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BEYOND ALL CONCEPT OF EXILE

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS MATOS-MASSEI; 26TH DAY OF TAMMUZ, 5749

1. The Shalo notes that the Torah readings Matos, Massei, and D'varim are always read in the three weeks of Bein HaMeitzarim. This reveals an intrinsic connection that they share with this period of time.

Among the obvious points of connection is the conclusion of Parshas Massei which speaks of the institution of six Cities of Refuge for someone who inadvertently killed a colleague. The expression the Torah uses for killing is "makka nefesh," literally, "one who strikes a soul." Thus, in an extended sense, it can refer to sin which harms the second soul, the soul which is "a part of G-d from above." Shedding blood refers to the effect of sin, taking the energy of the G-dly soul and bringing it to the forces of evil.

This bloodshed is always "inadvertent," i.e., a Jew never sins willingly for no Jew can and no Jew wants to be separate from G-dliness.[88] The exile can be understood as atonement for these "inadvertent" sins,

"Cities of Refuge" as it were. On this basis, we can understand the verse in the liturgy, "Because of our sins, we were exiled from our land." Our sins are considered like inadvertent murder for which we received the punishment of exile.

Nevertheless, we have endured many difficulties in exile and have carried out many different acts of service, including the service of t'shuva of which the Rambam states: "The Torah has promised that ultimately Israel will repent at the end of their exile and immediately they will be redeemed." Surely, each and every Jew has had several thoughts of t'shuva. Therefore, the redemption should come immediately and we should all "return to our ancestral heritage," to Eretz Yisroel, in the Messianic redemption.

This redemption is also alluded to in the beginning of Parshas Massei which describes the journeys of the Jews between their departure from Egypt and their entry into Eretz Yisroel. In a larger sense, these journeys represent the travels of the

Jews throughout history as they proceed from Egypt — representative of boundaries and limitations — to Eretz Yisroel — the full state of Eretz Yisroel as will be revealed in the Messianic redemption.

The concept of redemption is also expressed by the final verse of Parshas Massei which is also the conclusion of the Book of BaMidbar: "These are the mitzvos and judgments which G-d commanded... in the plains of Moav." Thus, it marks the conclusion of the four Books of the Torah — the Book of D'varim referred to as Mishneh Torah, "the repetition of the Torah," being in a category of its own.

These four Books allude to the four exiles — and conversely, the four promises of redemption. They reflect the four levels which exist within the downward progression of spiritual worlds which, in turn, stem from the four letters of G-d's Name.

The conclusion of the fourth Book of the Torah leads to the beginning of the fifth Book which refers to a level of revelation that transcends all

88. The Rambam Hilchos Gerushin, Chapter 2, states this concept as Torah

law, declaring that the true will of every Jew is "to fulfill all the mitzvos and

separate himself from sin."

boundaries.[89] This is reflected in the opening verse of the book, “These are the words which Moshe spoke.” This verse can also refer to the revelation of the new aspects of Torah in the Messianic age for our Sages have taught, “He (Moshe) was the first redeemer. He will be the final redeemer.”

2. Since both the beginning and the conclusion of Parshas Massei speaks about the concept of redemption, the question arises: Why is the subject of the Cities of Refuge — a reference to the concept of exile as explained above — also included in the same reading?

[It can be explained that the portion describes the preparations the Jews made for the division of Eretz Yisroel. Since the Cities of Refuge were included in the 48 cities given to the Levites, it is appropriate to mention them in this context. This explanation is, however, insufficient, for were that the intention, it would be enough to mention the cities in brief without explaining all the details of inadvertent murder as the portion does.]

This question can be resolved as follows: The opening verse of Parshas Massei, “These are the journeys of the children of Israel as they left the land of Egypt,” not only relates that the Jews left exile, it also reveals the manner of service which makes it possible for them to leave exile.

The exodus from Egypt reflects a spiritual service of leaving one’s boundaries and limitations which is possible even when one is physically in exile. This means that the person will pay no attention to the hardships of exile. Rather, he will carry out his service of Torah and mitzvos as if he was not in exile at all.[90]

A Jew’s soul is totally above all concepts of exile. This applies even when the soul is en clothed within a body in this world, even when a person lives in the darkness of exile in the generation preceding Moshiach’s coming when the darkness is greater.

Since the Jew’s soul is, to quote Tanya, “actually a part of G-d,” or to rephrase that expression, “a part of

A Jew’s soul is totally beyond all concept of exile. This applies even when the soul is en clothed within a body in this world, even when a person lives in the darkness of exile in the generation preceding Moshiach’s coming when the darkness is greater.

G-d that has become actual,” i.e., that can be felt, it stands above all the difficulties of exile. Accordingly, when a Jew makes his soul primary and his body secondary, the powers of the soul are revealed within the body and no obstacles can keep the body in exile.

Thus, a Jew’s entire life becomes a series of exoduses from Egypt, i.e.,

departures from boundaries and limitations. This is alluded to in the verse, “These are the journeys of the children of Israel as they left the land of Egypt.” On the surface, after the first journey, they had “left the land of Egypt.” The verse, nevertheless, mentions “journeys,” to teach that every state, even a level of holiness, can be considered Egypt, a place of boundaries and limitations in regard to the level above it. Thus, a Jew must continually, “proceed from strength to strength,” constantly progressing to higher levels in a never-ending process.

Within this process, however, there are distinctions between the extent in which some of the intermediate levels are perceived as “boundaries and limitations (Egypt)” when compared to the level above it. There are times when a person realizes that he can proceed to a higher level, but does not feel constrained by his present state. There are, however, situations when the awareness of the potential for further growth causes a person to feel limited and constrained by his present state.

In general, the higher a person’s level is, the more he realizes his potential to proceed to further peaks and therefore, the more he feels limited by his present state. There are times when his awareness of his ultimate potential is so strong that he cannot see any positive value in his present state. On the contrary, he sees it as a sin, i.e., a state of lack.[91]

In this context, we can appreciate why the Torah mentions the details of inadvertent murder in the portion Massei which describes the Jews’ journey to the ultimate redemption. A Jew must constantly serve his Creator,

89. This is related to the phrase “And the fifth part is Pharaoh’s” The Zohar explains that Pharaoh can be understood as a reference to the source where “all lights will be revealed.” This is also connected to the month of Av,

the fifth month, the month in which the reading of the Book of D’varim is begun.

90. This is related to the lesson that can be derived from Parshas Matos which

literally means “staff.” A Jew can become as hard and firm as a staff, revealing a powerful and unchanging inner resolve to carry out his service of Torah and mitzvos.

employing every one of the potentials that he has been given and every moment of his existence with this goal in mind. Furthermore, he must constantly progress further in this service, continually reaching higher levels.

Despite this resolve, when a person makes an account of his service of G-d, he may realize that his service is lacking, that compared to the peaks which he could reach, his service cannot be considered service at all. Indeed, it may appear sinful, as if he is — albeit inadvertently — “striking his soul.”[92]

This realization is, nevertheless, not an indication that his service is on a low level. On the contrary, because he has continuously risen higher and higher in G-d’s service, stepping beyond his boundaries and limitations, he is aware of the ultimate potential he has. That awareness causes him to feel a lack — and even to consider as “sinful” — his present level of service.

These concepts can be applied within the context of Bein HaMeitzarim. We have carried out a variety of services in a journey through the exile. When compared, however, to the ultimate service that is possible in the Messianic Era, our present service is surely constrained and can even be considered comparable to “striking a soul.”

The awareness of these constraints should motivate a Jew to call to G-d — “Out of the straits, I call You, G-d,” — “Ad Masai — Until when!” Because

he desires to serve G-d in the most complete manner, he asks for the end to the exile. This call arouses a response from G-d — “With abounding [relief], G-d answered me,” bringing the Messianic redemption and removing entirely all constraints and limits. Then, G-d’s essence will be revealed.

When interpreted in this manner, “striking a soul,” serving G-d in a limited manner when compared to one’s ultimate potential, is surely an “inadvertent act.” A Jew cannot be held responsible for this lack for it results from the constraints established by G-d, Himself. The fact that a Jew is unable to reach a complete level of service despite his desire to do so, stems ultimately from G-d’s concealment of His infinite light. [93]

Therefore, the Torah teaches that when a person is tried for a murder, he must be taken from the City of Refuge where, “the congregation (the judges) will save him,” i.e., they will release him. In spiritual terms, this means that the limitation of G-d’s light (the Tzimtzum) will be nullified for G-d’s intent in this limitation was only that it bring forth a greater revelation. Similarly, the intent of the descent of exile is that — through the service of t’shuva — we proceed to an even higher level as the higher quality of light comes from (the transformation of) the darkness. In this context, the descent is merely one phase in the ultimate ascent. [94]

In this context, we can understand why the Torah uses the expression

“And the congregation shall save him” to refer to the activity of the judges. A “congregation” refers to a group of at least ten Jews and thus, alludes to the Jewish people as a whole who are divided into ten categories. Despite their individual differences, they join together as one communal entity, reflecting the true unity that stems from the essence of the soul which is present in every Jew. This potential also establishes unity between them and G-d.

Therefore, the potential to save a person who inadvertently “strikes a soul,” — in all its interpretations, from the highest[95] to the lowest — comes from the unity of the Jewish people, which reflects the essence of their souls and the essence of G-d. Our Sages teach that the present exile came about because of unwonted hatred. By showing Jewish unity, we thus negate the cause for the exile. When the cause is negated, the effect — the exile — will also cease to exist.

3. As a practical expression of the above, it is important to increase our achdus Yisroel (the unity of the Jewish people); for each individual to view himself as part of the entire Jewish people so that his individual achievements in the service of G-d are considered as part of the service of the Jewish people as a whole. This begins with saying, “I, hereby, take upon myself to fulfill the mitzvah, ‘Love your fellowman as yourself’ “[96] and is reflected in one’s actual deeds. One seeks the welfare of each individual Jew and the Jewish people as a whole,

91. Note Rashi’s commentary to Genesis 31:39.

92. Even though this is not the simple interpretation of the verse, the Torah “speaks in the higher spiritual realms and alludes to the lower realms,” i.e., the true interpretation of a verse is its refined spiritual meaning. Ultimately, through the downward progression of spiritual worlds, there is the possibility for the simple interpretation of the

verse to occur.

93. In truth, Chassidic thought explains that all sin — the source for the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and the exile — is ultimately, an act which “G-d brought to his (man’s) hand.” The Midrash Tanchuma states that blaming man for sin is equivalent to framing him. Similarly, the Kabbalistic tradition explains that the sin of the Tree of Knowledge (which brought about the

potential for all future sins) was a result of the first Tzimtzum as reflected in the limitation of the light of the moon.

94. From G-d’s perspective, He is able to perceive revelation despite the concealment caused by the Tzimtzum. Similarly, the essence of the soul is always connected to G-d despite the descent caused by sin.

in regard to material matters and in regard to spiritual matters. In the latter context, this involves spreading Torah and Yiddishkeit as implied by our Sages' words, "Raise up many students."

In particular, the above applies to a communal official, elected democratically by the community as a whole. When a community composed of many different individuals chooses a single individual out of the awareness of the unique potentials he possesses, he has the responsibility to use those potentials to the utmost.

Furthermore, as the representative of the community, he is granted unique blessings because of the merit of the community. Indeed, we see that "those who faithfully occupy themselves with the needs of the community" have been able to achieve far greater success than would be possible because of their own individual potentials, however great those potentials might be.

A community official must resolve to use these blessings to the fullest degree possible. This, in turn, will bring him blessings in everything he personally needs to allow him to carry out the above tasks.

In particular, the two portions, Matos and Massei, provide significant guidelines for a communal leader. Matos meaning "staff" implies that he must show the necessary personal strength. Massei meaning "journeys" teaches that he cannot rest comfortably on his past achievements, but must constantly strive to reach higher peaks, appreciating the loss caused if he does not use his powers to the fullest as explained above.

The above particularly applies to

communal officials in Eretz Yisroel. There is a unique Divine providence controlling Eretz Yisroel as implied by the Torah's description of it as "a land which... always the eyes of the L-rd, your G-d, are upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year." Consequently, they are given even greater powers which they must use in the fullest and most complete manner.

In particular, they have a

It is worthy to acknowledge the efforts of a group of individuals from Toronto... May their efforts find great success and may they serve as an example to other cities.

responsibility not to give up one inch of Eretz Yisroel. G-d has granted the Jews the potential to live as free men — and "there are no free men aside from those occupied in Torah study" — in Eretz Yisroel before Moshiach's coming. There, they will live with security and composure until the ultimate entry into Eretz Yisroel led by Moshiach.

Also, in the weeks to come efforts should be made in the following areas:

a) Torah study, in particular, the study of the laws of the construction of the Beis HaMikdash. When G-d revealed to Yechezkel the vision of the Messianic Beis HaMikdash, He told him:

Shall the construction of My house be negated because My children are in the exile...I will consider your involvement in reading about it as if you actually built the Beis HaMikdash.

[Also, efforts should be made to make siyumim during the Nine Days.]
b) The construction of "sanctuaries in microcosm" — houses associated with Torah, prayer, and deeds of kindness, both on the communal and on the individual level.

In this context, it is worthy to acknowledge the efforts of a group of individuals from Toronto who journeyed from their city to spend Shabbos here to announce a construction project within that city. They should say "L'chaim" — and "L'chaim U'liv'racha" — and may this drawn down life and blessing in all their activities. May their efforts find great success and may they serve as an example to other cities.

To participate in the construction of buildings for these purposes in all places — whether communal or individual — \$100 will be given from a fund of the Previous Rebbe. May these efforts hasten the time when the synagogues and houses of study (including also the private homes where these activities were carried out) in the Diaspora will be taken and permanently established in Eretz Yisroel and may this help reveal the ultimate building, the third Beis HaMikdash.

95. As mentioned above, the highest interpretation of "striking a soul," is the realization of one's failure to use one's full potential. Since the unity described above stems from the essence of the soul which reflects the essence of G-d — the ultimate of all potentials — by

realizing such unity, one compensates for failing to actualize one's potential in the past.

96. There is another connection between this service and the month of Av. Rosh Chodesh Av is the yahrtzeit of Aharon, the Priest, who was distinguished by

the service of "Loving peace and pursuing peace." (Significantly, this teaching is included in the portion of Pirkei Avos associated with the present Shabbos.)

HA'RAV YISROEL HALPERIN, HEAD SHLIACH
AND RAV OF K'HILAS CHABAD, REHOVOT:

“THE REBBE ESTABLISHED THE MESSAGE, WE MUST PUBLICIZE IT!”

INTERVIEW BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*“We have no authority to alter the clear message of the Rebbe MH”M shlita. The Rebbe bestowed upon us the strength, the honor, and the privilege to choose the methods how to instill the message. There are numerous ways and means to give over the message, and each individual, according to his place, must decide the proper manner.” * Open questions and answers with Rabbi Halperin as part of a Moshiach symposium in 770 – Beis Chayeinu.*

Why must we publicize the announcement of the Redemption specifically as a prophecy?

First of all, we are talking about an explicit instruction of the Rebbe MH”M shlita. On Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5751, the Rebbe explained at length about the need to publicize the announcement of the Redemption specifically as a prophecy. Therefore, the question itself has no basis. Since the Rebbe said this and has so ordered, what more do we need? We must do it whether we understand it or not.

Getting to the heart of the matter, when we emphasize that the announcement of the Redemption is a prophecy, this causes the message to be more easily accepted. After all, we’re talking about “things that will be in the future.” In a larger sense, we are referring to the future and ultimate purpose of the dwelling place for G-d

in this lowest world. Thus, in order to publicize this future vision in its fullest sense and with the utmost confidence, we need the firm and strong backing of “prophecy.”

If we explain that the Rebbe is a great tzaddik with ruach ha’kodesh – isn’t that enough?

Ruach ha’kodesh does not possess the unique validity that prophecy does, and the Rebbe himself pointed this out in the *sicha* from Shabbos Parshas Shoftim. In Note 117, the Rebbe refers to the short *maamarim* of the Alter Rebbe, where it is explained at length that when something is said only through *ruach ha’kodesh*, there is no guarantee that it will actually come to pass. This is because such things may remain only in the spiritual worlds, and not find expression in this world. In contrast, regarding a prophecy (of a positive nature), it must take place here in this physical world.

The Alter Rebbe explains that when a prophet gives over a prophecy, this is not *his* message but the words of Hashem Himself, which are only transmitted through the prophet, as is written, “The matter of G-d he has spoken, and His word is on my tongue.” Since the prophecy is the actual word of G-d, it is known that the speech of G-d is as actual deed, “By the word of G-d, heavens were made.” From the moment the prophecy is said, no deed is lacking, just “a lacking in time.” To our regret, the time is getting longer. Still, a person has to know that since the Rebbe’s prophetic announcement of the Redemption, the Redemption has already existed in actual deed. It is simply a matter of the brief time remaining until we see this with our very eyes, immediately, *mamash*, in this generation!

By the way, since the announcement of the Redemption was said as a prophecy, and as we said, it exists now in an actual sense, just “lacking in time,” from the Torah’s point of view, there is an absolute

certainty that the Rebbe will gather in the Jewish people from the farthest corners of the earth, and also physically build the Beis HaMikdash in this world.

As a result, the Rebbe emphasizes

sense. All that remains is for us to open our eyes.

In summation, when we speak to other Jews about the prophecy of the Redemption, in addition to the fact that it hastens its actual revelation in



in a *sicha* from Shabbos Parshas VaYeiitzei 5752 (Sec. 18) that not only will things connected with the Redemption be fulfilled in the future, but everything now is already prepared and ready in an actual and revealed

this world, the very fact that a Jew hears the word “prophet” makes the concept more acceptable and with greater fortitude.

Why is it so important to publicize that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach?

Isn't it enough to spread the announcement of the Redemption without identifying the Redeemer?

Let me tell you a personal story that will serve as an excellent example for the need to publicize the identity of the Redeemer.

During Operation Peace in the Galilee, I was stationed at the northern border in the eastern sector of Lebanon. Everyone was gloomy. No one felt like tending to the upkeep of the army post, and it showed. Suddenly, we heard rumors that the prime minister was about to pay a visit to the northern border, and a stop to our base was on the itinerary. The mood was so despondent that we didn't pay attention to the rumors.

At a certain point, we saw high-ranking officials starting to come around and inspect the area. With every passing hour, even more prestigious individuals arrived. We began to understand that something serious was brewing, and at once, the mood changed. Everyone put their shoulder to the wheel and helped to prepare for the prime minister's arrival. Within a short period of time, the post was tidied up, preparations were at their height, and the air was filled with tension and excitement. Naturally, when the appointed time came and the prime minister arrived at the gates, the atmosphere there was totally different from the one that prevailed before the preparations began.

The same applies in our case. When we talk about the Redemption and Moshiach in abstract terms, people tend to be somewhat skeptical about the subject. They are inclined to classify the announcement of the Redemption as another tenet of faith that will be realized one day – “at the end of time.” However, when they know that Moshiach is already here in our generation, and the Rebbe's prophecy will be realized in our generation, they understand that this is a Redemption that is happening now. At the moment that we instill within

the consciousness of the Jewish people that there is a Melech HaMoshiach in our generation, and his identity is known and obvious to all, the announcement of the Redemption is received with an entirely different meaning and the subsequent preparations intensify. Jews feel a special need to prepare themselves and take part in the *hisgalus* of the Rebbe *shlita* as Melech HaMoshiach.

If so, why didn't we see in previous generations that they awakened the anticipation for the Redemption through identifying Moshiach (in that generation)?

A person has to know that since the Rebbe's prophetic announcement of the Redemption, the Redemption has already existed in actual deed. It is simply a matter of the brief time remaining until we see this with our very eyes!

Who says they didn't? In *Kuntres Beis Rabbeinu Sh'B'Bavel* (Note 58), the Rebbe refers to the S'dei Chemed, who writes explicitly that every generation sought the Moshiach for that generation, and “in this manner, there was an estimation of who it was in every generation...all this is quite simple.” Even in past generations, they saw the need to look for someone who was fit to be Moshiach of that generation, in order to intensify the

belief in and longing for the coming of Moshiach.

If such was the case in previous generations, all the more so in our generation, about which the Rebbe MH”M *shlita* testified is the actual generation of Redemption. As we stand a few moments before the *hisgalus*, there can be no doubt that we must publicize to the entire generation who the Moshiach is, and that “all this is quite simple.”

Yet, besides all the *pilpulim* and explanations, one thing must be clear. We have evidence from the great event of Yud Shvat 5753, when the Rebbe came out and encouraged the singing of “*Yechi Adoneinu*” before millions of people, Jews and (*l'havdil*) non-Jews alike. Despite the concentrated efforts of certain *askanim*, who tried to prevent this public display at any price, the Rebbe rejected them and expressed his opinion in the clearest possible manner as he came out and publicized to the entire world that there is a Moshiach in this generation!

And who would ever consider contradicting the king?

Be that as it may, after the concealment of Gimmel Tammuz, perhaps it would be better to do the same regarding the issue of Moshiach's identity, as it seems clear that this makes the publicity campaign much harder...

Assuming that the *olam* is not a *golem*, we're talking about a secret that has long since been revealed. This discussion is similar to those of the wise men of Chelm, who, when the whole world was debating openly something once kept secret, they convened in their top secret command and debated whether or not it was now permissible to reveal the secret.

Everyone knows that all Lubavitcher *chassidim*, despite the differing opinions, believe that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach. This is the most revealed secret of the last decade. The only task that remains for

us is to verify and confirm the matter in absolute terms, and to make certain that all sectors of society internalize the message. From the moment that everyone knows that all Lubavitcher *chassidim* believe that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, what logic is there to remaining silent and keeping things under wraps? How will it appear to the world that everyone is talking about the fact that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, yet only Lubavitcher *chassidim* have still not emerged from their shell?

It's true that everyone knows that we believe. But if there are those who are bothered by discussion of the issue and its publicity due to fears that it drives people away from *chassidus*, perhaps it would be more appropriate to keep a low profile for the sake of our outreach activities?

There are a number of answers to this point:

1. As I said earlier, everyone knows that all Lubavitcher *chassidim* believe that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach. So if there are people who are not bothered by the belief itself but by all the publicity and involvement, I recommend to them the saying of our Sages, "And so he should lose his world because of fools!"

After the Rebbe himself openly encouraged the involvement in this matter for over a year, it is clear that it is our obligation to continue it, and it is simply inconceivable that we should conceal our belief.

2. The Rebbe initiated many *mitzva* campaigns that were not accepted at first, neither by secular nor by observant Jews, starting with the T'fillin Campaign, *Shleimus ha'Aretz*, "Who is a Jew?" and culminating with the Moshiach Campaign. Even then, there were many good people who suggested to the Rebbe that he refrain

from speaking out on these issues, since it would not be accepted and would only cause divisions among the people, etc. Taken at face value, it might appear that they were right, and were it not for all the *sichos* on these subjects, it seems that there would have been greater brotherly love among the *chareidi* community and in general. Yet, despite all this, the Rebbe, who in everyone's opinion is the ultimate *ohev Yisroel*, did not accept a single claim that it might drive Jews away, and continued talking about what had to be talked about with full force.

In practice, the approach that proposes a lower profile on certain issues for the sake of unity, *ahavas Yisroel*, or the spreading of *chassidus*, didn't start on Gimmel Tammuz, 5754, nor on Chaf-Zayin Adar Rishon, 5752. It started in 5594, when the Baal Shem Tov revealed himself to the world and



began spreading a new method of Torah. Most of the Jewish people were apparently against it, and the opposition then was considerably more fierce than the opposition encountered today. Were the *chassidim* of that day also expected to “lower their profile” for the sake of unity? There is no question that even then there were good Jews who came to the followers of the Baal Shem Tov and suggested that they take a low profile in order not to create greater dispute. It stands to reason that there were “*chachamim*” in those days who told them, “You can believe in it, but why publicize?”

And so it continued over the years. When the Rebbe Rayatz began publicizing “Immediate *t’shuva*, Immediate Redemption,” and even initiated the writing of a *seifer Torah* to greet Moshiach, this also aroused a wave of opposition at the time. *Chassidus* was never welcomed with open arms, but *chassidim* knew that they would always have the upper hand, including and especially in the spreading of the wellsprings of *chassidus*, and the current instructions of the leader of the generation *shlita*.

It never entered the mind of *chassidim* to hide *chassidus* under the table. The only one who has the authority to determine for us what to do and what to refrain from doing is the Rebbe *shlita*. Therefore, since the Rebbe encouraged us in the most revealed fashion to publicize his identity as Melech HaMoshiach, and since we have not heard from the Rebbe himself about the need to lower our profile on this issue, who would dare to consider contradicting the king?

3. Let’s see what the common folk say. If there are those who are disturbed by all the talk about Moshiach’s identity, they are only a small minority. The Rebbe has testified to the fact that the world is ready to accept the message, and whoever acts in accordance with the Rebbe’s instructions sees clearly that most

people today are thirsting for an encouraging message. Thus, they constitute a fitting vessel for the announcement of the Redemption, including the identity of the Redeemer.

It is impossible to sit idly at home and claim that Moshiach activities drive people away. We must go out on such activities and see that the reality is the absolute opposite: Moshiach activities only bring people closer. People are happy to hear the announcement and to be partners in

When we speak to other Jews about the prophecy of the Redemption, in addition to the fact that it hastens its actual revelation in this world, the very fact that a Jew hears the word “prophet” makes the concept more acceptable and with greater fortitude.

Moshiach preparations by increasing in Torah study and the fulfillment of *mitzvos*.

Recently, we organized a campaign in Herzliya to distribute pocket-size pictures of the Rebbe with the caption, “Moshiach.” The reverse side features “*T’fillas HaDerech*” and the address of *Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel*. We gave out 25,000 of these, and I must point out that everyone who received one only thanked us. By the way, we made certain that they put the picture in

their wallet, so the effect would not just be momentary. In fact, we received hundreds of responses from people who told us about the great awakening in their spiritual lives, including and especially, their longing for the Redemption.

A certain Jew, who is not yet Torah-observant, recently told me that he brought one of these Moshiach cards to his relatives in B’nei Brak. When he displayed the card (in order to show them that he’s also into it!), they tried to convince him to throw it away. He told me how he stood firm and argued with them, enlisting every scrap of information that he had heard on the subject, in order to defend the faith in the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach. Again, we’re talking about someone who does not keep Torah and *mitzvos*, yet when he received the card, heard about the announcement of the Redemption, and placed the card in his wallet, the message made him stronger. It has an effect!

The bottom line is that the Rebbe’s statement about the world being ready is not some figure of speech, *ch”v*; it is a proven fact which each person can see with his own eyes. The people are waiting for us, and expecting that we will go out and explain to them about the Redemption and Melech HaMoshiach.

The Rebbe demands that we prepare the world to greet Moshiach. In other words, people must internalize the message and add in Torah and *mitzvos* out of a true sense of anticipation for the Redemption. Do you believe that a card with just one word, “Moshiach,” will bring people to internalize the message and change the direction of their lives?

First of all, the initial stage of internalizing the message within someone else starts with us. The Rebbe says to prepare ourselves and (afterwards, as a field worker) our environment. We see clearly that someone who lives with the announcement of the Redemption



inspires all those around him, even without much discussion. This is the reality.

Regarding the second stage, actually internalizing the message within those around us, I can tell you how it works with us, here in Herzliya:

Before I began publicizing the announcement of the Redemption, I consulted with several people in the field of marketing. They said that the most effective method today is to promote the message summed up in a very concise slogan. They explained that people today are confronted by a sea of information; they simply have neither the time nor the patience to read literature, albeit well prepared and organized. Therefore, the message must be encapsulated, then publicized with the greatest possible strength. The same applies with world newspapers. The paper is primarily comprised of huge pictures and slogans that express the messages that the editors are interested in transmitting. "If you want to publicize that the Rebbe is coming to redeem the Jewish people," the advertising experts told me, "use pictures of the Rebbe with a brief two word message, and make certain that every Herzliyan sees these signs several times a day."

"And what about internalizing the message?" I asked. "Our goal is not just that people should know that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, but to have them identify with the message and prepare for his arrival."

"That comes in the second stage," they said.

I got the idea, and began distributing pictures of the Rebbe all over town with the short caption, "Melech HaMoshiach" – two words that sum it all up. If we publicize that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, it becomes obvious that we believe that he will reveal himself very soon. We plastered the signs on every corner, placing them every week on all of Herzliya's municipal bulletin boards.

How did people react to these signs? It's safe to assume that many people shook their heads and said, "meshugoyim..." When they saw a hundred of these posters, they were astonished: "How many crazies are there in town?" They continued walking down the city's streets and saw another five hundred. Then, suddenly, they began to think, "Just a minute, maybe there is something to all this?" At the next stage, when they see a thousand signs, they ask, "Where can I get one?"

That's the way things work today in marketing. You pound away at the message until it is finally brought home. When the Rebbe gave us the order to publicize the announcement of the Redemption, he often mentioned the idea of "when you come to a city, go according to its custom." Clearly, we have to use the best available methods of advertising in order to publicize the Rebbe's announcement of the Redemption – and it works better than you can imagine!

After the election of the current Mayor of Herzliya (the only mayor in the country who is both a woman and member of Meretz), I was invited to her office for the first time, accompanied by my wife. During the course of our conversation, when I mentioned the Rebbe, I didn't add the title "Melech HaMoshiach *shlita*." At a certain point, I turned to her and said, "Of course, you understand that when we speak about the Rebbe, we mean the Lubavitcher Rebbe Melech

HaMoshiach."

She looked at me, surprised, and said, "Obviously, Rabbi Halperin, did you think otherwise?" (It appeared as if she was insulted that I suspected that she was so far from *Yiddishkeit*..).

Why did I say this? Because I had never met her until that meeting, and she had never come to visit our Chabad House. Yet, it turns out that she is also a resident of Herzliya, and she undoubtedly has had the opportunity more than once to take a stroll in town, and for a number of years she has seen all over town: Melech HaMoshiach, Melech HaMoshiach, Melech HaMoshiach... So whether she wanted to or not, it penetrated her conscience without anyone saying a word or without the slightest coercion, for this is the message that people on the street get.

Together with the publicity's first stage came the second stage of internalizing the message and identifying with it. Now, after everyone is familiar with our message, certain that it is "not normal," all that's left for us to do is to prove that we are actually quite normal. Thus, the conclusion to be reached is that also our message is normal, something serious that should be related to as such.

This is what we have done with our "abnormal" message. We have established a whole line of activities to demonstrate that we are most normal people. We founded a system of charitable functions: the city's only public kitchen, a Moshiach tank that goes around all the city's streets and distributes hot meals to needy families, etc. Everyone knows and sees that Chabad does these activities every day. Whoever comes to visit the Chabad House sees a respectable place that leaves a positive impression upon all those who pass through its doors. Even those who work at the Chabad House come in clean orderly attire, befitting "normal" people. Thus, everyone knows that Lubavitcher *chassidim*,

those who publicize the message of “Melech HaMoshiach,” are normal, honorable, and cultured people.

From now on, every bowl of soup that we bring to a needy family or every action we do that adds greater honor to Lubavitch is with one singular purpose: Moshiach!

Someone sees standing before him a rational individual conducting himself in an honorable fashion in every aspect and speaking words of logic and reason. He will relate to him seriously, even when he starts telling him things that aren't exactly rational – because he trusts him.

We act in a way that all people throughout the city know that they can rely on Chabad, even when the message is not so “normal.” When activities are conducted seriously with an emphasis on quality, even the not-so-normal messages will be accepted.

A Lubavitcher is asked to give a *drasha*, and the rabbi of the synagogue says that it is on the condition that he does not mention the subject of Moshiach. What should he do?

If we respond negatively and don't come to give the *drasha*, we obviously have not advanced the objective. This is pure laziness on our part. The whole purpose is that they should talk about Moshiach, even in this synagogue, and if we don't come to speak, then certainly no one will talk about Moshiach there. So what do you do? The rabbi doesn't want any talk about Moshiach. Nu, then you have to devise a plan of action on how to get the rabbi to agree. Sometimes, you have to adopt the general rule of “a descent for the sake of an ascent,” i.e., speaking for a period of time without mentioning the subject of Moshiach. However, we are assured that if we will remain steadfast in our faith, this will even influence our listeners, and eventually, they will ask us to talk about Moshiach.

The following story is one example of this successful approach: A couple

of years ago, I got a call from the *gabbai* of a certain synagogue in town with a membership that includes attorneys, physicians, and prominent public figures. He asked me (at the recommendation of the congregation) to give over a class in *chassidus* each week in the synagogue. But, of course, there was one condition: not a word about Moshiach. I immediately said yes. (My consent to give the class this way stemmed from the principles of my faith, and not, *ch"v*, as a form of compromise.)

For a lengthy period of time, I gave over *shiurim* on a high academic level, befitting my listening audience, and in accordance with the agreement made in advance: without mentioning the word Moshiach or his identity. This continued for several months until Yud-Tes Kislev, when, with the *gabbai's* approval, we organized a *chassidic farbrengen* in honor of the auspicious day. One of the participants at the *farbrengen* was a well-known journalist who was accustomed to come regularly to the *shiurim*. At the height of the *farbrengen*, he stood up to say *l'chaim*, and requested my permission to say a few words. He said, “K'vod HaRav, today is Yud-Tes Kislev, and if we're already sitting at a *chassidic farbrengen*, let me do it as befitting *chassidim*.”

“Do what? Did I forget something?” I asked.

He looked at me, smiled, and proceeded immediately to say: “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach Lolam Va'ed!*”

Don't you have a problem with the fact that for several months you concealed your belief that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach?

This is the main point: Even during those months that I didn't say a word about Moshiach in one of my classes, everyone knew my position and my belief. Since we try to let all the city's residents know about the announcement of the Redemption in every possible way, the truth has already been said to the fullest. When I

gave over a *shiur* without speaking about Moshiach (as per their request), this was after the truth had been said. Now, this truth must be heard from those who have received the message, as they too identify with the message. If those who have received the message fail to identify with it, then what have we accomplished?

Therefore, when the members of this synagogue asked me to give a Torah class without mentioning the subject of Moshiach, I agreed without hesitation, because everyone knows my opinion on this issue, and that's exactly the reason why they didn't want me to raise the issue during the *shiurim*. However, after several months of scholarly classes, when they saw that the guy with the extremist views is actually a very level-headed individual who acts according to the dictates of *halacha*, Torah, and tradition, they reached the conclusion on their own that the message is true, to the point that one of them could get up at a *farbrengen* and declare “*Yechi*.”

If we want to define this tactic, let's call it a combination of stubbornness (massive publicity) and devising a plan of action (high-level classes, not necessarily on the subject of Moshiach).

What is the “acid test” for determining whether or not it is possible to speak in a synagogue about Moshiach's identity, when it will be accepted immediately, and when it will require a special protocol to instill the message?

I'll divide this subject into two basic points:

1. Chabad's position as presented in a widespread public forum. When people ask what Chabad's position is today, after Gimmel Tammuz, Chabad must present itself according to the pure belief that the Rebbe is Melech HaMoshiach, *chai v'kayam*, without any change, *ch"v*. The general public must know that this is the declared official position of Chabad *chassidim*, and it is our obligation to publicize it

everywhere in every way possible.

2. Chabad's position as presented in a more private forum. When we come to a more private setting – synagogue, institution, or a person's home – and the person in charge expresses opposition to mentioning the subject of the Redemption, the only vessel for instilling the message is specifically not to talk about Moshiach. Together with this, we must make certain to emphasize the message in a roundabout way, without touching the subject directly in a manner that might cause friction.

If we work in an integrated fashion, then everyone will know that this is the clear belief of Chabad *chassidim*. Furthermore, when they will see that these same *chassidim* also respect their opinion and conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, this will bring them to identify with the Chabad message. Subsequently, within a short period of time, they will ask us to give a *drasha* in their synagogue on Moshiach and the Redemption.

We are *Chayalei Beis Dovid*, so we can learn the process of conquest from the military. The first stage in conquering the city is through massive artillery bombardment. Afterwards, when infantry forces enter the city and proceed towards a fortified area, G-d forbid if they should use heavy artillery. Everything must be used in proper dosage, according to the need. Sometimes, the situation demands the usage of no weapons whatsoever to enable the ground forces to move forward.

Similarly, we find with publicizing the announcement of the Redemption. The first stage in conquering the city is through extensive bombardment through pictures of the Rebbe with the title of "Moshiach." But when you reach a fortified area to give over the announcement of the Redemption on an individual one-on-one basis, each person handles the matter in his own way. As the Rebbe himself said on Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sara 5752, on

the one hand, there must be absolute self-nullification to the *m'shaleiach*; on the other hand, the *shliach* must act according to his intelligence and strengths, with the *bittul* serving in the background.

You are describing a very interesting tactic that combines external characteristics without explanation, along with an array of explanatory Torah classes. The problem is that there are those who only adopt the former, focusing upon the external characteristics without explanation, e.g., waving Moshiach flags. Does this also advance the desired objective?

Most of their suggestions to restrain these external expressions of belief were not in the form of tactical advice. These proposals stemmed from a lack of faith and self-confidence on their part.

Before relating to the heart of the question, let me say something as a form of introduction. I have had the opportunity to speak with many friends from all sides of the Chabad spectrum and hear their advice on the issue of the announcement of the Redemption. Without speaking contemptuously of anyone, most of their suggestions to restrain these external expressions of belief were not in the form of tactical advice, i.e., a clever device to find a way to instill the faith without compromising one's

beliefs. These proposals stemmed from a lack of faith and self-confidence on their part. As a result, when there is a discussion on this issue, the central point behind it must be a sense of firm and strong faith, with full and absolute trust in the words of the Rebbe MH" M. When this serves as the foundation, there can be a debate over which methods are useful and which are harmful.

Other such proposals based on a lack of faith are covered up by a litany of ideological considerations. Sometimes people enwrap their lack of self-confidence with a myriad of excuses, all with one objective: to evade the fulfillment of their responsibility. When it comes time to carry out the main *shlichus* for which the whole world was created, it is most important that we inspect ourselves first. Are we mixing in our personal considerations in the accomplishment of the task before us just a bit or are we truly concerned with the task itself? In the event that our personal feelings are clouding matters somewhat, as holy as they may be, the resulting conclusion will simply not be properly in line with the ultimate truth.

Getting to the heart of the matter, it is clear beyond a shadow of a doubt that just as we understood the Rebbe's instructions all these years and acted accordingly, so too today. There is no reason to say suddenly that maybe we really didn't understand the *sichos* after all. Just as before Gimmel Tammuz, we worked with great fervor and no one even dreamed to restrain the *chassidic* ardor in the fulfillment of the Rebbe's instructions, the same applies now – with even greater force.

With every *mitzva* campaign, after laying out its general rules, the Rebbe left considerable room for the *shliach*'s own personal appraisal: "Chabad according to the location." This is especially so in connection with the Moshiach Campaign, about which the Rebbe said that he is giving the matter over to us. It depends upon us to

devise a plan of action on how to bring down the lights of Tohu into the vessels of Tikkun. To put it in simpler terms, we find that even on the subject of Moshiach there are the Rebbe's clear words, about which it is said, "Turn neither right nor left." However, there are also many areas that the Rebbe left to our own judgment, each according to his place and his surroundings. The Rebbe bestowed upon us the strength, the honor, and the privilege to choose the methods how to instill the message. There are numerous ways and means to give over the message, and each individual, according to his place, must decide the proper manner. However, we have absolutely no authority whatsoever to alter the message.

We see also regarding the Moshiach flags – for waving or for placing on a lapel – that they can be used as a tool for transmitting the message. Look at the entire leadership of the United States Government today, everyone is wearing an American flag. Recently, more and more heads of state are appearing with their national emblem in their lapel. Anyone familiar with his environment, who reasons that wearing a flag will succeed in spreading the message, should do so. This is an example of spreading the announcement of the Redemption in the vessels of Tikkun, in a suitable fashion for a person's surroundings. The advantages are far too numerous to mention here. The main point is that the situation in every place is judged on an individual basis, and in general, there is no reason to refrain from the use of advertising gimmicks in order to spread the announcement of the Redemption.

In recent years, it has become customary to write "Yechi" everywhere, say "Yechi" everywhere, sing it in 770 both before and after davening, hang it all over shul and the beis midrash, etc., etc. Isn't this getting a bit exaggerated?

First of all, without getting into a discussion here about the essential

meaning of "Yechi," let's look at the record. We saw the Rebbe MH"M *shlita* with our own eyes for a period of fourteen months, in spite of seemingly terrible physical suffering, encouraging the declaration of "Yechi," including via satellite broadcasts to millions of people all over the world. Not since Moshe Rabbeinu has there been a Jewish leader who constantly encouraged the same thing so many times out of self-sacrifice and affliction. After all this, the only real question that should be asked is: Why aren't we saying it more?

There are numerous ways and means to give over the message, and each individual, according to his place, must decide the proper manner. However, we have absolutely no authority whatsoever to alter the message.

Furthermore, when we learn the Rebbe's teachings on the substance of "Yechi," we understand that the question is wrong from its very foundation. On Shabbos Parshas Toldos 5752, the Rebbe said, "And it can be said that the substance of this declaration is the revelation of the existence of Moshiach. As a result and afterwards, his revelation will be for all to see through his activities." To put it more clearly, this means that through the declaration of "Yechi," there will come the revelation of Moshiach's

existence, to the point of his revelation for all to see through his activities. In another *sicha*, the Rebbe says that "the air of Moshiach" is the essential existence of a Jew, just as air is the essential existence of man.

When we put all these things together, we understand that the declaration of "Yechi" reveals Moshiach's existence, which in fact is the essential existence of each and every one of us. So, the question "Isn't the constant declaring of 'Yechi' getting a bit exaggerated?" is really quite similar to a person complaining "How much can one possibly breathe? Isn't it a bit exaggerated to breathe twenty-four hours a day?"

This sounds a bit ridiculous, but regrettably, there are *chassidim* out there with "spiritual asthma," who can't breathe Moshiach all the time. However, a healthy *chassid* must know that a normal person breathes all the time, and a normal *chassid* talks about Moshiach all the time, and he must work every waking moment to bring Moshiach in a variety of activities. This includes especially the declaration of "Yechi," which in the words of the Rebbe, reveals Moshiach's existence.

Of course, when we declare "Yechi," we have to relate to it in a manner fitting a declaration that reveals the existence of Moshiach. We should stop for a minute from our daily routine and contemplate matters in their simplest terms. The Rebbe lives ("Yechi"), and he is "Adoneinu," "Moreinu," "V'Rabbeinu." In addition, he is also a "Melech," and not just any king, but "Melech HaMoshiach," and his life and sovereignty is "Lolam Va'ed." There is no question that when we think about the essential content of the declaration, this will bring about our total self-nullification to Melech HaMoshiach, and such *bittul* will be felt throughout the entire day – from "Modeh Ani" until "B'Yadcha Afkid Ruchi."

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

THE YOUNG ELDER SCHOLAR

TRANSLATED BY RABBI SHIMON NEUBORT



*Biographical Sketches * From the Sichos of the Rebbe Rayatz in America * Seifer HaSichos – Kayitz 5700 * Shabbos Parshas Savo, Chai Elul, at the Shabbos Meal – Part 1*

1. *Mazel Tov* to us and to all of Israel. Today is the day when the “Two Great Luminaries” were revealed: the birthdays of the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe. Our master the Baal Shem Tov was born on Monday, Chai Elul in the year 5458. When the Alter Rebbe returned from Mezritch the first time, he related to his devoted disciples, the young scholars, that when he had been with his Rebbe in Mezritch his Rebbe had said to him that there are two connotations to the year of the Baal Shem Tov’s birth: i) *Nachas* is satisfaction in the Supernal Worlds, and satisfaction in the lower worlds [458 is written *Tav Nun Ches*, which spells “*nachas*,” meaning satisfaction see also the *sicha* of Chaf Kislev 5693, par. 1]; ii) In that same year the *seifer Shalo* was printed in Amsterdam in clear typography.

2. The happy day of the Baal Shem Tov’s birth and the happy day of the Alter Rebbe’s birth is Chai Elul. Both of them – the Baal Shem Tov and the

Alter Rebbe – instilled inner vitality in the *avoda* of “*Ani l’dodi v’dodi li*.” Both of them – the Baal Shem Tov and the Alter Rebbe – had *mesirus nefesh* to bring all Jews, regardless of whether they are Torah scholars or simple people, to the status of being drawn to inner vitality. They revealed the path of *chassidus* that makes it possible also for simple people to live with inner vitality.

There are two terms used regarding the concept of a name, but [when two different terms are used for the same concept] these two terms [may] have two different connotations. [For example:] the terms *bar simcha* [lit., “son of joy”] and *baal simcha* [“master of joy”] both denote the concept of [a person experiencing] joy, but they have two different connotations. A *bar simcha* means [a person who is experiencing] the *result* of a joyous event, i.e., the revelations *derived from* joy. But *baal simcha* refers to the person who *makes* the joyous event. And so

also, the term *baal shem* [“master of the name”] means the master of the effects of the name. Our master the Baal Shem Tov was a *baal shem* – not merely a *bar shem* but in fact a *baal shem*, and he was also on the level of Baal Shem Tov [“Master of the Good Name”]. He was a Master of the Name, able to draw down the Good Name from above to the Jews, and also to raise up the Jews to the Good Name Above.

3. Regarding the meaning of the verse “Your word, O G-d, stands always in Heaven,” is explained in *Shaar HaYichud V’HaEmuna* (Ch. 1) in the name of our master the Baal Shem Tov. Although this concept is found in *Midrash T’hillim* (loc. cit.), the Alter Rebbe had a specific purpose in quoting it in the name of the Baal Shem Tov: it is because the statement, “Let there be a firmament...” was said on Monday, and this serves as an eternal remembrance that on the same weekday – Monday – the Baal Shem Tov was born [see discussion at length in *Kuntres Chai Elul 5703, Sicha 3*].

4. During the year 5658 my father once took me along on his trip from the summer estate to Lubavitch. The round trip took about four hours. This was sufficient time to hear a concept discussed by Father, and also to assimilate it. While riding to Lubavitch, Father told me that he

would ask my grandmother (Rebbetzin Rivka) to tell me stories she had heard from our great-uncle, the *tzaddik* and *gaon* Reb Chayim Avrohom, from her father-in-law the Tzemach Tzedek, and from her mother-in-law, Rebbetzin Chaya Moussia. Fortunately, Grandmother was not busy at the time (ordinarily she was constantly busy helping poor people to arrange some joyous celebration of a *mitzva*).

5. Father's schedule for traveling was arranged in a precise order. He would rise early to *daven* and to study his regular study sessions, and at ninety-three he would depart for Lubavitch. While traveling he would study. But this time, when Father took me along to Lubavitch, he devoted the entire time of traveling there and back to speak to me. It is not possible to transmit in words the joy of the soul that his holy words caused in me. Before we entered Lubavitch, Father said: "My father – the Rebbe Maharash – once said to me in *yechidus*: 'You will appreciate the inner delight of this idea when you hear a certain story from your mother – Rebbetzin Rivka – that she in turn heard from my father the Tzemach Tzedek. She is a master of tradition.'"

Upon returning to Lubavitch Father would ride straight to his mother, my grandmother Rebbetzin Rivka. This was one of his holy routines regarding the *mitzva* of honoring his mother: upon returning from a trip, Father would ride straight to his mother's residence. Entering the house, he would find a teakettle and refreshments that had been prepared in advance in her reception parlor: pastries made with sugar, the sort for which the blessing was unquestionably *borei minei mezonos*. Father poured a glass of tea, which he handed to his mother the Rebbetzin, and I poured a glass of tea and handed it to my father the Rebbe.

Father answered all the questions his mother asked regarding the summer estate: whether there was a place where one could go for a stroll

and the like. Afterwards, Father said to her that if it was not too difficult for her, he strongly requested of her to kindly tell me stories about our ancestors; events where she herself had been present, and things she had heard from reliable people who had seen it themselves or who had themselves heard it from reliable people.

6. [Father said:] "The *melamdim* Reb Yekusiel and Reb Nissan – through their custom of telling the children stories each day after the studying was

***The Maggid's elder
disciples called the
Alter Rebbe the
"Young Elder
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Alter Rebbe was the
youngest of all the
disciples as measured
in years, but he was
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knowledge and in
receiving the
Maggid's teachings.***

finished – have aroused in Yosef Yitzchok a desire for stories of *tzaddikim*. His tutor Reb Nissan gave to him to read and copy various stories that the old Lubavitcher *melamed* Reb Nissan Ber had written down, stories from the time when the Alter Rebbe studied in Lubavitch under the *maggid* Reb Yisachar Dov."

The chassid Reb Nissan Dov saw the Baal Shem Tov four times, and heard his teachings and stories. He met with the *gaon* Reb Yosef Yitzchok, the

Alter Rebbe's uncle, and with the *tzaddik* and *gaon* Reb Baruch, the Alter Rebbe's father. Reb Nissan Dov was present in Mezritch when the Alter Rebbe came to the Maggid for the first time, and he described the exceptional ways in which the "young elder scholar" was drawn close. The Maggid's elder disciples called the Alter Rebbe the "Young Elder Scholar" because the Alter Rebbe was the youngest of all the disciples as measured in years, but he was the eldest in knowledge and in receiving the Maggid's teachings.

Father said to his mother: "During the time of his *bar mitzva*, Yosef Yitzchok collected stories, and I am very pleased with this."

My grandmother the Rebbetzin replied: "I myself was brought up on stories about our holy ancestors, about the Maggid of Mezritch, and about the holy Baal Shem Tov. I don't remember my father [translator's note: Rebbetzin Rivka was only two years old when her father passed away; see *Seifer HaToldos Admur Maharash*, Sichos in English, p. 123, and footnotes loc. cit.], but Mother [i.e., Rebbetzin Sarah, the Mittler Rebbe's youngest daughter] used to tell us various stories, and my grandmother Rebbetzin Sheina [wife of the Mittler Rebbe] also drew us very close. When I was nine years old, our mother gave me a gift of a book handwritten by our father, in which he had recorded some stories about the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples, about the Maggid of Mezritch and his disciples, and stories about the great *chassidim* of Shklov. Father's book was very dear to me, and I read it each day, until I knew all the stories thoroughly.

"At my wedding to your father, my mother gave me as a gift two additional books handwritten by my father. In one book was recorded what he heard about the Alter Rebbe, and things he himself had seen and heard from the Alter Rebbe. In the second book was recorded the routine and conduct of his father-in-law the Mittler Rebbe, and also various stories."

(To be continued.)

“MY FATHER WAS NOT THE PREVIOUS MAYOR; THE PREVIOUS MAYOR WAS BLUMFIELD”

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



This week we read a double portion. The first begins with some of the laws concerning vows, and the second, with a list of the forty-two journeys the Jews made in the desert after they left Egypt.

We can understand the connection between these two *parshiyos* by first telling a story.

Shraga Farber was a wealthy businessman and a bit of a Torah scholar to boot, but he scoffed at the *chassidim*. Nevertheless although he made fun of every Baal Shem Tov story he heard, something inside him told him that he must travel to Mezibuz, where the Baal Shem lived, and see for himself.

It was a two-day trip, but when he finally arrived, secured a private audience, and entered the Baal Shem Tov's room, he was anything but impressed. The man that everyone called a great, holy *tzaddik* looked and acted pretty much like everyone else. It didn't take long until he decided that he had been right all along: there was nothing for him here. He waited for a pause in the conversation, stood up,

shook the Baal Shem Tov's hand, thanked him for his time and explained that he had to catch his train.

The Baal Shem escorted him to the door, gave him a blessing that he find a good job and a new house, handed him a sealed letter and asked him if he would please do him a favor and deliver it the next time he visited Minsk. "That is weird," the rich man thought to himself as the door was closing behind him, "Why did he bless me with a job and a house?" He looked the letter and saw it was addressed to "Mr. Samuels the Mayor of the Jewish sector of Minsk," slipped it into his jacket pocket, and chuckled uneasily to himself, "What, does he think I am, his postman?!" as he walked quickly to the train station.

A few days later he arrived back home, put the letter on some shelf, and promptly forgot the entire matter.

Twenty years passed. The Baal Shem had passed away, Mr. Forbes had aged a bit and his luck had taken a change for the worse. He

was no longer the self-confident millionaire of years ago. Financial setback after setback had brought him to the point of actually selling the furniture in his house to salvage something from his foreclosed mortgage. As he was moving a cabinet suddenly he noticed a letter that fell to the ground. He picked it up and began weeping; it was the letter that the Baal Shem Tov had given him to deliver twenty years ago!

"Don't weep Shraga," his wife comforted him, "The *chassidim* say that it is never too late. I think that you should travel to Minsk and deliver the letter. Perhaps the mayor is still alive; maybe your luck will change."

A week later he arrived in the Jewish quarter of Minsk to find the streets decorated for a festivity. A hundred tables were set with fruit and cakes, a small band was tuning up and a huge banner was tied to opposite sides of the street saying: "MAZAL TOV MAYOR SAMUELS!" – a new mayor was being sworn in!

Our hero asked to meet the new

mayor, and was directed to a young, well-dressed man. "Mr. Samuels? Congratulations! I have a letter for your father, the previous mayor, from the Baal Shem Tov" "My father?" asked Samuels as he took the letter, "From the holy Baal Shem Tov? But my father was not the previous mayor; the previous mayor was called Blumfield. And the mayor before him was called Goldman."

He opened the letter and read: "Dear Mr. Samuels, mazal tov on your appointment as Mayor! The man standing before you is honest and intelligent. He was once very wealthy and successful, please make use of him and provide him with an income and a house. I guarantee that you will not be disappointed. Sincerely, Yisroel Baal Shem."

* * *

How could the Baal Shem Tov know that Mr. Farber would become poor and forget the letter until the inauguration day of the new mayor twenty years later?

One of the explanations is that everyone's soul has to go through the 42 journeys (even if it takes several incarnations), and the Baal Shem Tov was able to see all these journeys before they happened.

The great *tzaddik* Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk related that once the Maggid of Mezritch told each of his disciples allegorical stories explaining each of their pasts and futures according to these journeys. "Each of us understood some of the metaphors," he said, "but the only one who really understood everything was Shneur Zalman."

It is no wonder, therefore, that the *Tanya* is the only book ever written that completely explains

what a Jew is, what his special purpose in Creation is, and how exactly to carry out this purpose. The *Tanya* explains that life, like our first Torah portion, begins with an oath. Every soul is made to swear before entering this world, "Be a *tzaddik* and not a *rasha*." Namely to be completely devoted

***"Mr. Samuels?
Congratulations! I
have a letter for your
father, the previous
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Shem Tov"***

***"My father?" asked
Samuels as he took
the letter, "From the
holy Baal Shem Tov?
But my father was
not the previous
mayor; the previous
mayor was called
Blumfield. And the
mayor before him
was called Goldman."***

only to G-d, and not even consider transgressing His will.

This oath attaches the inner (G-dly) soul of each Jew to the outer (natural, enlivening) soul, giving each Jew the ability to do, speak, think, and even feel (love,

etc.) what the Creator wants.

Just as when a person takes an oath to, for instance, stop smoking, the oath gives him power and drive to ignore all distractions and focus only on his goal, similarly the oath taken before birth gives each of us the urge and the power to focus on moving ever nearer to G-d and His Torah.

This oath is also the secret of the 42 journeys. The mystical books explain that the number 42 is derived from one of the names of G-d, which manifests itself in each of us (because we are made in G-d's image) as an insatiable drive to ascend closer to the Creator, closer to truth, just like the oath we spoke of.

In this deeply personal sense, the 42 journeys beginning with the Exodus from Mitzraim and culminating with Yardein Yereicho take on a new importance.

"Leaving Egypt" (Mitzraim) means constantly leaving all boundaries (Mitzraim), even the spiritual levels acquired yesterday. And both "Yarden" and "Yereicho" allude to the last stop, the revelation of Moshiach. "Yarden," because it says of Moshiach, "He will rule (*yared*) from sea to sea (T'hillim 72:8); "Yereicho," because he will judge by his sense of smell (*moreiach v'dayan*).

In other words the purpose of our lives is to bring Moshiach, who will be a true leader and a true judge (two things sorely lacking today), to correct the entire world.

This week's combined portions are reminding us that it all depends on our doing these two things; keeping the oath and completing our 42 journeys to bring Moshiach NOW!

THE YOMIM TOVIM, A NEW HOUSE, & LOTS OF NESHAMA- STORIES

*The Kupchik family of Tzfas went on shlichus to Poona, India. They are there alone, nine souls: R' Betzalel and his wife Rochel, and seven of their ten children, who reach out to Jewish tourists in India. * In a series of poignant as well as humorous letters that Rochel Kupchik wrote to the students of Beis Chana, where she worked until she left for India, she describes the challenges and adventures they are experiencing. * Part 9*

EREV ROSH HA'SHANA IN POONA

B"H

Hello Beis Chana,
Principals, Teachers, Secretaries,
Employees, Students
And hello Yehudis!

I knew which day school began not only because of Yehudis. Believe me when I tell you that in my thoughts and interests I live with Beis Chana. Beis Chana and Tzfas in general, are my home port from which we left on *shlichus*.

They say a joke about a *shliach*, that he has a *maala* (advantage) over Moshe Rabbeinu. Regarding Moshe it says no one knows where he is buried, whereas with a *shliach* that is where he is buried...

It's not easy for me to think like that because India is a "real cemetery." So I fortify myself with the knowledge that the Rebbe promised prophetically that "*hinei*

zeh Moshiach ba, u'kvar ba" (behold Moshiach is coming and has already come). Therefore, now, at this time, the "burial" is only temporary: For Moshiach is already here, and it says that in the future Melech HaMoshiach will appear in the Galil.

I have the feeling that this year everybody traveled to the Rebbe and only we remained behind. Listen, in addition to the *inyan* of 770, the Beis HaMikdash, etc., there is the tremendous longing to see a *chassidic* face.

Last summer, we got a video of family weddings that took place in Eretz Yisroel. People danced and ate while the camera scanned the crowd, and we sat in front of the screen saying: Oh look! There's so-and so and there's...

Twenty minutes later when the video was over, how disappointed we were! A video of a world full of *chassidim*... Needless to say we watched it over and over, *plotzing* to

get a view of *chassidim*.

Immediately afterwards I went out to the street to take a rickshaw, and like someone who looked at the sun for a while, I was stunned by the dark faces all around me.

So you should know that *ilu keirvanu lifnei Har Sinai* (from the "*Dayeinu*" song: if we had been brought to Mt. Sinai) to be crushed in 770 and to see the masses of *chassidim* all around us, that itself would be "*dayeinu*," and only someone who lacks this so terribly can understand what I'm saying.

I repeat to the boys (and to myself) that here, too, we are with the Rebbe – even more so, for the farther away you are on *shlichus*, the closer you are to the Rebbe.

Anyway, that's how things are with me. I'm beginning to wander. What I wanted to say was that I really wanted to write to you my blessings for the new school year, but I didn't have the time. This

morning they are all still sleeping and I'm taking advantage of these quiet moments.

* * *

The Rebbe speaks about a spiritual *Hakhel* everywhere, and so we had our *Hakhel* and our *Hakhel* was very special. First of all, the *t'filla* itself. In our school here in Poona, which consists of five students. (I don't know whether I should include two-year-old Yigal, we studied the Machzor. Besides learning the structure of the *t'fillos* and the meaning of the words, we learned and reviewed and sang all the "ai ai aiiiiiiiiis").

Don't think our children aren't big mischief-makers. Each year we have to make sure that the little

ones sit throughout the *davening*, but this year we had in stock only one hoarse *chazan* and them. So it was their responsibility to be the supporting singers.

Baruch Hashem, it worked. I've got to admit that it's much easier to hold on to the *chevra* at a meal with chumus and *t'china* than it is during *davening*. The children's singing during the *davening* transformed it into an experience, and captivated those who came.

On the other side of the *mechitza*, made of a colorful sari, the singer N.R. sat with us in the *ezras nashim* during the *t'fillos* of Yom Kippur. She was comfortable with the Machzor and knew all the tunes. In the middle of the *davening* on

Yom Kippur night she hugged me and whispered, "Who needs an ashram? Who needs anything? How wonderful that I have the privilege of being at this *t'filla!*"

I have the children to thank.

Michael sat among the men. He's a Jew from the U.S. who has spent twenty years in the East. He wears a rag wrapped around his head like a turban. He was once married to a Chinese girl and worked in the past as a translator from Thai and Chinese to English. Today he doesn't do anything. He just wanders around, living on the cup of coffee someone gives him at the German Bakery or at meals at the Chabad house. Mendy from the Chabad house was sent to buy him glasses



One of the Kupchik children at a Lag B'Omer parade

because he's being going around for a year already without glasses and he's "walking around in darkness" in more ways than one. Cut off from everything, from his city, his family, his people. A fallen flower child. Really lost.

And this Michael (he was named Moshe at his *bris*, he told us) sat throughout the *davening*, serious, concentrating. He held his palms together in the Eastern form of supplication, holding a flower – that's how he *davened*.

In the times of the Baal Shem Tov a Jewish child rent the heavens with the "cock-a-doodle-do" from the *olam ha'chai* (the animal kingdom). Over here, Michael *davened* with the *olam ha'tzomeiach* (the vegetable kingdom).

So we had our own *Hakhel*, and the notes certainly ascended along with the notes of the singing in 770, and maybe it helped a bit in renting the heavens.

* * *

I'm telling you about the *t'fillos* while skipping the *gashmius*, but the *gashmius* of the Chabad house is also *ruchnius*. And how!

As Rosh HaShana approached we knew that we had only a few days left before we had to leave the house we moved into before Pesach (we have a strange sort of *mazal* in that we have to move Erev Yomim Tovim).

We knew we had to move before Yom Tov because the previous house, which was suitable for the needs of the "weak season" in Poona, would no longer be adequate. On the last Shabbasos the guests were crowded and our children ate the Shabbos meals on the kitchen floor.

With a special blessing from Above, we managed – one day before Erev Rosh HaShana – to sign a lease on a new house! What a house! I'll tell you about it.



A kosher meal at a Chabad house in India

Right after signing the lease, we just finished our lessons and began packing. We decided to start with the kitchen and the things we needed for the Yom Tov meals, and figured we would sleep at the old Chabad house.

We arranged a work crew: Mendy and Moshiach (8 and 12), Shlomi and Avichai (6 and 10), and Yinon (4) who helps everybody. Each crew got written orders as to what to pack.

The children worked energetically. In the meantime, Abba tried fundraising, and Imma, oh boy, Imma was a bit hysterical. The next evening we were going to host dozens of people for the Yom Tov meal, and although we don't have anything here, when you move you see how much you actually had. And when you're really stuck you write to the Rebbe.

In the answer appeared these words, "*m'at m'at agarshenu*" (I will chase them out bit by bit). I kept repeating these words. Yes, the Rebbe is telling us to take it bit by bit, in stages, just as we thought...

When everything was more or less concentrated near the door, the T'mimim – the chief activists of the Chabad house (12-year-old Mendy and 10-year-old Shlomi) went out to get a rickshaw that carries loads from the Yeruda Market.

A brief bargaining session, and Mendy yells at the driver, "*Ptz'as rupee ki bulsa*" in Indian (will you make a big deal over 50 rupee?) and Shlomi declares "*Sao rupee*" (100 rupee, which is equivalent to ten shekel, a couple of dollars), and both end up angry with their mother for closing the deal with 100 rupees for each porter, including the rickshaw. They load the rickshaw-truck and the children hang on like cherries on the cream, and head off.

And *baruch Hashem*, it all works out and Rosh HaShana was about to descend upon the world in another few minutes.

A few minutes and a whole crowd manages to squeeze in before the end of 5761: some of the *chevra* that show up put on *t'fillin*, with the added bonus of a *karkafta* (someone who had never put on *t'fillin*

before), and there was *Mivtza Neiros Shabbos* with the girls, “*SheHechiyanu v’Kimanu...*”

With seconds remaining till sunset and the day we coronate the King, my husband put up a *mezuzah*.

I promised you earlier and I still have to tell you about what is special about this house and its location, but you must understand that I am here as mother-teacher-shlucha and so when should I find the time to sit down at the computer and write? So I grab a few minutes here and a few there, but now they are all awake, so I’ll have to write you some other time.

B’nos Chana (and my Yehudis who is with you this year) – be *chassidische* girls, rejoice over the privilege you have to learn in the Rebbe’s school. Now this is your *shlichus* (here in Poona the *chevra* would say “*achla shlichus*” – pardon the slang).

And together we will bring the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach one moment earlier!

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

Rochel

THE ARAVOS OF INDIA

B”H

7 Tishrei 5762

Dear Ronit (and now you are even more dear, since who’s writing me letters?)

Shalom

G’mar Chasima Tova and all the good things I wish for you! We are at the new Chabad house, and it’s an unbelievably perfect fit.

The truth is that from the day my husband began looking for a house in Poona he took note of this house, but at the time his legal situation was complicated. In the meantime, the house was renovated and became really nice, and then

suddenly, between all the agents who literally mock us (“this is India...”), someone suggested this very house!

The first advantage this house has is its location. I don’t know if I sent you the letter I wrote to the members of my *shiur* about the amazing answer that the Rebbe gave us, so I’ll send you a copy of that letter.

As you’ll read there, the letter I got from the Rebbe was in connection with the e-mail of the Rebbe’s *sicha* that we send out every week to the *chevra*. The Rebbe thanked us for printing *sichos* that

***I repeat to the boys
(and to myself) that
here, too, we are with
the Rebbe – even
more so, for the
farther away you are
on shlichus, the closer
you are to the Rebbe.***

bind also the *aravos* (the willows used as one of the *arba minim*, a reference to those devoid of Torah and *mitzvos*) to our people.

Sukkos is approaching. I once saw, in a store that sells the *arba minim*, G-d-fearing Jews checking the esrog for hours, centimeter by centimeter to ensure that it was *mehudar*. Then checking the hadas (myrtle) leaf by leaf to ensure that they grew in groups of three; they also checked the lulav, seeking a *lulav mehudar*.

What about the *arava*? Oh that they’ll buy last minute. Here in Poona we are *mehader* in *aravos*!

(By the way, it’s the *arava* that’s the hardest to obtain here in Poona because there are no willows here, and importing it is a problem because you need fresh *aravos*).

The *arava*, as simple as it is, unfortunate as it were, is our specialty! Take Mitra for example. Excuse me for using his *Sniasi* name, but that is the only name he agreed to tell us. We met Mitra at the Internet café when we went to send e-mails. When we walked in, he moved his chair that was in front of one of the computers and we saw a young man with a beard and ponytail who sang “*Yechi*” for us!

“Where do you know that from?”

“I don’t know. I know all sorts of songs...”

Next to him stood a blond girl he called “his daughter,” but she was the daughter of his gentile, Norwegian “wife.”

This is our perfect “*arava*” that is *mehudar* according to all the fine points of the *halacha*.

Mitra ended up coming to our house many times until he left for Norway. He receives (as they all do) the e-mail on the weekly *sidra*, but we didn’t hear from him again since he left Poona. I would not have believed how connected he is, *baruch Hashem*, until we sent him happy birthday wishes for his birthday as well as the birthday customs, and received this reply:

“I just read a beautiful message from you. Thank you for that. I am also getting and reading *parsha* every week. Thank you, it is always nice for me to learn more and see more...”

Can you believe this?

A Jew sits somewhere in Norway among gentiles and wants to read *sichos* of the Rebbe!

If you ask me, quite a few “*lulavim*” (a reference to those great in Torah) could bend before an

“arava” like this!

“I am asleep yet my heart is awake.”

If Mitra is ready for Moshiach, then the whole world is ready!

We must cry out to the Rebbe:

The beautiful lulavim sprout before you from all the Tomchei T'mimim: in 770, in Tzfas and everywhere else. The people of *chesed* and Torah in Kfar Chabad and Crown Heights and Yerushalayim and B'nei Brak have already provided you with beautiful esrogim and triple hadasim, and we little ones in Poona, like the humble aravos sellers, complete the set:

Look and see what aravos we have prepared for you along with all the Chabad houses in the world!

This was all by way of introduction in order to begin telling you about our wonderful new house, but my time is up so I'll say it in a sentence: Our new house shares a fence with an ashram on one side and it's on the way to the German Bakery on the other side. So we've got plenty of aravos in red robes.

As to the rest, I'll add more details the next time I have a few moments to write. Write me!

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

Rochele

B”H

HACHNASAS SEIFER TORAH IN POONA

Greetings to the Beis Chana Family!

It's the ordinary days of Cheshvan and I'm “unpacking the suitcases” of Tishrei in order to be able to use what I brought.

No, I didn't spend this Tishrei in Crown Heights, but I still spent the time with the Rebbe, along with the whole family. The Rebbe emphasized

that the further away *shluchim* are, the closer they are to him.

Speaking of suitcases, last week I finished unpacking the last of the cartons with the children's help. Not that we have that much stuff, but I just couldn't take care of it during Tishrei. I came across, among the bundles in “our suitcase,” a very moving package, which looked like this:

One morning, during the Aseres Yemei T'shuva, I heard singing and drums from the street. I hurried outside. The family had left earlier

*In the middle of the
davening on Yom
Kippur night she
hugged me and
whispered, “Who
needs an ashram?
Who needs anything?
How wonderful that I
have the privilege of
being at this t'filla!”*

for the local airport in order to meet a Tamim who was coming from Calcutta. The members of the community there agreed to lend us a *seifer Torah*!

The Jewish community in Calcutta consists of 28 people and they have 82 *sifrei Torah*. It was once a large community, and the Rebbe even mentioned them once in a *sicha*.

So I went outside and what did I see? On the streets of Poona, which are full of idols, my husband and children were dancing and singing

just like in Lubavitch! In the center walked the Tamim holding the precious Torah, with *t'fillin* on his head. Why the *t'fillin*? Because the plane landed in Poona before he had a chance to remove his *t'fillin*, and so that's how he went out to the streets of Poona.

The band consisted of two dreadlocked Indians wrapped in cloth energetically banging away on drums, in the local style, to the holy sounds of Simchas Torah. Another two Indians in saris brought up the rear and clapped.

They apparently had passed by the German Bakery beforehand, in order to include the early bird Israelis in the great simcha, for a Seifer Torah had come to the Chabad house in Poona!

The parade entered the Chabad house and danced inside, kissing the Torah with great love. The Torah was put in its place and my husband opened it to take a look. It was placed in a beautiful silver holder, Sephardic style, and was 100 years old. It had been recently checked and was pronounced kosher. The letters were written with great craftsmanship.

Who knows who the sofer was and which Jews heard this Torah being read and kissed it and danced with it for the past 100 years until it turned up in the Chabad house of Poona...

When the cloud from Poona lands near 770 in Yerushalayim, we will also go out to greet the king like the Jews from other *shuls* in the world, with the *seifer Torah* in our hands...

*Sisu v'simchu b'simchas Torah,
u'snu kavod la'Torah!*

This is packed deeply in my “suitcase.” I will try to make proper use of it during the year for *simcha* and *ahavas ha'Torah*.

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

Va'ed!

Rochele

A BEAUTIFUL HOME

B"H

Shalom Ronit!

Why the silence? I sent you a letter didn't I or did I never send it due to the chaos here during the *chagim*? (It contained quotes from the *chevra* in order to show what beautiful aravos are like).

What's doing with you? Did you travel to the Rebbe? How was Yom Tov?

The main event of Tishrei here was definitely the new house. Ever since Betzalel decided to set up a permanent Chabad house he kept

his eye on this house. Its location – two meters from the German Bakery where the Israelis hang out – is perfect. On the other side it's separated by a fence from the house of *klipta*, where the red-robed people congregate. What could be better? The house was in litigation over its ownership, and in the meantime it was renovated and we just dreamed about it.

The truth is that if it had been offered to us then we could only sadly decline because our financial state when we first came – we're still drowning in debts of last year – made it impossible to raise the money for a house even though India is generally cheap. But the price of a nice house in an

expensive neighborhood where the Israelis are is not cheap. Especially, a house like this, in the center.

In short, Hashem sets things up and we just have to follow along with simcha. The house we moved to Erev Pesach was half the price of this house. Aside from that it was good for the monsoon season, when Israeli tourists are scarce.

And the house waited.

The neighbor says that nobody has lived in this house since it was built over thirty years ago. The house stood here in India and waited for tenants who would make it a *dira ba'tachtonim* for Hashem.

When Betzalel first saw it, it was very neglected. Lately we noticed

Rabbi Betzalel Kupchik and his children dancing on the streets of India



that it was being renovated. The owner of our previous house asked that we leave. I was upset at the time because I hated the idea of house-hunting once again since the house had become too small with all the guests, with the children sitting on the kitchen floor for lack of space on Shabbos.

Then Betzalel went out again with an agent (the agent earns more than others do in half a year or more) who wanted to show him a house. When he came back he said – you know what he showed me? Yes, the white house...

The negotiations weren't simple and took a long time. Having no choice, this time too, we finished the deal Erev Yom Tov. Now the feeling of walking in the path of Avrohom Avinu is even stronger. Not just the "knead and make cakes," but also the "and he sat in the entrance of the tent," because Betzalel literally sits in the doorway of the house and "captures" passersby:

"Come put on t'fillin!"

He also sits, like Avrohom, in the "heat of the day."

Okay, the sounds and cries of the children that emanate from the dining room are getting extreme (at least it's revenge of sorts against the

ashram next door), so I'll join them for breakfast (warm pitot that Mendy baked!).

I await your letters! What's with Moran? Don't let Bruria leave her! What's with Bruria? Tell her to send me an e-mail, because for some reason the e-mails I send her are returned. Something's wrong with the address apparently.

L'hitraot at the third Beis HaMikdash, quickly,

Rochele

P.S. Remember: our ticket expires in another month and we are returning for a "vacation at home." (We'll have a replacement here.) We'll be able to reorganize financially, visas, and no less important: meeting all the tourists that passed through here throughout the year.

Motzaei Shabbos Lech Lecha

I didn't send the letter right away, and I noticed that after spending so much time on the house's location I didn't write anything else about it.

The other thing that made it hard to find a suitable house was the need for a spacious living room for the busy season. This house has an enormous living room in addition to three rooms on the

second floor. You've got to understand that in the guest house that we stayed in for the first five months, seven children slept in one room! In addition to many things they didn't have, they also didn't have space to breathe.

The house is plastered nicely in white. The floors are shining white. Really beautiful! (If you don't take into account that here in India nothing is every finished, and every day there's a problem with a leaky faucet, etc.)

Betzalel says that now *shlichus* is luxurious and no *mesirus nefesh* remains... There are some more hardships but all in all, *baruch Hashem!*

Write to me! The best thing here is receiving mail. I miss you and can't wait to see you. Give regards to all and tell them to write!

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

Rochele

Readers of this column are asked to help support the Chabad house in Poona which is mekarev young people to their Father in heaven and hastening the Geula. A tax deductible donation can be sent to Rabbi Yehuda Friedman, Chabad House of Canarsie, 917 E. 82nd St. Brooklyn, N.Y. 11236

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IT'S THE DUTY OF A CHABAD CHASSID TO PROTEST!

BY SHAI GEFEN

SITTING AT THE TABLE WITH MURDERERS

Exactly ten years ago, Israel decided to cast its lot with Yassar Arafat, who would do the work for them. They transformed the arch-terrorist into a white peace dove. They brought him to the White House lawn, and the nation rejoiced.

Now, Israel is in the midst of a worldwide campaign to oust Arafat from the region, while relying on two other murderers to do the work for us. One of them is Mohamed Dachlan, a murderer and “*ben mavel*” as Ariel Sharon himself called him. Just three years ago, he was responsible for the attack on Kfar Darom in which the legs of the Cohen children were blown off.

Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz met with him for “joint security needs” to mark the *Hudna*. There’s no sadder joke than the abasement of our leaders. A man who was on a “wanted list” by Israel has become a distinguished person who will bring

us peace!

“Optimism within the Israeli Intelligence community,” screamed the headlines last week. “Abu Mazan will compromise on the Right to Return,” they tell us, because he is working on that compromise. It’s fascinating to see how many times they repeat the same ploy. The headlines ten years ago were remarkably similar, except that at that time, all eyes were on a person who today is no longer considered relevant.

How is it that the Intelligence folk are so optimistic when their predictions of ten years ago failed? Then, too, they promised us peace without widows and orphans, yet since that time the land has been inundated with blood.

They’re selling us the *Hudna*. The attempts to murder Jews haven’t stopped for a moment. The kidnapping of a taxi driver (which had a miraculously happy ending) on Friday and the explosion at Kfar Yaavetz are just the tip of the iceberg

of the crimes perpetrated against us (not to mention the ones that fail).

For those who remember, the first one to propose the idea of a *Hudna* was President Moshe Katzav, when he spoke about it a year and a half ago. The P.M. attacked him for it at the time, and everybody felt burning shame. Today the shame is far greater, for even the defense minister who served as chief of staff is sitting and disgracing us all in talks with a murderer in order to arrange “security matters” with him, while simultaneously, the government continues to evacuate Jews from strongholds in Eretz Yisroel and is freeing hundreds of murderers.

We don’t have complaints against the terrorists. They openly say what they think of the *Hudna*. Ahmed Yassin explicitly stated that the *Hudna* is for technical purposes only and that Israel will cease to exist by the year 2027.

Once again we see the Rebbe’s amazingly prophetic words in a *sicha* of Chayei Sarah 5746:



“A situation such as this – degradation and capitulation before the goy in such a shameful fashion – was unheard of, even outside Eretz Yisroel, the actual place of the Diaspora! And even in Eretz Yisroel it was never as disgraceful as this – to run after terrorists and murderers..., as has been happening lately. The most ridiculous thing of all is that there are still people who claim that we are in the era of ‘is’chalta d’Geula...’

“They announce day and night that they are ready for everything: joint rule with mutual reliance, autonomy, and all other things, the most important thing being that they can sit together with those murderers and terrorists around a ‘round table’

“Furthermore, everybody knows, they themselves do too, that these are murderers and terrorists, who even after they promise and sign are unreliable, to the extent that even after they’ll have promises and signatures in their hands, it’s worth nothing more than a piece of paper!”

“This is like a person who sits with a murderer at a round table in order to arrive at an agreement with him, and as he does so, the murderer takes a knife and stabs him!

“The most amazing thing about it is that they still haven’t learned a lesson from the mistakes made in the past. This is not the first time they are ready to return land in exchange for a peace agreement; there’s a precedent for this in the signing of the unfortunate Camp David accords [the place is named for Dovid Melech Yisroel, Dovid Malka Meshicha] in which they returned everything to Egypt in exchange for a signature on a “peace agreement” which today everybody admits was a terrible mistake. Yet even so, they continue on the same path regarding Yehuda and Shomron!

“It pays to recall some facts in

connection with the peace agreement with Egypt, so that they open their eyes and see what the results of such an approach is: Jews who had worked and toiled to build new settlements in Eretz Yisroel were expelled from their homes and land – men, women, and children!

“Not only that, but they forced soldiers, who sacrifice their lives to protect Eretz Yisroel and those who live there to expel Jews from their land in Eretz Yisroel!

“Young soldiers, who innocently go to protect the land and its inhabitants to the point of *mesirus nefesh*, are forced (by taking advantage of the fact that they must obey) to expel Jews from their land in Eretz Yisroel! ...

“And all this is for what? In order to give land to *goyim*, among them – Egypt, which is the source of all the exiles, i.e., all the exiles of the Jewish people, the exiles of Bavel, Madai, Yavan, and Edom have their initial source and root in Egypt!

“The very fact that they give *goyim* land which we know to belong to Eretz Yisroel, the land that Hashem gave to every Jew, from the generation that was present at Har Sinai to the generation that will greet Moshiach in a way of an “eternal inheritance” – is extremely serious.

“Aside from all this, even according to the view of those who claim ‘we should be like all the nations’ ... We are talking about something that presents a serious danger to the security of Eretz Yisroel and those who inhabit it! Returning strategic land to Egypt is a serious danger to the security of three million Jews, may they increase, living in the Holy Land!”

SHLEIMUS HA’ARETZ
IS NOT POLITICS!

Shleimus ha’Aretz and the security of the Jews living in Eretz Yisroel is

The most amazing thing about it is that they still haven’t learned a lesson from the mistakes made in the past. This is not the first time they are ready to return land in exchange for a peace agreement; there’s a precedent for this in the signing of the unfortunate Camp David accords ... which today everybody admits was a terrible mistake.

something the Rebbe put a tremendous amount of time and energy into. You can see this in the hundreds of *sichos* and letters that the Rebbe said and wrote throughout the years, regardless of which party was ruling Israel: Right or Left. The Rebbe warned, fought, cried, and begged and even attacked the leaders responsible for the situation. The Rebbe was not fazed by what people would say.

The same is true for the time the Rebbe strongly denounced the ceasefire agreement following the Six Day War, without taking into consideration what they would say and what they would think. The Rebbe stood strong even when he stood alone and cried out against the whole world, even against *rabbanim* who were in favor of the Camp David accords.

The Rebbe screamed even when he knew that what he said would cause a delay in the payment of the salaries of Chabad teachers and every other position. Danger to life was the number one issue. The Rebbe even quoted the Gemara that says that one who asks questions regarding danger to life is like one who sheds blood, and the one who is asked is disgraceful.

A rare and shocking statement from the Rebbe was said on Shabbos Parshas VaYakhel-P'kudei 5740:

“The question about giving away land is not dependent on money or honor, or on whether it will interfere with spreading the wellsprings and *mitzvaim*; the only touchstone is whether ‘the land will be opened before them’ or not.”

So when the Jewish people are in danger, our job is to cry out. This is what the Rebbe demands of us. And if the P.M. endangers the lives of Jews because of his capitulation to the nations of the world, we must cry out: Resign from your position and don't endanger the lives of

millions of Jews in the Holy Land!

Lubavitcher *chassidim* march with the Rebbe without compromising, even if it isn't pleasant and even if it makes things difficult for an *askan* to meet with some minister or another.

This is not the place to remind those *askanim* how much the Rebbe demanded of them to work on behalf of *shleimus ha'Aretz* and not to sell Eretz Yisroel for money and bribes. We know what the Rebbe says about money raised by religious *askanim* who care only about their *yeshivos* and abandon *shleimus ha'Aretz*: “it is

We must publicize as widely as possible what the Rebbe said about shleimus ha'Aretz as well as the p'sak din of rabbanei Chabad – that the Sharon government should be annulled.

money dipped in Jewish blood.”

Chabad is the Rebbe, and he is the only one to say what a *chassid* ought to be involved in. If the Rebbe says that it is the obligation of every Jew to work on behalf of *shleimus ha'Aretz*, then even one thousand *askanim* and spokesmen can't nullify what the Rebbe said. (The only question is where do these *askanim* get their nerve to fight against Hashem and His anointed one?)

We must publicize as widely as possible what the Rebbe said about

shleimus ha'Aretz as well as the *p'sak din of rabbanei Chabad* – that the Sharon government should be annulled. The protest and crying out of *rabbanei Chabad* is in the category of “*d'var Hashem zu halacha*.”

BRING BACK THE MANDATE

When the issue of concessions arose after the P.M. decided to endanger the lives of Jews in exchange for an agreement, the Rebbe called upon the P.M. to resign and not to endanger Jews. This happened when Begin gave away land, as well as with Shamir, when the Rebbe referred to himself by name and said that he would personally fight to take down Shamir's government.

Our approach has to be emphatic and non-compromising. A situation of danger to life, when Jewish blood is spilled on the streets of our cities, is not the time for word games and flattery. Matters must be stated clearly.

The Rebbe turns directly towards Israeli leaders who abandoned Jewish lives, including ministers of the Israeli government:

“You admit that these concessions are a serious danger to the state of security but you claim you have no choice since pressure is exerted upon you which you cannot withstand. Therefore, there is a simple solution: sit down and give over the leadership to someone else who can withstand the pressure so that the lives of three millions Jews are not endangered!

“Indeed you cannot withstand the pressure, but it's possible that someone else *can* withstand the pressure! If so, who says that you have to be the one to make the decision when this decision endangers the lives of Jews living in the Holy Land!?”

“No one is born a minister; all the more so a ‘prime minister...’ So what's the big deal of resigning from your

position when the pressure to endanger Jews living in Eretz Yisroel proves too much for you?

“Even after resigning from the position of prime minister, you can continue to live a normal life like anybody else, whether regarding family life or social life, an honorable position. In fact, in this case, the weighty responsibility won’t rest on your conscience – that you were the one who put the Jews of Eretz Yisroel into serious danger... Even if you don’t see anyone who can do better than yourself, that’s no proof since you are biased! Give back the mandate to those who elected you and they’ll find someone else who can withstand this pressure so as not to endanger Jews.”

(Chayei Sarah 5746).

**THEY’RE STILL THERE?
THEY’RE STILL THERE!**

Hudna, murder, kidnapping, evacuating strongholds in Eretz Yisroel, talk about evacuating Gaza,

missiles shot towards residents of Israel, the wholesale release of hundreds of prisoners, and they’re still there – without even giving a whistle.

I’m referring of course to Effy Eitam, Benny Alon, and Evette Lieberman. Shame! They and only they are to blame. Even if they leave in a few months, they still won’t be able to say, “Our hands did not spill this blood.” They gave Sharon the coverage so he could use it freely. He derived the most benefit from them and each additional day is profit, as far as he is concerned.

In the meantime, Alon and Lieberman are doing Sharon’s dirty work for him. By belonging to the government, they are covering up the tragedy of the Road Map agreement, the tragedy of evacuating strongholds, and they belong to the family which gave birth to the establishment of a Palestinian state. It will be engraved as a mark of Cain on their foreheads. They’ll never be able to blame Yahadus HaTorah and

not even Shas.

And we say to you: If you are decent people, then go to Rabin’s grave with your eyes downcast and ask his forgiveness for what you did to him. The agreements he foresaw were far more preferable than those that were born in your time.

We all remember when you, Benny Alon, headed Zu Artzeinu. It was less than ten years ago when you blockaded roads, ignited the country, and described Rabin in the most unflattering terms. But the deeds you are responsible for are worse by far than what Rabin did.

You, and only you, are to blame. You gave Sharon the majority he needed to capitulate unconditionally. Your influence is nil, but you’ll also pay the price. There’s a Judge and Justice and there’s a merciful Father in Heaven Who has compassion on His children, who are being butchered in Eretz Yisroel, for He will avenge the blood of His servants!

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AD MASAI?! AD MASAI?!

“When you see something that happened that is not at all understood (even after a soul-searching of one’s deeds, etc.) you have to say the truth (and not seek to justify [events on behalf of Hashem) – that it is completely not understood. It is, rather [a case of] “Hashem has felled,” and therefore, “shrait er” (he screams) ... Certainly Hashem Himself is pained by this.”

(Sicha Naso 5734)

THE TRAGEDY IN CROWN HEIGHTS: THE SCHEINFELDS AND THEIR DAUGHTER, A”H

Chabad *chassidim* around the world, particularly the residents of Crown Heights, were terribly shaken by the news of a car accident that took the lives of R’ Yitzchok, his wife, Raizel Scheinfeld, and their daughter, Mrs. Bella Raksin, all residents of Crown Heights.

The Scheinfelds and Raksins were spending the summer in the Catskills and on 8 Tammuz were driving on the highway when a truck overturned on their car, killing Mrs. Scheinfeld instantly. Mr. Scheinfeld died on the way to the hospital, and Mrs. Raksin died the next day in the hospital. A granddaughter, who was in the car with them, was miraculously unhurt.

A huge crowd attended the funeral which took place on Wednesday in Crown Heights.

* * *

R’ Yitzchok Scheinfeld was born in 5698 (1938) in Brazil. While in Rio de Janeiro, he became a *mekurav* to *chassidus* and the Rebbe with the aid of *shliach*, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Chitrik, and in 5713 (1953) he went to 770 to learn in Tomchei T’mimim.

His wife, Raizel, was born in Russia. She was orphaned of her mother as a little girl, and during World War II she lost contact with her father. Years later she discovered that her father was alive and living in Russia. After the war she lived in France for a while and then moved to New York with the help of relatives.

In 5719 they married and the Rebbe was the *mesader kiddushin*. They lived in Crown Heights and dedicated themselves to the *chinuch* of their children.

Their daughter, Bella, attended Beis Rivka. After marrying Eliezer (Lazer) Raksin, she worked as a *mora* in Oholei Torah. Mrs. Raksin was a successful *mora* and parents requested that their children be placed in her class.

Mrs. Raksin was a *dugma chaya* of a *chassidishe mora*, and she successfully implanted a spirit of *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe in her students. In particular, she imparted the *emuna* in the coming of Moshiach and the revelation of the Rebbe, in daily life.

A few months ago she gave birth to a baby who, tragically, passed away after two days. During the pregnancy Mrs. Raksin had undertaken a number of *hiddurim* in



The Rebbe MH" M being *mesader kiddushin* for the Scheinfelds, a" h

the fulfillment of *mitzvos* and *chassidishe hanhagos*. The Raksins were greatly pained over the loss of their baby, but Mrs. Raksin said that it was a test from Hashem. She encouraged her husband to continue

with his work in *Mivtza T'fillin* and *Mivtza Mezuza*, which he had devoted himself to in recent years in the Catskills.

Every Tuesday, he drives up to the Catskills (about 3 hours one

way) in order to put *t'fillin* on with Jews. He provides pairs of *t'fillin* for a nominal fee to those who commit to using them regularly.

R' Lazer asked that in accordance with his wife's wishes that he expand his *mivtzaim*, we should publicize the fact that he will be dedicating *Mivtza T'fillin l'ilui nishmas* his wife. He asks everybody to contribute to this worthy cause so that many more Jews can participate in the *mitzvos* of *t'fillin* and *mezuza*. Donations can be sent to Lazer Raksin at 646 Empire Blvd. Brooklyn, N.Y. 11213.

Yitzchok and Raizel Scheinfeld are survived by two sons, residents of Crown Heights. Bella Raksin is survived by her husband, six sons, and a daughter.

On Tuesday, 15 Tammuz, a *kinus* took place in 770 at the behest of the *rabbanim*, members of the Badatz. Rabbi Yosef Heller, member of the Badatz and head of Kollel Menachem, wrote a letter to the



The *levaya* passing in front of 770

members of the Kollel in which he called for a strengthening of the basics: in *yiras Shamayim*, Torah, *t'filla*, and *mitzvos*; distancing oneself from *machlokes*; diligence and *chayus* in Torah study, establishing daily fixed times for the study of both *nigleh* and *chassidus*, and not being satisfied with the minimum; to *daven* all

THE TRAGEDY IN ROSH HA'AYIN: RABBI OVADIA MEUDA, A"H

Lubavitchers in Rosh HaAyin were shaken when they heard of the sudden passing of Rabbi Ovadia Meuda, who was killed in a car accident right before Shabbos. The accident took place at the entrance

professional manner as his friend reported to the media.

"In circumstances such as these a person generally loses his senses, but he separated his professionalism from his emotions. We tried to keep him away so that he wouldn't work on his father. When a doctor from Magen Dovid Edom came and told him the bitter news, he broke down."

R' Ovadia Meuda served in the past as principal in Chabad schools in Kfar Saba and in the Rosko neighborhood in Lud. He was 67 and is survived by children who follow in his ways of Torah and *chassidus*.

Mrs. Ora Ma'odah, a"h, wife of Shemarya Ma'odah, passed away as the result of severe injuries that she sustained in a car accident last Friday near Elad. Her brother-in-law, Ovadia Ma'odah, a"h, was killed, while her sister-in-law, who is also called Ora, suffered serious injuries. Shemarya Ma'oda was released from hospital after receiving medical treatment for more moderate injuries.

A child, Devorah Leah Ma'odah, a"h, was also fatally injured in the crash. She was the daughter of Yair Ma'odah. Her grandfather and aunt, a"h, also died as a result of the accident. The funeral is due to take place today at 5pm in Rosh HaAyin.

ANOTHER TRAGEDY: DOVID PERLOW, A"H

Kfar Chabad was shaken up upon hearing of the tragedy that took place on Sunday, Gimmel Tammuz. Three-and-a-half-year-old Duddy Perlow was killed by a train as he played on train tracks near his grandmother's house.

He had come to Eretz Yisroel from New York two weeks before, with his mother and two brothers for an uncle's wedding. The family said, "He loved trains and played with model trains. Whenever he heard the train-



Rabbi Heller's letter

three *t'fillos* slowly, carefully, and with *kavana*, not to *daven* late, not to talk during *davening* and *Krias ha'Torah*; to supervise oneself and one's household in all matters relating to *tznius* and distancing ourselves from *goyishkeit* (in dress, regarding newspapers, radio, etc., etc.).

to Yishuv Elad when R' Ovadia's car crashed into two cars and the passengers of the three vehicles were injured.

His son Ilan arrived quickly on the scene as a member of Hatzala. He soon realized that the smashed-up car was his family's car yet he continued to help the injured in a



The wreckage of the Meuda family car



Rav Ovadia Meuda, a"h

whistle he ran to the window in great excitement and looked out for the train."

On Sunday, Duddy went from his aunt's house to his grandmother's house nearby. When some time passed and he hadn't shown up, the family began looking for him. His mother asked that they search for Duddy near the train tracks. Nobody imagined that he would walk through the field and go through the fence onto the tracks.

The tragedy took place after an

hour and a half of searching. A train that came barreling from the north to the station in the Kfar, hit the boy on the tracks after he had gone through a break in the fence that separated between the new neighborhoods and the train tracks.

R' Pinchas Gorelik, a Hatzala member in Kfar Chabad, rushed to the scene as did an emergency team from Magen Dovid Adom, but after attempts at resuscitation the boy was declared dead. Among the passengers on that train were some of the boy's uncles who were on their way to the

grandparents' house to meet the relatives from the U.S.

"From our initial inquiries it seems that the boy went onto the tracks after sections from the security fence on the edge of the road were removed. We assume that the fence was removed during maintenance work," said chief-inspector Yossi Beitán, head of the police traffic department in the area.

The funeral took place on Monday and the child was laid to rest on Har HaMenuchos.



Hatzala of Kfar Chabad at the accident site



Doivid "Duddy" Perlow, a"h

YOSEF YITZCHOK CHANAN FISHER, A"H

The Chabad community has been shocked by yet another tragic death. Yosef Yitzchok Chanan Fisher, a"h, aged 10 and a half, of Sderot drowned in a local pool on Tuesday. On Wednesday morning the court rejected a police request to conduct a post-mortem. The accident occurred after Yosef Yitzchok's, a"h, brother was celebrating his *Sheva Brachos*, and the family were still there when they were called to the scene of the accident. The funeral took place Wednesday at 2 pm in the cemetery in Sderot.

* * *

In light of these tragedies we must *daven* for the immediate fulfillment of the Rebbe's bracha and promise in a letter dated Gimmel Tammuz 5734, after a car accident which took the lives of the rav of Kfar Chabad, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Garelik and three Lubavitchers from Lud:

"May Hashem, the Source of blessing, increase His blessings to each one of you, amongst our brothers the Jewish people *shlita* in all their needs, material and spiritual with visible and revealed good, with the *mida* of compassion, the *mida* of Yaakov, a boundless inheritance which penetrates through and through. As per the well known statement attributed to lofty holy [Torah] greats, and according to what our Rebbeim, our *n'siim*, have said on this matter – namely the Alter Rebbe, the Mitteler Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek – until the promise will be fulfilled, 'and Hashem shall wipe the tears from all faces and He will remove the shame of His nation from the entire earth...we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.'"

With the *hisgalus* of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach now!

RABBI AVROHOM DOVID WILHELM, A"H

The Crown Heights community was saddened to hear about the sudden death of Rabbi Avrohom Dovid Wilhelm on Shabbos, 5 Tammuz. R' Avrohom Dovid was born in Mihalpolava Romania, on the German border on 19 Shevat 5689 (1929). His parents were Moshe Aryeh and Raizel.

His father died when he was two, and his mother sent him to the local *cheider* in their *chassidic* town. When World War II began, the Nazis took all the Jews from the town, including the Wilhelms, to labor camps and then to Auschwitz. R' Avrohom lost his mother, his brothers and two sisters in Auschwitz. He himself was saved miraculously. He was in line to be sent to his death when at the last minute an order came for fifty workers for the coal mine. R' Avrohom, who was tall and strong, was selected to be sent for that backbreaking work.

R' Avrohom refrained from telling his family about the horrors he had endured during the war. They heard very little from him. Even during those horrific times, R' Avrohom tried to fulfill *mitzvos* with *mesirus nefesh*. He recently told his family about how he managed to fulfill the *mitzva* of *sukka* in the labor camp!

One day, on his way to work with a friend, his friend shook and had no strength to continue. The friend despaired of his life and asked R' Avrohom to leave him alone and to continue on his own. R' Avrohom couldn't bear to see his friend like that, and he stood him up on his feet and took him to the barracks where he found him some food to revive him, thus saving his life. Today the friend lives in New York.

From Auschwitz he went to Bergen Belsen, and that's where he was when the war ended. British soldiers liberated the survivors. Slowly, many Jews arrived in the camp, and even a (Litvishe) *yeshiva* was founded. R' Avrohom joined the *yeshiva*, where he was thrilled to be able to learn after being deprived of this privilege during the war. The *rosh yeshiva* was a *misnaged*, and when a *chassidische* bachur came to the *yeshiva* and said something in *chassidus*, the *rosh yeshiva* cut him off and didn't allow him to continue, fearing the influence it would have on the *bachurim*.

At this time, R' Avrohom's friend, Rabbi Yurkowicz, married Ms. Junik. The wedding took place in Poking, and his friends went to the wedding. R' Avrohom went too, and that's where he first met Lubavitcher *chassidim*, who made a tremendous impression on him, but he continued learning in the Litvishe *yeshiva*.

The *yeshiva* moved to Paris and was called Yeshivas Beis Yosef Navhardok. R' Avrohom continued learning diligently for a long period of time. Then he learned in a *yeshiva* in Belgium for another two years.

In 5714 he married Chana Rivka Lokshin from the family of R' Mordechai Dovber Lokshin, a Lubavitcher *chassid*. The wedding took place on Gimmel Tammuz in Paris. His *unterfirer* were the mashpia R' Nissan Nemanov and his wife.

R' Avrohom and his wife lived in Paris for three years. At this time he began learning *chassidus* and slowly drew closer to *Toras ha'chassidus* and its ways.

In 5717 he emigrated to the U.S. and settled in Crown Heights. He worked while having set times to learn *nigleh* and *chassidus*.

He and his wife merited to establish a large and beautiful family, and in the merit of his great *emuna* he was able, with Hashem's help, to overcome the traumas of the war. He never related his memories and suffering of that terrible time to anyone, including his own family, and did not allow his past to cloud the *joie de vivre* that is demanded of a Jew and *chassid* in order to fulfill his purpose in this world.

He didn't even want reparations from the Germans. A few years ago when he was offered a large amount of money to get rid of the numbers tattooed in his arm, he refused.

R' Avrohom excelled in *chesed* and *tznius*, and was beloved and pleasant in all his ways.

In one of his *yechiduyos*, which took place in honor of the *bar mitzva* of his oldest son Moshe, R' Avrohom



asked the Rebbe whether he should teach his son secular studies. His son learned in Oholei Torah, which does not teach any secular studies, and some of his son's classmates were learning English after school.

The Rebbe said, "What does he need English for? Moshiach's coming already!"

Naturally R' Avrohom dropped the topic and this is how he educated all his sons. R' Avrohom had *chassidische nachas* from his children who are principals, *roshei yeshivos*, *shluchim*, and *mechanchim* throughout the U.S.

On Friday, 4 Tammuz, he was in a car accident. When he was taken to the hospital the doctors saw he had broken a rib. He stayed in the hospital for observation, and that night he died in his sleep, something

that was completely unexpected.

His *levaya* was attended by many of his friends and acquaintances, and he was laid to rest in burial grounds of Agudas Chassidei Chabad in New York.



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