

RUNNING TO FULFILL G-D'S WILL

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS BA'MIDBAR; 29TH DAY OF IYAR, 5749

1. There are a number of factors which connect the present Shabbos to “the season of the giving of our Torah” that we will celebrate in the coming week:

It is the Shabbos on which the month of Sivan is blessed. Sivan is the “third month” and is associated with the Torah, “a threefold light” given to a “threefold people.”

It is also the Shabbos which precedes the holiday of Shavuos. Since all the days of the coming week are blessed from the previous Shabbos, it follows that this Shabbos contains a specific blessing associated with the holiday of Shavuos.

Shabbos falls directly before Rosh Chodesh, the day associated the essential preparatory step for the giving of the Torah. The Torah relates that on Rosh Chodesh, the Jews camped before Mount Sinai “as one man, with one heart.” The Midrash relates:

The Holy One, Blessed be He, declared: “Since Israel

[demonstrated] hatred for division and love for peace..., it is time for Me to give them My Torah.”

Accordingly, the primary preparatory steps necessary for the receiving of the Torah are an increase in ahavas Yisroel and achdus Yisroel (the love and unity of the Jewish people).

Also, it is self-understood that in preparation for the receiving of the Torah anew, we should increase our study of Torah, both Nigleh and P'nimiyus HaTorah. In particular, guidelines regarding this increase in Torah can be taken from the sixth chapter of Pirkei Avos, the chapter customarily studied on this Sabbath.

In general, the custom of studying Pirkei Avos on the Shabbasos between Pesach and Shavuos is to teach “the manner of Torah study and how to behave with it after one has studied.” With that intent, the Rabbis added another chapter, a collection of Braisos to be studied on the sixth Shabbos. These Braisos all focus on the study of Torah or the rewards given for its study. Therefore, it is called Kinyan

Torah, “the acquisition of Torah.”

There is a deeper lesson to be learned from the fact that on the first five Shabbasos, we study Mishnayos and on the Shabbos before Shavuos, we study a collection of Braisos, which are on a lower level than Mishnayos.[103] As will be explained, the final preparations for receiving the Torah are dependant on the study of the Braisa.

The latter concept can be explained as follows: There are two aspects to the giving of the Torah. On one hand, Torah is G-d's “hidden treasure,” His will and His wisdom which existed before creation. Conversely, the Torah was given within the context of our material world. “It descended... from level to level in the downward progression of spiritual worlds until it en clothed itself in physical things and entities of our world.”

In particular, this concept is expressed in the contrast between the giving of the Torah by G-d and the receiving of the Torah by man. G-d's wisdom is drawn down to the

103. This is implied by the very name, Braisa, which is related to the word m'bara which is

the word the Targum uses for the word meaning “outside,” i.e., teachings that were

related outside the study sessions of Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi.

extent that it can be perceived and comprehended by human intelligence in a manner where the person's intellect grasps and encompasses the Torah he is studying. The person, his thought, and the subject matter he is studying become fused in perfect unity. Furthermore, since "study is great because it brings to deed," the effects of the giving of the Torah are also apparent in our deeds," both those directly connected with the performance of the mitzvos and those carried out in the spirit of "All your deeds shall be for the sake of heaven," and "Know Him in all your ways."

Even though the Torah undergoes such a tremendous descent, it remains essentially unchanged. Even in our world, it is G-d's wisdom. Thus, it can bring about the refinement and the elevation of our world, drawing down the revelation of the giving of the Torah within it.

An allusion to this concept is found in the opening words of the sixth chapter of Pirkei Avos: "The Sages taught [this chapter] in the language of the Mishna:," i.e., the chapter is a collection of Braisos, however, the manner of expression resembles the Mishna until the level of the Braisos is almost equivalent to that of the Mishna.

To explain the above: Pirkei Avos begins by relating the chain of tradition through which the Torah was transmitted from generation to generation. This process also reflects a chain of descent as obvious from the continuation of that Mishna which states, "Make a fence around the Torah." Why are fences necessary? Because the people's spiritual level had descended and they needed new safeguards to

prevent them from transgressing Torah law.

Nevertheless, the safeguards that the Sages instituted cannot be considered as additions to the Torah. They are also a part of the Torah which "Moshe received at Sinai" as our Sages declared: "Every new concept which is brought out by an experienced sage was given to Moshe at Sinai." Similarly, the Braisos of the sixth chapter of Avos, though on the surface on a lower level than the Mishna — reflecting the extension of the Torah to lower levels, "outside" the sphere of Torah — are taught in

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a manner which makes them "almost equivalent to the Mishna."

The first teaching of the sixth chapter of Avos continues: "Whoever occupies himself with [the study of] the Torah for its own sake merits many things" and continues to list various qualities and attributes that such study will bring. As mentioned above, this chapter is intended to arouse a person's desire to study and acquire Torah. By promising all these qualities, the sages desired to motivate people to involve themselves in Torah study. Since

people are different and what motivates one may not necessarily motivate another, the Braisa mentions a variety of different qualities and attributes so that every Jew, whatever his goals may be, will have a reason to apply himself to Torah study.

This also relates to the concept explained above: On one hand, it reflects a descent for the Torah, its teachings being lowered to the level of people who have to be motivated to study it. On the other hand, even after descending to that level, the Torah retains its ultimate perfection to the extent that it can bring these people the full range of benefits mentioned in the Braisa.[104]

This line of thought is completed by the final Braisa of the chapter which states:

All that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created in His world, He created solely for His glory as it is stated, "All that is called by My name, indeed, it is for My glory that I have created it, formed it, and made it," and it says, "The L-rd shall reign forever and ever."

This Braisa teaches how each and every creation was brought into being to express G-d's glory — "and there is no glory other than Torah." The ultimate expression of this glory will be in the Messianic age.

However, in microcosm, there was already a revelation of this nature at the time the Torah was given.

As is customary, when completing the study of a Torah text, we connect the conclusion of the text to its opening statements. Similarly, Pirkei Avos begins with the statement "Moshe received the Torah on [Mount] Sinai." This statement

104. This Braisa can be seen as a continuation of the concept explained at the conclusion of Chapter 5, "Learn it and learn it [the

Torah], for everything is in it." That Mishna speaks of the potentials that are contained within the Torah. Our Braisa speaks of the

advantages that a person can derive from Torah study, teaching him that through Torah study, he can acquire "many things."

also brings out the concept that the Torah effects all the aspects of our life, the material as well as the spiritual. Moshe was both the Torah leader of the Jews, the Nasi, and also, their king, the one who is responsible for their material well-being. Therefore, it was in his merit that the manna descended.[105] When G-d wanted to grant the Jews meat, it also had to come through Moshe's influence. Though Moshe complained, "From where will I have meat?", i.e., his spiritual level was too high to descend to such material things, G-d told him, "Collect seventy men... and I will separate from the spirit which is upon you and place it upon them;" the influence came from Moshe's spirit.

Pirkei Avos explains that Moshe "passed on" the Torah to Yehoshua. Though Moshe also taught Elazar, Pinchas, the Elders, and the entire Jewish people, Yehoshua was the fundamental recipient of Moshe's teachings. Thus, our Sages declared "Moshe's face was like the sun, Yehoshua's face was like the moon," i.e., Moshe's full light was reflected in Yehoshua. Therefore, Yehoshua also had both qualities of Nasi and king.

This phenomenon was not repeated in the generations that followed, however, it will be revealed again in the person of the Moshiach. He will be the teacher of the Jews and their king. In these three personalities, Moshe, Yehoshua, and Moshiach, their Torah knowledge and leadership permeated through their entire beings to the extent that even their leadership of the Jews' material affairs came through Torah.

This is also the concept

expressed by the Braisos of the sixth chapter of Avos, that the Torah is the source of all influence in the world, thus revealing how, "All that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created in His world, He created solely for His glory."

2. There is another aspect which is necessary in order to receive the Torah, the declaration "Naaseh V'Nishma — We will do and we will listen." The Jew's made this declaration before the giving of the Torah, on the fifth of Sivan. Similarly, each year, in preparation for receiving the Torah anew on Shavuos, the Jews must reaffirm their commitment of Naaseh V'Nishma. Not only did the Jews promise both to "do" and "listen," they promised to "do" first, i.e., they gave G-d an unbounded commitment, agreeing to accept His will regardless of what He commands. This reflects an acceptance not only of G-d's will, but an all-compassing commitment to G-d, Himself, the Master of the will.

This aspect of unbounded commitment is also reflected in the custom of reading Parshas BaMidbar before the giving of the Torah. Our Sages explained that the Torah was given in a desert to teach us that to be given the Torah, a person must make himself like a desert over whom everyone treads. The fundamental quality necessary for a person to be prepared to receive the Torah is bittul, self-nullification. In this context, we can see a positive dimension of our Sages' description of a desert as "a place where man does not dwell," i.e., it reflects a level of bittul above the limits of human intellect, the very source of the Torah.

The lesson derived from the chapter Kinyan Torah, the importance of bringing Torah down within the context of our lives in the material world, also relates to the service of Naaseh V'Nishma. Within the realm of Torah study itself, there is a concept of Naaseh V'Nishma which is reflected in the study of Torah law. In regard to the abstract study of Torah law, the study of halacha represents a descent. Nevertheless, it is described as "the crown of Torah," which reveals G-d's will. Though a person may derive more pleasure from the study of other aspects of Torah, because of his commitment of complete bittul, he will devote himself to the study of halacha for it is that realm of study that G-d's will is revealed.

3. The above is also connected to today's portion of the text of halacha which is studied on a daily basis, the Rambam's Mishneh Torah.[106] Today's portion of study deals with the delegation of the duties associated with the services in the Beis HaMikdash. The Rambam states that these duties were delegated by lot. Why were these tasks delegated in this fashion? The Rambam explains that this practice was a later institution, ordained by the Rabbis.

Originally, whoever wanted to remove the ashes from the altar would be allowed to do so. If there were many, they would run, ascending the ramp to the altar. Whoever reached within four cubits of the altar first would merit it... Once, it occurred that two were even while running up the ramp, one pushed the other. Since the court saw that the situation was becoming dangerous, they ordained that the selection of the person to remove the ashes would be done by lot.

105. Even the well and the clouds of glory, which our Sages associate with Miriam and Aharon respectively, were also connected with Moshe. The fact that when Miriam

and Aharon died, these miracles returned in Moshe's merit reveals that even originally, they were dependent on his influence.

106. The study of the Mishneh Torah parallels the declaration Naaseh V'Nishma, for the Rambam (in contrast to the Alter Rebbe in his Shulchan Aruch) states the halacha

Though originally, the division was not made by lot, once the Rabbis instituted this practice, it became Torah law. Even when there was no danger: i.e., a priestly watch with few members or for the third lottery — which selected those to offer the incense offering — a lottery was required.[107]

There is a parallel to this in our spiritual service: A lottery refers to a high spiritual level for a person has no choice in the matter at all. He leaves everything up to G-d. Therefore, one of the central aspects of the Yom Kippur service was the casting of lots to designate the goats to be sacrificed to G-d and to be sent to Azazel. Similarly, the Purim[108] miracle which expressed the Jews' ultimate self-sacrifice centered around the casting of lots.[109]

Thus, casting lots for the service in the Beis HaMikdash implies that a person is willing to leave the determination of the service appropriate for him to perform to G-d. This is possible because a person has reached a high spiritual level.

In this context, the Baal Shem Tov interpreted the word shivisi in the verse, "I placed (shivisi) G-d in front of me at all times" to have the mean "It is equal for me." Since G-d is constantly before me, all situations are equal. "Whenever anything happens, one will say to himself, 'It's from G-d.' Therefore, even if one might not think it desirable... since his intention is for G-d's sake, from his side there is no difference." Since

the person gives himself over to fulfilling G-d's will, he is willing to perform any and every service. Whichever service will come his way — and he is open to all types of services, letting the decision come by Hashgacha Pratis (Divine

Each Jew, by nature, desires to run to fulfill G-d's will. He does not proceed slowly, but runs. However, at present, Torah law teaches that a person's own desires should not determine which service he is to perform. Rather, he should leave this to G-d's will.

Providence) in a manner similar to casting lots — he is willing to perform.

Thus, we can understand the parallel to the service in the Beis HaMikdash mentioned above: Each Jew, by nature, desires to run to

fulfill G-d's will ("running up the ramp to the altar"). He does not proceed slowly, but runs. However, at present, Torah law teaches that a person's own desires should not determine which service he is to perform. Rather, he should leave this to G-d's will.

To conclude with practical directives for action:

Since today is the day directly preceding the first of Sivan, the day on which the Jews camped before Mount Sinai in perfect unity in preparation to receive the Torah, we should increase our service in ahavas Yisroel. Also we must develop bittul, total commitment, which like Naaseh V'Nishma is a necessary preparation to receive the Torah, and, of course, we should increase our Torah study itself.

We must increase our service in "raising up many students." This is particularly relevant in the summer months when the secular schools are on vacation and it is possible to have them enrolled in summer camps in a Torah environment. Efforts must be made to insure that all Jewish children are enrolled in Torah camps in the summer months.

May these activities prepare us to receive the Torah anew "with happiness and in a way that it is internalized," as the Previous Rebbe would wish. And may we receive the Torah in a manner — as Pirkei Avos concludes — "G-d will rule forever," which will be realized with the coming of the Messianic Redemption.[110]

alone without explaining its underlying principles.

107. It is likely that only a small number of people were eligible for the latter lottery since it was restricted to those who never offered an incense offering before.

108. The Rabbis have noted the connection

between the two holidays, stating that the name, Yom Kippurim, can be translated to mean, "a day like Purim."

109. Thus, we see that many Sages would follow a practice that resembles the casting of lots to help them decide questions regarding their future. They would take a Chumash or another holy text and open it at random

and find an answer to their question based on the passage to which the text was opened.

110. This is particularly true since the coming year, 5750, is a unique year. Its letters are an acrostic for the words, "It will be a year of miracles."

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD, THERE'S A NEW PROGRAM MAKING WAVES (TSUNAMI STYLE) ON THE RADIO:

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TRANSCRIPT: ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN

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(In correction of last week’s installment, which was misprinted:)

Rabbi Greenberg: Now, Rashi seems to be of the school of those who apply this prophecy to the past, to the Babylonian exile. Rashi says, “*Od asid lakum navi l’keitz shanim*” – “There will be another prophet who will arise at the end of years,” “*sh’yisgaleh lo chazon l’masai yihyeh mo’ed mapalas Bavel u’Geulas Yisroel*” – “To whom will be revealed the vision of when the time will be for the downfall of Babylonia and the Redemption of Israel.” And in the next verse it says specifically that it refers to the seventy years after which Babylonia was supposed to be destroyed, according to the prophet’s prediction, and that there will be another, delayed date, at which time this prophecy will be fully fulfilled.

So, Rashi is referring to the Babylonian exile. However, the Gemara and other commentaries say clearly that it refers to the future Redemption. Maimonides, too, uses the words of this verse in his discussion of the Thirteen Principles of Faith, where he says that one is supposed to wait for Moshiach even though he tarries, for he will definitely come, and he will not delay.

Now, what’s interesting here about this Rashi is that it seems to fuse both interpretations. Now we understand how these two interpretations come together. Because what we see here, in the *recent* past, is that there was a war associated with Redemption, just as it says in the Midrash that you [Rabbi Gold] quoted at the beginning of this

program, which the Rebbe emphasized was a reference to the Gulf War, and then that war was aborted, so to speak, in the middle; it did not end. And people were disappointed and disillusioned over the fact that it did not end and the revelations that were foretold did not materialize.

But what is happening now?

We are seeing the end of that Babylonian destruction, in reference to the future Redemption – just like the original Babylonian exile ended in two stages, so to speak. So one shouldn’t become discouraged by the fact that it didn’t finishing in the beginning. I think that Rashi is trying to tell us – or at least allude to the fact – that the future Redemption of Israel will also come about in two stages. But one thing is for sure, one thing is definite, that when the Rebbe said, “*Od chazon la’moed*,” i.e., that there will be another vision of the appointed time, when this [i.e., the Redemption] will come true,” he was predicting that there would be a sequel to the Gulf War, and that’s what we’re seeing right now.

Rabbi Gold: Rabbi Greenberg, we have a question from our listening audience. Hello, you’re on the line with “Living With Moshiach.”

Caller: Okay. I just have a question, I don’t understand something. My cousin is named Menachem Mendel, and he is named after the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and if the Lubavitcher Rebbe is still living, then how is he named after him?

Rabbi Greenberg: I don’t think that relates to what we were discussing.

Rabbi Gold: Give a shot anyway, Rabbi Greenberg.

Rabbi Greenberg: The naming of

someone after a great person is something that has always been done. Among Sephardic Jews, they give these names after living people – that's number one. Number two: even before Gimmel Tammuz, the Rebbe told people to name their children either after the Previous Rebbe, Yosef Yitzchok, or Menachem Mendel. Even though the explanation [for giving the name Menachem Mendel] was that it was after the Tzemach Tzedek, the third Rebbe, *chassidim* always had in mind that they were also referring to the Rebbe himself. Even though it was not an overt thing, it was still something that was done. When people give the name Menachem Mendel *now*, it's the same thing as it was before Gimmel Tammuz. It was given for the name of the Tzemach Tzedek, as well as the Rebbe, both together.

Rabbi Gold: Rabbi Greenberg, obviously what we just discussed about “*Od chazon lemoed*” refers to what is happening now in Iraq. I wanted to ask you, it says there clearly in Rashi that the falling of Iraq-Bavel is connected with the *Geula*. So what can we expect right now, as we're witnessing the fall of Bavel? And what should we be expecting in the days to come in fulfillment of this prophecy in Habakkuk?

Rabbi Greenberg: We can only go by what the Rebbe told us and what the Torah tells us – anything more specific, the Rambam writes clearly that we have to just wait until it happens. We didn't invoke this prophecy, this *pasuk*, until the events started to unfold, and then all of a sudden, we said, “Aha! Here's where the Torah referred to it.” And that's the way we have to look at all the Biblical prophecies. We can't really say ahead of time how the scenario is going to unfold. One thing we know for sure: the Rebbe told us in no uncertain terms that “*Higia Z'man*

Geulaschem” (“The time of your Redemption has arrived”), that Moshiach's coming is imminent, and that there is no rational explanation for the delay.

So we don't really need to have *this* event happen, or *that* event happen, in order for the Redemption to occur. I think we have to be very careful to not take away from the intensity of what the Rebbe said by

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pointing to various signs that point to some future date. Those signs only exist only to enhance that we which we already heard, years ago, from the Rebbe – i.e., that Moshiach's coming is imminent. Sometimes, people even feel that a sign detracts from the strength and intensity of our *emuna*.

In fact, say you're taking a trip, and looking out for signs to indicate

that you're getting closer to the city of your destination. If you reach the city and then see a sign that tells you that you are within five miles of the city, you get worried: “Maybe I went to far already!?” I missed my destination, and I have to go back. So too, we have to realize that the signs are not as strong as the words that the Rebbe himself uttered. The Rebbe told us that they are a “*nevua*,” a prophecy, that Moshiach's coming is now more than just a hope, an aspiration, and a belief – which we always had – but that it's something that is imminent, and that if anything doesn't make sense, it's not that Moshiach can come right now, but that he is delaying.

So, in that spirit, when we talk about what is going to happen and how things are going to play out, we should never take this to mean that the scenario has to follow any specific order, and that it can't happen before.

Having said all that, one thing is clear – that this war is definitely connected to the revelation of Moshiach and the complete Redemption. And we hope that it will not have to delay even one more day.

Rabbi Gold: Is there a specific hint for us in the Rebbe's statement that “*Od chazon la'moed*”? Is there some specific hint in that statement that should inspire us in a particular way to deal with what is happening in the world today and with which we can bring Moshiach faster?

Rabbi Greenberg: In that talk that the Rebbe gave during the year 5751, which you made reference to before, the Rebbe spoke about Bavel, Babylonia. We know that modern day Iraq and Iran occupy the ancient empires of Persia and Babylonia. Iraq, in particular, is associated with Babylonia. The Rebbe explains that name Babylonia comes from the Hebrew word Bavel, which means *confusion*. There are things that confound and confuse us, that distract

us from our march towards Moshiach. There are things that stand in the way of our living a life that is in accordance with the Torah and *mitzvos*. After all, what is Moshiach? Moshiach is not some magical waving of the wand that will transform the world instantaneously into some type of fantasyland, some type of an unrealistic type of existence. That's not what Moshiach is in Judaism. Moshiach is when the world will become a good, mature, holy world, where G-d's plan for the world will come to fruition, where we will see G-dliness and live in accordance with that vision.

What does that mean in practical terms?

It means, as the Rebbe said, that we should live *now* the way we will live when the *Geula* will be complete. Our aspirations should be nobler, our commitment to Torah should be more complete, our observance of the *mitzvos* should be more meticulous, our relationships with others should be more wholesome, our *ahavas Yisroel* should be more intense and more profound. Every aspect of Judaism should be deeper, broader, and should be extended to others, as well.

And that is something that Moshiach is all about, as the Rebbe emphasized over and over. Sure, we have to believe that Moshiach is a person, and we believe that that person is the *nasi ha'dor*, the leader of the generation. These are things that we certainly have to believe in and accept as part of the process of Redemption. But what is the follow-up to that? That we have to follow Moshiach's instructions. It's like the Midrash that says that when G-d gave us the Ten Commandments, the first thing He said was, "First accept My monarchy, and afterwards you will receive My commandments." In other words, G-d was saying, "Once you

accept me, I can give you instructions, but not before you accept me." This is because if you give instructions to people who have not accepted you as their leader, as their authority, then sometimes those instructions will be followed and sometimes they won't be followed, and they don't have the

There's a Zohar that, right before the Geula, the towers of a great city will be destroyed, and in relation to this tragedy a great leader will come to the fore and will start wars, but then Moshiach will take over from that great leader. In other words, as great as any American or world leader can be, they don't replace Moshiach, and they can't do everything perfectly.

same depth.

The same thing is true about Moshiach, about a leader, about a king. The first thing we have to do is accept the authority of that leader, of Moshiach, and *then* we follow his instructions. And we *know* what the

Rebbe's instructions are, and they are very clear. That we have to increase in goodness and kindness – this was said to journalists, and was a more universal way of saying, "Live in accordance with the days of Moshiach," "Live a *Moshiachdike* life," to put it in the Yiddish-English vernacular. And that has not changed.

One more thing: We have to also learn about Moshiach, because the learning is what makes us appreciate the difference between exile and Redemption, and you can only live a "redemptive" life if you know what it is.

Rabbi Gold: Rabbi Greenberg, you were talking about accepting the Rebbe as the ultimate authority on Torah and all other issues. So, I want to ask you if you can speak for a minute or two about a specific situation that is now being connected to the war in Iraq – the so-called "Road Map" that they are now speaking about, the so-called path to peace in the Middle East that is developing from all this. Can you touch on this subject briefly? After all, the Rebbe has very clear instructions regarding *shleimus ha'Aretz*. So, what can we expect right now? The president and the prime minister of England are now discussing the Post Gulf War II era, and saying that the next step would be peace in the Middle East. Can you tell us the Rebbe's clear instructions about this issue?

Rabbi Greenberg: Part of the process of Redemption is to do the things that are consistent with Redemption. What is Moshiach going to do? As I mentioned before, Moshiach is going to bring the world to a state where we will be able to observe the *mitzvos* properly and we will study Torah without distraction – everything will be more complete, more whole. One of the things that we cannot compromise on – it would be contrary to the whole vision of Moshiach, as well as a contradiction

to Jewish law – is the wholeness and integrity of Eretz Yisroel, the holy land of Israel.

The Jewish people cannot compromise their right to that land, which they possess not because of some UN resolution, and not because of some Balfour Declaration, and not because of an historical connection to Israel. It's true that we do have all of these things, but it's way beyond that. G-d gave us the land and said: It's your land because this is what the Jewish people are all about. They're all about being a part of Eretz Yisroel. That is the place where they live their lives in the most complete way. That's where the Beis HaMikdash is going to be rebuilt, and that's where it stood in the past. We don't have a right to compromise it. In addition to the security reasons, the fact is that this is our land. Anytime we talk about

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compromising the integrity of Jewish rule over Eretz Yisroel, we are in a way, compromising our preparedness for Moshiach, because it is contradictory to the whole idea of Moshiach, in addition to it being contradictory to Torah and *mitzvos*, which is really synonymous with Moshiach.

There's no question that as much as we're grateful to the United States and grateful to President Bush for all that he has done for this country and for the world by ridding the world of this menace, this modern-day Pharaoh, this modern-day

Haman, this modern-day Amalek – and all the other names that are suitable for Saddam Hussein and his following – nevertheless, it's not a question of having respect or not having respect, but rather, that neither the President or any other king or leader can change that which G-d Himself has said – that the lands of Israel belongs to the Jewish people, and that cannot change.

There are various sources that describe the greatness of Moshiach over all leaders. For example, there's a Zohar that people were quoting a while back, in relation to the Twin Towers, which says that [right before the *Geula*], the towers of a great city will be destroyed, and in relation to this tragedy a great leader will come to the fore and will start wars, but then Moshiach will take over from that great leader. In other words, as great as any American or world leader can be, they don't replace Moshiach, and they can't do everything perfectly. We have to stand strong and demand for the benefit of Israel and the benefit of America, and for the preparedness that we have to show for Israel, that we cannot compromise on such important matters.

(To be continued.)

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THROUGH AVODA ONE ARRIVES AT THE STATE WHERE HE DESIRES IT

TRANSLATED BY RABBI SHIMON NEUBORT



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

7. The Alter Rebbe was an *atzmi*. An *atzmi* is constantly connected to *Atzmus*, and he reveals *Atzmus*. This revelation is in two aspects. The Alter Rebbe opened up the *Chochma*, *Bina*, and *Daas* in the souls of *chassidim* through *avoda* in actual deed, revealing that the actual deed of *chassidim* consists of the *avoda* of intellectual contemplation and taking stock of one's soul regarding all periods and times in his past. The first of these periods is when one approaches manhood, and the later period is when he has already become a man.

The Mittlerer Rebbe says that one must do *t'shuva* also for [transgressions done] before the time of his *bar mitzva*. That is, [one must do *t'shuva*] for things that he did unwittingly and things that he did when he was [as incapable of moral deliberation] as an animal. But [even if he does not do *t'shuva*] he is not liable to punishment [for things he did before *bar mitzva*]. In fact, there are differences in the

punishment [for things done] at the age of thirteen years, and at the age of twenty years [see also *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chayim*, end of Ch. 343; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Choshen Mishpat*, Ch. 349, and references cited there].

8. There are two periods in which each person – according to his station and situation – approaches manhood, and then becomes a man. In my case, the period of approaching manhood was in the year 5648, when I heard from my father the *maamer* “*Ein HaKadosh Baruch Hu Ba BiTronya*.” The period when I became a man began for me in the year 5611, when I heard from my father the statement: “Our Rebbeim educated the congregation of *Chabad* in the idea that each teaching is an intellectual accomplishment in Torah, and each gesture is a lesson in conduct.”

9. This occurred at a *farbrengen*: My saintly father the Rebbe was then reciting an installment of the

maamer “*Tik'u 5650*,” and my uncle, Raza, recited Grandfather's *maamer V'Asisa Tzitz*. It was an excellent *farbrengen*, and there were present at the time Reb Yehoshua of Cherson, Reb Asher of Nicholaev, and others. Reb Asher requested of Father: “Rebbe! Recite the *maamer* that your father, the Rebbe, recited on Purim Katan 5635.”

Father leaned upon his arms and wept profusely. After that, we sang a heartfelt *niggun*, and Father recited the *maamer* “*V'Kibbel HaYehudim*.” This *maamer* explains that all the Jews at that time were in a state of *mesirus nefesh* for a whole year. Mordechai and his twenty-two thousand disciples revealed the power of *mesirus nefesh* among the Jews: whatever the body and the animal soul desires to do, through *avoda* one arrives at the state where he does not desire it; and whatever the body and the animal soul does not desire to do, through *avoda* one arrives at the state where he *does* desire it, and he does it in actual deed.

After the *farbrengen*, my tutor, Reb Nissan, explained to me – within my capacity to understand – the concept of *avoda* with *mesirus*

nefesh.

10. Because of my father's tears and his praying for Heaven's mercy regarding my education, I was fortunate to have good *melamdin*. My first *melamed* was Reb Yekusiel. His wife's grandfather had been one of the Alter Rebbe's *chassidim*. Reb Yekusiel taught me Alef-Beis. It was his habit each day after the class to tell a story about the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples. Whenever he told a story we would gather around him and gaze at his mouth. This caused [the story to make] a strong impression upon us. One of our worst punishments was to have to stand behind Reb Yekusiel while he was telling a story.

My second *melamed* was Reb Shimshon. The Tzemach Tzedek had said to him: "Become a *melamed*, and I will give you two of my grandsons to teach." But he was a harsh person, and would beat us for no good reason.

My third *melamed* was Reb Nissan, and I have much to thank him for. I have related on numerous occasions that he made me rich in stories about holy people, and also instilled in me inner vitality regarding writing my diary.

My fourth *melamed* was the *chassid* and master of *avoda*, Reb Shmuel Betzalel. Rashbatz stood on a higher level than the others, both in his knowledge and in his *avoda*. My Rebbe Rashbatz possessed a particularly delicate and profound faculty of understanding, and an ability to explain each story with an inner-Chabad style of elucidation. Rashbatz also had a special ability to illustrate the assets and accomplishments of the *chassidim* whom he had known. He became my tutor in the year 5654.

Through my father's tears and his arousing Heavenly mercy, I was fortunate to have success in my upbringing from my childhood

years. Father did much to encourage the development of my talents, including the use of various playthings that significantly promote the development of the faculties of understanding and illustration.

11. The *chassid* Reb Zalman Zlatapolsky was a *chassid* of my grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash. Whenever he came to Lubavitch,

***Whatever the body
and the animal soul
desires to do, through
avoda one arrives at
the state where he
does not desire it; and
whatever the body
and the animal soul
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arrives at the state
where he does desire
it, and he does it in
actual deed.***

Grandfather would say *chassidus* especially for him. One time, in the year 5637, the Rebbe Maharash recited for him the *maamer* he had recited in public the previous Shabbos. But in the year 5638, he recited a separate *maamer*, especially for him.

In the middle of a *maamer*, the Rebbe Maharash would often say a few words that had nothing at all to

do with the *maamer* itself. In the above *maamer* of 5638, Grandfather elucidated the teaching of the Sages [Bava Basra 10a], "Rabbi Eliezer would give a penny to the poor, and after that he would pray." He explained: Prayer must be recited with vitality and life. And by giving [a penny] to a poor person before praying, and thereby saving his life, we add much vitality and life to the prayer. [While saying this] he gestured with an upward motion of his holy hand. This was his habitual way of hinting by gesture of his hand for every subject where he wished to indicate that it was in great profusion.

12. Besides possessing intellectual faculties and an unrestrained *chassidic* heart, the *chassid* Reb Zalman Zlatapolsky was very patient and orderly. And he was a devoted adherent of my grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash. Everything that Reb Zalman did was done with patience, after intellectual consideration. His approach to everything was with the *Chabad* style of intellectual order. He had a special schedule regarding his traveling to Lubavitch, the time he spent with the Rebbe and how long he should remain there, and when he should depart from Lubavitch.

Reb Zalman was one of the outstanding intellectuals in *chassidus* and masters of *avoda*, for whom the trip to Lubavitch, hearing *chassidus*, and going in for *yechidus* was an experience of the soul. For them, this experience occupied the highest place in their life history. For serious *chassidim* who are masters of intellect and *avoda*, the schedule of their journey to and from Lubavitch was an experience of the soul. Each of the imposing *chassidim* would stop over in certain towns and villages during his trip to Lubavitch and on the return trip, to transmit to the *chassidim* what he

had heard in Lubavitch and to repeat the *maamarim* he had heard. They would then make a *farbrengen*. But the real reception occurred when he arrived at home. All *Chabad chassidim* – regardless of whether they were wealthy or poor, either in material things or in spiritual matters of knowledge and *avoda* – would participate in this joyous affair.

Once, at a *chassidic farbrengen* held as a reception for the guest when Reb Zalman returned from Lubavitch, he repeated a statement that my grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash, had said in the middle of

a *maamer*: “If one restores physical life to a Jew by giving him something to eat, he is rewarded with both material and spiritual things.”

When the *chassid* Reb Chayim Ber heard this statement, he made it part of his routine that before *davening* he would often give food to the travelers and the regular poor people so they would have something to eat after *davening*. My saintly father the Rebbe said to me that this inner devotion and dedication of the *chassid* Reb Chayim Ber to the Rebbe Maharash placed him in a situation of success

in the *avoda* of the intellect and the heart.

The *chassidic baalei battim* of previous generations implanted in their children, both sons and daughters, devotion and dedication to the Rebbe, so that they would ask the Rebbe’s advice about all of their affairs, including family and business affairs. They did everything according to the Rebbe’s instructions. This had beneficial results both for themselves and for members of their household.

(To be continued.)

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NO OTHER EXPLANATION OTHER THAN: HE IS MOSHIACH

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



The meeting had been set months before, and the group of five Chabad women had been waiting almost twenty minutes in the reception room outside the office door of Knesset member Sara Doron, anxious to present their well-prepared case regarding the law called *Mihu Yehudi*. But these women were in for a surprise...

Mrs. Doron came out of her office, briskly announced that she had another meeting, and abandoned the astonished women with only her secretary to complain to, which they did with a gusto.

After listening to their grievances for several minutes, the secretary quietly said: "Oh, you are Lubavitchers, right? I know the Rebbe of Lubavitch. He is the Moshiach!"

The women were shocked and furious; this woman was mocking them! Adding insult to injury!

My wife, who was in the group, looked at the secretary and asked her in a bewildered tone, "Tell me, are you joking? If so, you're not very funny!"

"No, No! Certainly not!" the lady answered. "I really mean it, he is the

Moshiach – I'm sure. Let me explain."

The women were really in no mood for stories, but on the other hand, why not? They looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders and agreed.

The secretary began apologetically. "I know that I don't look very religious," she said, "but believe me, since this story happened, I eat only kosher and even keep Shabbos.

It happened like this. Five years ago I visited some friends in the U.S.A., in California. One late afternoon I was driving to a party in my convertible, alone on the freeway, watching the sunset, listening to music and feeling great, when I had this feeling that something was wrong.

I looked at my watch, and I realized what it was. It was already after eight o'clock. The party was supposed to be a twenty-minute drive from where I was staying, and I had been driving for over an hour! It was getting darker and darker outside, and as far as my headlights lit up, all that could be seen was desert.

I figured that I must have missed my exit or something, so I turned the car around and headed back. But the more I tried to correct my mistake, the more lost I got, and not only that, but the road was empty; no cars were passing by from either side.

At first I wasn't worried, but after another hour of driving in the dark and not getting anywhere – and I was getting low on gas – I started to get nervous.

Anyway, I decided all was not lost. I could always flag down a car for help, right? So I pulled over to the side of the road, turned on the light inside the car so people would see me, and began flashing my lights at oncoming cars.

But this didn't work either. First, there were very few cars. Second, the ones that passed didn't stop, and finally when this big truck did stop, two huge men got out laughing and shouting obscenities. So I put the car in gear, and drove away as fast as I could.

Now I was really scared, petrified. I even started crying and prayed out loud for help. But it didn't help. A few minutes later the gas ran out and I coasted to the side

of the road, alone in the middle of the desert.

Then, after about a half an hour it started getting cold. I don't know if you have ever been in the desert at night, but its like winter, and after a while with no heater I was really shivering. I was alone, frightened, and it was at least eight hours till dawn. I began really crying. I lost control completely. I was sure that this would be the end of me.

I had no blanket, the seats didn't even have covers, or I would have wrapped myself in them. I just curled up in a ball and kept saying, "Oy *Imaleh* (mommy)! Please, please someone help me."

I lost track of time, but it must have been an hour until suddenly I saw a car coming! I began flashing my lights again like crazy and praying that everything would be all right.

The car stopped.

It stopped a good distance from my car. The door opened and three men got out, all dressed in black, and one of them had in his hand a gun!

They were still a bit far away. My heart was pounding like a drum. I still had a chance. I jumped out of my car and thought that I would run, but all that came out was a scream, "*SHMA YISROEL!*"

The man with the gun yelled back quickly,

"*Shma Yisroel Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad!*"

They were Chabadniks from California who were planning to travel to some convention early in the morning, but received an urgent phone call from the Lubavitch Rebbe's office to set off immediately. They thought it was weird to begin their journey at night, especially with no sleep, and arrive eight hours before the convention, but the

Rebbe, they said, never makes a mistake.

I'm sure that the Rebbe sent them to save me. I mean, there is no other explanation. They gave me gas from their tank, escorted me home, and calmed me down. They were wonderful.

But then I started to think, how did the Rebbe know about me? And why would he even care about me? I mean, I wasn't at all observant. So I decided that there is no other explanation other than: he is the

Now I was really scared, petrified. I even started crying and prayed out loud for help. But it didn't help. A few minutes later the gas ran out and I coasted to the side of the road, alone in the middle of the desert.

Moshiach. He felt that I was in trouble. He must care about everyone.

After that, I wrote a letter of thanks to him, and he wrote me back asking me to please begin to strengthen the Jewish people and myself and keep some of the commandments. So I did."

Then the secretary took a deep breath, looked at all the ladies, gave a big smile, and said: "Wow! Thanks for listening to my story!"

The group of women now understood the real reason for their visit to the Knesset.

* * *

This week's section is called "In the Desert," and it is a preparation for the holiday of Shavuot, "The giving of the Torah."

The Midrash gives several reasons why G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people in the desert. One is because the desert is free territory; anyone who wants it can live there, teaching us that we should rejoice in the knowledge that the Torah is similarly free for all who want it.

Another reason is that the desert is all sand, teaching us that one must be humble like the earth in order to learn Torah.

Yet a third reason is that although the desert is a wasteland, nevertheless G-d provided the Jewish people with food, water, clothing, and housing, telling us that in order to learn Torah one must trust in G-d for his livelihood.

A fourth is that just as the desert is a full of snakes and scorpions, so must Torah scholars be cautious of their own bad impulses and never be overconfident.

These four reasons, however, are not so clear.

First: Why would G-d want to suggest that the Torah is ownerless like a desert? The Torah is the possession of the Jewish people!

Second: Why would G-d want to compare the Torah to the sand of the desert from which nothing grows? The Torah should be compared to good fertile earth.

Third: Why do we need the desert to learn to trust G-d? The desert is not the only desolate place in the world. There are (unfortunately) homeless and starving people everywhere.

Fourth: Dangerous animals,

snakes, etc., exist elsewhere (in fact, humans beings are even more dangerous!). We don't need the desert to teach us not to be overconfident.

In other words, G-d could have given the Torah in Egypt or in Eretz Yisroel, for example, and the Jews could have learned all these moral lessons there. Why specifically the desert?

The answer to these questions is that only in the desert could G-d teach the Jews devotion to Moshe Rabbeinu. Without complete devotion to Moshe it is impossible for the Jews to wholeheartedly observe the Torah and its commandments. (In fact, we see that the very moment that they believed that Moshe was gone, they built the Golden Calf and forgot all they had learned.) And the desert is the only place that this could be done.

In the desert, the Jews were isolated and completely dependent on Moshe for leadership. There he could teach and inspire them without interruptions, and bring the Torah into every aspect of their souls, as only he knew how to do.

The reason that only Moshe could do this is that Moshe was a special gift of G-d to the Jewish people. He was the *Raaya Mehemna*, a Shepherd of Faith, and a "man of G-d" (D'varim 33:1), so united with Hashem, that he, and only he, knew exactly how to inspire and increase

They thought it was weird to begin their journey at night, especially with no sleep, and arrive eight hours before the convention, but the Rebbe, they said, never makes a mistake.

faith and enthusiasm in each and every Jew according to his or her individual nature.

In fact, the Zohar tells us that every generation must have a leader like Moshe (the Rebbe, of course, in this generation), and without such a person the Jews are like lost sheep without a shepherd.

So now we can understand the four aforementioned factors in a new light: How only the desert can teach us how to connect to Moshe.

First, the fact that the desert is ownerless, teaches us that the Torah in its essence can never be possessed, for it belongs only to Hashem. Only Moshe could teach this, because Hashem's Torah came

through him and did not change at all; it always remained G-d's Torah.

Second, from the barren desert sand we can learn true humility as was found only in Moshe Rabbeinu. The Rebbe MH"M explains that Moshe was the most humble man on earth (Numbers 12:3), because he felt that he himself was nothing, barren as the sand; all his qualities of leadership, wisdom and devotion were only gifts from G-d (and in his estimation, others would have surely used them better).

Third, the *mahn* that they ate, Miriam's well that they drank from, and the Clouds of Glory that protected them in the desert were all in the merit of Moshe (Taanis 9a). Teaching us that if we trust the Moshe of our generation, Hashem will provide for us and protect us.

Finally, Moshe showed them repeatedly in the desert (at the Yam Suf, the Golden Calf, Korach, The spies, the *mahn*, etc.) that even the *tzaddikim* should not be overconfident, and the real wild animals one must be wary of exist in one's own personality.

So everything – the Torah, ourselves, in fact, the entire world – depends on Moshe Rabbeinu, and (like the secretary in our story) we can learn it all from the desert.

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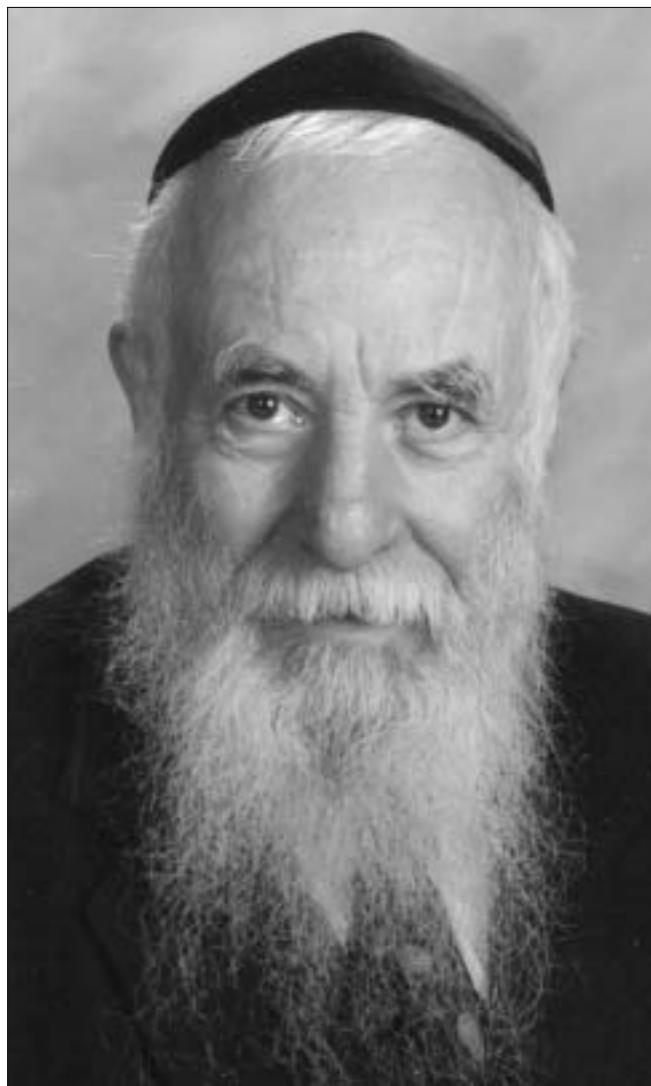
PREPARED BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ

*The Rebbe Rayatz arrived in the U.S. on 9 Adar 5700 (1940) and founded Tomchei T'mimim. * One of the talmidim of those early years, who slept on the first floor of 770 and witnessed many special events of those times, was Rabbi Yosef Goldstein (Uncle Yossi), who presently lives in California. * The following is Part One of his memoirs which he gave to Beis Moshiach.*

“When I was three years old, my parents decided to leave Providence, Rhode Island, where we were the only religious Jews, and to move to New York in order to be able to live Jewish lives. It wasn't easy, because that year, 5690 (1930), was the height of the Depression. The economy was in bad shape and the currency was severely devalued, so that every businessman tried to protect his business. Yet my father sold his business in Providence and moved to N.Y. without knowing how he would support his family there.

My parents made this decision upon the advice of a number of *Admurim* who regularly visited our home on their way from N.Y. to Boston (see box), who told my parents that Providence wasn't a suitable place for *frum* Jews.

We arrived in N.Y. and settled in Boro Park. In those days, there were only two *yeshivos* in Boro Park. One





was a modern Zionist school called Eitz Chayim, and the other one was Toras Emes. At first, my father wanted to register my older brothers in Eitz Chayim, but it cost too much, so they registered in Toras Emes instead. When I grew older, I too went to Toras Emes.

In those days, Rabi Yisroel Jacobson, one of the distinguished Chabad *chassidim* in the U.S., ran the *yeshiva*, and all Chabad *chassidim* in N.Y., like the Posner, Simpson, Rivkin, and other families, sent their children to this *yeshiva*. This was the case for about ten years, until 5701 (1941).

That year was very difficult. The administration of the *yeshiva* couldn't pay the teachers on time, and when they finally paid it was only eighteen dollars a week. When they weren't paid for a long time, they left. The high rate of turnover made it difficult for me to connect with my teachers, in addition to the fact that we weren't on the same

The next day I brought him a thermos of coffee and he thanked me a great deal and told me how I had revived him. From time to time I tried to bring him rolls and other food to sustain him. Our relationship was that of teacher and student, but it was a wonderful friendship.

wavelength, they being Litvaks, graduates of Mir and Slabodka, while I was all-American.

A TEACHER OF THE PREVIOUS GENERATION

One day everything changed. That morning the classroom door opened and there stood a new teacher. Later on I found out that he was Rabbi Shmuel Zalmanov. There was no comparison between him and the previous teachers. He had the appearance of a Jew from a previous generation. He wore a long coat and a black hat, and he had a long, beautiful beard. He had a *hadras panim*, the likes of which I had seen only in history books, and as soon as he walked into the room I stood up in awe. I felt myself drawn to him as to a magnet. His manner and speech were friendly and gentle, and I could sense how everything was done out of great love. From day to day my attachment and love for him grew.

During recess I noticed him

leaning his head on the table. I didn't know if he was sleeping or just thinking, but he usually appeared frail. I went over to him and asked whether he felt all right, and he asked me to fetch him something to drink. I ran and got him a cup of water.

The next day I brought him a thermos of coffee and he thanked me a great deal and told me how I had revived him. From time to time I tried to bring him rolls and other food to sustain him. Our relationship was that of teacher and student, but it was a wonderful friendship.

One day he disappeared. I took it very hard since I had become so attached to him, and I began to investigate what had happened to him. I discovered that R' Shmuel was one of the big *chassidim* of the Rebbe Rayatz who had been appointed to be secretary in the Rebbe's *yeshiva*, Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim. That's when I heard of Tomchei T'mimim for the first time, and I thought to myself that if this *yeshiva* was good for my esteemed teacher, then it was certainly good for me!

This resolution, however, remained just a thought, for R' Shmuel Zalmanov's replacement was also a Lubavitcher, R' Yitzchok Dovber Ushpal, and I became friendly with him too, no less and perhaps more than with my previous teacher. I saw this as Divine providence, that Hashem was sending me angels to raise me out of the mud.

R' Ushpal's material circumstances were very poor. He came to class with torn pants and shoes, like a war refugee. He was very *mesudar* (orderly) and clean, but in tatters, since he had nothing else.

I visited him and was shocked to see a house that had no furniture. Instead of chairs he had some crates

that also served as a table. I spoke with some friends and we got him a mattress, chairs, and a table.

He greatly befriended me. One day he said to me: "Yossel, you're a good boy and I have a present for you." It was a volume of *maamarim* which he began learning with me. We learned in his home. This was my first connection with Chabad *chassidus*.

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At my *bar mitzva* my father gave me a gold watch. When I learned with R' Ushpal, I noticed that when he wanted to know what time it was, he had to ask me for he didn't have enough money to buy a watch, even a plain one. I thought it wasn't right for me to have such a nice watch while he had to ask me what time it was. I thought of giving him my watch as a gift, but I was afraid he

would be insulted. I finally approached him and begged him to accept the watch, for I was grateful for his learning *chassidus* with me. He refused to take it, of course, but I insisted until he finally took it.

Thus, a few happy months went by until he left for Tomchei T'mimim, too. At that point I said to myself: and why shouldn't I go, too?

THE FIRST TRIP TO THE REBBE RAYATZ

My parents didn't agree, of course. In those years, a trip from Boro Park to Crown Heights wasn't simple. You had to change a few trains, and it wasn't the thing for a thirteen-year-old to do every day. And the price was prohibitive too at five cents a ride. It was only after "holy stubbornness" on my part that my parents agreed to let me switch to Tomchei T'mimim, but on condition that I stay in the dormitory so I wouldn't have to travel every day.

I went to *yeshiva*. This was the first time I was traveling by train and I went over to ask how to get to Eastern Parkway. The man told me where to get off, at what was the first stop on Eastern Parkway and called the Eastern Parkway stop, which was a half-hour walk from 770!

I left the subway and saw an impressive building and I was thrilled, thinking I was going to attend *yeshiva* in such a beautiful building. I quickly realized my error, discovering this was the public library. I asked a number of people how to get to 770, and they told me I needed to walk another twenty blocks.

I arrived at 770 and stood in wonder once again. I had expected to see a large *shul*, yet this was a house! Yes, an ordinary house, like all the houses there. Just as I walked into 770 a large celebration was



Rabbi Shmuel Zalmanov

taking place for a raffle for learning Mishnayos by heart. I later learned that the Rebbe Rayatz wanted to purify the air of America by means of the saying of Mishnayos by heart, and in order to motivate the *chassidim* they would raffle off Mesechtos of Mishnayos in the Rebbe's presence.

The Rebbe sat on the dais, the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach on his left, and Rashag on his right. Truly, a sight to behold. Rabbi Zalmanov, my



R' Yitzchok Dovber Ushpal

former teacher, noticed me immediately and called me. He introduced me to R' Eliyahu Simpson, the Rebbe Rayatz's secretary at that time, and I was registered in the *yeshiva*. I began learning in R' Ushpal's class in 770.

I mentioned Mivtza Mishnayos B'al Peh, and I recall the Rebbe Rayatz sitting on his chair on the small porch on the second floor (above where the large *sukka* of 770 is) and reviewing Mishnayos.

The Rebbe MH" M once said: It's a *kal v'chomer*. If the air around the Rebbe is like Gan Eden (like it says about Yaakov, "the scent of my son is like the scent of the field which Hashem blessed") yet he sees fit to purify the air, then how much more so for us, in the air we find ourselves in, that we need to review Mishnayos.

THE DORMITORY

The sleeping problem was solved unexpectedly. In those years, shortly after they bought 770, the Rebbe Rayatz lived on the second floor, his son-in-law, Rashag, on the third floor, while the first floor remained empty at night (at that time there weren't *bachurim* hanging around at night). Being that this was the case, Rabbi Berel Chaskind asked me to sleep in 770. He chose me because I was an American who spoke English well and conducted myself properly, so if a policeman or mailman would come, I'd know how to deal with them. I got the key to one of the rooms on the first floor, a room that later became Rabbi Dovid Raskin's office.

That's how I had the *z'chus* to sleep in 770 for a long period of time. I brought all my things to my new room. They included my clothes and the *maamarim* that R' Avrohom Pariz would publish. In those days printing was very expensive, and he would use a copying machine. These *maamarim* were all I owned, and I

didn't want to leave them at home. At that time, when a *maamer* came out, it was "bread from the heavens." Till this day I have a bundle of *tzukvetchte maamarim* (crumpled *maamarim*), which is what they were called since they were folded and put in one's pocket to be learned wherever one found oneself, on the train, on the bus, etc. That was its beauty: the more crumpled it was, the more it showed it had been learned.

The year I came to 770, 5702, it was after the *histalkus* of Rebbetzin Shterna Sarah, the mother of the Rebbe Rayatz, and I had the *z'chus* of being part of the *minyán* that *davened* upstairs with the Rebbe Rayatz. Aside from myself there were a few other *chassidim* who *davened* in the *minyán* regularly, such as Rabbi Nachum Sklar, Rabbi Avrohom Pariz (who came from Boro Park), and Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson. Till this day I treasure the precious moments I merited to have in the presence of the Rebbe Rayatz. I especially recall the sight of the Rebbe MH" M standing and taking in every move the Previous Rebbe made.

Those years were really days of light. Those who had the *z'chus* of being in 770 in those years were able to absorb *chayus* for a lifetime. *Chassidim* came from afar in order to eat at the Rebbe's table on Shabbos and Yom Tov. The Lubavitch *k'hilla* in Crown Heights numbered a few dozen *chassidim*, but they came from other neighborhoods, too. *Chassidim*, like R' Pariz, R' Rivkin, and R' Cunin, ate at home and then walked from Boro Park to *farbreng* with the Rebbe until the wee hours.

Forty to fifty people attended these *farbrengens*, but relative to the room in which the Rebbe *farbrenged* in on the second floor, it was a large group. We once came to the *farbrengen* only to find the door locked. We learned that the Rebbe's

doctors said that the room shouldn't be overcrowded, so it wouldn't get too stuffy (there were no air conditioners then, and when a few dozen people were in the room, it got very warm). They had a system

whereby a few *chassidim* entered, and after some time they left and other *chassidim* took their place. It often happened that in the middle of a *sicha* there were knocks at the door. These were *chassidim* who

stood outside who wanted some *chassidim* to come out so they could go in.

We usually knocked quietly so as not to interrupt the *farbrengen*. One

GROWING UP AMONG ADMURIM

I was born on 24 Iyar 5687 (1927), in Providence, Rhode Island. My father was Moshe Yehuda Goldstein, who was nicknamed “*Der Shomer Shabbos*,” and my mother was Chaya Malka.

My grandfather, my mother's father, R' Yaakov Yitzchok Goldman, *a”h*, who came from Anipol, was a Jew with a white beard, an outstanding “*chassidic* prototype.” He owned many *sifrei chassidus*, among them the *Tanya* and *Kuntres Eitz Chayim* of the Rebbe Rashab, and he valued them greatly.

My grandfather came to America in 1900 where he married and settled in Pawtucket, Rhode Island. He supported his family by means of a print shop, and when he made enough money he devoted the main part of his earnings and energy to *avodas ha'kodesh*.

He was a *melamed* and *shochet*, and since there was no *rav* in the city, he responded to the *halachic* questions that people asked him. The United States at that time was really very far from anything to do with *Yiddishkeit*, and today it's clear that any spark of Judaism in his city was mainly thanks to the arduous work he did.

In addition to his work with the community, he devoted a great deal of time to his children, and succeeded in giving them all a *chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh* despite the difficulties. He merited raising a family of children and grandchildren who were *yerei Shamayim*, and who remained that way despite the influences and enticements that surrounded them.

An incident that happened with my uncle Yehuda Leib Goldman, *a”h* (I'm Goldstein from my father's side and Goldman from my mother's side), serves as a good example to the strong *emuna* he implanted in his children. This uncle learned to play the violin, and he eventually became one of the greatest musicians in America. The conductor, Sergei Koussevitzky, took him as first violin in the Boston Philharmonic. My uncle was successful there and everything was fine until the issue of performances on Shabbos came up. They wanted him to play on Shabbos and they offered him all the money in the world so that he'd agree, but my uncle refused. He could have risen to the heights of his profession, but

he withstood this test and was not *mechalel Shabbos*.

My father met my mother in Boston, married her, and moved to Providence. My father was not a Chabad *chassid*, but he was the first to show the way in Providence since others did not keep Shabbos and even laughed at it. They certainly didn't have beards, and so my father was a *dugma chaya* for *Yiddishkeit*. My father did manual work in the house, which was the source of our income. The work he did was printing small items for customers. He chose to take his chances with a private venture, because in those days if you wanted to work for someone else, you had to be *mechalel Shabbos*.

In 5680 (1920) the material situation in Poland and Galicia was frightful, and *Admurim* of various communities left to fundraise in the U.S. They came by ship to New York as their first stop. The next stop was Boston, because both cities had a large Jewish population. The trip from N.Y. to Boston took twelve hours by train, and they had to stop to rest in Providence.

My father, Moshe Goldstein lived in Providence and he was the only one able to host them with kosher food in a true Jewish home. Thus our home was full of these *Admurim*, who spent Shabbos with us and *davened* in the little *shul* in the vicinity.

Those who accompanied the *Admurim* joined us at the Shabbos table and the *tish* with singing and *divrei Torah*. All this greatly strengthened my parents, who were the only religious Jews in the area. Whenever the *Admurim* came they left a *seifer* behind and learned a bit of *halacha* or other things with the family.

My mother, *a”h*, told me that when I was born (at home with the help of a midwife) she remembered that she gave birth in one room while the *Admurim* sat in the other room and recited T'hilim out loud. Certainly, my mother concluded, this *z'chus* enabled me to see children and grandchildren *oskim ba'Torah u'b'mitzvos* from you.

Providence is close to Newport, which has the first *shul* built in the U.S. in the time of President George Washington, who visited the *shul*. The government would renovate it every year and it later became a sort of museum which people visit from all over the world.



The Rebbe Rayatz and the Rebbe MH" data-bbox="228 431 487 446"/>

time, after we knocked a great deal but nobody came out, some of the *chassidim* began banging on the door. A few seconds later the Rebbe MH" opened the door and said that when they knocked strongly the Rebbe [Rayatz] had stopped speaking, smiled, and said that they knocked with "an *emes*." The Rebbe allowed some *chassidim* to enter, but I, as well as some others, remained outside.

We waited a few minutes and then began knocking again, but nobody responded. There were a few "*chachomim*" who decided to knock strongly again until the Rebbe Rayatz stopped the *sicha* again and told the Rebbe MH": Tell them that the time has already come when they can "take" from the walls there (i.e., the building of 770 was already suffused with *chassidus* and *k'dusha*, and even where we stood we were able to take *chayus* and *k'dusha* from the walls. When I say this today, I think that if this was the case in 5702-3, how much *k'dusha* and *Elokus* are there in 770 today?!).

"A MESSAGE FROM ABOVE"

The phrase "*lo raa me'oros mi'yamav*" (he never saw any luminaries in his lifetime) is not something I can say about myself, since I *did* see. In those years it was difficult for the Rebbe Rayatz to walk, and since it was not dignified to see him being wheeled in his

The Rebbe opened his eyes, looked at each one of us, and said: I stood up in the middle of the niggun in honor of the three guests [the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, and the Alter Rebbe].

wheelchair, the Rebbe MH" would enter the room where the Rebbe Rayatz *davened* first, before everybody else, and then leave last. When we entered the room, the Rebbe [Rayatz] was already sitting in his place with his face to the wall, so it wasn't possible to see the Rebbe in a wheelchair.

One day, after *davening*, the Rebbe asked us to wait, and they turned the chair around so that he could see us. The *chassidim* were shocked and wondered why the Rebbe was turning to view them. This scene is engraved in my mind till this day. Next to me stood R' Moshe Yitzchok Konikov, *a"h*.

The Rebbe Rayatz looked at everybody with a penetrating gaze. This was the first time that I saw the Rebbe in *tallis* and *t'fillin*. I suddenly understood what is meant by "light." I saw an illuminated countenance, a handsome face. The heavens simply opened and I saw a G-dly vision.

And if that wasn't enough, the Rebbe suddenly began to speak. His face burned like a flame and he began with, "*M'hut mir ibergigeben u'modia geven milmala*" (they told me from Above). He spoke about a day when you don't say *Tachnun*, you must say chapter 20 of *T'hilim*, not as part of the prayer service but as supplication (see this instruction in the *T'hillas Hashem siddur*, p. 190). I remember myself standing there, a young boy, like a golem, looking at someone who said he was informed from Above, a man with connections to the upper worlds.

Later on, when I had *yechidus* with the Rebbe MH", I wrote up what happened and concluded that to my great sorrow, despite the fact that I had seen the Rebbe in such an exalted state, I didn't budge...

The Rebbe read the note, gave me a sharp look and said: *R' Yossel af zich tor men oich nisht reddem lashon ha'ra* (one is not allowed to say

lashon ha'ra about oneself).

Another scene which I will never forget happened that same year on Shavuos. The Rebbe Rayatz said we should sing the Niggun of Three Movements, and in the middle of the niggun he suddenly rose from his wheelchair, supported himself with his hands, and stood up!

At that moment everybody rose and stood rooted to their spots. I stood next to the Rebbe's table, facing the Rebbe. The Rebbe stood with eyes closed and sang along as tears poured down his face. It was an awesome sight that I cannot describe in words. A few minutes later, the Rebbe stopped singing and sat down. Everybody sat and it was absolutely silent. We expected the Rebbe to say something, for we had never seen anything like this before.

The Rebbe opened his eyes, looked at each one of us, and said: I stood up in the middle of the niggun in honor of the three guests [the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid, and the Alter Rebbe].

TIME OF WAR

Between the years of 5700 and 5705, the war years of World War II, the army did practice drills for civilians in the event that New York would be attacked by enemy planes. From time to time they would sound an alarm and everybody had to extinguish all lights and darken their houses [for years afterward you could see the nails in the sides of the windows of the small zal in 770 on which they hung curtains]. Policemen went about the streets during this time and those people who did not darken their homes were heavily fined.

I remember that once, during a siren, the assistants entered the room of the Rebbe Rayatz to shut the light. The Rebbe MH"M was in the room at that time and he looked out the window where you could see



The letter the Rebbe Rayatz wrote to R' Yosef Goldstein in which he refers him to his son-in-law, the Rebbe MH"M

searchlights checking to see whether any enemy planes were present.

Suddenly the Rebbe Rayatz sighed. The Rebbe turned around immediately to see what had happened, and the Rebbe Rayatz said, "Vos vil men fun main tzeit?" (what do they want from my time?), because this went on sometimes for

twenty minutes and the Rebbe was bemoaning the waste of time.

WORKING IN THE REBBE'S ROOM

Being a *ben bayis* in 770, Rebbetzin Nechama Dina appointed me to bring food from the kitchen to the home of the Rebbe MH"M, which was in the building on the corner of President and New York. The house number was 346, and we had a *siman* for it, "*shmo ha'gadol*" ("His great name," with "*shmo*" being numerically equivalent to 346). In this way a special closeness with the Rebbe was developed.

With the coming of the Rebbe MH"M to New York, the Merkas L'Inyanei Chinuch was founded, and one of its first projects was printing *Talks and Tales*. I once heard the Rebbe MH"M complain to R' Sholom Mendel Simpson: "*Ich darf alein leigin di Talks und Tales in di envelops un ich darf alein leigin di stempis. Mistama*

Suddenly the Rebbe Rayatz sighed. The Rebbe turned around immediately to see what had happened, and the Rebbe Rayatz said, "What do they want from my time?"

darf ich leigin in post oich..." (I have to put the *Talks and Tales* into envelopes myself, and stick the stamps on myself. I'll probably have to take them to the post office, too.)

In those days the Rebbe had no help, because there were very few *bachurim* and they were tremendous *masmidim*, and so the Rebbe spoke very sharply.

Since I had heard the Rebbe say that, I approached him and suggested that I do the work, and that I would do it in my room so as not to disturb the Rebbe. The Rebbe said he agreed to my helping him, but he wanted me to work in his room.

I worked in a corner of the room, and as I did so, I observed the Rebbe

to see what he was doing. At that time, *kuntreisim* of the Rebbe Rashab were being published, and the Rebbe edited the material with a pencil. He stood with one leg on a chair and the other leg on the floor, and he worked. In response to my request, the Rebbe gave me some of the galley sheets with his holy handwriting on it, as a gift.

The Rebbe had a typewriter on his desk in the office. When I was older and learned in the *beis midrash* I would correspond with *mekuravim* to *chassidus*, and in the evening I would sit and type on the Rebbe's typewriter.

In one of my letters to the Rebbe Rayatz, I saw in the answer a hint from him that I should become *mekushar* to the Rebbe *shlita*. This is

what happened. I was accustomed to asking the Rebbe Rayatz questions in *chassidus*. One time, when I wrote that it seemed there was a contradiction between two *maamarei chassidus*, the Rebbe wrote me [see picture]: "I gave your letter with the question to my son-in-law...R' Menachem Mendel, *shlita*, and he will certainly answer you, *im yirtzeh Hashem*."

Indeed, soon after, I received an answer to my question from the Rebbe MH"M, who wrote his answer on the typewriter and gave me the letter. I regarded this as a sign to become *mekushar* to the Rebbe, *shlita*, already in 5709, as a *horaa* from the Rebbe Rayatz.

(To be continued.)

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BETWEEN FATHER & SON, THE REBBE & THE T'MIMIM

THEY CAN'T FOOL ME!

In the first years of the *nesius*, the Rebbe gave out Chanuka *gelt* only to those T'mimim who kept the *yeshiva's s'darim*. The administration would give in a list of *bachurim* who kept the *s'darim*.

The Rebbe once said to a secretary: I was at the *chassidus seider* in the morning a number of times, and I know that a number of the *bachurim* weren't there. What do they think – that they're fooling me? They can't fool me!

HOW A TAMIM MAKES COPIES

Someone told the Rebbe that his son made Xeroxes of the Rebbe's letters. The Rebbe said that since he made copies of his letters he should do as a Tamim does, i.e., read the letter *before* copying it, *while* copying it, and *after* copying it.

THE T'MIMIM AND THE SHAAGAS ARYEH

R' Yosef Goldberg had a *yechidus* at which the Rebbe said: It's a *busha* (embarrassment) that when you ask a *bachur* a Tosafos, a Shaagas Aryeh, he doesn't know it.

LICENSE TO OBTAIN A LICENSE

A *bachur* wrote to the Rebbe and said that he wanted to get a driver's license so he could drive for *mivtzaim*. The Rebbe said: Why are you mixing your own *taavos* (desires) with my *inyanim* (concerns, projects)?

To another *bachur* the Rebbe said: If you haven't yet learned how *l'hanhig es atzmecha* (lit., "to drive yourself"; meaning, "to control yourself"), how is it that you want to learn how to drive a car?

HOW A TAMIM WRITES

Once, after the month of Tishrei, the Rebbe showed R' Yisroel Jacobson a *pidyon nefesh* he received from one of the T'mimim who wasn't necessarily the cream of the crop,

The Rebbe said that since he made copies of his letters he should do as a Tamim does, i.e., read the letter before copying it, while copying it, and after copying it.

and the Rebbe said, "Zeh vi *shraibt a Tamim*" (see how a Tamim writes).

NOT TO INTERRUPT

The Rebbe went out for Kiddush Levana in Kislev 5739 at 8:10 p.m. during *chassidus seider*. Before going out, the Rebbe said that he was going out on condition that the *bachurim* wouldn't be there, so as not to disturb their learning. The Rebbe said he could have been *Mekadesh* at

home alone but he wanted to do so with a *minyan*.

A SHORT YECHIDUS

A Tamim related that at his first *yechidus* the Rebbe asked him: Did you see the sign on the wall with the *s'darim* of the *yeshiva*? And that was the end of the *yechidus*.

S'DARIM IN EATING

The Rebbe told a Tamim in *yechidus* in 5728: You should try to see to it that the times for eating and sleeping are such that you will be able to attend *s'darim*. There is enough time between *s'darim* to go from strength to strength.

DAVENING ALONE AND WITH A MINYAN

A Tamim told the Rebbe that when he *davened* alone he was able to concentrate on the meaning of the words, but when he *davened* with a *minyan*, he could not do so. The Rebbe told him to *daven* alone sometimes, and sometimes with a *minyan*, and to consult with a *mashpia* for more specific guidance.

IT TOOK THE ENTIRE NIGHT

On Acharon Shel Pesach 5736 the Rebbe said a *sicha* in which he explained the *inyan* of Yeshivas Tomchei T'mimim and what is demanded of those who learn there. After the *sicha* was published, the Rebbe told his brother-in-law, Rashag, that his editing of the *sicha* took the entire night!

THE REBBE AND THE REBBE RAYATZ, “NISHMASO BI”

THE REBBE IS WITH US

Ziknei ha'chassidim in Paris would say that at one of the Rebbe's *farbrengens* in Paris, the Rebbe suddenly got up and with an awesome look he said: The Rebbe [Rayatz] with his illuminated eyes accompanies us wherever we are!

And then the Rebbe began dancing enthusiastically and everybody joined in.

THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF HISKASHRUS: GIVING MAAMUD

5707 (1947). When the Rebbe was in Paris he *farbrenge*d with the *chassidim* there and spoke about seven levels of *hiskashrus*. He concluded: But none of this achieves the level of *hiskashrus* that giving *maamud* (money for the Rebbe's household) does. I don't say this as a son-in-law, but as a *chassid*!

THE REBBE'S MENORA

The Rebbe's *menora* is very simple. Someone wanted to give the Rebbe a gold *menora*. The Rebbe told him that he wanted to use a *menora* like his father-in-law used. The Rebbe accepted the gold *menora*, but did not use it.

“AZKIR AL HA'TZIYUN”

Someone who would forward a lot of requests from people for blessings, once wrote to the Rebbe, saying that he sometimes hears that people are dissatisfied when the Rebbe responds to their question with “*azkir al ha'tziyun*.” He said that he explained to them that “*azkir al ha'tziyun*” is very significant, etc., etc.

The Rebbe sent back his letter and by way of response, he underlined the words, “*azkir al ha'tziyun*,” as well as, “etc. etc.,” with two lines.

HOW THE REBBE SPOKE ABOUT HIS FATHER-IN-LAW

Chassidim, who remember the early years in which the Rebbe *farbrenge*d only rarely, relate that when the Rebbe began speaking about his father-in-law, the Rebbe Rayatz, his face went pale and he cried a great deal. It was a scene that was hard to describe.

THE SIDDURIM IN THE

None of this achieves the level of hiskashrus that giving maamud does.

REBBE'S HOUSE

A person who spent time in the Rebbe's house said that the Rebbe had two *siddurim* of the Rebbe Rayatz, one which he used and another which he lent to *chassanim*. In the house there was a *siddur* which the Rebbetzin received from her father which had the following words written in it, “*Yehi ratzon sh'yiskablu t'filosai*” (may it be [Hashem's] will that my prayers are accepted).

ANNULLING HIS VOW

The photographer L.Y. Friedan

once asked the Rebbe why he went to the Ohel on Sundays after “dollars,” and not on some other day. The Rebbe answered that in order to go on a different day he would have to be *matir neder* (annul his vow).

Apparently the Rebbe did so, for in later years the Rebbe began going to the Ohel on Mondays.

THE SHVER WANTS MORE

In the lifetime of the Rebbe Rayatz, it once happened that after the *bachurim* put the *s'chach* on the *sukka*, the Rebbe arrived and told them to go out and the Rebbe Rayatz would come and check to see if there was enough or not. Afterwards the Rebbe came back and said with a smile, “The Shver wants more.”

THAT'S WHAT THE SHVER DID

Somebody brought his son for *yechidus* and complained that his son did not want to eat *mezonos* before *davening*. The Rebbe told the *bachur*: That's what my Shver did, that's what I do too, and I'm telling you to do so. And if you want to conduct yourself with *iskafia*, then you can put salt on your cake.

TIME IS PRESSING

On 7 Shevat 5710, three days before the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz, a Lubavitcher wedding took place. The Rebbe, who had been at the *chuppa*, was asked by the *chassan's* father to remain for the meal. The Rebbe said time was pressing and he had to learn with *mori v'chami* (my teacher and father-in-law).

FROM MOROCCO TO SINGAPORE

Nearly nine years ago, a young Lubavitcher woman set off for Asia and became the sole shliach in Singapore. Mrs. Simcha Abergel describes her shlichus, the challenges and successes, in this fascinating interview.

I was born in Casablanca, Morocco, and when I was two years old my family emigrated to Canada, where I grew up in Montreal. I attended Chabad schools in the city, Beis Rivka and Beis Chaya Mushka Seminary.

When I married, we moved to Crown Heights for a year. After that we lived in Postville, Iowa, and then we left on *shlichus* for Singapore.

My husband, Mordechai, is of Moroccan origin, though he was born in France and was raised in Belgium.

He learned in Morristown and then helped out on *shlichus* in Miami. Before we married he learned in 770 and afterwards he continued in the *kollel* there.

We have, *baruch Hashem*, four children: Naomi, who is nine; Refael



Meir, who is seven; Rina, who is five; and Aryeh is four months old.

Pardon my ignorance, but where in Asia are you located?

Singapore is a country in Asia near Malaysia, Indonesia, and China.

How did Singapore get Chabad *shluchim*?

The local community here needed a *rav*, and Chabad couldn't help them out because they wanted a Sephardic *rav* who could read and *daven* in the Iraqi *nusach*. They kept searching until they found us.

To tell you the truth my husband didn't know the *nusach* they wanted, but over time he learned it. The fact that both of us are Sephardim was good enough for them.

How long have you been there?

We arrived in Tishrei 5755, and we've been there ever since.

What do you know about the Jewish history there?

The Jews arrived here before World War I, most of them from Baghdad in Iraq, some of them from India. They opened various businesses in Singapore. One of the Jewish families here was the Sasson family, and there was also a Jew named Menasheh Mayor, who became extremely wealthy, and he built a *shul* and *talmud Torah*, which also served as a Jewish community center.

Before World War II there were over 3000 Jews in Singapore, which at the time was a British colony. After the war many Jews left for Eretz Yisroel, Australia, or America.

In the last twenty years the local Jewish community numbers 300-500 Jews. Aside from the local community there are other Jews, some of whom are here on business from all over the world. Others are Israelis who work for the Israeli embassy or various engineering firms. Altogether there are about 750 Jews.

There's no need to prepare for shlichus itself except in strengthening one's emuna. This is something you'll need to use many times in the future.

How did your *shlichus* begin?

When I arrived here I was only twenty-one years old, and it was hard getting acquainted with everybody, not to mention becoming the *mashpia* of people older than me, some of whom could have been my parents.

As far as local communal customs (even though we follow *minhagei Chabad*), I didn't have problems adjusting, because when you come from a Sephardic background there are many similar customs. I think it was also a bit difficult for the people here, especially when their mentality is that you don't tell adults what to

I came to realize that I am not the most important thing. On shlichus one gains the awareness that we were not sent to this world only for ourselves and our desires, but for others.

do.

In order to overcome these difficulties we simply became friends of theirs. After we acquired their trust, the work was a lot easier. Today we are extremely close with many families.

What do the gentiles in Singapore think of you?

Baruch Hashem, there was never any open anti-Semitism here, and the Singaporean government has an excellent relationship with the community. Life here was always peaceful and harmonious. The nature of the people here is relaxed. They are courteous and even somewhat spiritual.

We influence those *goyim* with whom we come in daily contact, and tell them about the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach to hasten the *Geula*.

We have so much work to do with the Jewish people here that we don't have much time to spend on those outside of the community.

What difficulties do you encounter on *shlichus*?

The main challenge is in *chinuch* for our children. According to Singaporean law, every child must attend school, and home schooling is out of the question. My two older children go to the international non-Jewish school, which is for children of foreign countries who are temporarily in Singapore and who will return home in the future.

They receive a Jewish *chinuch* at home. They learn every afternoon with four *Chassidishe bachurim* who came here for this purpose, as well as to organize educational activities for other children and young people.

How do your children handle *shlichus* in Singapore?

Great! From a very young age my children are taught that they are different, and this is implanted deeply within them. They go to



Educational programming with Jewish children in Singapore



Young *shluchim*, the Abergel children

school having no other choice, and they make their peace with that. Their friends are not from school, but children from the Jewish community. Thus far, *baruch Hashem*, there have been no problems with this arrangement.

The bigger problem is in giving them a traditional Jewish *chinuch* when they're home. It's very difficult for me to divide my time between family; that is, running a household, while leading a community, with all it entails.

So how do you do it?

ADVICE FOR SHLUCHOS

Mrs. Simcha Abergel has some advice for *shluchos* just starting out:

There's no need to prepare for *shlichus* itself except in strengthening one's *emuna*. This is something you'll need to use many times in the future. In Chabad communities there are other *chassidic* Jews around you from whom you can recharge your batteries and continue on, but on *shlichus* the only way to gain renewed strength is from your spouse. Until you have a community that you can rely on, all you have is your spouse and children.

We live in a time when we have access to phones, faxes, and the Internet, and we can use them to connect with those near and far. But obviously this is no substitute for the feeling of togetherness.

You have to constantly believe that you are on *shlichus* for a reason and with clear goals. I greatly admire the *shluchim* who have gone on *shlichus* in recent years, in this time of concealment. If only we could get a verbal *bracha* from the Rebbe face to face. This would intensify even more the feeling that we can't disappoint the Rebbe!

*To tell you the truth
my husband didn't
know the nusach they
wanted, but over time
he learned it. The fact
that both of us are
Sephardim was good
enough for them.*

Baruch Hashem I have cleaning help at home, which frees me up from that work. I try to do my work in the morning so that when the children return home in the afternoon I am able to give each of them quality time.

On *shlichus* there are also *gashmius* problems, like the inability to shop for kosher products in a local supermarket.

Wouldn't your children prefer living in Crown Heights among Lubavitchers?

Actually, no. I'll tell you an interesting story in connection with your question. The last time we visited New York, my oldest daughter asked me, "*Ima*, if you want me to be like the women and girls here, then we should be living here and not in Singapore!"

To her utter surprise I said, "I don't want you to be like the people here; I want you to even surpass them."

I asked her, "When we are within the larger Lubavitch family, are you an example of a Jewish, *chassidische* girl? During your stay here, did you influence anybody to light Shabbos candles or to eat kosher?" She said she hadn't. So I told her that was precisely why we were in Singapore, so she could be even better.



Jewish children in Singapore learning about the Shabbos meal



The pre-school

* * *

Tell us about your work.

When we arrived here there was no Jewish learning for either adults or children. There was a neglected *mikva* which nobody used. There were no families with kosher kitchens. Today we have a *mikva* which is used daily. Over thirty families keep kosher, and there's a daily *minyán*.

We started a pre-school in which fifty children receive a Jewish education. The school has children from ages one to six, and they are in school all day. It's a *mosad* which requires a great deal of effort and time.

We have a Sunday School for the older children. We have *shiurim* in the evening in which Tanach, *halacha*, Pirkei Avos, *chassidus*, and Lashon HaKodesh are taught. Once a month I have an evening for woman on *taharas ha'mishpacha*. This is attended both by those who already observe these laws and those who will begin to start soon. We have regular programming for children and *bar* and *bas mitzva* clubs.

Since my husband is the only *rav* in the country, we see it as our obligation to unite the three groups of Jews here: the locals, the businessmen, and the Israelis. There are very few Jews here, so why

shouldn't we unite? So everybody is invited to every Shabbaton or event we make, for adults or children.

What gives you *nachas* in your life on *shlichus*?

Many things. Every time we manage to break up a potential marriage between a Jew and a Chinese or Singaporean, and it happens often, I am happy that we stopped, even if it is only in a small way, the plague of assimilation.

I have much *nachas* when I see my children influencing their friends in *yiras Shamayim* and the fulfillment

of *mitzvos*. *Chassidische nachas* is the greatest possible pleasure.

* * *

Shlichus changed me in fundamental ways. *Shlichus* removed my ego as the center of my life. I came to realize that I am not the most important thing. On *shlichus* one gains the awareness that we were not sent to this world only for ourselves and our desires, but for others.

Shlichus also changed me in how I relate to my environment. I don't take credit for myself, but give it to others. I need to get others to do things with

WE BROKE THE ICE

Mrs. Simcha Abergel: When we moved to our present apartment in Singapore, I had a dream of turning the entire building we are in, into a Jewish building so that my children would have Jewish friends around them.

Baruch Hashem, today we have a number of Jewish families in our building now, one of whom I'd like to tell you about.

We once had a guest, a businessman from another country in Asia, who was originally from Venezuela in South America. I tried to convince him to move to Singapore and live in our building. He said it wasn't a bad idea, but his wife hates anything to do with religion, and she certainly wouldn't agree to live in the same building as the Rabbanit.

The end of the story was that they indeed moved into our building, and today they are a *frum* family, and the woman can't believe that once upon a time she would have refused to live in my proximity. How did we break the ice? Very slowly, but steadily and successfully.

the feeling that they initiated the idea. I can't push them to do things against their will, and therefore, they truly deserve being appreciated.

I want to add that as opposed to ordinary life, life on *shlichus* is completely different. Ordinary women live in a way of give and take, but we *shluchos* do things differently. We give and give and give and don't always get something in return. There's no question that we get something spiritual in return though.

From your experience on *shlichus*, do you have advice for a *shlucha* who is just starting out?

There are no rules. It very much depends on the type of community you are working with, and the chemistry that results. I think that every *shlucha* who is starting out has to focus on forging personal ties with the women of the community, and not necessarily at a *shiur*, but just to schmooze with them. Women like to talk, and there are many topics that women have in common, like children and cooking, etc.

Creating and strengthening friendships will lead to the women trusting you and in the not too distant future you will benefit when you want to be *mekarev* them. Practically speaking, it will be a lot easier then, and they won't relate to you as to a stranger who came to ask for a donation. If the one asking them



The website for the Singapore Jewish Community

is a good friend, they won't give it a second thought but will automatically give what is asked.

Are you in Singapore ready to greet Moshiach?

We are always ready for Moshiach. We are ready for his

immediate coming! The fact that the *Geula* is not fully here proves to me that I must continue working and adding more and more in my *shlichus*, and we will do this until Moshiach comes to redeem us, the Jews of Singapore.





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HUNGER STRIKES FOR MONEY, NOT TERROR VICTIMS

By Shai Gefen

WE PAID THE PRICE!

After P.M. Sharon decided to make a gesture of goodwill towards the Arabs in honor of U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell's visit, despite protests from those in Security, what price did we pay? After all, every time we make these gestures, we pay in blood. And Sharon knows that we'll pay in blood – blood of fathers, mothers, and children, *r"l*. The only question was the blood of how many people?

We got the answer last weekend when a couple was murdered in Chevron on Shabbos, and on Sunday, only five hours after Sharon's meeting with terrorist and Holocaust-denier Abu Mazen, one suicide bomber killed six Jews, and another suicide bomber tried to do something similar but was miraculously thwarted.

We knew this would happen, even though we're not prophets. It's just that we know what the Rebbe said. In 5750 when the Rebbe barred Peres from carrying out his devious power-grab at the last minute, two representatives of Ger questioned the Rebbe about this. The Rebbe responded:

Since this party met with Arab representatives and negotiated with them, and this meeting was publicized in other newspapers, and among the Arabs, of course, and as a result of this – naturally and logically – this leads to Arabs all

over continuing to take action and it harmed a number of our Jewish brethren, *shlita*, to the point of murder, *r"l*. This occurs not only in the Holy Land but in other countries as well. And who knows whether as we speak, for “do not open your mouth, etc.,” that at this very moment something didn't happen to a Jew, may it not happen, for their hand is still uplifted.

(Chol HaMoed Pesach 5750)

The murders in Chevron and on the #6 bus in Yerushalayim were known about ahead of time.

After talking to them about concessions, and after Sharon promised to evacuate the Gaza Strip or some other place in Yehuda and Shomron “for experimental purposes,” it's self-understood that the next attack is only a matter of time, *ch"v*.

Baruch Hashem, it was quiet for a few months. Why? Simple, because the government stopped talking with them and denied them any political option. As soon as we started with goodwill gestures again, we were attacked once again on our streets. When the Prime Minister begins to speak with Arab representatives about implementing the Roadmap, he is in effect dressing the suicide bomber in his explosives belt and helping those who send him out to get him into Yerushalayim. By making a goodwill

gesture in honor of Powell's visit, Sharon was bringing the terrorist in himself.

It's a proven recipe for murder, mayhem, and bereavement on the streets of our capitol city. The 774 dead in the past two and a half years are on the heads of Sharon and his government. The man who allowed Arafat to make a mockery of us without eradicating the snake, shouldn't come with complaints. The one who continues to spread lies among the people – as though a murderer and Holocaust-denier is the one with whom we can make agreements – deludes the nation and himself and is personally responsible for the unceasing bloodshed.

The time has come to wake up and say the truth: The Americans are not the guilty ones. Neither are Arafat and Abu Mazen. It's easy and convenient for us to blame them. The truth is that we, and only we, are the guilty parties. It is our leaders who are full of defeatist fears because of the “goy within you,” despite the fact that we pay for it in blood!

THE REBBE AND THE ATTACK IN CHEVRON

Exactly twenty-three years ago, Erev Lag B'Omer, six Jews were killed at Beit Hadassah. In the Lag B'Omer *sicha* that the Rebbe said at the parade, the Rebbe spoke at length about the situation in Eretz



Yisroel, talking about the reason for the murder of Jews in the holy city of Chevron. It's amazing to learn the *sicha* today because it sounds as though the Rebbe said it on Motzaei Shabbos 16 Iyar 5763:

First of all, we must fulfill the instruction of Hashem in that matter. It is an explicit *halacha* in *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, Hilchos Shabbos, siman 329*, that it is forbidden to give a non-Jew something that can adversely affect the security of Eretz Yisroel. And when a Jew stands strongly by this – since this is not his own strength but Hashem's strength, for that is what is written in His Torah – he will not be able to do anything on their own, certainly not against the Jews, and not even to threaten Jews, but only to do Hashem's *shlichus*.

And by walking proudly, they will stop being frightened by *goyim* and *goyishkait*. Especially after seeing that by chasing after the *goyim* they use this to harm Jews, *r"l*, till the incident that happened lately in the Ir HaAvos (on Friday night, six Jews were murdered near Beit Hadassah), not far from Avrohom, Yitzchok, and Yaakov, and this incident took place on the holy day of Shabbos ... If only it affects an essential change in Jews' conduct, a change from one extreme to another. Instead of continuing in the same vein – giving in to *goyim* and *goyishkait* – may they stand strong with the "might of Your arm," [the arm] of Hashem, by grasping firmly onto His holy Torah, which is the Jews' true strength.

AN OPEN LETTER TO RABBI MEIR PORUSH

Rabbi Porush, you've been waging a hunger strike to protest the budget cuts. You and your friends call it *G'zeiros 5763*. On the tent you wrote, "I am waging a

hunger strike because it is impossible to live in this country."

The budget cuts are definitely something that causes many to lose sleep. It's not that, *chalila*, we denigrate the determination you took upon yourself to wage battle for the sake of *yeshivos* and stipends for children. We believe you when you say that the mothers who are "breaking their heads" as they wonder how to cut down on household expenses are your primary concern. However, your battle raises some questions, especially in light of the bus a terrorist exploded Sunday morning, and in light of talks between Abu Mazen and Sharon in Yerushalayim. Let's say the economic problems were solved, would you be able to live in the country then?

When the Rebbe, *nasi ha'dor v'navi ha'dor*, said not to go along with Peres, one of the *rabbanim* cried out at the Siyum HaShas in Yerushalayim that apartments for young people were *pikuach nefesh*. Now, as Jews are being massacred and the government is about to implement the Roadmap, should we be busy with *G'zeiros 5763*? Is it not absurd? Is it not bizarre that a distinguished *askan chareidi*, held in high esteem by large segments of the religious public, is waging a hunger strike because of economic reasons? What about religious *g'zeiros*? What about hundreds and thousands of *goyim* who are being allowed to enter Israel every month? Can you live with that? Is it only the minute they start withholding the perks that alarm bells go off?

Let's take it one step further: Isn't *chareidi* Jewry responsible for the bleak economic situation? You didn't support the Chevron Accords; you just abstained (which is also support), but your colleagues in Shas and Yahadus HaTorah voted

The time has come to wake up and say the truth: The Americans are not the guilty ones. Neither are Arafat and Abu Mazen. It's easy and convenient for us to blame them. The truth is that we, and only we, are the guilty parties.

in favor of it. The same is true for the Wye and Oslo Accords. The economic disaster stems from there, from the tremendous security expenses which are necessary thanks to those agreements which you participated in having passed in one form or another. You celebrated for a decade, you made deals to express support for those agreements. Now everybody is paying the price, including *yeshivos* and *kollelim*.

“It’s impossible to live in this country,” you declare, but if you and the other representatives of the *chareidi* public continue to defy Hashem and His Torah, and continue supporting the Roadmap, it really will be impossible to live in this country, even if they continue to give you millions. Dead people don’t need money.

As for you, Knesset member Rabbi Porush, as you wage your just battle against economic decrees, this is the time for you to wage a battle against the Roadmap, because those murderers don’t differentiate between religious blood and any other. In that same protest tent of yours, announce to one and all that the *chareidi* public has resolved to obey the *Shulchan Aruch, siman 329* against all concessions, and stop this despicable *shita* of trading people’s lives in exchange for money for *yeshivos*. It’s contaminated money which shouldn’t even be used to build bathrooms! Good *chinuch* can’t come out of money like that.

Rabbi Porush! Your silence in the protest tent in the face of horrendous acts that are being perpetrated during your strike is an unprecedented *chilul Hashem*. What will people say? He cares about his pocket and political power but doesn’t care about the lives of

Is it not bizarre that a distinguished askan chareidi, held in high esteem by large segments of the religious public, is waging a hunger strike because of economic reasons? What about religious g’zeiros? What about hundreds and thousands of goyim who are being allowed to enter Israel every month?

millions of Jews? What will Hashem say? You are concerned for your honor, but not My honor? Why don’t we hear your voice when Jews are murdered in Chevron?

It’s difficult to say, but even more difficult to remain quiet. While you are in the Opposition on the side of the fighters, you can openly say the truth. We expected that you’d understand, once and for all, that the *shita* that your colleagues continue to promote, to sell Eretz Yisroel in exchange for joining the government, will in the end be your undoing.

How many of your colleagues are eagerly awaiting the implementation of the Roadmap so that the Right will leave the government and you’ll be able to enter it and sit at the table and get the money you want? If so, we hereby inform you: “Relief and salvation will arise for the Jews from some other place, and you and your father’s house...” The time has come for *chareidi* representatives to understand and accept the instructions and warnings of the *nasi ha’dor*, and begin conducting themselves according to *Shulchan Aruch*, and at the very least they will justify the fact that they are *chareidi* representatives.

We hope your strike will soon end and all the needs of the Torah world will be given generously by the full, open, holy, and expansive hand of Hashem, with the true and complete *Geula*.



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