who opened the channel of faith and self-sacrifice for the Jewish people of all subsequent generations.

The giving of the Torah granted the potential for this essential quality possessed by the Jewish people to be revealed in the world at large. Through Torah study, this revelation is drawn down into the conscious powers of a Jew’s soul and through the observance of the mitzvos, it is drawn down in his body and in the world at large.

There is an advantage to the revelation of the essence of the soul at the giving of the Torah to the service of the Patriarchs. For the fact that G-dliness is revealed throughout the world at large reveals its true unbounded and unlimited quality, that it has no limitations.

Although the Patriarch’s service also tapped the essence, since their service was not revealed in the world at large, its unlimited quality was not revealed. Conversely, however, the service of the Jewish people after the giving of the Torah involves primarily the worldly sphere as it exists within its own context. In regard to the Patriarchs, the opposite was true. The fundamental thrust of their service was spiritual.

The concept can be amplified by use of the following analogy: The

giving of the Torah is referred to as the wedding — i.e., the essential bond — between G-d and the Jewish people. It is explained that at every wedding, the souls of three generations of the ancestors of the bride and groom attend. Similarly, the wedding of the giving of the Torah involved the presence of the three generations of Patriarchs and Matriarchs.

This implies that:

a. The service of the Jewish people in subsequent generations

Our service of Torah and mitzvos draws down G-dliness into the material realm. The revelation of this service will not come, however, until the Era of the Redemption.

comes as a result of that of the Patriarchs.

b. It is the service of the Jewish people in subsequent generations that reveals the essential potential possessed by the Patriarchs.

There is relevance to the above concepts at present although several millennia have passed since the giving of the Torah. The ultimate revelation of the Name Y-H-V-H will come with the revelation of “the new [dimensions of the] Torah that will

emerge from Me” in the Era of the Redemption. Therefore, in a more particular sense, our Sages refer to the giving of the Torah as the betrothal of the Jews to G-d, while the wedding will not be until the Era of the Redemption.

Thus there are parallels between the concepts referring to the service of the Patriarchs as anticipating and preparing for the giving of the Torah and our service at present which prepares for and anticipates the Era of the Redemption. Our service of Torah and mitzvos draws down G-dliness into the material realm. The revelation of this service will not come, however, until the Era of the Redemption. Then “glory of G-d will be revealed and all flesh will see...” Since the essence need not remain hidden, the fact that there is no revelation implies that the essence has not been tapped in its entirety (as the fact that the world at large had not been affected indicated that the Patriarch’s service had not fully touched the essence).

Conversely, however, just as it is the Patriarch’s service which led to the revelation of the giving of the Torah, similarly, it is our service which will lead to the revelations of the Era of the Redemption.[154] Indeed, our service in the era of exile taps the essential power of the soul, and this is the quality that will be revealed in the Era of the Redemption.

There is a connection between the above concepts and the Torah portion which we begin reading in the afternoon service, Parshas Bo. That portion begins, “Come to Pharaoh.” The Zohar explains that there is also a counterpart to Pharaoh in the realm of holiness, i.e., “the source for the revelation of all lights.” In this

154. There is also a connection between the Patriarchs and the Era of the Redemption as reflected in our Sages’ expression, “G-d gave

three individuals a foretaste of the World to Come.” Significantly, our Sages associate this concept with the three verses connected with the

expression *ba’kol mi’kol kol*.

context, the phrase “the fifth part to Pharaoh,” can be understood as pointing to the essential revelations associated with the number five that will become manifest in the Era of the Redemption.

2. There is a connection between the above concepts and the present Shabbos, the Shabbos in which the month of Shvat is blessed. The name Shvat relates to the Hebrew word *shevet* meaning “staff” that is associated with the concept of authority and kingship as it is written, “The shevet will not depart from Yehudah.” The most perfect expression of this concept will be in the Era of the Redemption, with the assumption of sovereignty by Moshiach. And thus on the verse, “And a shevet will arise in Israel,” the Rambam comments, “This refers to the King Moshiach.”

The word *shevet* also means “branch” or “shoot.” In this context, there is also a connection to Moshiach, for on the verse “A shoot will emerge from the stem of Yishai” which begins a renowned prophecy concerning Moshiach’s coming, the Metzudas David comments “a *shevet* will emerge... the King Moshiach.”

The connection between Shvat and the essential revelations of the Era of the Redemption is also apparent from the fact that it is the eleventh month. All existence is structured in a pattern of ten and eleven alludes to a revelation that transcends this structure.

Shvat is also the month of the Rebbe Rayatz’s *yahrtzeit*. In *Tanya*, the Alter Rebbe describes a *tzaddik’s yahrtzeit* as the day on which “all of his deeds, Torah, and service which he carried out throughout his entire life are revealed... and ‘bring about

The third decade was spent in America, spreading the wellsprings of chassidus and Yiddishkeit outward and directing his efforts to hastening the coming of the Redemption, declaring “Immediately to t’shuva, immediately to Redemption.”

salvation in the depths of the earth.’”

Thus this is an appropriate time to consider the Rebbe Rayatz’s service. In particular, the Rebbe Rayatz served as Nasi for 30 years, 5680-5710. Each of these three decades represented a different and unique mode of service. The first ten years were spent confronting the challenges to *Yiddishkeit* in Russia with outright *mesirus nefesh*. The second ten years were spent in Poland, teaching *chassidus* according to the rationale approach of Chabad, a revolutionary step in that country. The third ten years were spent in America, spreading the wellsprings of *chassidus* and *Yiddishkeit* outward and directing his efforts to hastening the coming of the Redemption, declaring

“Immediately to *t’shuva*, immediately to Redemption.”

In a larger sense, the Rebbe Rayatz’s life can be seen as paralleling the three stages in the history of the world mentioned previously. The first forty years of his life was spent assisting his father, particularly by serving as the director of Yeshivas Tomchei T’mimim. This can be compared to the period of the Patriarchs which served as a preparation for the giving of the Torah.

The thirty years of his *nesius* can be compared to the period of service which began with the giving of the Torah. The third period refers to the years after his passing, even then he continued to serve as the Nasi of the generation. This period is associated with the Era of the Redemption, for it is in this period that all the preparations for the Redemption have been completed.

It is proper to commemorate the Rebbe Rayatz’s *yahrtzeit* with *farbrengens* on that day and similarly, on the previous and subsequent Shabbasos.[155] Since all the service necessary to bring the Redemption (and with it the Resurrection of the Dead) has been completed, at any moment, the Rebbe Rayatz can enter and see what his *chassidim* and his students are involved with. The knowledge of the imminence of this event itself should motivate a greater increase in our service and our efforts to compensate for anything that is lacking.

And these efforts will bring about the ultimate Redemption, when the Jews will emerge from the exile and proceed to the Third Beis HaMikdash, “the Sanctuary of G-d established by Your hands.”

155. Similarly, such gatherings should be held on Rosh Chodesh Shvat. That day is distinguished as the day on which Moshe “began

to explain the Torah thoroughly.” Rashi interprets the latter phrase as referring to the translation of the Torah into seventy languages.

This also relates to the Rebbe Rayatz who dedicated much effort to the translation of Torah texts.

NOT EVEN A HANDFUL WILLING TO SIGN

BY BORUCH MERKUR

If you sometimes notice that the tension is greater in 770 – or in Chabad circles, in general – than in other *shuls*, you should keep this in mind: your toes only get stepped on by the ones who are closest. If the *shul* wasn't so packed with fellow *chassidim*, then no one would get trampled on. Being that we are all brothers – “*chassidim ein mishpacha*” – who wish to gather at “our father's table,” there may be the odd and unfortunate sibling rivalries. But since we are close, ultimately our relationships will mend and we will act as brothers ought to.

This is true among *chassidim*, but, as Shai Gefen points out in this week's *Shleimus HaAretz* article, *halevai* it should be true of *Klal Yisroel*:

While all the parties try to sound like they are the guardians of Eretz Yisroel...the platform which ought to be subservient to halacha is in favor of the establishment of a Palestinian state and the division of Yerushalayim... How is it possible that a chareidi party, at a time like this, has a platform that opposes halacha? There's no greater chillul Hashem than this!

The Rebbe told Moshe Katzav: “It's one thing if those who don't believe in Hashem do this; it would be understandable. But people who believe in Hashem – that they should sign about giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel – that's a chillul Hashem!”

In the name of the Torah, Orthodox Jews sign on documents which give away our land and even establish a land for our sworn enemy. *Halevai* that Jews at large should see those on the frontlines, which are virtually everywhere these days, as family. How could we possibly sacrifice their security then?!

* * *

This Shabbos afternoon in 770, the English *farbrengen* was hosted by Professor Boruch Bush. Professor Bush focused on a topic dealt with in Editor's Corner (the article, “Yes, It's Normal, It's Logical, It's Judaism,” of issue #394), namely, how certain people end up missing the point and making claims against beliefs that are central to Chabad all because they don't fit in with the “logical,” or popular, view. After *Maariv* I was approached by a *meshpia*, who had attended the *farbrengen*. This is what he told me:

In response to the series of programs radio talk show host, Zev Brenner, carried on his airwaves dealing with the

topic of Moshiach and the Rebbe MH”M being *chai v'kayam*, a group claiming to represent the “true” Lubavitch sought to lay down their point of view. Zev Brenner, sensing something was amiss, asked that the group produce a petition with the signatures of ten *shluchim* supporting their opinion. The group failed to produce such a petition, and thus was refused the airtime.

I was a bit startled by the story. “Surely there are at least a handful of individuals who make such claims,” I said. “Why didn't they fill the petition?”

The *meshpia* answered with a smile: “I guess it's like the Chanuka story. Jews were *moser nefesh* not to ‘sign a petition,’ pushed upon them by the Greeks, forsaking their portion in the G-d of Israel [“*Kisvu lachem al keren ha'shor sh'ein lachem cheilek b'Elokei Yisroel*,” Yerushalmi Chagiga 2:2]. There might have been those who *talked* that way at the time, but no one was willing to *sign* on it.”

We both laughed.

* * *

We must reach out to our fellow Jews and awaken their Jewish spark by sharing with them the message of the Rebbe MH”M regarding *shleimus ha'Aretz*, a situation of *pikuach nefesh*, which takes its toll daily, *r"l*. Likewise, we must arouse the spark of Moshiach within every Jew by communicating the *b'suras ha'Gelula*, the message of the imminence of the Redemption, thereby vanquishing the darkness of *Galus* with the light of Moshiach and

Geula, not leaving a single soul behind. By doing this we are, in effect, welcoming these souls into the brotherhood of *chassidim*. As the Tzemach Tzedek says (quoted in the *HaYom Yom* of Chaf-Daled Teives):

The “ways of *chassidus*” are that all *chassidim* are to be like one family, with affection, as Torah teaches. *Chassidus* is vitality. *Chassidus* is meant to bring life and illumination into everything; to shed light even on the undesirable; to become aware of one's own evil exactly as it is, in order to correct it.

When we let the light of *chassidus* penetrate our hearts, we will see that we are all really one family. When we let the light of Moshiach penetrate the entire world, we will see that we are all one, united with the one G-d. “And on that day, G-d will be one and His name will be one.”



WHEN CHASSIDIM GIVE A BRACHA

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

The late *mashpia*, Reb Mendel Futerfas, of blessed memory, used to tell the following story:

There was once a *chassid* of the Rebbe Maharash who had been married many years but had not been blessed with children. Many times he had asked the Rebbe for a *bracha*, but the Rebbe never reacted, nor had he even acknowledged his pleas. In reference to other matters, the *chassid* always merited to receive the Rebbe's counsel and blessings; this matter, however, seemed to be off-limits. The Rebbe would simply change the subject, giving no indication that he had even heard.

One time, a *chassidic farbrengen* was held in the home of this *chassid*, and the *mashkeh* flowed freely (this was before the decree limiting the consumption of alcohol was issued by the Rebbe MH"M). The *chassidim* were having a wonderful time telling stories, singing *niggunim*, etc., etc., united in a spirit of *achdus* and brotherhood.

Late at night (in the wee hours of the morning, actually), when the *farbrengen* was at its peak, the *mashkeh* ran out. No more *mashkeh*! But how could they continue? What were they going to do now?

(A joke is told about the *pasuk* in *T'hillim* (45:2), "My tongue is like the pen of a skillful scribe": Why the "pen of a skillful scribe"? Why not a "ballpoint pen," or a "fountain pen"? The answer is that a scribe dips his quill in ink each time he prepares himself to write a letter. Similarly, the tongue, if it's going to speak properly, needs to dip itself in *mashkeh* before uttering each and every word...)

The *chassidim* were at a loss. Where on earth would they find *mashkeh* in the middle of the night? A debate ensued; each *chassid* voiced his opinion as to where a drop of *mashkeh* might be obtained. Their voices soon awakened their hostess, who quickly sized up the situation. "If you promise me that I'll have a child, I promise to find you something to drink!" she declared.

As one, the *chassidim* stood up and bentedched the *chassid* and his wife, vowing that she would give birth to a healthy child within a year's time. Together the parents would raise him to a life of Torah, good deeds, and the marriage canopy.

True to her word, the woman left the house and soon returned with several bottles of *mashkeh*. The *farbrengen* continued, as only

chassidim know how to do.

A few weeks later, the woman joyfully informed her husband that their *bracha* was bearing fruit. Her heartfelt wish of so many years had come true, and the couple was now expecting a child.

The *chassid*, remembering the countless times he had approached the Rebbe for a *bracha*, realized that something more than meets the eye was going on. At once he set out for the Rebbe, and in a *yechidus*, informed the Rebbe what had happened.

For a long while, the Rebbe sat with his head resting on his holy arms. He then looked up at the *chassid* standing before him and explained what had occurred:

"There are three channels through which G-d's blessings are drawn down to His creations in this world: children, long life and good health, and ample livelihood. It sometimes happens, though, that the measure of abundance allotted to a particular individual is insufficient for all three, and one area is deficient. Through prayer it is possible to fill what is lacking, but the channels are merely switched, as it were, and the deficit is transferred to another area.

“So it was in your case, as well,” the Rebbe Maharash continued. “I saw that if I *davened* and children were born to you, the ‘channels of blessing’ would be interchanged; you would not live for very long but would pass away at an early age. I, therefore, avoided giving you a *bracha* and ignored your pleas to pray for you. *Chassidim*, however, do not see what goes on Above, and therefore, didn’t hesitate to *bentch*

Again the Rebbe rested his head on his arms. After a few minutes he continued speaking. “But don’t think that because *chassidim* cannot see what goes on Above that the results of their *bracha* will be undesirable, G-d forbid. Absolutely not!

you and your wife. The *ko’ach* of *chassidim* is a true *ko’ach*; their *bracha* a true *bracha*. With G-d’s help you will be blessed with healthy and lively offspring.”

Again the Rebbe rested his head on his arms. After a few minutes he continued speaking. “But don’t think that because *chassidim* cannot see what goes on Above that the results of their *bracha* will be undesirable,

G-d forbid. Absolutely not! May you and your wife enjoy length of days and good years, and may you merit to raise your son to Torah, to *chuppa*, and to good deeds, with abundant blessing, both material and spiritual!”

Needless to say, that is exactly what came to pass. The woman gave birth to a son in a good and auspicious time, and the infant was entered into the covenant of Avrohom. His parents lived to a ripe old age, and their son was a constant source of true *Yiddishe* and *chassidishe nachas*.

CHASSIDIM GIVE STRENGTH!

In the *kuntres* “*V’HaChai Yiten El Libo*” (*Hisvaaduyos* 5748, Vol. 2, p 609) the Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach, stated (free translation):

“Our Sages said that Torah brings healing to the world. Indeed, it is the *chassidim* who must demand that he speak words of Torah. Then he will have to speak Torah, thereby effecting an improvement in his health.”

When the Kloizenberger Rebbe responded by saying that one needs strength in order to speak Torah, the Rebbe MH”M *shlita* said, “*Chassidim* give strength!”

In the same *seifer* (page 575) the Rebbe stated: “It is clear that the intent of *siluk ha’mochin*...is not that G-d be ‘forced’ into agreement and acceptance. On the contrary, it states that ‘the Holy One, Blessed Be He, smiled and said: You have won, My children, you have won.’ That is to say, it is not as if G-d has no choice in the matter, but that He is happy and receives satisfaction when Jews understand His intent. G-d wants them to ‘win Him over,’ so much so that He has revealed this principle in the Oral Torah, the revealed part of Torah!”

PUSHING THE GALUS AWAY

“The objective,” the Rebbe MH”M continues (page 586), “is to push (*arois shtupen*) the *Galus* away.

“The declaration of the Rebbe Rayatz is well known: ‘Not of our own free will were we exiled from Eretz Yisroel, nor is it in our power to return... Our Father and King is the One Who has exiled us...and He, may His name be blessed, will redeem us, etc.’ At the same time, however, Jews

Our Father and King is the One Who has exiled us...and He, may His name be blessed, will redeem us.’ At the same time, however, Jews must do all they are obligated to do in order to dispel the *Galus*.

must do all they are obligated to do in order to dispel the *Galus*.

“Some people claim that one must not ‘push’ the End of Days... But the truth is that G-d is anticipating and waiting for us to do so: ‘Behold, he stands behind the wall,’ ‘The voice of my beloved is knocking: Open up for me!’ – and all who hasten to do so are praiseworthy!”

On page 557 the Rebbe states: “This is also the reason why ‘Dovid King of Israel is alive and well’ is said during

the sanctification of the new moon, when one can actually see the moon with the fleshly eye. For even though the statement 'David King of Israel is alive and well' is true at all times, it is recited specifically in connection with actually seeing the moon, emphasizing that the *Geula* must come about in an open and literal manner, one which is perceptible to the physical eye."

WHY SAY "HALEVAI"? WHY NOT SAY "OF COURSE"?

An interesting exchange is printed on page 620, following the Rebbe's statement: "The essence of the debate over this matter is whether or nor this

In other words, not only was Moshe's mission to Pharaoh unsuccessful, but it seemed to have actually added to the Jewish people's misery!

has any bearing on actuality, when we know for certain that Moshiach Tzidkeinu will come before that time – that several months before Simchas Torah the prophecy, 'And G-d will wipe away the tears from all faces,' will have already been fulfilled."

Rabbi M. Rotenberg *shlita* then answered, 'Amen, *halevai*.'

"Why are you saying *halevai*?" the Rebbe MH"M countered. "Say it with certainty! Surely you said in today's prayers, 'Speedily cause the scion of David Your servant to flourish,' so of course, 'they will be redeemed immediately.'"

"Amen *v'amen*," Rabbi Rotenberg responded.

G-D IS "TRUSTWORTHY TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE"

On Shabbos Parshas VaEira 5748 the Rebbe said (*Hisvaaduyos* 5748, Vol. 2, pp 259-60):

"The Children of Israel cried out to G-d because Pharaoh 'slaughtered the Jewish children and bathed in their blood,' thereby curing him of leprosy. And G-d was silent!

"Finding themselves in such dire circumstances, what benefit would it bring for the Jewish people to hear G-d's promise to redeem them reiterated? Indeed, throughout the years of exile, the Jewish people knew that G-d had promised to redeem them from Egypt. But countless years had already elapsed during which they suffered. And not only that, but the *Galus* was getting worse, to the point that Jewish infants were being slaughtered!

"Tell the Children of Israel that I am G-d' – Moshe Rabbeinu must be the one to tell the Jews that G-d can be counted on to fulfill His promise.

"Why Moshe Rabbeinu *per se*? For it was he who complained, 'Why have You done evil to this people,' and, 'Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in Your name You have done harm. You have not saved Your people.' In other words, not only was Moshe's mission to Pharaoh unsuccessful, but it seemed to have actually added to the Jewish people's misery!

"Tell the Children of Israel that I am G-d, and I will take you out from under the burdens of Egypt.' G-d countered Moshe's protest as follows: 'Instead of coming to Me and complaining, go and tell the Jewish people that I, G-d, am loyal to My promises!'

"It is, therefore, understood that when the Jews would hear that G-d was trustworthy from Moshe Rabbeinu's own lips – the same Moshe Rabbeinu who had complained to G-d about the severity of the *Galus* – it would give

them encouragement, comfort and reassurance."

THE REBBE TOLD US MANY TIMES: CHASSIDIM GIVE STRENGTH!

Chassidim are powerful and strong even if it appears that they are weak and few in number – so much so that they impart this strength to the Rebbe, as it were. "*Chassidim* give strength!" the Rebbe told us countless times.

No, we're not attempting to "force" G-d into doing something He doesn't want to do. Rather, "He is happy and

it is precisely when we see the darkness of the Galus intensifying that we must stand up and remind the entire world: "Don't worry, G-d can be counted on to fulfill His promise!"

receives satisfaction when Jews understand His intent. G-d wants them to 'win Him over!'"

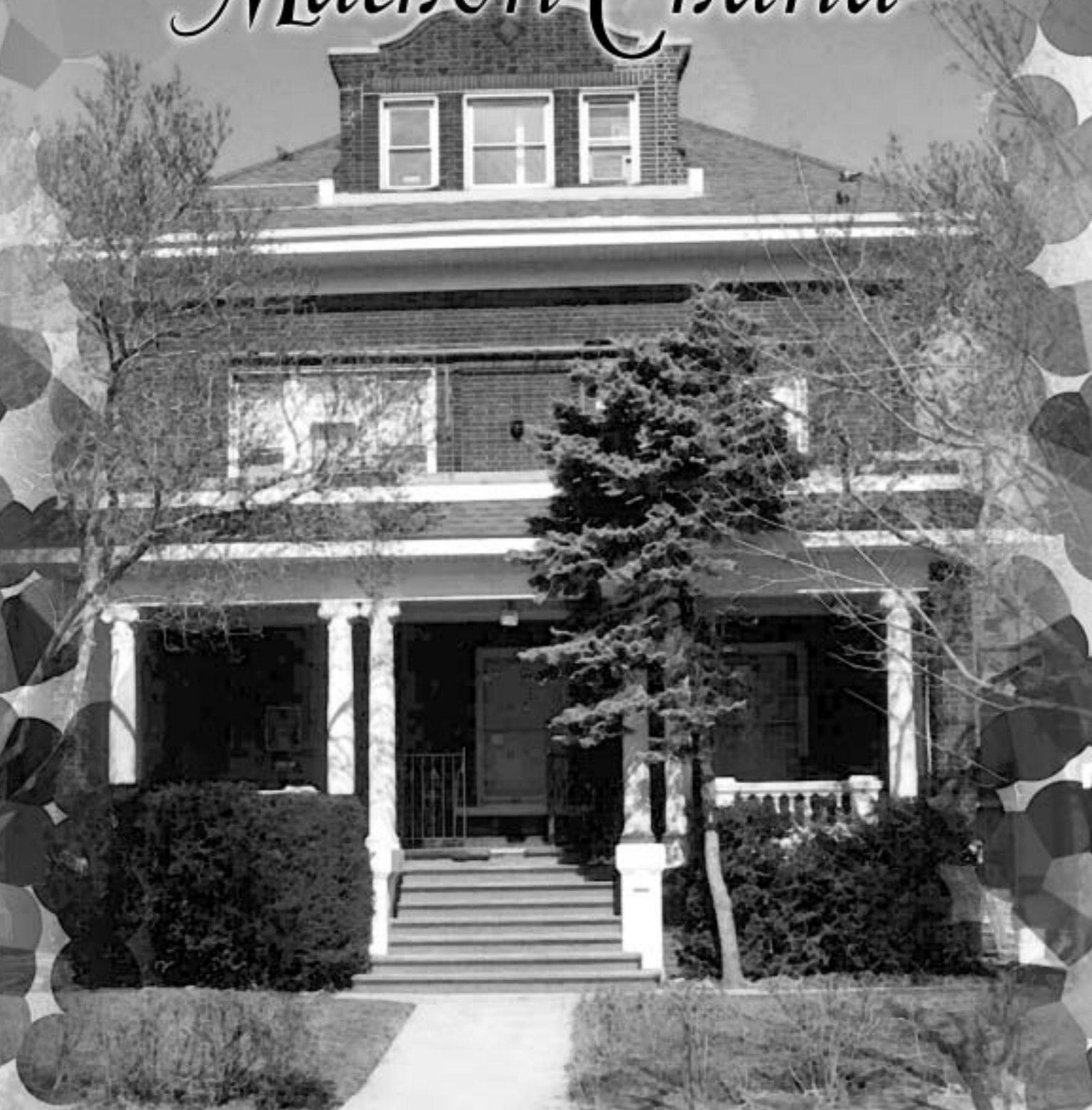
"G-d is waiting for us to push away the *Galus*!"

"Why are you saying '*halevai*'? Better to say it with certainty!"

For it is precisely when we see the darkness of the *Galus* intensifying that we must stand up and remind the entire world: "Don't worry, G-d can be counted on to fulfill His promise!"

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

Machon Chana



FOLLOWING IN THE WAYS
OF REBBETZIN CHANA

Nearly 30 years have passed since the founding of Machon Chana in Crown Heights. Machon Chana is a school for girls and women who want to learn about Judaism. Shluchim send girls to the school from all over the world. The graduates of Machon Chana establish chassidic homes, and even go on shlichus.

THE HIPPIY REVOLUTION

Yud-Alef Nissan 5732 (1972), was the Rebbe's 70th birthday. The Rebbe asked his *chassidim* to establish 71 new institutions around the world to correspond to his age. 770 seethed like a cauldron as *chassidim* tried to think of ideas for new *mosdos*. A committee was formed in the U.S. and Eretz Yisroel to serve as a clearinghouse for the ideas for 71 new *mosdos*.

Mrs. Sara Labkowski, a young mother of two children, heard the Rebbe's *sicha* from her seat in the *ezras nashim*, and was deeply affected. With the ardor of youth and with unusual daring, one can say, she sat down to write to the Rebbe about her idea for a

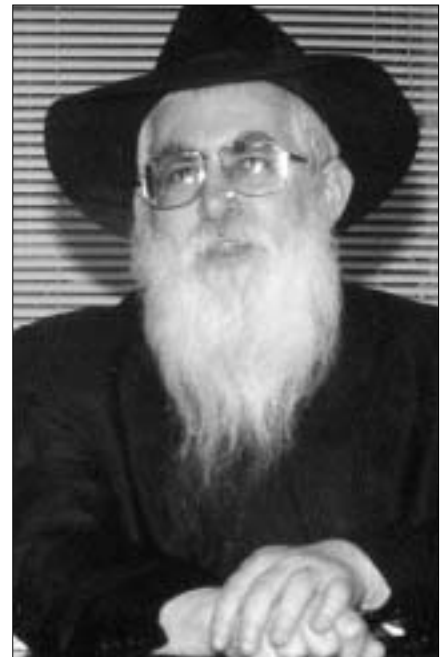
new *mosad*: a school where women and girls who wanted to learn about Judaism could do so. Back then, this idea was radical.

This was the beginning of the 70's, at the tail end of the hippie era. Self-indulgent American youth had rebelled and were searching for meaning in life. They yearned for spirituality, and anarchy prevailed.

Religious Jewry was a world unto itself, and it feared contact with the outside world. The only movement that opened its doors to these thirsty *neshamos* was Chabad. Chabad actually went on the offensive in order to be *mekarev* the "lost ones in the land of Ashur and the outcasts in Egypt." Slowly, more and more young

men and women were seen in Crown Heights. They had come for answers, but although Hadar Hatorah for men was already in existence, there was no school for women.

At that time, 770 was frequented primarily by *Anash* from Russia and Poland, old-time *chassidim*. *Baalei t'shuva* were not a common sight, and suddenly longhaired hippies had appeared and wanted to know what



Rabbi Shlomo Majeski, dean



Artist's depiction of new campus on the corner of Crown and Albany

Chabad was all about. It was definitely a unique phenomenon.

N'shei Chabad in the U.S. asked Mrs. Labkowski to give a class to women once a week on Sunday. Mrs. Labkowski relates:

"We started small. I gave a *halacha* class and a young man gave a class in *chassidus*, in the small *shul* on Montgomery St.

"That winter, the other teacher left, so I was left giving both classes. I moved the *shiur* to my house. I served coffee and cake and the atmosphere was homey and warm.

Despite the limitations we had

great success. One woman brought another, and the group began to grow. We had quality in addition to quantity. We had a student who attended N.Y.U. who progressed at an amazing pace. Whatever topic was raised, she immediately implemented. We spoke about *kashrus* and she began keeping kosher. When we learned about *tznius* and the separation between men and women, she immediately left the co-ed dormitory.

Thanks to her, I suddenly realized the vast potential that lay in these classes. By the way, today that student runs a beautiful *chassidic* home and is assistant principal in a school in a major city.

So it wasn't surprising when the Rebbe called for new *mosdos* that I thought this was the time to expand our horizons. I didn't know how or what, but I dearly wanted to do something.

The Rebbe's answer to my letter arrived shortly thereafter, and it showed me how the Rebbe took women's education so seriously: "This *mosad*, its importance, and perhaps even its responsibility, is greater than that for men."

Then the Rebbe went on to lay down a number of founding principles: to take a representative from N'shei Chabad (that's when Mrs. Leah Klein joined); not to open a dormitory at that time; and to be particular about the '*chevrusas*' or social milieu of the girls.

"I AM PARTIAL ..."

This was the small beginning of a *mosad* which grew to an impressive size, both in quality and quantity. The beginning was difficult but there was lots of enthusiasm and excitement. The teachers were all volunteers and saw this as a great *z'chus*. Classes were held on Sundays, plus two and then three evenings a week, and during the year, they had to move a few times to accommodate the growing student

The Rebbe once said that his mother's presence is constantly at Machon Chana because the girls follow in her ways.

body.

There was no funding, and when the founders wrote about this to the Rebbe, they were told to devote themselves solely to the *ruchnius*, and that they should turn to the Merkaz L'Inyonei Chinuch for the *gashmius*. Thus, every month, Rabbi Chadakov covered the bill he was given.

The *mosad* still didn't have a name. About a month after they had begun, the founders asked the Rebbe for permission to name the school after the Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana, a"h. The Rebbe asked that they wait until the *mosad* had proven itself and was firmly established.

The school was more firmly established shortly after. There were three classes on different levels, with 80 students. They asked about the name again, offering three suggestions ("Chana," "Beis Chana," and "Machon Chana"), and the Rebbe chose

"This mosad, its importance, and perhaps even its responsibility, is greater than that of the men."

"Machon Chana."

From that point on, the *mosad* enjoyed a warm and fatherly relationship with the Rebbe. The Rebbe often inquired about even the smallest details, and received detailed reports about the school. Not a move was made without the Rebbe's approval. The Rebbe once said, "*Der vos iz mir choshed az ich bin a nogei'a b'davar tzu Machon Chana iz gerecht*" (Whoever suspects me of being partial to Machon Chana is right).

Things picked up speed in the summer of 5733 when Rabbi J.J. Hecht (who ran the men's school for *baalei t'shuva*, Hadar HaTorah) invited Machon Chana to run a camp on a property near Emunah. Thus began a period of collaboration.

At the end of the summer, the Rebbe was asked how the school should proceed being that things had to be formalized and teachers had to be paid. As the Rebbe had predicted in his initial answer, there was a need for a dormitory, and an opportunity to buy a beautiful four-story home on President Street had presented itself, where the girls could live in a Jewish-*chassidic* environment 24-hours a day. The house cost \$90,000, a fortune at that time.

The Rebbe responded with a detailed two-part letter (*Igros Kodesh*, vol. 27, p. 343). In one part the Rebbe suggested that a dinner be planned for the school, on his mother's *yahrtzeit*, which would help both in *gashmius* and *ruchnius*. The other part suggested that if the relationship with Rabbi Hecht during the summer was good, perhaps he should be approached to undertake the *gashmius*. R' Hecht also received a letter from the Rebbe in which the Rebbe asked him to take on the "*Z'vulun*" role.

Upon receiving the Rebbe's answer, members of the Machon Chana committee (which included Mrs. Tema Gurary, Mrs. Rivka Chitrik, Mrs. Sara Katzman, Mrs. Korik, and Mrs. Riva

Teleshevsky) with the help of Rabbi Yoseph Weinberg, immediately began working on a dinner.

The dinner took place on Tishrei, the *yahrtzeit* of Rebbetzin Chana, at the "Young Israel" on Eastern Parkway, (the largest hall at the time). Knowing the Rebbe's excitement to this project brought everyone out and the place was packed. As the Rebbe had promised, "it would certainly pay," it was a huge success, and by the end of the evening, they had the money to buy the house.

Members of the *vaad* contributed, but most of the money came from members of the *kollel* who lent their wedding money, while Rabbi Avrohom Parshan of Toronto guaranteed the loans.

Once the dinner was over, the committee turned to the second part of the letter and established a working relationship with R' Hecht. R' Hecht rose to the challenge and enabled Sara Labkowski and Leah Klein to devote themselves to the *ruchnius* with peace of mind. R' Hecht's tremendous devotion to the school contributed towards the school's progress on all fronts.

A SURPRISE VISIT

On 10 Shvat 5734, the purchase of the building was complete. Five days later, the Rebbe surprised the *hanhala* of the school. Mrs. Labkowski relates:

"On *Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat*, R' Chadakov called my mother, Mrs. Tema Gurary, and asked whether I felt strong enough to host the Rebbe at the new building (I had given birth two weeks before). My mother called me immediately, and naturally, I said yes! R' Hecht received

a similar phone call, and of course he said yes, too.

"The pressure was enormous. I got together a group of women who were



When the founders wrote about this to the Rebbe, they were told to devote themselves solely to the ruchnius, and that they should turn to the Merkaz L'Inyonei Chinuch for the gashmius.

connected with the school, and we ran over to the building to prepare it for this special visit. We hadn't yet entered the building, which had been

neglected. Snow covered the path that led to the entrance. We began to clean up and Esther Blau, our secretary, ran to get a picture of the Rebbe, while another woman brought a picture of Rebbetzin Chana.

"In the meantime, there was another surprise at 770. In the afternoon, with no prior warning, the Rebbe came out to the large *shul*, washed his hands for a meal, and began *farbrenging*. There was great excitement, and some of those present went out to inform their friends and family of the *farbrengen*. The place was quickly packed with people.

"Right after the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe left 770, accompanied by R' Hecht, and instead of turning left, as he generally did on his way home, the Rebbe turned right and walked towards Kingston. The men and T'mimim standing there were curious about this and they followed behind the Rebbe and R' Hecht to see where they were going. So an impressive parade of men accompanied the Rebbe on his visit to Machon Chana.

"In the meantime, we had finished cleaning the building, and we waited at the window to see the Rebbe arrive. The Rebbe came in and looked around, and gave us many *brachos*. He wished us *mazal tov* on the acquisition of the house, and before leaving, he gave a packet of dollars for me, and a packet of dollars for R' Hecht (which we used to buy a bookcase and a chandelier) and said, "This is for the *ruchnius* and this is for the *gashmius*." The dollars I received were distributed to each girl at the end of each year for the special *z'chus* of being a Machon Chana student. When the dollars were used up, I asked the Rebbe for more, and got

them every year.”

Right after the visit, the Rebbe wrote a letter addressed to the group of women mentioned above and to R' Hecht in which he expressed his great pleasure in the visit.

UNIQUE TREATMENT FROM THE REBBE

It was the first visit, one of many at Machon Chana. Over the years, one could see the special relationship the Rebbe had with the school. The Rebbe was involved with the smallest details, and insisted on the school being dignified and elegant, and said that all expenditures for this purpose were worthwhile.

When a library was set up, the Rebbe contributed a *Chumash*, *Tanya*, *T'hillim*, *Kesser Shem Tov*, and *Maggid Devarov L'Yaakov*. A tradition was established not only among the *kallos* of the school, but *kallos* from all over, that they say *T'hillim* on their wedding day from the *T'hillim* the Rebbe brought to Machon Chana.

When the furniture arrived, the Rebbe came to visit and found that the chandelier wasn't elegant enough. The Rebbe went through the building and commented. He suggested that there be a door dividing the dining room and the living room, so the girls would have privacy. He also asked why there weren't any mirrors and radios in the rooms. We saw that despite the emphasis on *ruchnius*, the Rebbe wanted the girls to have both feet firmly planted on the ground.

The concern and caring for the girls themselves was also unusual. One Friday night on his way home, the Rebbe passed by the school and went in unexpectedly. The door wasn't locked. The Rebbe went to the

apartment of the dorm parents, the Kurinskys, alerting them to the importance of ensuring the girls' safety and to making sure the door was always locked.

Each year, the Rebbe came before the *seider* in order to bless the girls. The Rebbe visited other *mosdos* too, like F.R.E.E., Hadar Hatorah, and the kitchen of *Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim*. One year, when he went to Machon Chana after visiting the other *mosdos*, the Rebbe said to R' Hecht with a smile, "Now, I'm going home."

The Rebbe insisted that each girl



A letter from the Rebbe MH" M about the school

have her own cup for *Kiddush*, and a *matza* cover. Each year, the Rebbe gave a package of *matzos* to Mrs. Labkowski to be distributed to the girls. When the Rebbe visited the *seider* at the school, he blessed the girls that they should have the privilege of making a *seider* in their own homes the following year.

The line that best expressed the Rebbe's feelings about Machon Chana was what he said to the devoted housemother, Mrs. Gansburg, "Adank



Rabbi Yossi Paltiel

far hadeven meine techter." (Thank you for raising my daughters). The Rebbe asked Mrs. Galperin, the cook, whether she prepared food for the girls like she prepared at home.

Each year, on Erev Yom Kippur, the Rebbe sent *lekach* for the girls, and on Chamisha-Asar B'Shvat, the girls received a basket of fruit. The Rebbe requested that they send him a picture of the girls each year. The Rebbe once said that his mother's presence is constantly at Machon Chana because the girls follow in her ways.

DEEP, PERSONALIZED HASHPO'OH

The new dormitory was a breakthrough in the development of the school. It enabled the girls to study without concerns, and to be in holy atmosphere 24-hours a day. Mrs. Gita Gansburg runs the dormitory. She and her husband, R' Itche Gansburg, live in the dormitory, and are the girls' "father and mother."

Mrs. Gansburg is always there when a girl doesn't feel well or needs sage advice. With her life experience and innate wisdom, she is able to help the girls overcome the difficulties inherent in the transition to a new life.



**The beloved
mashpia,
Rabbi
Shmuel
Wudowsky,
a"h**

The girls reciprocate her love and greatly respect her.

The teaching staff is always available to the girls, ready to listen, advise, and to provide direction on this new path. The staff models what a Jewish-chassidic life is all about.

The fact that the students are in a *chassidic* neighborhood, the Rebbe's *sh'chuna* no less, also contributes its share in shaping the girls. The girls are invited to different homes on Shabbos, where they can see a *chassidic* life being lived.

Mrs. Yocheved Adelman is a former student of Machon Chana. She studied there in 5636, and today is the mother of ten children, and runs a Chabad house in Amherst. She wrote

the following and it was published in an article by Richard Greenberg under the heading, "A Spiritual Oasis": "I was shocked to discover the depth of my heritage that had somehow eluded me. I was greatly influenced by the people I was living with at the dorm. It was a very warm environment of young women going through the same struggles and challenges. We'd exchange ideas and bolster each other. And everything was permeated with the warmth and light of *chassidus*. It brings you to the realization that everything you do is valuable and can

***The Rebbe was
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connect you to G-d and your people. The special image of Mrs. Labkowski was a model and example as "the total opposite of the stereotype *chassidic* woman who is chained to the kitchen sink and has no aspirations beyond supper. That's what I thought I'd find. I was wrong. She is a tremendous woman, a real powerhouse. She saw a need and filled it."

SPARKS THAT BECAME A TORCH

The school experienced great hardship, but it continued to expand from year to year regardless. Dozens of girls who come from homes bereft of Judaism find their way each year to the school. Most of them ultimately build *chassidic* homes.

Shluchim around the world know about Machon Chana's success, and when they discover a girl who is interested in *Yiddishkeit*, they send her to Machon Chana, where she learns about a whole world previously unfamiliar to her.

Over one hundred girls attend the school each year for the two semester program, which prepares them for a full *chassidic* life, including a recognized teaching certificate. The curriculum includes a wide variety of topics such as *Chumash*, *Navi*, *Halacha*, *T'filla*, Jewish History and ethics and the Jewish Home, with the primary emphasis placed on *p'nimius ha'Torah* and the teachings of the Chabad *Rebbeim*. In order for the student to "catch up" in two years to the level of a regular Yeshiva graduate, much emphasis is put on skill building classes and *chevrusa*, which facilitates continued independent study.

Some of the best lecturers have considered it a privilege to take part in this important work. Rabbi Shmuel Wudowsky, a"h, was a beloved figure to the girls. He was one of the school's *mashpiim* who was completely devoted to the students.



The living room at Machon Chana

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Besides the school's Yeshiva program which is targeted at young women who intend to immerse themselves in full-time intensive study, the school has a number of programs which enable them to reach working women, mothers and students who cannot take advantage of the regular program.

***Yeshivacation** – This is a ten-day intensive learning program which takes place during college vacation in December and June. It began in the winter of 5745 for students and women of all ages. It is a comprehensive program which includes two theme Shabbatons and a week of in-depth study which introduces students to all facets of Jewish life. Each day a central theme in Judaism including Women, Chassidus, Kashrus, Shabbos, Moshiach, Mitzvos is thoroughly examined in the light of Jewish law, Jewish thought, Jewish history and Chassidic sources through classes, evening lectures and hands on workshops.

***Machon Chana in the Mountains** – Since the school's first year, students have gone to the Catskill Mountains for a special summer program. Thanks to the Gellman family of Buffalo, a charming hotel on seven acres of land with a stunning mountain backdrop, including sixty-five rooms with private baths, three swimming pools, an elegant *Shul*, lounge and dining room, was chosen as the perfect summer resort for spiritual growth and intellectual fulfillment.

With a staff of many of Chabad's best educators, highly challenging and inspiring classes and a warm supporting atmosphere, Machon Chana in the Mountains attracts over a thousand people from all walks of life each summer. There is programming to accommodate English speaking women of all ages, their husbands and daycare for their children. Participants return home excited and more committed to Torah and Chabad.

***Parent Shabbatons** – This a highly effective and inspiring weekend program for parents, helps bridge the gap between Machon Chana students and their parents.

***Chavrusa** – One-on-one learning programming is provided evenings to enable students to master skills and advance on their own pace in subjects of choice.

***Chevrusa on the Line** – For those not living in close proximity of Crown Heights or those who can't attend classes in person, Machon Chana provides learning via telephone in any language and any subject.

***Alumnae reunions** – Held around *Gimmel Tammuz*, this five day program in Crown Heights brings alumnae from all over the world together to reconnect and recharge. Challenges in *Chinuch*, *Sholom Bais* and *Avodah* are discussed in depth through thought-provoking workshops, seminars and classes. They provide participants with inspiration and practical tools for further growth.

Rabbi Shlomo Majeski leads the teaching staff as the *menahel ruchni*. He joined the school in 5741, and has since become an integral component of the school. Today, twenty-two years since he joined the staff, it is clear that Rabbi Majeski is one of the most sought-after speakers on *chassidic* subjects in the U.S.

Rabbi Majeski noted that a special program exists for those intellectual girls who need instruction on a higher level. He also stressed that any girl who wants to pursue a particular topic is aided in her research and is provided with a private tutor.

Rabbi Majeski would like to dispel the myth that *baal t'shuva* schools in other circles emphasize study, while Chabad emphasizes action and neglects study. It's just the opposite, for the facts, which speak for themselves, prove that those girls who want to enrich their knowledge are particularly satisfied when they encounter Chabad. As to the emphasis on action, the goal is to instill the girls with the truth which lies inherent in Torah, so that the concepts of Judaism are translated into practice and become part of one's daily conduct.

Rabbi Majeski relates: We once had a girl here from a Chabad house in the U.S. who was very bright and talented, and who had studied at a university and had excelled. She expressed an interest in learning about Judaism. The *shliach*, aware of her level of accomplishment, was apprehensive about referring her to Machon Chana, and thus, didn't mention it to her.

She began searching on her own, and discovered a program for *baalos t'shuva* in a non-*chassidic* school in Yerushalayim. She decided to attend it, but Divine providence had other ideas, and the Gulf War began and her parents were afraid to send her to Eretz Yisroel. She cancelled her plans and looked for a school in the U.S., and finally arrived at Machon Chana.

At first she joined the program, but

after she surpassed the pace and it was felt that she needed special attention, we arranged private lessons for her in Gemara and other subjects she wanted to learn. She loved it so much that she realized early on that this would be her home for the next two years. She felt she had come to the right place, and that she would be taught about authentic Judaism, which is what she sought.

She quickly began taking on *mitzvos* too, and by the time she finished her studies, she was a full-fledged *chassidic* woman. She married a Tamim, and today they are *shluchim*.

Needless to say, that *shliach* who had been afraid to refer her to us was amazed by how it all worked out and by the unexpected success. Today he puts in great effort to send girls to our school.

Do you have any idea how many girls and women have participated in your programs to date?

Mrs. Labkowski: Over 10,000 women from around the world have learned in our various programs. *Baruch Hashem*, most of them have established *chassidic* homes, including many who devote themselves to the Rebbe's work in various *mosdos* or on *shlichus*. Some of the strongest women in the world today are proud daughters of Rebbetzin Chana.

The *shluchim* around the world ignite the spark in their *mekuravim*, and then Machon Chana fans the spark into a huge flame. Looking back, we see how Chabad has grown tremendously, and I dare say that Machon Chana shares the credit for this.

HONORING A LOVED ONE AS THE REBBE HONORED HIS MOTHER

After thirty years the building the Rebbe visited and called his home had fallen to disrepair. Due to the large number of girls using the facilities,

the need of additional bedrooms and bathrooms grew.

A worldwide campaign was launched two years ago to renovate the building. BH with the help of *Anash* and alumnae who saw it a tremendous *z'chus* to participate in restoring the building the Rebbe took such pride in to its original beauty, the top two floors, including fourteen bedrooms were renovated.

The dining hall and kitchens the Rebbe visited every Pesach as well as dining room the Rebbe stood in during his first visit, still have to be done and dedication opportunities in honor or in memory of a loved one are still available.

The Rebbe said to the devoted housemother, Mrs. Gansburg, "Thank you very much for your devotion in raising my daughters."

When there was a lack of funds in Machon Chana many years ago the Rebbe bitterly cried "*aifo hayu hamikusharim ailai*" ("Where are those that consider themselves close to me?!" Underlining "to me" three times). The Rebbe expressed his disappointment that a project that was so dear to him and he chose to continue his mother's legacy was not supported by his *chassidim*.

A large "*mekusharim*" plaque will proudly hang in the elegant entrance hall with the names of all those that participated in the project and stepped forth to answer his plea. BH

the home has begun to look beautiful once more and will soon be ready to greet the Rebbe and Rebbetzin Chana proudly

What are your plans for the future?

Lately, thanks to the generosity of the Gellman and Gurary families, a building in Crown Heights was purchased, to become a Women's Educational Center, which will serve as our new state of the art campus. The Rebbe's *horaa* had been that not only the dormitory but the school building as well should be on a large scale. The largest library for women in the world, a gym, art and music centers, as well as other community services and facilities such as day care facilities, teen and parenting centers will join classrooms, offices and additional dorm rooms under one roof.

Once the campus is built, we will be able to cater to the growing needs of both our community and alumnae worldwide. Expanded programming will not only provide for college students, but for the growing number of families and teenage girls seeking intellectual advancement and spiritual direction. We are also planning to open the facilities to *Shluchim* who wish to bring their *mekuravim* to Crown Heights for *Shabbatons*, but lack suitable accommodations. With proper room accommodations, a *Shul*, cafeteria and social halls, in collaboration with the *shliach* we will be able to provide tailor-made programs.

All this and more will be available to women and girls of all ages and all backgrounds, so that they can prepare themselves and their households to greet *Moshiach*. As the Rebbe said more than once, "In the merit of the righteous women our fathers were redeemed from Egypt, and in their merit we will be redeemed in the future."

WHEN PHARAOH CALLS G-D "KING"

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



Once there was a very poor couple that didn't remember how to prepare the house for Pesach. Finally the wife began yelling at her husband. "Fool! What type of husband are you? Everyone is preparing for Pesach and we are standing like two cows doing nothing. Go to the neighbors and ask them what to do!"

The husband dutifully went outside, but because he was too ashamed to actually knock on the neighbor's door, he went around to the side of the neighbor's house, climbed up on the garbage cans and peeked in the window.

Now it just so happened that exactly at that moment the neighbor and his wife were at the height of a fierce argument and she was furiously running after him around the living-room table trying to hit him over the head with a broom while he was doing his best to avoid the blows.

Our hero looked bewilderedly on for a few minutes and finally returned home.

"Nu?" asked his wife "What did they say?"

He, not wanting to answer, took a glass, filled it with water and began to drink.

"Nu, nu!" she repeated, "Answer

me! What did they say?"

But he continued slowly filling his mouth with water, and tried to ignore her.

"ANSWER ME ALREADY!" she screamed, as she picked up a broom and furiously began to hit him over the head with it.

"One minute!" He said to her. "If you already knew what to do, why did you have to send me to the neighbors?"

Similarly, in the end of last week's section Moshe asked G-d; "G-d, You sent me to announce to Pharaoh that we are preparing to leave Egypt, and after I returned, more bad things happened to the Jews! If you want the Jews to suffer, why did you have to send me to Pharaoh?"

This week's section begins with G-d's reply to this question: *I am G-d. I appeared to Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov... but I did not make known to them my full name.*

At first glance, there are many puzzling things in this week's *parsha*:

1) What does G-d's answer have to do with Moshe's question about Jewish suffering?

2) Why did G-d keep sending Moshe to ask Pharaoh for permission to leave Egypt?

(I can just imagine Pharaoh giving Moshe a sly look and saying "Listen, Jew, if your G-d really creates and controls everything, then why is He asking me for permission? Why doesn't He do it himself? You want my opinion? I say NO.")

3) Why did G-d tell Moshe to turn his staff to a snake for Pharaoh before threatening him with the plagues? This seems completely unnecessary.

4) Why did G-d have to make ten plagues to free the Jews? Why not one big one?

5) Why did the Jews have to leave Egypt at all? Why didn't G-d just stop creating all the Egyptians, and give everything to His people?

6) Why did the Jews have to enter Egypt in the first place? If G-d is really kind and almighty (which He is), why didn't He just give them the

Torah without all the suffering?

The answer to all these questions in a nutshell is: G-d wants everyone to change the world by recognizing His greatness and serving Him with their own free will. Therefore, G-d made this physical world in the first place, and did not suffice with the spiritual ones.

All the other religions of the world interpret this to mean that this world is

only a preparation for the spiritual worlds. But really they are wrong. G-d wants man to reveal the true reason for Creation within the Creation.

This was the job of Adam, the first man, and when he failed, the world had to wait almost two thousand years until Avrohom realized this truth.

Because of Avrohom's devotion, G-d actually revealed Himself to him and spoke to him. And so it was to Avrohom's son and grandson, Yitzchok and Yaakov, but still something was missing.

These three spiritual giants, despite their greatness, did not succeed in changing the world in a permanent way. Firstly, they did not receive any real physical commandments (except for circumcision), and also, they did not have any lasting effect on the non-Jews.

They received only temporary revelations and eternal promises from G-d. In other words, they did all the work and passed all the tests, but did not really see any of the results.

That is what this week's section is all about. G-d is telling Moshe that now He is preparing the Jewish people for a revelation of G-dliness that even the forefathers did not receive: the Torah.

This preparation will have two stages; eliminating the bad and encouraging the good. In other words, changing the Creation. This is the inner meaning and purpose of the story of leaving Egypt.

Now, if G-d did the whole thing Himself, it would not really be a change; it's no novelty that the Creator can do what He wants.

But if the Creation changes itself – that is a novelty. That is why it is so important that Pharaoh himself declares that G-d is the King, and the Jewish people decide to serve Him with all their souls.

That is why the first thing that Moshe showed Pharaoh was how he could transform his staff into a snake.

The staff of Moshe symbolizes the unifying, creative force of G-d, while the serpent is a symbol of the power of evil and selfishness.

Moshe was showing that evil is really another creation of G-d Himself, and that his (Moshe's) job is to see to it, through the plagues, that all the forces of separation (evil) will eventually return to their source, just as his staff finally devoured all the serpents of Pharaoh.

This is why G-d wanted Pharaoh to

Exactly at that moment the neighbor and his wife were at the height of a fierce argument and she was furiously running after him around the living-room table trying to hit him over the head with a broom while he was doing his best to avoid the blows.

agree to send the Jews; he had to surrender to Hashem with his free will.

Thus, there had to be ten plagues, corresponding to the ten aspects of evil (*s'firos raos* in the language of *kabbala* – see *Tanya*, beginning of chap. 6) emanating from Egypt – so that the surrender be complete. And therefore G-d hardened Pharaoh's heart (Pharaoh represents nature, Creation without a Creator. As Pharaoh himself said in last week's *parsha* (5:2), "Who is G-d that I should do what He wants;

I don't know G-d," and in our *Haftora* (Yechezkel 29:3), "I made the river (Nile) and I made myself"), because if Pharaoh would have released the Jews too early, some of these aspects of his selfishness would still remain uncorrected. (In fact, if the Jews had not sinned with the Golden Calf, all the evil represented by Pharaoh would not have returned to this day.)

The above can be illustrated by a story told about the Alter Rebbe. The Alter Rebbe was imprisoned by the Czarist Government in the year 1799 and charged with high treason. Several times he was taken at night by rowboat across a river to another building for interrogation. Once, in the middle of such a journey, he requested the soldier rowing the boat to stop long enough for him to stand and say a short prayer (*Kiddush Levana* on the new moon). The soldier refused, and the Rebbe did or said something so that the boat stopped moving. The soldier began begging for mercy, and the Rebbe told him that he would only release the boat if he promised to stop rowing and allow him to say his prayer. Of course, the bewildered and grateful soldier complied.

The Rebbe desired that the Russian soldier also have a part in the service of G-d.

But this is only half of the picture – the eradication of evil; there still remains the other half – to reveal the good. This is accomplished, as strange as it may seem, through the suffering and hard work of the Jewish people.

One of my teachers, Rabbi Mendel Futerfas served over five years at hard labor in Stalin's labor camps in Siberia. He said that the conditions were impossible for a normal human being, no less a Chassid who insisted on keeping all the laws of the Torah. Several Passovers he ate nothing for eight days in a row, the temperatures were often lower than 20 below zero, and both the inmates and the guards were vicious animals. But in retrospect he said that those were the best days of

his life, because he had to constantly exert every power in his Jewish soul, and even reveal new ones, in order to stay alive with his *Yiddishkeit*.

So it was with the Jews in Egypt. The reason that they had to be imprisoned there was to arouse in them the deep desire to be free to serve G-d.

In fact, that is the meaning of "serving" G-d. In Hebrew the word for "serve" and for "tanning" (like tanning hides) have the same letters "*avod*." *Chassidus* explains that the thing they have in common is: complete change. Before a hide is tanned it is hard and un-pliable, but afterward it is soft and useful. Similarly a Jew must "serve" G-d, i.e., change himself so that he is "pliable" and filled with the love of Hashem.

And this is done through suffering and pressure.

The Rebbe points out, as an example of this – that to this day it is not clear how the huge blocks were lifted to build the pyramids; how was it possible to force workers to exert such effort?

The Midrash also points out that the Jewish people are likened to olives and grapes that only emit their true potential when they are squeezed.

That is why the Jewish people had to be in Egypt – just as the name of G-d begins with a *Yud*, the smallest of the letters – so the Jewish people must begin in a very compressed way in order to reveal G-d's name.

This is the meaning of G-d's answer to Moshe in the beginning of our section. G-d was telling Moshe that in order to reveal Himself in a way that even the forefathers didn't know, it was necessary to squeeze the Jewish people just a bit more.

But just as in G-d's name the second letter (*Hei*) is much more expanded than the first, so too the Jews would need to leave Egypt ("Mitzrayim," which also means "constriction") after the pressure of servitude was released.

What this means to us in a practical way is that everyone must work on himself, i.e., change himself from the inside as well as the outside and go out of his own limitations (*meitzarim*).

This change must be in two directions 1) Turning from bad, i.e., convincing "Pharaoh" (one's natural urges and character traits) that G-d is the boss, and that he should help the Jewish soul go free and unhindered, and 2) increasing the good, which means being as attached as possible to the *tzaddikim*, and especially to the Moshe Rabbeinu of our generation, the Rebbe MH"M.

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“LIVE IN CROWN HEIGHTS AND BE ON SHLICHUS”

TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



While I was sitting in the office of Rabbi Gavriel Avichezer, Director of “Chabad-Lubavitch Torah Educational Services,” the telephone didn’t stop ringing. “Rabbi Gavriel, I need *t’fillin* urgently,” said the voice on the other end on the line. Not more than a minute passed and the phone rang again. “Hello, Rabbi Gavriel? You’ve convinced us. We want to make a Jewish wedding. Now what do we do?” Just a couple of examples.

When I asked Rabbi Avichezer if this goes on every day,

he said ‘yes’ with a true sense of satisfaction. “All those with whom we have contact ‘feel at home’ and get warm and personal treatment,” said Rabbi Avichezer. “We teach them to come to us on every issue, whether spiritual or business-related. We try to help as best we can, both directly and through the many connections we have accumulated with *shluchim* and with Jewish and governmental welfare organizations throughout the United States.

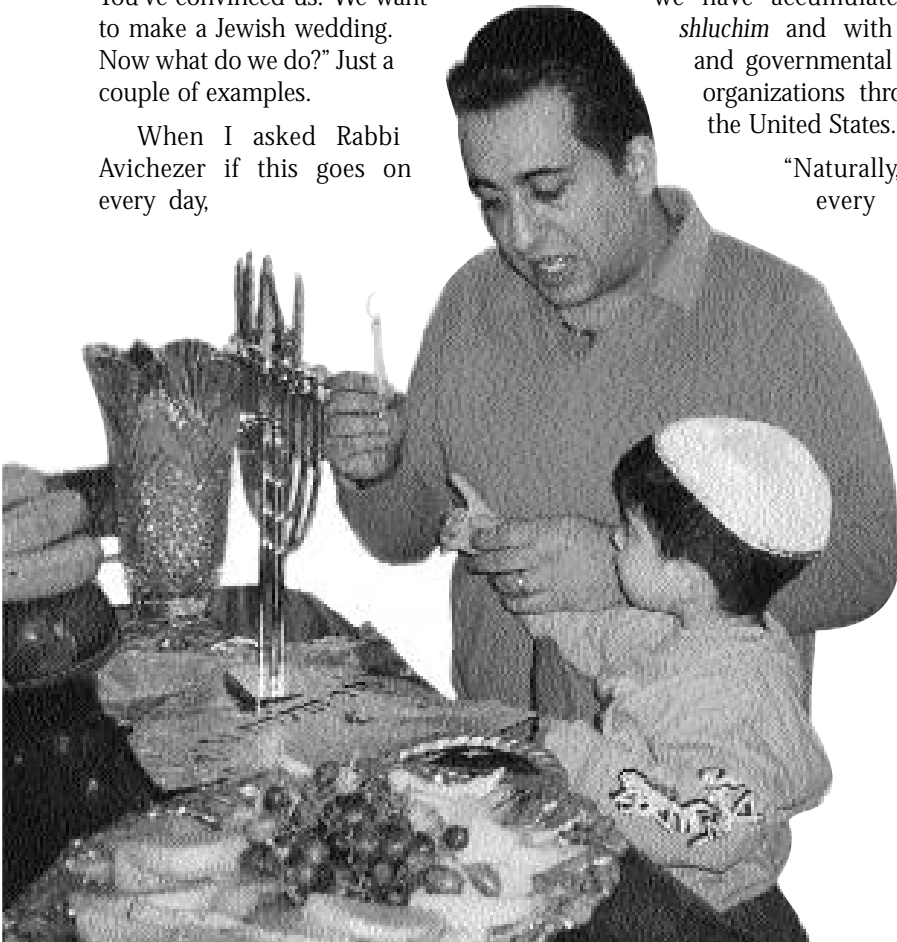
“Naturally, on every matter,

we write to the Rebbe and request his advice and his *bracha*. For his part, the Rebbe gives every *shliach* the needed strength to fulfill his *shlichus*.”

The name Chabad-Lubavitch Torah Educational Services – New York is known to thousands of Jews in the New York City metropolitan area who participate in Torah study programs, telephone *chavrusos*, or at one of the dozens of classes held at people’s homes, and benefit from the other services it provides. This center has become the address for everything Jewish: checking and replacing *t’fillin* and *mezuzos*, transferring children to Torah educational institutions, workshops on family purity, organizing kosher Jewish weddings, and festive parties connected with the Jewish holidays.

These classes and other activities have proven themselves in action, when numerous families become stronger every day in their observance of Torah and *mitzvos*, and their actual *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe MH”M.

When I asked Rabbi Avichezer to give some examples of results produced from the Torah classes by phone, he smiled and said, “Just last week, we arranged a wedding for an Israeli couple. The groom is a subscriber with



our Torah classes since 5749, and the bride has been a regular listener since 5761.” There was no need to inquire further; it was easy to guess who the matchmaker was.

I prodded a bit more and got him to tell me another small episode:

This week, as I passed through the office’s telephone booths to prepare *shiurim*, HaTamim Shimon Mayer, who directs our Torah classes, pointed in the direction of booth #10 and said, ‘We have a surprise for you. Sitting there is a *bachur*, a Tamim in every sense of the word, who says that up until a year ago, he got his *shiurim* himself over the phone. Afterwards, due to the efforts of the *shiur*’s teacher, HaTamim Avi Kali, he went to learn in *yeshiva* in *Eretz HaKodesh*. He is here now to give over a *shiur* to his old friends. ‘There are more names to add,’ the *bachur* concluded with a characteristic smile...

In preparation for the *chag* of Yud-Tes Kislev, the center organized a grand *farbrengen* for Hebrew speakers. The *farbrengen* took place in the Teichtel home and more than a hundred people participated – *avreichim*, *bachurim*, and friends sitting together as one.

Rabbi Shlomo Teichtel gave over the evening’s central point as he retold the events of the Alter Rebbe’s imprisonment and redemption, illustrative stories from the Rebbe MH”M connected to Yud-Tes Kislev, and of course, about the need to make good resolutions, especially in the realm of Torah study. Similarly, emphasis was given to the *shiurim* in Gemara, *chassidus*, and *D’var Malchus* which take place in a number of places throughout the community for Hebrew speakers, and the need to start more Torah classes, particularly in the neighborhood of the Rebbe. Rabbi Saadia Dahan continued with a selection of *chassidic* stories appropriately connected to a *chassid’s* day-to-day life and about the need for *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe MH”M *shlita* in these times more than before, primarily

through studying about Moshiach and the Redemption, and fulfilling his instructions.

Rabbi Gavriel Avichezer conducted a study session in the *seifer* “*M”Toras Rabboseinu N’sieinu*,” and then distributed a commemorative copy of the *seifer*, published by the center, to each of the participants. Rabbi Moshe Antizada told about the many *Igros Kodesh* miracle stories and activities that have occurred in the Persian community in Netanya.

At around one in the morning, R. Ami Pikovsky from California arrived

**“Everyone is a bow,
and everyone shoots!
The question is: in
which direction? We
try to bring in as
many targets as we
can to aim at, so the
power of influence
will reach the proper
channels.”**

and declared openly, “While I have participated in many *farbrengens*, still for some reason, the notices on the ‘Farbrengen for Hebrew Speakers’ drew me in here, and I see that I was not mistaken.”

He proceeded to tell the wondrous story of his return to *Yiddishkeit* and the role of Divine providence from his more youthful days, when he would put on *t’fillin* with Rabbi Yechiel Malov, the milkman in old Tel Aviv. Rabbi Malov always had a pair of *t’fillin* under the counter on his wagon, and he would

put them on the many young people who were interested in a little *Yiddishkeit*. He told about the Rebbe’s involvement in the process that led him to his connection with Chabad and an interesting encounter with Rabbi Malov’s son near the *bima* in 770, during one of his first visits to the Rebbe.

R. Ami then expressed his impressions from his recent visit to *Eretz HaKodesh*, which was made as part of a program organized by him along with his fellow business associates in Los Angeles to assist the families of terror victims living in Yesha. He described the embarrassing incident in the Knesset when an Arab Knesset Member said whatever words of sheer contempt for Jews he wanted from the speaker’s rostrum and even threatened one of the right-wing Knesset members, saying, “Just wait, come to Ramle and we’ll take care of you!” A truly painful thing to hear, and even more painful to see the country’s leaders listening to the disgrace of their people without responding...

The *farbrengen* continued until 5:30 with dozens of T”mimim, *Anash*, and others remaining, *farbrenging* from the heart about what they must do in actual deed, while accepting upon themselves to increase in the spreading of the wellsprings of *chassidus* outward and their *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe MH”M.

Long after that most interesting *farbrengen*, participants expressed their impressions that they had not felt “Rosh HaShana” as they did on that Yud-Tes Kislev for a very long time.

Immediately after Yud-Tes Kislev, Chabad-Lubavitch Torah Educational Services began to get ready for Mivtza Chanuka. Even the week before, the streets of Crown Heights were filled with giant posters that the center distributed, under the headline “Live in Crown Heights and be on *shlichus*,” calling upon *Anash* with cars, and T”mimim, to take part in the *shlichus*. This would be a first-of-its-kind



R. Ami Pikovsky *farbrengring* with the center's volunteers



A group of T'mimim with Rabbi Zalman Hertzel at a Chanuka party in the Bronx

campaign with dozens of Chanuka *farbrengrings* and parties in the homes of friends and supporters, sponsored by Chabad-Lubavitch Torah Educational Services.

In the days leading up to Chanuka, the center worked around the clock at an accelerated pace on all the necessary preparations in order that the campaign would be a crowning success. Friends and supporters were requested to invite as many of their acquaintances and colleagues as possible to the activities, dates and times for events were set, while the center's staff worked to prepare the lists of speakers, drivers, volunteers, and dividing the T'mimim into groups for each event. The T'mimim were also involved in the

preparation of Chanuka sets to be distributed to all the participants at every event. Each set included an attractive calendar filled with interesting facts on the various holidays and Chabad dates throughout the year, a Chanuka brochure in Hebrew – each published by the center, the Tzivos Hashem / Moshiach Times newspaper, a special pamphlet on the connection between the Baba Sali and the announcement of the Redemption, registration forms for Torah classes and other activities through the center, applications for membership in Tzivos Hashem, and letters in the Children's Seifer Torah, and a *pushke*.

The *mitvza* began on Motzaei Shabbos, the second night of Chanuka,

and continued for the duration of the holiday.

Volunteers from *Anash* and other supporters came every night to pick up the T'mimim and bring them to the events. Some of them even brought their children to teach them about *mitvzaim*. Every driver was briefed the previous evening about the event's location with precise directions and starting time, so that they will be ready beforehand.

Dozens of T'mimim assembled near the center's offices to register with one of the groups going out on *mitvzaim*. HaTamim Shimon Mayer, who directed the operations together with HaT'mimim Liron Revach, Mordechai Luki, and Shaul Fradkin, worked tirelessly so that everyone arrived at their appointed destinations on time with all the necessary supplies, but not before they broke out in enthusiastic dance even before they started out on their nightly journey.

At every gathering, approximately five or six T'mimim participated, filled with energy and excitement, equipped with bottles of *mashkeh*, jelly donuts and other refreshments, dressed in special shirts emblazoned with a joyous picture of a Jewish family lighting the Chanuka *menora*, surrounded by the words "*Chanuka Sameiach*" and "*Yechi Adoneinu*."

Immediately upon arrival at the home hosting the party, they began to sing and dance with great enthusiasm, and shortly afterwards, the communal Chanuka lighting commenced in order that those who had not lit yet could fulfill their obligation. The younger participants were drawn to the side by interesting stories about the Maccabees and holiday riddles. The older guests were also engaged in discussions about the holiday's significance, miracle stories from the Rebbe MH"M, and about the need for greater *hiskashrus*. During the evening, a *duch* to the Rebbe was prepared and the participants were encouraged to make good resolutions,

e.g., checking their *t'fillin* and *mezuzos*, *kashering* their kitchen, joining a Torah *shiur* at someone's home or via telephone, etc.

At the conclusion of the evening's festivities, every participant received the special Chanuka set, and the children received dreidels and chocolate *Chanuka gelt*.

It is important to note that every Tamim was equipped with an instructive manual on how to arrange the party, on obstacles which might be encountered and how to deal with them, etc., and a historical text on the miracle of Chanuka and the era that preceded it, with its interpretation based on *chassidus*, stories, and special Chanuka songs.

Even the local teenagers were enlisted into the campaign. These T'mimim, who live in the neighborhood and study in Oholei Torah and the Lubavitcher Yeshiva, came every night, after concluding their studies, to give over Torah classes via the telephone in English, Yiddish, and even Hebrew. They were naturally joined by the *bachurim* from "k'vutza," who instilled in them the warmth and vitality of 770 and even continued the connection on an individual basis through Torah study.

The organizers state that the *farbrengens* this year were conducted with tremendous success. Many *avreichim* responded positively to the appeals and took an active and respectable part in the events' organization. Rabbi Gavriel Avichezer used every available opportunity to meet with *avreichim*, *baalei battim*, and *askanim* among *Anash* and others connected to the center's activities and encourage them to join in a more active capacity. The success can be seen in the growing number of positive responses.

Rabbi Avichezer: "On Thursday evening, the seventh night of Chanuka, the last night of Mivtza Chanuka, an *Anash* businessman called me up with a complaint. 'Why wasn't I invited to participate at one of the parties?

Chanuka is almost over...' I told him that just a few minutes ago, one of our volunteers said that he can't make it, and that he had arrived just in time. Of course, I saw him arriving at the office within a few minutes, ready to go out as one of the T'mimim..."

* * *

How did you get the idea for *Anash* to join your activities?

It was when I learned the *sicha* from Chaf-Daled Teives, 5712, in which the

"We have accepted upon ourselves (through the instructions we have received from the Rebbe via Igros Kodesh) to get them to join us in a warlike effort to bring Jews to the path of chassidus and to prepare them to greet Moshiach Tzidkeinu."

Rebbe said things that if we look into them deeply enough, we can understand what is happening today among *Anash* in general, and in Crown Heights in particular: (free translation) **And since, in the familiar expression of my honored father-in-law, the Rebbe, "yedern fun unz haht men gemacht far a 'shiser'" (every one of us has made himself a 'bow'), we have no choice other than to take the bow and shoot, and the shooting will quite likely go**

towards the correct target.

(The Rebbe *shlita* smiled and said:) **There's a story about someone who said that he knows how to shoot, but he doesn't know how you're supposed to hold the bow (since they forgot to teach him), from this end or the other end...**

But in connection to our discussion: Since "it is an established fact that someone knowledgeable will not bring out something in disrepair," when they give us bows, it is quite likely that they can shoot only in the right direction!

It is clear to us that every Lubavitcher is a "tankist" – a bow – who has the power to shoot and influence others.

We have accepted upon ourselves (through the instructions we have received from the Rebbe via *Igros Kodesh*) to get them to join us in a warlike effort to bring Jews to the path of *chassidus* and to prepare them to greet *Moshiach Tzidkeinu*.

If you contemplate upon the matter properly, you will see that there are no "mere" Lubavitchers. Everyone is a bow, and everyone shoots! The question is: in which direction? We try to bring in as many targets as we can to aim at, so the power of influence will reach the proper channels. And as the Rebbe summed it up, "it is an established fact that someone knowledgeable..."

On a recent Shabbos just before Shacharis, a friend of mine who is very involved in community matters approached me and said, "Listen, Gavriel, you are making a great tumult in the community. You should know that it is accomplishing something here. I am a born and raised English-speaking American, but when I see the giant posters that you are making a "*farbrengen* for Hebrew speakers in an Israeli atmosphere," you give us tremendous vitality. You are "shocking the community into action," pushing us onward to do more and more in the complex task of "living in Crown Heights and being on *shlichus*." *Yasher*

ko'ach!

In summation, the main purpose is to bring people, great and small, to a deeper sense of involvement in outreach with the Rebbe's educational campaigns, and thus, many of the problems in a variety of areas will be solved.

For example, every Motzaei Shabbos during the winter, we organize a *Melaveh Malka* for Hebrew speakers. It is held each week in a different home with *baalei battim*, T'mimim, and others participating and *farbrenging* until the late evening hours. On Shabbos summer afternoons, we have classes in *Pirkei Avos*, combined with a stream of interpretations from the Rebbe, seasoned with practical *chassidic* stories.

During the previous year alone, we recorded a large number of good resolutions that were carried out from these local community *farbrengens*, e.g., growing a beard, wearing *tzitzis*, going out on Shabbos in a *kapote*, learning *Chitas*, greater stringency in the Laws of Family Purity.

What are your plans for the future?

We are about to initiate a program encompassing the entire New York area, in coordination with *shluchim* and major synagogues. The program will include a series of lectures on domestic harmony and the education of our children in these times with Rabbi Mordechai Rottenstein from *Eretz HaKodesh*.

Chabad-Lubavitch

Torah

Educational Services proposes that all *shluchim* encourage the participation of as many *Anash* and other friends and supporters as possible, which creates a double effect: "*Shlichus* from within and without." As the Rebbe MH"M writes, "Above all else, the spreading of the wellsprings outward must begin within the *yeshiva* walls," e.g., among ourselves.

I wish to take this opportunity to call upon *Anash* in the Crown Heights community, "here G-d commanded His *bracha*": Give a hand in the spreading of *chassidus*, give a Torah *shiur* at least once a week. We need plenty of volunteers, and "may G-d illuminate the eyes of them both." For further information, please call (718) 953-7217.

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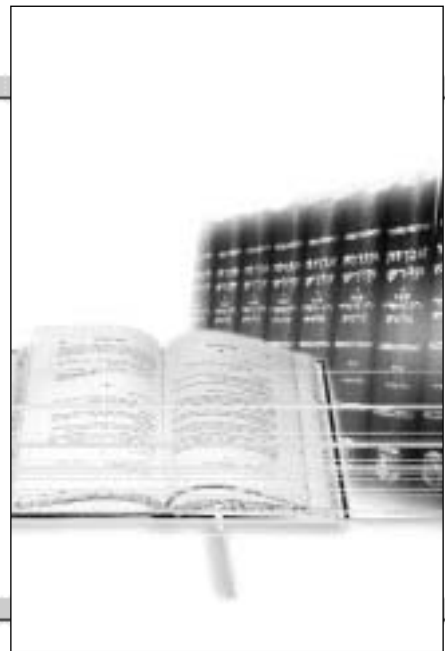
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WHY DIDN'T IT RAIN IN MILAN?

BY RABBI SHOLOM DOV BER BROD



Many of *Anash* have the custom of regularly reading the Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh* in order, and I do this, as well. There are many advantages to doing so, chief among them being *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach by learning his teachings. In addition, when you learn the Rebbe's letters, you become familiar with the Rebbe's approach and outlook on various life issues, which generally don't come up in *sichos* and *maamarim*.

Aside from this, there's a special advantage in learning the Rebbe's letters in order, because by learning in this way you can see how the Rebbe "lived" and "*koch't*" in a certain topic at a certain time, and we can learn how we must live with a timely issue.

Whenever the Rebbe had a *koch* in a certain topic, every Jew who was in touch with the Rebbe at that time heard about this topic. It made no difference whether this Jew was a *rav*, a *mashpia*, a doctor, or a scientist. In every letter, to every personality, the Rebbe stressed the topic he *koch't* in at that time.

This fact alone can teach us how our *koch* ought to be in *inyanei Geula* and *Moshiach*, which the Rebbe told us to be involved in with a special *chayus*, at every moment. We should simply inform everyone we are in contact with

of the *b'suras ha'Geula*, not leaving anyone out, and we should use every possible opportunity to bring up this topic.

Generally speaking, these are the advantages in learning the Rebbe's letters, and certainly every person on their own will discover other advantages.

It sometimes happens that in the *z'chus* of learning the *Igros*, the reader sees an incredible miracle story unfolding before his very eyes. Sometimes it can be discerned from the content of a letter, and sometimes from a series of letters.

As I made my way steadily through volume 7 of the *Igros Kodesh*, I had the *z'chus* to identify an incredible miracle which teaches a number of lessons.

* * *

Rabbi Mordechai Perlow, author of *Likkutei Sippurim*, spent some time in Milan, Italy. Since the *mikva* there was not in accordance with the *shita* of the Rebbe Rashab, which says there must be a *bor al gabbei bor* (one pit over another, as opposed to side by side), he decided to have a new *mikva* built with all the *hiddurim* and *chumros*.

At the end of the summer of 5712 (1952), R' Perlow told the Rebbe about this. In his letter, he enumerated all the

hiddurim he had thought of, and he asked the Rebbe if there were additional *hiddurim* he should include.

On 7 Elul 5712, the Rebbe sent him a long letter. Among other things it said, "I was very pleased about the establishing of the *mikva* in your city according to the instructions of the Rebbe [Rashab] ... and there's no reason to drag things out longer than necessary." Then the Rebbe went on to point out additional *hiddurim* which could be included in the new *mikva*, and ended with "Hashem *yisborach* should give you the merit, that through the arousal from below by increasing purity in the world, we will very soon merit the fulfillment of the promise, 'and I will cast pure water upon you, for G-d is the *mikva* of Israel.'"

In accordance with the Rebbe's instructions not to make things "*shlep*," R' Perlow quickly got to work, and with the help of one of his *mekuravim* (who is mentioned in the Rebbe's letter: "I was pleased about your writing that X participated and helped you with the *mikva* plans. Aside from the *inyan* itself, you must seek out all means of *kiruv* to strengthen him in his situation regarding *Yiddishkeit*, and in his participation in *inyanei Chabad*") he managed to complete the building of the *mikva* within a few months.

In the middle of the winter the *mikva* was ready, but it hadn't rained yet in Milan. Strong rains usually fall in Milan, but that year it was dry.

R' Perlow wrote to the Rebbe in Shvat about the drought in Milan which made the *mikva* inoperable. The Rebbe wrote back to him on 27 Shvat 5713 and referred to the man who had helped him, and then at the end of the letter the Rebbe wrote, "I hope that by the time you receive this letter, rain already fell and you are able to use the *mikva*, and in connection with this, it is worthwhile to again generate publicity in matters of Family Purity, which must be done regardless, for the health of the children who are born, and even that of the husband and wife, depends on it."

About a month passed from when the Rebbe's letter was sent, and Milan was as dry as ever. R' Perlow was eager to see the new *mikva* operating and so he began to look into the possibility of using artificial ice instead of rainwater. He wrote to the Rebbe about this and received this answer:

"About your writing about the *mikva* and whether to make it permissible for use with artificial ice, you know there's discussion about this among the *Acharonim* and many allow it ... yet, it's difficult for me to assert myself in a matter of *halacha*, especially when it comes to a *mikva* with which you are trying to satisfy many [*halachic*] opinions. In addition, in your question, the Sephardic Rav said it was forbidden. Therefore, it will arouse surprise if you permit it. And since the other *mikva* still exists, it should be fixed as much as possible and used. Certainly Hashem will have mercy and rain will fall and quench the earth."

At the end of the letter, the Rebbe wrote an amazing note, and when I read it, I realized that this series of letters concealed an amazing miracle of the Rebbe. This is what the Rebbe wrote:

"It occurred to me that maybe something is still missing in your

mikva, and this is holding back the rain. It pays to check it all once again."

To tell you the truth, even if the story ended with this, and we didn't know what happened next from the letters, the line itself would arouse surprise. An entire winter was going by in Milan without rain, something highly unusual, and the Rebbe was saying that [perhaps] there was something the *mikva* was lacking which was preventing the rain from falling!

Upon further reflection, you can see how much the Rebbe was concerned that no mishap befall his *shluchim*, so that when one of his *shluchim* built a *mikva*, and one

"It occurred to me that maybe something is still missing in your mikva, and this is holding back the rain. It pays to check it all once again."

necessary detail was lacking, the Rebbe made sure that rain didn't fall there. Nobody should use the *mikva* before the matter was corrected.

This story expresses the Jewish belief that "*b'shvili nivra ha'olam*" (the world was created for my sake), for we see how the world changed its usual nature for the sake of the *mitzva* fulfillment of the Jewish people.

Anyway, I found the continuation of the story in the *Igros Kodesh*. In Sivan, R' Perlow told the Rebbe finally, everything was in order, the underground pit was full and the *mikva* was operable, but he forgot to mention whether rain actually fell or he found

another solution.

Since the Rebbe had thought that if they fixed the *mikva* it would rain, it was important to the Rebbe to know whether the *mikva* was using rainwater. The Rebbe sent a letter to R' Perlow on 29 Sivan in which he wrote, "I was pleased to read about the *mikva* that everything is fine, though surprisingly, you didn't mention how you obtained the water, whether it's rainwater or, etc., in accordance with what I wrote to you already. Certainly you will fill me in in your next letter."

We have a letter dated 23 Av which contains the amazing conclusion of the story. "I was pleased to receive your letter of 15 Menachem Av which calmed my spirit because you wrote that the storage pit was filled with about 900 liters of rainwater (and only afterwards did you add to it, etc.).

* * *

I am sure that hundreds of similar stories lie hidden within the volumes of the *Igros Kodesh*, and I'd be very happy to let you readers know about them when I have the privilege of discovering them.

Here's another story that is connected with the letters I mentioned, which happened with Rabbi Yeshaya Cohen, *shliach* and chief Rabbi of Kazakhstan. I heard this story from my friend R' Avrohom Reinitz, who heard it from Rabbi Cohen.

A few years ago, Rabbi Cohen built a *mikva* in Alma Ata, capital of Kazakhstan. They finished building the *mikva* in the summer, a season of heavy rainfall in Kazakhstan. That summer no rain fell, and no rain had fallen with the start of winter. This was highly unusual, for it had never happened that an entire summer passed without rain, yet the month of Cheshvan had arrived and there was still no rain.

Rabbi Cohen, who was flabbergasted by the bizarre wonder of nature which prevented him from opening his *mikva*, decided to study the Rebbe's *Igros Kodesh* on the topic of

mikvaos. When he got up to the letter I referred to, which was sent to R' Perlow and discussed the same phenomenon, Rabbi Cohen decided to check his *mikva* to see if there were any problems.

He contacted one of the biggest *mikva* experts, described the structure, and asked how he could improve upon it. The expert enumerated a number of *hiddurim* he could add to the *mikva*, and Rabbi Cohen made all the corrections. The next night, rain began falling, filling up half of the storage pit with rainwater.

After a few days passed and the rain did not continue, Rabbi Cohen realized that there was more to improve. He remembered that when they had built the pipeline which brought the rainwater to the pit, he had told the workers to make the chute from soft cement (a mixture of 12 to 1 of sand to cement), but since he couldn't stand on top of them all day, it occurred to him that maybe they hadn't done as he had asked. He broke open the chute and discovered that they hadn't listened to him, and they had made the chute of hard cement. He rebuilt the chute and this time it was in perfect accordance with *halacha*. Then he removed all the water that had filled the pit via the old chute, dried it out and waited for more rain to fall.

A few hours after he had dried out the pit it began raining and again it filled up only halfway. Once again, some days passed without additional rain, and Rabbi Cohen went to check and see what else could be improved. He remembered that he hadn't supervised the workers when they had built the chute which brought the water from the faucet to the upper pit of the *mikva*. He broke the old chute that same day, and built a new one and waited for rain.

That same night, after he finished his class at the Chabad house, he said a *l'chaim* with those who had attended the *shiur* in the *z'chus* of the completion of the *mikva* which had been made

with all the *hiddurim*. The next day, it began pouring. The storage pit filled up completely and the rain continued to fall until the upper pit was almost full and people could immerse themselves in actual rainwater.

* * *

From this story we learn that the Rebbe looks out for his *shluchim* so that no mishap comes about through them, and when they build a *mikva* – with *mesirus nefesh* – and without realizing it, a detail is not quite right, the Rebbe arranges things so that rain doesn't fall

there until the deficiency is pinpointed and corrected, and then the Rebbe sees to it that rain falls.

The lesson for us is simple: The entire world was created just for us, the Jewish people, so that we can fulfill Torah and *mitzvos*. When we encounter a situation in which it seems the world is interfering with *mitzva* observance, we have to know that this is only a test. When we overcome it, the obstacle will naturally disappear, and we'll see that not only does the world not interfere, but it actually helps.

If this is so for all of Torah and *mitzvos*, all the more so for the Rebbe MH"Ms *mitzvaim*, and especially for *Mitza Moshiach*, for *Moshiach* is the purpose of the world from its very start, as *Chazal* say on the words, "and the spirit of Hashem hovered over the waters" – "this is the spirit of *Moshiach*."

The world cannot possibly interfere with the publicity of the *b'suras ha'Geula*, especially not after the Rebbe declared that the world is ready. The world waits for us to take action, and as soon as we do, and in the spirit of the Rebbe's *sichos*, not only will the world not oppose us, but the world will help us disseminate the *b'suras ha'Geula* until we see the fulfillment of "*Isaken olam b'malchus Shakai*," when we'll see how the world actually helps us fulfill G-d's will, with the revelation of the Rebbe MH"Ms now!

***"It is worthwhile to
again generate
publicity in matters of
Family Purity, which
must be done
regardless, for the
health of the children
who are born, and
even that of the
husband and wife,
depends on it."***

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WHAT A CHILLUL HASHEM!

BY SHAI GEFEN

"THE TIME WILL YET COME!"
US soldiers in the Persian Gulf



WHEN THERE'S A CHILLUL HASHEM

The other week, one of the newspapers publicized the platforms of the big parties, including those of the parties that are called "the religious parties." While all the parties try to sound like they are the guardians of Eretz Yisroel (apparently they are sensitive to the electorate, at least on the eve of the elections), the platform which ought to be subservient to *halacha*, is in favor of the establishment of a Palestinian state and the division of Yerushalayim, after the cessation of bloodshed.

The members of that party take the *halacha* and pervert it in a way far more seriously than the Reform do. How is it possible that a *chareidi* party, at a time like this, has a platform that opposes *halacha*? There's no greater *chillul Hashem* than this!

The Rebbe told Moshe Katzav: "It's one thing if those who don't believe in Hashem do this; it would be understandable. But people who believe in Hashem – that they should sign about giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel – that's a *chillul Hashem*!"

That party prides itself on its tremendous achievements in securing

funding from the Treasury in the final budget which was ratified. Although their financial attainments are also greatly in doubt, the headlines they put out announce how much money they got (money soaked in Jewish blood) while they trot out a platform conceding Yerushalayim and support of a Palestinian state. The very announcement is a *chillul Hashem*, for which there is no atonement.

How much longer can we restrain ourselves in the face of such cynicism in the name of *Toras Yisroel*? Has any member of that party thought of the *chillul Hashem* created by their presentation of "*Toras Yisroel*," which they've turned into a business? Does anybody realize that it is behavior such as this which leads to the meteoric rise of the parties which champion hatred towards religion?

"*B'm'kom sh'yesh chillul Hashem, ein cholkim kavod la'rav*" (where there's a *chillul Hashem*, one does not afford respect to the *rav*), all the more so for religious politicians who long ago turned religion into something self-serving.

Another important point. When *shleimus ha'Aretz* is neglected, all aspects of religion are neglected as a matter of course, and they are having

difficulty procuring their usual perks for their *mosdos*. In the last coalition, they didn't manage to get a *single* religious issue put forward. Shame!

THAT THE RIGHT IS LEFT

It's hard to understand how a party on the Right can write things like this in its platform before the elections. In the platform publicized on the weekend, it turns out that the Right, like the Left, has fallen in love with the idea of a "peace plan" based on concessions to Arabs. They feel good about presenting their own peace plan.

The leaders of the National Unity party write that they don't want leadership from Tunis. They want local leadership. This is what they publicized: "Those who are not listed as residents of the refugee camps will fall under the 'autonomous areas plan,' in accordance with the geographical layout of the territory, on a basis of authentic local leadership and not leadership imported from Tunis, and this will be under full and complete Israeli sovereignty and military authority."

This is precisely what the Rebbe cried out about, for this is the basis of the establishment of a Palestinian state

and it endangers millions of Jews. “*Cantonim*” or as the word is being used to imply an autonomous region, means a state. Period. It makes no difference to us whether the *cantonim* are manned by Arafat or Sari Nusaiva or Dachlan. Really, it doesn’t. Whoever is in favor of *cantonim*, will end up collaborating in the uprooting of tens of thousands of Jews from their homes.

A SLAUGHTER FOR “HIM” IN BASRA

The preparations for the big attack on Iraq are at their height. According to reports, within a month or two, the U.S. and its allies will once again attack the Babylonian kingdom of our times. This attack is not new. It’s actually the attack that began exactly twelve years ago, which was spoken of a great deal by the Rebbe MH”M, who saw this war against Iraq as part of the process of the revelation of Moshiach.

Twelve years ago, the Rebbe spoke heatedly at *farbrengen* after *farbrengen* about the *maaleh* of Jews, who would not be harmed in this war. At “dollars,” the Rebbe told everybody who asked, that Eretz Yisroel is the safest place.

Now, when we see that the war that did not end till this day, and the upcoming attack is a direct continuation of that war, we must all publicize what the Rebbe said then.

The international media publicized that the attack on Iraq will start by sea in the port city of Basra, the second largest city in Iraq. You might remember that on Shabbos Parshas Bo, two days after the Gulf War began, the Rebbe delivered a long *sicha* about “*zevach lo b’Batza*” (the prophecy that Hashem will carry out a slaughter in Basra) – that this is part of the promises of *Geula* as written in Yeshaya. The Rebbe said to put this *sicha* aside and not to publicize it. R’ Yekusiel Rapp told me that when the *manichim* (editors) asked the Rebbe

when they could publicize it, the Rebbe answered, “*od chazon la’moed*” (i.e., the time will come).

As events develop and worldwide terrorism prompts the superpower (led by the son of the president who started the Gulf War) to go out and wage war against Iraq, we must believe and hope that the Rebbe’s prophetic words that were said at the beginning of the war twelve years ago, are about to be realized before our very eyes, this time ending Saddam Hussein’s rule, once and for all.

The Rebbe teaches us that the upheavals in the world are an inseparable part of the revelations of

How is it possible that a chareidi party, at a time like this, has a platform that opposes halacha? There’s no greater chillul Hashem than this!

Moshiach. Furthermore, the Rebbe said (Toldos 5750) that the revolutions in the world are derived from the actions of the Jewish people, “for all events in the *g’vulos amim*, the 70 nations, are connected with the stability and strength of the Jewish people.”

In light of this, when nowadays Jews are “*misraashim u’misbahalim*” (quaking and becoming confused), we, as *chassidim* connected with an eternal bond with the Rebbe, must quote the Rebbe and say that everything that is taking place, is a part of the *Geula* process, and that Eretz Yisroel is the safest place.

This must be done by *chassidim* and *shluchim* alike, as well as the Rebbe’s *mosdos*. We would be remiss and failing the Rebbe and the *sichos* we received if we didn’t repeat them as we heard them. It’s specifically when darkness covers the earth, that we have this *shlichus* from the Rebbe, to bring encouragement to our fellow Jews and to publicize the *besuras ha’Geula*, while emphasizing that the matters relating to exile are diminishing as we draw closer to the realization of Hashem’s Kingdom.

THE LESSON TO BE LEARNED FROM THE ALTER REBBE

The I.D.F. cleared out the Giborei Chevron outpost, which was established on the spot where fourteen Jews were murdered, including the local Chevron Army Commander. It was established on the spot which the Supreme Court later ruled illegal to confiscate from Arabs. Two days after that dangerous decision, they shot at Jews from that same spot. These two events – the court decision and the shooting – should have been red lights for our leaders, proving that concessions lead to threats on our lives. But it didn’t help, and the army decided to clear the Jews out. After all, this was Arab land.

What wickedness this is on the part of the government, including the defense minister, who wanted to appease the Americans by clearing out the Jews from the area. Those houses became Arab strongholds against Jews, and that’s where they plan to continue attacking Jews, but suddenly we take a humanitarian stance. The court and the government have pity on Arab property, but think nothing about Jewish property in Chevron, most of which remains stolen by Arabs till this very day.

Since it’s shortly after the *yom hilula* of the Alter Rebbe, let’s review the lesson the Rebbe MH”M derived from the first leader of Chabad about

how a Jew and the government ought to act, this being the *only* way to achieve true peace:

One of the main claims they had against the Alter Rebbe, for which reason he was imprisoned, was that he sent money to Eretz Yisroel ... And if so, after his release one would think he would stop making a tumult about sending money to the *kollelim* in Eretz Yisroel since his life had just been in danger on account of his sending funds to Eretz Yisroel. However, right

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after his release, the Alter Rebbe continued to send money to the *kollelim* in the Holy Land, and he wrote in his letter that "the *tz'daka* for Eretz Yisroel is what stood by us to redeem the lives of our souls, etc."

From this it is understood that when a Jew comes and says that it is forbidden to stand up against the *goy*, even when the *goy* demands the *Kosel HaMaaravi* (and it's no secret: they said explicitly that they want to give back the Old City of Yerushalayim ...),

because if they stand up to the *goy*, it will cause harm – they should know that it's just the opposite. It is specifically by standing strong that one has an effect on the *goy* and can accomplish what you want, until it becomes "v'rav yaavod tza'ir" (the older shall serve the younger)

(Chaf-Daled Teives 5738, edited).

An eternal lesson which they have never tried to implement.

WHERE WERE THEY HIDDEN

The Ginnosar affair, which included the receipt of royalties in the hundreds of millions in exchange for dealings with the most despicable murderers, has not quieted down. From information publicized last week, it turns out that the Attorney General, Elyakim Rubinstein, was also involved, and he was the one who prevailed at the second Camp David Summit – that Barak could include Yossi Ginnosar as the head of the peace committee, insisting that Ginnosar had no dealings with Arafat.

Doesn't the Attorney General, who gave a false report after not checking the accuracy of his information, have to pay the price when we've learned what a serious situation this has put us in? And who deserves the title, "partner to terror"? Ginnosar and Rubinstein who were part of the Arafat corruption scheme (Ginnosar who made the money and Rubinstein who looked away), or Baruch Marzel of Chevron, who the Attorney General wants to invalidate because he's a dangerous terrorist?

Rubinstein must be assumed to have known the truth, but as he has always been a lackey to the government, he is the one who gave the seal of approval to use Ginnosar's services, and therefore Rubinstein is as much a collaborator as Ginnosar and the Oslo gang.

One of the newspapers this week had a picture of the members of the delegation that went to Camp David

two years ago in order to give the Holy of Holies to a murderer. If you examine the picture, you see that nothing remains of those people who were part of that unfortunate group. The Prime Minister of that time, Ehud Barak, and his ministers Shlomo Ben-Ami, Amnon Lipkin Shachak, Dan Maridor, the other top men in office, and Yossi Ginnosar are not mentioned at all today.

Does anyone remember those

Two days after the Gulf War began, the Rebbe delivered a long sicha about "zevach lo b'Batzra," which the Rebbe said to put aside and not to publicize. When the manichim asked the Rebbe when they could publicize it, the Rebbe answered, "the time will come."

names, aside from their remaining in our collective memory as being willing to endanger us by giving away all of Yesha and the Temple Mount? Those individuals who, two years ago, seemed invincible, are not even looked at today. This is food for thought for Sharon, Avigdor Lieberman, Binyamin Netanyahu, and Amram Mitzna, those who plan on putting together the new government by making "painful concessions."

TAMIM, YOSEF YITZCHOK DAGAN, A"H

KILLED IN A ROAD ACCIDENT ON HIS WAY TO MITZAIM

What a shocking tragedy! On Friday, 15 Teives, Yossi left his house in Petach Tikva for Kfar Tapuach in the Shomron, in order to do *mitzaim*. He hitched a ride, and when they got to the Tapuach Junction, the driver suddenly swerved and went head-on into a bus coming towards them. Yossi and the driver were killed on the spot.

Yossi was carrying two I.D. cards, his own and that of his twin brother, and this misled people into thinking that both twins had been killed, and this was told to the reporters. That news quickly reached the *yeshiva* in Tzfas, but was quickly ascertained to be incorrect. Rabbi Y.Y. Wilschansky, *rosh yeshiva*, found out that the other twin was on *mitzaim* with friends in the north of the country. The police were told, and it was only then that the driver was identified.

The *yeshiva* in Tzfas, as well as the family in Petach Tikva, was in shock.

Yossi Dagan, a"n, was born on 26 Adar 5740 in New York, and the family moved to Eretz Yisroel. He learned in Chabad *yeshivos* in Lud, Montreal, and Tzfas together with his twin brother, Avi.

Yossi's friends describe him as a wonderful *chassidische* boy. This past summer he was in Camp Gan Yisroel in Montreal where he was a learning *rebbe* for young children.

His warm smile and his pleasant demeanor helped him succeed in his special role of teaching Jewish children.

Tamim Mendy Harel, a classmate, said, "There's always competition between twins, but the relationship between Yossi and Avi was anything but competitive. They always supported one another, especially in recent years when their father was so sick, and in the year of *aveilus* that followed.

"The two brothers *koch'd* in the Rebbe's message about *shleimus ha'Aretz*. Yossi was preparing to organize a Shabbos in Chevron for the *talmidim* of Shiur Gimmel, in order to strengthen the T'mimim in *shleimus ha'Aretz*. Unfortunately, he won't be attending the Shabbaton."

Rabbi Wilschansky said brokenheartedly, "We lost a diligent *talmid*, a *talmid* who was *m'kushar* heart and soul to the Rebbe MH"m. He was devoted to *mitzaim* and died on his way to *mitzaim*. He had gotten permission to be home for Shabbos, but apparently changed his mind at the last minute in order to strengthen those who live in Kfar Tapuach."

Ad Masai?! Ad Masai?!



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