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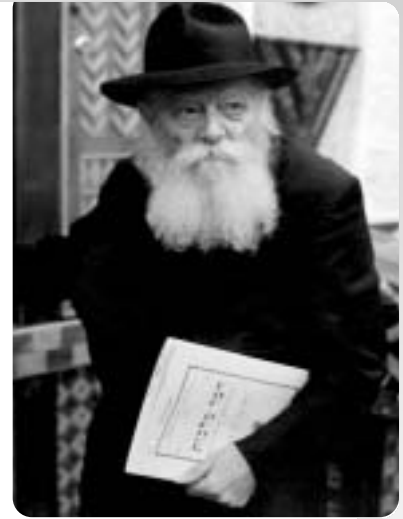
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JUDGES AT OUR GATES

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS SHOFTIM; 2ND DAY OF ELUL, 5749

1. This Shabbos is the first Shabbos of the month of Elul.[194] This is a month in which we should take stock of and complete all the service associated with the year, 5749 (a year connected with the concept of release), and prepare for the service of 5750, a year of miracles.

Each day of Elul is of unique importance for each day of the month can elevate and compensate for the service of that day in all the months of the previous year and prepare for the service of that day in all the months of the year to come[195] (i.e., the first of Elul is connected with the first day of all the months of the previous and coming years, the second of Elul with the second day, etc.[196]).

According to the principle that

194. Though the date is the second of Elul, it is the third day after the beginning of the service of Elul since the first day of Rosh Chodesh Elul is the 30th of Av. Thus, today marks the establishment of a chazaka (something that is accepted as a fact) for the service of Elul.

195. The Siddur of the Arizal explains a similar concept regarding the seven days between Rosh HaShana and Yom

“we must live with the times,’ i.e., find a lesson relevant to our lives within the weekly Torah portion,” it is self-understood that there is a connection between the above concepts and the weekly Torah portion, Parshas Shoftim.

Parshas Shoftim begins with the commandment to “appoint judges and police in all your gates.” This concept is relevant in the personal service of every Jew. Judges, those who decide the law, allude to the study of Torah which teaches us the proper behavior to follow. Police, those who enforce the law, allude to the service of actual deed.[197] By “appointing judges and police” for himself, a Jew assures that his behavior will follow the Torah’s guidelines.

This concept is further emphasized by the interpretation of

Kippur. Each of those days has an effect on all the correspondent days of the week.

196. The 29th day of Elul includes the service of the 29th and 30th days of those months which have 30 days. We find a parallel to this in the monthly recitation of T’hillim. In those months that have only 29 days, we recite the T’hillim of the 29th and 30th days on

“your gates”[198] as referring to our sensory organs, our eyes, ears, etc. These organs are the “gates” through which we take in information from the outside environment and respond to it. We must “appoint judges and police” to control our appreciation of these stimuli and our response to them, directing them according to the Torah’s standards.

This brings out the connection to the month of Elul, the month of stocktaking. In such a month, there is a greater emphasis on judging and controlling our behavior to compensate for any deficiencies in the service of the previous year and to prepare for the service of the year to come.

This concept also relates to the conclusion of the weekly portion which discusses the mitzvah of Eglah Arufa (decapitating a calf as

the 29th day.

197. Note Or HaTorah which states that “judges” refers to our three intellectual powers and “police” to our seven emotional powers.

198. The fact that the Torah uses the singular form of the word “your gates” implies that this service is relevant to every single individual.

atonement for an unsolved murder). The appointment of “judges and police” is intended to prevent undesirable events of this nature from occurring. When such an event does occur – even though it occurs “in a field,” beyond the domains of their city – they perform the service necessary to bring about atonement.

This also relates to the service of the month of Elul which is associated with and prepares for the atonement of Yom Kippur. Indeed, it is explained that the cycle of repentance and atonement of these days has its source in the forty day period which Moshe spent on Mount Sinai, beginning Rosh Chodesh Elul and ending on Yom Kippur. [This involved repentance for the sin of the Golden Calf and G-d’s pronouncement of atonement, “I have forgiven according to your words,” on Yom Kippur.]

The fact that the corpse is found “in the field” can also be understood as an allusion to the metaphor of “the king in the field” which describes the service of Elul. To quote Likkutei Torah:

Before a king comes to a city, the people of the city come out and greet him in the field. Then, it is permitted [and the potential is granted] for all those who desire to go and greet him. He receives them all with a pleasant countenance and shows a smiling countenance to all.

Going out to “greet the king” in this manner brings about atonement since the Thirteen Attributes of

Divine Mercy are revealed in the month of Elul.

2. This week’s – and the following week’s – portion contain a verse which when translated literally would read: “When you go out to war over your enemies...” A Jew must “go out” to war, i.e., the confrontation with the undesirable aspects of this world represents a

These organs are the “gates” through which we take in information from the outside environment and respond to it. We must “appoint judges and police” to control our appreciation of these stimuli...

departure and a descent from his natural state. When he approaches such a confrontation, he must know “not to fear them,” that he is “over” his enemies.

A Jew is “truly a part of G-d from above” – “Israel and the Holy One, Blessed be He, are one.” Therefore, by nature, he stands above all the

undesirable aspects of this world. Thus, the war is not a battle between two equals. Rather, he is on a totally different plane than the enemies he faces.

Why does a Jew descend to this low physical world? Because G-d begged him, as it were, to do so. G-d gave each Jew a mission which involved descending from the spiritual heights[199] to become clothed in a physical body in this world where G-dliness is concealed.

Thus, if this descent leads to undesirable consequences, this is not the Jew’s fault. It occurred only because G-d sent the soul to such a place and hence, it is something which to quote the Torah’s expression in regard to an accidental murder, “G-d caused it to come to his hand.”[200] Therefore, “our hands did not shed this blood.” We cannot be held accountable for this sin.[201]

The ultimate purpose of this descent is an ascent. Through working to make a dwelling place for G-d within this material world, the soul ascends to a higher level than it experienced before its descent. The Torah and mitzvos themselves are given for the sake of the Jewish people as we say in the Mishna recited after Pirkei Avos: “G-d wished to make the people of Israel meritorious; therefore He gave them Torah and mitzvos in abundant measure.” Similarly, Tanna D’vei Eliyahu states that two entities preceded the creation of the world,

199. This is reflected in the blessing E-lokai Neshama recited each morning. We relate how the soul which each of us possesses “is pure.” Nevertheless, “You (G-d) created it, You formed it and You blew it within me;” i.e., the soul’s descent through the downward progression of spiritual worlds was caused by G-d.

200. This verse shares a connection with the month of Elul for its letters are an

acronym for the word. It is taken as a reference to the study of Torah for there are parallels to the idea of Cities of Refuge and Torah study.

The subject of the Cities of Refuge also features prominently in this week’s Torah portion. Indeed, the ultimate performance of this mitzvah, the establishment of the nine Cities of Refuge in the Messianic Age is mentioned in this Torah reading alone.

201. There is also a parallel allusion in the verse which introduces the concept of the Eglah Arufa which describes the discovery of a corpse “in the field.” The “field” in this context refers to an undesirable state that has its source in the destruction of the vessels of the World of Tohu, the diminution of the moon, and the like.

Torah and Israel. Of the two, Israel is on the higher level.

Since the Torah and mitzvos were intended to elevate the Jewish people and the Jews are above the Torah, it is impossible that an imperfection or deficiency in the service of the Jews should cause a descent in their level. The Torah bypasses, as it were, the blemishes and deficiencies caused by sin in appreciation of the point in a Jew's soul that transcends Torah.

This concept sheds light on the request, "Atone for Your people, Israel." Why is atonement possible? Because the Jews are "Your people," connected in a complete bond with G-d, they are above Torah. Hence, a deficiency in their service of Torah and mitzvos does not disturb this essential bond.

This connection is expressed by the service of t'shuva which has its source in the arousal of the essence of the soul. Therefore, on a revealed level, the Torah is above the Jewish people [as evidenced by the need for us to follow the Torah's laws]. The service of t'shuva, however, reveals

The service of t'shuva, however, reveals the essential connection between the Jews and G-d which surpasses the Torah.

the essential connection between the Jews and G-d which surpasses the Torah. Furthermore, t'shuva has the power of compensating for all the deficiencies[202] created in a person's service of G-d, lifting him to a very high level as our Sages declared: "In the place of baalei t'shuva, even complete tzaddikim cannot stand."

{The Rebbe Shlita continued developing this theme within the context of the metaphorical significance of the portion of the Mishneh Torah connected with the present day. This has been published

as a separate essay, entitled "The Challenge of the Sea."}

The awareness of the essential connection between the Jews and G-d which surpasses the Torah should lead to an intensification of our efforts to reach out to every Jew. Though Elul should involve an increase in each person's individual service of G-d as expressed in a variety of different customs,[203] it should also lead to an increase in our efforts to reach others.[204] To quote the Rambam: One who saves a single Jewish soul is considered as if he saved an entire world.

May it be that the essential quality possessed by each Jewish soul motivate G-d to hear the prayers of the righteous and "your people are all righteous" and bring the redemption. "All the appointed times for the coming of the redemption have past;" we have even "polished the buttons," to cite the Previous Rebbe's expression, and we are all "standing prepared to greet Moshiach."

202. This implies that not only does the service of t'shuva express the essential connection between the Jews and G-d which surpasses the Torah, it can also compensate for particular deficiencies in service. One might think that since each aspect of Torah and mitzvos represents a particular aspect of refinement, these particular qualities could only be reached through the

service of Torah and mitzvos. This is not so, the service of t'shuva also allows one to compensate for the deficiencies in these particular levels as well, allowing one to reach the same – indeed, greater – heights of service.

203. Among the customs of Elul are: the sounding of the shofar each day, the recitation of "LDovid Hashem Ori," and

the addition of three extra chapters of T'hilim each day.

204. Reaching out to others will not detract from one's own service. On the contrary, this expression of "spiritual tz'daka" will "increase the refinement of one's mind and heart one thousand times."

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THE RAMBAM SAYS: THERE'S A PROPHET IN OUR TIME!

BY RABBI AVROHOM MENDEL WECHTER
ROSH KOLLEL IN NACHALAT HAR CHABAD

*When people ask how we can say there's a prophet in our time, the question is not on Lubavitchers but on the Rambam, who states that prophecy will return before the coming of Moshiach. * An in-depth look at the phenomenon of prophecy in our time, twelve years after the Rebbe asked us to publicize his prophecy of "Behold he (Moshiach) is coming!"*

When discussing the topic of prophecy after the destruction of the Mikdash, it is only proper to point out that "first rights" belong to the Rishonim like the Rambam and the Baalei Tosafos, who already in their day stated that prophecy exists after the *churban*. So all questions about prophecy ought not be directed at Lubavitchers, but at the Rambam and the other Rishonim. The way they explain the Rambam will also explain our belief that the Rebbe MH" M is the

navi of our generation.

In this article we will closely examine the sources that seem to say that prophecy does not exist after the *churban*.

* * *

The Rambam begins chapter 7 of "Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah" with the words, "It is one of the principles of our faith to know that Hashem gives prophecy to man." The Rambam then goes on to enumerate the prerequisite qualities for prophecy, such as "great

in *chochma*, strong in his *middos*, etc." and he concludes with, "*ruach ha'kodesh* immediately rests upon him."

Since the Rambam doesn't limit prophecy to a specific time, this means that not only can we have prophecy in our time, but this is a principle of our faith!

Many quote the Gemara (Yuma 9, Sota 48) that says "when the last prophets died, Chagai, Zecharia, Malachi, *nistalka* (departed) *ruach ha'kodesh* from among the Jewish people," but as we said – this question is on the Rambam: why didn't the Rambam write that the fact that "Hashem gives prophecy to human beings" is only until the last prophets died?

This question is also difficult regarding all those students of the Baal Shem Tov who said that their Rebbeim had open *ruach ha'kodesh*. The Raavad in "Hilchos Lulav" writes, "*Ruach Ha'kodesh* has already appeared in our *beis midrash*." And in the forward to *Shaalos U'T'shuvos Min HaShamayim* by Rabbi Margolis, in the chapter

“*Giluyim*,” he tells amazing stories about many *g’dolei Yisroel*, the Rishonim, and how *ruach ha’kodesh* appeared regularly in their *beis midrash*!

The truth is the explanation of the Gemara is very simple. The Gemara does not mean that *ruach ha’kodesh* ceased entirely after the passing of the later prophets, but that it is not found as before. We see similar things in the Gemara like (Bava Metzia 29), “Once the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, white glass ceased,” and Tosafos proves that even after the *churban* there was white glass, and the Gemara actually means, “it is not found as before.”

Just as with white glass, Tosafos does not mean to say that the existence of white glass is a *possibility* after the *churban*, but that it actually exists after the *churban* too but it is not as readily available, so too with prophecy: It is not merely that prophecy is *possible* after the last prophets; it actually exists. It’s just not as readily found as before.

We’ve seen already with the Baal Shem Tov and his *talmidim*, that the Tzemach Tzedek testifies in *Seifer HaChakira*, “The Baal Shem Tov, z”l, the likes of whom we haven’t had since the days of the Rishonim, incredible wonders outside of nature were seen through him, as I heard from my grandfather [the Alter Rebbe], *nishmaso Eden*, that he [the Baal Shem Tov] and his *talmid* the Maggid were able to see from one end of the world to the other with actual vision, and they would say what they would see, as witnessed by their students.” And the Tzemach Tzedek continues and says that, “also from my grandfather [the Alter Rebbe], *nishmaso Eden*, we heard predictions that were right on the mark.”

The message of the Gemara – that *ruach ha’kodesh* is not found as before – can be explained in two ways: 1) literally, that *ruach ha’kodesh* is rare, 2) perhaps the Gemara is referring to the

level of revelation of *ruach ha’kodesh* – that today it is not on the same level as it once was, before the last prophets died; but it certainly exists on a lower



The truth is the explanation of the Gemara is very simple. The Gemara does not mean that ruach ha’kodesh ceased entirely after the passing of the later prophets, but that it is not found as before.

plane.

This idea can be supported by the Gemara in Sota (49A) which says, “when Rebbi died, humility and fear of heaven ceased ... when R’ Meir died,

those who said parables ceased.” Does anybody think that among all the *g’dolei Yisroel* of the past many hundreds of years, there wasn’t even a single *tzaddik* who could be described as humble, G-d-fearing, or one who could say parables?

The only explanation is that here, too, the Gemara means that it wasn’t found as before, and again in two ways: either 1) once Rebbi died, humility and fear of heaven ceased to be on Rebbi’s high level, and the same goes for those who said parables, that once R’ Meir died, there are none who can say parables like him, or 2) it’s not found as readily as before, but certain individuals have these qualities just like before!

(The Rambam (in chapter 9 of “*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*”) says that Malachi was the “last of the prophets” – this can be simply understood to refer to the **era** of prophets, not, *ch”v*, that since then there haven’t been and won’t be any prophets.)

* * *

Thus far we have established the possibility of the existence of *ruach ha’kodesh* even after the last prophets died. Now we shall attempt to prove the existence of prophecy after the end of the era of prophets.

In the Gemara Bava Basra (12b), Rav Ashi is quoted as saying, “You should know that a great man says something and there is repeated a ‘law unto Moshe from Sinai’ like what he said.” The Gemara asks: “Perhaps like a blind man in skylight?” (i.e., he just happened to stumble upon the truth) The Gemara answers: “Didn’t he give a reason?”

Rashi explains the response of the Gemara as follows. “Since he stated a reason [for his conclusion] he is not like a blind man who tries to descend through a skylight by happenstance, rather it is the reasoning of the heart that comes to him as prophecy and he merits to concur with ‘law unto Moshe from Sinai.’” Thus, we see that Rav

Ashi maintains that prophecy is also extant after the era of the last prophets.

Also in Eruvin (60b) the Gemara says, “This is nothing but words of prophecy,” and Tosafos explains that “wherever it says, ‘this is nothing but words of prophecy,’ it is meant in the positive sense. In other words, there is no wisdom capable of apprehending

such subtle reasoning, and it must have been said with *ruach ha’kodesh*.” Once again we clearly see, from Tosafos too, that even after the era of the last prophets, there is still prophecy.

Later on too, in the era of the Rishonim, we find many designations of prophecy in reference to *g’dolei Yisroel* in that area. There are many

examples of this. Here are two:

In the Gemara in Gittin (88A, Tosafos “*V’dilma*”) we find that one of the Baalei Tosafos was called “Ezra **HaNavi**.”

In the Gemara in Menachos (109B, Tosafos “*B’tchila kol ha’omer*”) the Tosafos quote Rabbeinu Klonimus, the father of R’ Meshulem, and concludes: “and three things he edited as if

WHY DO WE NEED PROPHETS?

*Twelve years ago, on Shabbos Parshas Shoftim, we heard an unusual sicha from the Rebbe in which the Rebbe spoke about the beginning of the fulfillment of the promise, “return your judges as at first, and your advisors as at the beginning.” The Rebbe said that we must publicize to all members of this generation that we merited that Hashem chose and appointed someone with free choice, who is incomparably greater than anyone else, to be “your judges” and “your advisors” and the prophet of the generation, who will teach us what to do and give us advice regarding the avoda of all Jews and everybody of this generation, in all matters of Torah and mitzvos and daily life, and the main prophecy, the prophecy of “L’Alter l’Geula” and immediately “behold he (Moshiach) comes.” * The Rebbe said that along with this z’chus, each one of us has the responsibility to accept upon himself “your judges” and “your advisors” and to follow his orders and good advice.*

From this *sicha* it was clear that the Rebbe was referring to himself, that he is the *navi ha’dor*, and that he was revealing this to us in order to instill in us the certain faith of Moshiach’s coming, so that we’d know that this was definitely happening.

As we review the *sicha* of Shoftim 5751, let us examine the purpose of prophecy and the Rebbe’s prophecy in particular.

What usually happens when the topic of the Rebbe being a *navi* comes up is that many questions are asked, most of them stemming from ignorance. Of all the questions that are posed, we chose to focus on one topic: What do we need prophets for anyway?

* * *

At the beginning of chapter 7 of “*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*,” the Rambam writes, “It is one of the principles of [our] religion to know that Hashem gives prophecy to human beings.” This means that belief in the phenomenon of prophecy is one of the principles of our faith.

It must be noted that the phenomenon of prophecy throughout the generations is incomparable to that of

Moshe Rabbeinu. Whereas the entire Torah is based on the prophetic revelation that Moshe had on Sinai, the rest of the prophets could not innovate anything in Torah. Moshe was the sole prophet whose mission it was to teach us the *mitzvos*. From Moshe onwards, “A prophet is not allowed to innovate anything!”

From this it seems that prophecy is only about letting us know what will take place in the future, which is quite surprising. Do we need prophets to tell us the future? If we don’t know the future, so what?! This is a principle of our faith?!

Many Torah greats have addressed this, and *chassidus* has its part to add, but they mostly try to explain why prophecy is central to our faith, and don’t deal with the question of why do we need prophets?

Let us look at the *Seifer HaChinuch* and see what he says about prophecy, and we’ll see that even though a prophet can’t innovate anything, he and his prophecy are necessary so that the conduct of the Jewish people will be in accordance with Hashem’s wishes.

In Mitzva #516, “to listen to the true prophet,” the *Chinuch* defines the phenomenon of prophecy:

through *nevua* at the time of his passing.”

We clearly see that even during the era of the Rishonim, there was still *nevua*.

The question that many raise is the quote from the Gemara in Bava Basra (12b) that “since the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, prophecy was taken

from the prophets and given to fools and babies.”

First of all, the Gemara brings another opinion, that of Rav Avdimi of Chaifa, that “it was taken from prophets and given to the *chachamim*.” So the initial quote was not accepted by all.

Second of all, even according to

Rabi Yochanan – that “it was given to fools and babies” – there are many commentators that maintain that he is not disagreeing with R’ Avdimi. On the contrary, he repeats what R’ Avdimi says and adds to it. In other words, he maintains that after the *churban*, prophecy was given to *chachamim*, but not to all *chachamim*, but only to “special *chachamim* who

“The ultimate level man can reach is that of obtaining prophecy, and very few people merit this. One in tens of thousands achieves this, and in a generation that is worthy of it. Therefore the Torah commands us that when one man in a generation attains this level, we should listen to whatever he tells us to do because he knows the true path; arguing with him is an utter mistake and a deficiency in knowing the truth.”

This means that the *navi* is a sort of conduit who transmits Hashem’s word to the Jewish people. Not the Torah per se, for the Torah was already given on Sinai. But in every generation there are upheavals in the world that require a new approach. The world progresses and every generation needs new instructions as to how the Torah wants us to respond to the new situation.

We need someone in the generation who can realize this.

Not because he understands, because understanding is a human quality, sometimes he is correct, sometimes not. What is needed is someone who will give a definitive – and most importantly, true – message.

Judaism is based on absolute truth. Absolute truth is not something the greatest genius can impart. The best he can do is provide his reasoning. Absolute truth is determined through prophecy. Only a prophet who can perceive G-dliness can receive a direct message from On High and direct us on the true path.

This idea is also seen in *Seifer HaIkrim*. When the author talks about prophecy he stresses, “The existence of prophecy is for a purpose: to warn about the fulfillment of Torah and *mitzvos*, and *avodas Hashem* and

doing those things that are desirable to Hashem.”

This means that the role of a *navi* is not just to warn us to keep the Torah. If that’s all it was about, *rabbanim* could fill that role just fine. The role of a *navi* is to direct the nation in every generation on the path that is desirable to Hashem.

Therefore, the *Seifer HaIkrim* stresses that telling the future is only a sign of a *navi* in order to convince us that he is in fact a *navi*, but his function is not to tell the future, to save us in battle, or to warn of impending earthquakes, but to direct humanity and the Jewish people towards the true path.

This is what the Rebbe emphasizes in the *sicha* of Shoftim 5751 in defining the essence of a *navi*: “He give instructions and advice regarding the *avoda* of all Jews and all the people of the generation, in all matters of Torah and *mitzvos*, **and regarding daily life in general.**”

We see this clearly with the Rebbe. In a topsy-turvy world such as ours, as mighty empires fall silently, seemingly overnight, and the nations of the world are in confusion, we hear a clear voice, the voice of truth, the voice of the Rebbe, that says, “The time for your redemption has arrived.”

The Rebbe shows us the way, not only in Torah and *mitzvos*, but also – perhaps primarily – in all personal matters. The Rebbe directs us through the ever changing landscape, which changes at the dizzying pace of the newest headlines, and paves the way, towards the true and complete Redemption.

Judaism is based on absolute truth. Absolute truth is not something the greatest genius can impart. The best he can do is provide his reasoning. Absolute truth is determined through prophecy.

hide and conceal their wisdom and make themselves like fools and babies.” So even Rabi Yochanan maintains that after the *churban* prophecy rests upon *chachamim*, but in his opinion, it’s only on *chachamim* that “make themselves like fools and babies.”

But there are still those who ask, based on the words of the Alter Rebbe in *Igeres HaKodesh* (22) where the Alter Rebbe berates the *chassidim* who seek advice about *parnasa*, and says there explicitly that prophecy was only “formerly amongst the Jewish people,” and later even the early *chachmei Yisroel* like **Tanaim and Amoraim** did not merit prophecy, and therefore could not instruct regarding material things and reveal the future like the prophets.

The Rebbe addressed this point in *Likkutei Sichos* (vol. 14, p. 73), after proving the existence of prophecy in later generations: “Even though this is not on the same level of the bestowal of *ruach ha’kodesh* that the prophets had [see *Igeres HaKodesh* (end 22), “there was something like this, etc., even to the early *g’dolei chachmei Yisroel* like the Tanaim and Amoraim, etc., but to actual prophets who were formerly in Israel like Shmuel the Seer, etc.”], still, generally speaking, this is a level of **prophecy**.”

What this means is, like what was said above, that there are levels of prophecy, and “even after they died, etc.,” one level of *ruach ha’kodesh* was removed in a general sense – still, lower levels of prophecy remained. As the Alter Rebbe himself defined the early *chachmei Yisroel*, that “no secret was withheld from them, and it was illuminated for them the pathways of the heavens,” and this too is a level of prophecy!

Furthermore, even after the Alter Rebbe wrote this letter, *chassidim* continued asking and the Rebbe continued answering! It is not hard to understand why *chassidim* continued asking, but a strong question can be

asked about the Alter Rebbe and all the Rebbeim who succeeded him: how could they rule regarding weighty matters which pertain to material life when the Alter Rebbe said only *neviim* can answer questions such as these?!

We’re not talking about isolated instances, but tens of thousands of private audiences with all the Rebbeim, from the Alter Rebbe to the Rebbe MH”M. *Chassidim* asked about their material concerns, matters which

After the Alter Rebbe wrote this letter, chassidim continued asking and the Rebbe continued answering! How could they rule regarding weighty matters which pertain to material life when the Alter Rebbe said only neviim can answer questions such as these?!

the Alter Rebbe said only a *navi* can answer, **yet our Rebbeim answered!**

Chassidim explained that after they clearly saw that the Rebbeim’s advice was “on the mark,” they saw empirically that *nevua* was given to *chachamim*, and so they continued asking and the Rebbeim continued answering (see also the *sicha* of Parshas Shoftim 5751, footnote 102).

It’s interesting to note that despite the rule of “*yeridas ha’doros*” (the decline of the generations), regarding

nevua the Rambam says that in *Ikvesa D’Meshicha* prophecy will be more powerful than in the earlier generations after the *churban*.

In *Igeres Teiman* (*kuntres* 3) the Rambam writes:

“We have a great and wondrous tradition, which I received from my father who received it from his father and grandfather, thus all the way back to the beginning of the exile of Yerushalayim, as it says (Ovadia 20), “This exiled host of the Children of Israel who are among the K’naanim until Tzorfas and the exile of Yerushalayim, which is in S’farad, will inherit the cities of the South.” And the explanation is that **in Bilam’s prophecy there is an allusion that prophecy will return to Israel after it ceases.**”

Then the Rambam continues and says, “About this matter, our tradition is that when Bilam said (BaMidbar 23:23), “Now it will be said to Yaakov and Yisroel what Hashem wrought,” there is a secret that from that time you have to calculate from the Six Days of Creation until that time, and prophecy will return to Israel, and then the prophets will tell them what Hashem wrought.”

After a detailed calculation the Rambam concludes:

“And according to this explanation and this calculation, prophecy will return to Israel in the year 4976 since Creation (1216), **and there is no doubt that the return of prophecy is the harbinger of Moshiach**, as it says (Yoel 3:1-2), “And your sons and daughters will prophesize, etc., and also regarding the slaves and maidservants in those days, I will pour My spirit.”

In certain texts of the Rambam there is another paragraph which tells about an elevated man, one of the *chachmei Yisroel* by the name of Moshe Dery who “**began prophesizing things that came true.**” His custom was to announce to the public “gather tomorrow and this is what will happen or that will happen,” and it actually

happened. Once he said that that week blood would rain down ... this was in the month of Cheshvan. It poured heavily and the water was mixed with cement. **This wonder proved to all that he was definitely a navi.**” And the Rambam concludes, **“However this is not impossible from a Torah perspective, as I explained regarding prophecy returning (to Israel) before the coming of Moshiach.”**

What we derive from the Rambam is: 1) According to the Rambam's calculation, even those levels of prophecy which departed after the era of the last prophets, will return to Israel starting in the year 4976. 2) The return of prophecy precedes Moshiach. 3) If the *navi* proved that what he says is true, he is definitely a *navi*.

After we've proven that *nevua* is possible in our times, let's look at the Rambam (the first *halacha* in chapter 7 of "*Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*"), which describes the man who is deserving of prophecy:

“One of the principles of our faith is to know that Hashem gives prophecy to human beings, and the prophecy does not rest on anyone except upon a great *chacham* in *chochma*, strong in his *middos*, whose

yetzer does not overpower him in anything, rather he constantly overcomes his *yetzer*, and he possesses an exceedingly broad and proper understanding. One who is full of all these qualities, complete in body, when he enters the Orchard (i.e., the secrets of Torah) and is drawn after all those great and distant matters, and he has the proper understanding to comprehend and grasp and he continuously sanctifies himself and separates himself from the ways of the people who go in the darkness of the time, and goes and urges himself and teaches his soul not to have a single thought in worthless matters and not in the vanities of the time and its wiles, rather his *daas* is constantly turned Above, connected under the Throne, to understand those holy and pure forms, and he gazes upon Hashem's *chochma* in its entirety, from the highest spiritual forms to the core of the earth, and from these he knows His greatness, etc., – **immediately *ruach ha'kodesh* rests upon him, etc.”**

There's no need to elaborate and explain why the only person who meets these criteria in our generation is *Adoneinu Moreinu V'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach shlita, nasi ha'dor* and its leader, who devotes all his days and

nights, the likes of which was never seen before in history!

And when we also see how the Rebbe's prophecies were fulfilled, there's no question that he is the *navi* of our generation. He said many prophecies, not only on personal matters but on matters that affect the *Klal*. That which is famous needs no proof. The Rebbe's prophecies about the wars in Eretz Yisroel have been written about at length. The Rebbe saw what would happen in advance, just like the early prophets!

As the Rebbe said on Shabbos Parshas Shoftim 5751, “To publicize to yourself and to everybody you come in contact with that you must accept upon yourself (with the greatest strength) the directives and advice of “your judges” and “your advisors,” of our generation – “Who are kings? The Sages” in general, and especially *nasi Doreinu*, who comes as the successor of the Rebbeim who preceded him, the judge of our generation and the advisor of our generation, and the prophet of our generation ... until the main prophecy – the prophecy of “*l'alter l'Geula*” and immediately “behold this (Moshiach) comes.”

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

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LIGHT THAT COMES FROM THE DARKNESS

BY RABBI NAFTALI ESTULIN, SHLIACH, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY

*The Mayor of Toronto said in a media interview that in the previous twenty-four hours, he had never so many acts of kindness and charity. * The good that comes from the darkness.*

POWER FAILURE IN THE CITY OF THE LEADER OF THE GENERATION

As soon as I heard about the blackout that hit the East Coast of the United States, I thought that this is connected somehow with Moshiach. When I heard that this great power failure affected the lives of sixty million people, it was clear to me that there is a direct connection between this strange event and preparing the world to greet Moshiach.

As a brief reminder to our readers, on Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim 5752, the Rebbe MHTM referred to the superpower summit, saying that since the meeting took place in New York, the city of the leader of the generation, this alludes to its relation to the activities of the Moshiach of the generation.

While the blackout affected many states along the Eastern Seaboard and large areas in Canada, it was New York that was in the headlines. Everyone wanted to know what's happening in New York, the city of the leader of the generation.

The greatest power failure in American history, which has already earned the name "Blackout 2003" was no normal occurrence. It apparently began with a problem on three high-tension wires in northern Ohio. Within twenty seconds, it created a huge chain reaction with dozens of power stations collapsing one after the other throughout the Eastern United States and Eastern Canada. Sixty million people were left without electricity, many of whom were stuck in the elevators of tall skyscrapers, the dark tunnels of New York City subway trains, and paralyzed airports.

Such a large scale event, occurring on the eve of Moshiach's coming, must be connected to his imminent arrival. If a Jew must derive a lesson in his *avodas Hashem* from everything that he sees and hears, then certainly it must be so regarding this bizarre and unique event. There can be no doubt that from this darkness in the city of the leader of our generation we will see much greater light.

TO ADD IN GOODNESS AND KINDNESS

In the summer of 5751, a newspaper reporter passed by the Rebbe at Sunday dollars distribution and asked him if he has a message for their readers. "Write about the coming of Moshiach," the Rebbe answered him.

Reporter: "When will he come?"

The Rebbe: "Write about the

preparations for Moshiach's coming."

Reporter: "When will he come?"

The Rebbe: "When he will come is up to him to decide. But what each one of us must do is to increase in matters of goodness and kindness, and this will hasten his arrival. May G-d Alm-ghty bless you."

Around this same time, a reporter from CNN passed by the Rebbe and asked, "Rebbe, can you tell us what is your message for the world about the Moshiach?"

The Rebbe: "I have printed it in papers in all the countries. If you want to repeat it, then repeat and say that Moshiach is ready to come now, and what is left on our part is to do something additional in the realm of goodness and kindness."

Reporter: "So people should be doing more goodness and kindness for him to come?"

The Rebbe: "At least a little more, and then Moshiach will come immediately!"

What the Rebbe said to these reporters in brief, he explained in greater detail on numerous occasions at *farbrengens*, based upon the words of the Rambam. The Rambam said a person must see the world as half worthy and half guilty, and if he does one *mitzva*, he will tip the scales to the worthy side, and bring salvation to the world.

This is applicable to the coming of Moshiach, as well. Moshiach has already decided on the time that he will reveal himself, whether we are ready or not. However, if we increase in goodness and kindness, he will reveal himself even sooner.

HOW DO WE INCREASE IN KINDNESS?

How is it possible to bring the whole world, including all the non-Jewish nations, to increase in goodness and kindness?

Regrettably, expressions of kindness tend to come after

humanitarian aid. In short, tragedies awaken people to increase in goodness and kindness.

Before the coming of Moshiach, there must be a serious increase of goodness and kindness. However, together with this, since the Rebbe, the leader of the generation, is the one who gives direction in these matters, he undoubtedly makes certain that everything will be with kindness and mercy.

Last week, we all witnessed a unique event that brought an unprecedented outpouring of goodness and kindness.



Eastern Parkway enveloped in darkness. Photo by Shmulik Gewirtz.

The mayor of Toronto, Canada, where millions were left without electricity for a full day, said in a media interview that in the previous twenty-four hours, he had never so many acts of kindness and charity. Millions took part in acts of goodness and kindness with one another.

tragedies. After an earthquake that causes the deaths of tens of thousands of people, delegations of charitable organizations descend upon the affected area. So it was during the great earthquake in Armenia, when the Rebbe made reference to the delegation that arrived from the United States to offer its assistance, and with every earthquake that has occurred in the past several years. We see similar reactions in response to other great natural disasters, such as floods, when many countries send

The media emphasized throughout that the blackout caused a unique awakening to acts of goodness and kindness. People helped one another in every possible way. Hundreds of people volunteered to rescue those trapped in the subways and to direct traffic at intersections, many others assisted the weak in finding their way home. Neighbors who for years had not spoken to one another suddenly found themselves conversing and opening a new sense of kinship between them. Water bottles and food were distributed,

free of charge, to thousands of people who were stranded in the streets.

As amazing as this all is, it is even more incredible when we compare this current power failure to the previous great blackout that occurred in New York in 5737 (1977).

Then, widespread arson and looting occurred in neighborhoods throughout New York City. More than a thousand fires raged, including more than fifty serious blazes. Acts of looting very quickly turned violent, and hundreds of people were injured as a result of the mayhem that spread that dark night. The 3,800 arrests that were

made give a clear indication of the evil that erupted that night.

In the recent blackout, however, we saw the exact opposite. Despite the darkness, there were very few reports of violence and looting – less than on a regular night, with electricity!

This was seen clearly and

THE LIGHT THAT BROKE THROUGH THE DARKNESS

PICTURES BY SHMULIK GEWIRTZ

Dear Zalman,

How are you? Surely you heard what happened here! Let me describe to you, firsthand, what it was like when the lights went out so you can get an inkling of what New York, and 770 in particular, was like in the dark.

Thursday, 4:30 in the afternoon: Most of the *bachurim* were sitting in the *zal*. As I always do, I was sitting on the *farbrengen* platform and learning Gemara with a *chavrusa*. Suddenly I noticed that some lights had gone out. Within a few seconds another section of the *zal* was dark. After another minute had gone by, the entire *zal* was pitch-black. I thought someone had tampered with the electricity and the lights would come back on in a minute.

It was hard to see anything, even something up close. After the initial confusion, some people began singing, “We want Moshiach now,” and “*Yechi*.”

I figured something was wrong with the circuit breakers in the basement of 770 and it would be fixed shortly but the minutes went by, then a half an hour, and the lights didn’t come back on. I went outside and I saw

people coming downstairs from offices upstairs and I realized that the entire building was in the dark. Another few minutes went by and I noticed a commotion at the corner of Kingston and Eastern Parkway. I saw that the traffic lights weren’t working and thought it was a neighborhood-wide problem. Some more time went by when I finally realized that there was a blackout.

Many *bachurim* left 770 for the corner where there was a big crowd. As always, 770 is at the hub of the action, and this time too, people came from nearby streets to hear what was going on. Most of the stores on Kingston closed and many people were out on the streets.

When people exited the subway they were filthy because when the trains stopped their subway had been in a tunnel, and people had to leave the trains and walk in the tunnels. It was pitch black and they felt along the

walls until they got out. No wonder they were dirty! Some of them looked quite traumatized. There were women crying and screaming.

Afterwards, I heard that many Lubavitchers from Crown Heights had gotten stuck underground for a long time until they were rescued. Hundreds of



literally leading up to Shabbos Parshas R'ei: "Behold, I place before you today a blessing." The electricity was cut off in New York in the middle of the day, and we all saw the *bracha* of the intensification of goodness and kindness.

In conclusion, here are some lessons that we all can learn from the great blackout:

Look at what one action on three high-tension wires can do. Similarly, one action on our part can bring the Redemption to the entire world.

The superpower the United States of America, at whose feet the Government of Israel bows and grovels, was paralyzed in less than twenty seconds. This teaches us that G-d runs the world.

We know the parable of those who are so accustomed to the dark that they refuse to believe that there is light. Similarly, we are so accustomed to electricity, and then suddenly, our eyes are opened and we see that there is darkness. The true light is – the light of Moshiach!



It began growing dark and we slowly realized that soon it wouldn't be possible to see anything. People were running, trying to find a place that was open that sold batteries, flashlights, phones that plugged into jacks, and battery-operated radios. These were hot items that sold out quickly, and some people made a nice profit.

We started getting ready for Maariv with the Rebbe's *minyán*. Despite the darkness we had to set things up. We took the *shtender* and chair (with the carpet) upstairs to the small *zal* on the first floor. They connected a few cables and there was light. It turns out that Gili Schwartz had brought his van close to 770, connected cables to the van's battery, and we had **light!**

As usual before the *davening*, we began singing "Yechi." It was very moving (at least for me). We stood next to the Rebbe's place in the small *zal* upstairs. They put the

menora (from Kiddush Levana) near the *shtender*. Just as they started Kaddish, the light went out. The improvisation didn't stand the test of time. Some flashlights illuminated the room a bit. That's how we *davened* Maariv. When we finished *davening* the light came back on.

We were dripping from the lack of air conditioning on this hot August night, but that didn't stop us from dancing "Yechi" as usual.

I went outside and saw people hanging around 770, looking for something to do. Apparently they had nothing to do at home. They had no air conditioning, and nothing worked. At least cars had air conditioning,

people walked for miles from work to home in Crown Heights.

Hatzala members were on the alert. They stayed near the ambulances in case of emergency. They were prepared to remain there until the lights came back on, even if it took all night.

Police cars moved quickly through the streets. If at first we thought it was a local problem, we learned that it was far more widespread, though we didn't know how large an area was affected.

Confusion on the street was mounting and police and volunteers helped direct traffic. We found out that this blackout was a major disaster, affecting the entire north-east of the U.S. as well as parts of Canada.

so why stay home? This is when I took some pictures.

As night fell, the Hatzala ambulance went around the neighborhood asking people with cars to go to Grand Army Plaza to help the hundreds of Jews stranded there. As I stood on Eastern Parkway, the *mitzva* tank drove up with dozens of people who had hitchhiked home from Manhattan on it.

Store owners had closed up their stores securely in fear of looting. I heard that during the last blackout in New York in 5737/1977, gentiles looted dozens of stores and set them on fire. I saw R' Mendel Brickman from the large electronics store called Sterling, working that night for a long time to get the electronic gate down that locks his store.

Police and Shmira patrolled the streets constantly to ensure law and order. A car with a large searchlight on it went through the streets and checked emergency stairs and other areas where thieves are likely to lurk.

In the meantime, 770 was lit up with candles. Many *bachurim* sat down to learn by candlelight. It has a certain *geshmak*, you know. Later on there was a *farbrengen* in the

eastern corner of 770. The *farbrengen* lasted until eight in the morning, no exaggeration!

Friday: The area near 770 where the large sukka stands, became a temporary *shul*. Dozens of *minyanim* took place, one after the other. The Rebbe's *minyan* started at 10:00 in the small *zal*, by the light of special emergency lighting they brought.

We couldn't go on *mitzvaim*, not only because there were no trains, but because most stores and businesses were closed. A few *bachurim* went by bicycle to areas where stores were open, and the rest of the *T'mimim* stayed and learned.

The electricity came back in parts of Crown Heights at three in the afternoon, to the relief of numerous women who were anxious about preparing for Shabbos (in Boro Park it had come back 4:30 early Friday morning and in Flatbush it came back on at 6 Friday evening!).

Life returned to normal fairly quickly. Now we all await the Great Light, the light of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach!

Shmulik

PLEASE HELP

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<http://www.torah4blind.org/staiman>

LIKE THE BAAL SHEM TOV, WHO TRAVELED FROM PLACE TO PLACE

BY C. NUSSBAUM

*Thousands of Jews spend the summer in the Catskills, vacationing and enjoying the clean mountain air. Many of them are not religious, and they are visited by Mrs. Raizy Taubenfliegel and her husband Yaakov. * A story of shluchim in the Catskills*

Just as the Baal Shem Tov wandered from village to village and from city to city, in order to find another Jew and be mekarev him to his Father in heaven, so do the Taubenfliegels. Rabbi Yaakov and Mrs. Raizy Taubenfliegel live in the Catskill Mountains and they travel from town to town seeking Jews. Sometimes, after a long trip, they find one Jew in some out-of-the-way place, and they put *t'fillin* on him. That's what the work of *shluchim* in the mountains is like.

In an area where many miles separate one Jew from another most of the year, the Taubenfliegels have been on *shlichus* for about 36 years, where they've raised their five children. When I called to interview Raizy, I knew they were very busy, especially in the

summer, so I was surprised when she said, "Listen, I don't know if I have anything to tell you. You're not going to hear about meetings with the mayor or other important figures, but about little things, mostly with ordinary people."

By the end of the interview I knew I had reached the right woman-*shlucha*, and I'm sure the readers, after reading about these "ordinary" things, will see that Big things are going on here in the Catskills. Truly Big things.

How did you start out on *shlichus*?

My husband and I are from Boro Park. I had a connection with Chabad and I had Lubavitcher friends. My best friend was Yehudis Gordon, and she strengthened the *chassidische* feeling in

me and I became a Lubavitcher, though I had the *chassidische* feeling in me all along.

I was a counselor for many years in Chabad camps and my husband had a connection with a Chabad house. My uncle made our *shidduch*, and after we married it was only natural that we went on *shlichus*.

Why *shlichus* in the Catskills?

My husband always liked it. He had been a counselor in the summer months, and so right after our wedding, that's where we went.

Some of us are not from New York. What can you tell us about the Catskills?

The Catskills are two to three hours away from Crown Heights. It's a very popular summer vacation spot. Starting around 5680 (1920 until 1960) there were famous hotels here and many Jews came, especially for the shows and concerts. Many well-known comedians and other performers got their careers started in the Catskills. On Shabbasos and Yomim Tovim, famous *chazanim* would come.

When a Jew said, "I'm going on vacation to the mountains," people

knew he meant the Catskills. It became a very Jewish area. In the early 1900's, Jews moved to the Catskills and did farm work. They tried their luck after many years of poverty and tremendous crowding on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Most of them didn't succeed. They had rooms they rented and this is what saved them financially, since there were numerous people who wanted a break from urban life and they rented these rooms. This led to the idea of the bungalow. Most bungalows were built small and cheap, and weren't that comfortable, yet people flocked here in the summer. Over the years, hundreds of bungalows were built, and every summer there was a huge influx of Jews of all backgrounds.

During the past forty years, bungalows became more popular than hotels, and there was more and more of a demand for them. Some Jews live in the Catskills all year round in certain parts.

Various groups have bought year-round locations, like Vizhnitz. I should point out that even though they aren't Lubavitchers, they greatly respect us and our work.

How many Jews are there in the Catskills?

There's no clear answer to that question. Numbers are impossible to know since people come and go, and those who live here permanently live far apart from one another.

* * *

Raizy: I was born on 21 Shevat and the *HaYom Yom* for that day is: It's the obligation of *n'shei and b'nos ha'chassidim* to stand in the front ranks in all activities of strengthening religion and Judaism in general, and family purity in particular.

Thus she sees *shlichus* as an inseparable part of her life.

Tell us about your work.

Since the area is huge but the people are few in number, it requires a great deal of effort to get from one town to another. But as *chassidim* and *shluchim* we never despair. Over the years we've moved a number of times, living in various parts of the mountains. The work is based primarily at home. Although our house is small, there's room for all. Our activities are more personal and everybody knows one another. That's

the secret to success.

I am a teacher for secular studies in a Jewish school that opened in the area. I am also a substitute for Jewish subjects. As a teacher of secular subjects, it really bothered me that the textbooks are not *al taharas ha'kodesh*.

When I saw the Rebbe, the Rebbe asked me, "What's with the books?"

At first I didn't realize that the Rebbe was speaking to me, and I thought (naively) that the Rebbe didn't know who I was, but then I realized exactly what he meant. I decided to publish textbooks for *limudei chol* that were *al taharas ha'kodesh*. Today many schools use these books, including Beis Chaya Mushka in Crown Heights.

Aside from teaching, I organize programs at different times of the year, before Yomim Tovim, etc. for senior citizens (women) in my house. It's all personal. That's how we get to know and work with everyone.

For many years, when my children were young, we organized Tzivos Hashem and activities for children. Sometimes 50 people come to our house but we manage, because there's place in the heart for every Jew. "As waters reflect your face" – people



become close to us and *Yiddishkeit*.

We also have Tanya classes, *farbrengens*, and programs for adults. Many Jews who aren't Chabad, including those from Litvish circles, were *mekurav* because of these activities. They are also exposed to pamphlets with the teachings of the Rebbe, that we distribute everywhere.

Sometimes we have parties in the homes of old *mekuravim*. We come with music and our grandchildren, and there's a wonderful atmosphere and it makes a *kiddush Hashem* in the city.

Before Purim and Pesach we reach every Jew we know and give out *mishloach manos* and *shmura matza*. When we encounter *goyim*, we promote the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach.

As I said, this is serious work out in the field. The biggest hardship is the traveling between one place and another, because of the large distances.

Do you see results from your work?

Of course! My husband is very involved in *mitzvaim*, especially Mivtza T'fillin, with the help of Lazer Raksin of Crown Heights (may Hashem console him and repay him for his good work). From this work we have many stories of *neshamos* who became *mekuravim* to *Yiddishkeit*. The two of them go from village to village and town to town. Many farmers suddenly discovered that they are Jews, thanks to Mivtza T'fillin.

There's a Jew who worked at a gas station, surrounded only by *goyim*. One day he discovered he was Jewish, and since then, every time my husband shows up, he jumps up, rolls up his sleeve, and puts on *t'fillin*. He does this like a thirsty person in a desert who discovers pure well water. He could care less that his friends are looking at him like he fell off the moon.

Now he puts on *t'fillin* daily and you can really see the principle of "don't be ashamed before those who mock," with him (even though his wife

is a gentile). He even has a Moshiach sign hanging in the doorway of his house.

Here's another story. One time as we traveled with Lazar from village to village on Mivtza T'fillin, we drove into a village that was populated entirely by *goyim* of German descent. We had decided to get out of there, when suddenly someone jumped from a tractor and yelled, "Rabbi! You're Jewish. Me too!"

The man's family had lived there for close to 100 years, and he had

never seen nor heard about Judaism, but the Jewish spark is always there. When he identified us by our dress, he jumped for joy. The visit ended with his putting on *t'fillin* and with our telling him we'd keep in touch.

Another story. A few years ago we got an urgent phone call. The daughter of someone who lived near us had gotten involved with a cult, and we were asked to help extricate her. We immediately established contact with her and the family. We gave them a lot of material about Judaism and had

ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

Mr. Ezra Heller, a Catskill resident and one of the first *mekuravim* of the Taubenfliegels relates:

I have the privilege of knowing these wonderful people, and through them, I returned to my *Yiddishkeit*. I was born to a religious family, but like many immigrants, when my parents arrived in the U.S. they stopped being observant. I went to Hebrew school occasionally. I only attended *shul* on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. They bought me *t'fillin* for my *bar mitzva*, but I didn't use them since the *bar mitzva* until Rabbi Taubenfliegel came along and put *t'fillin* on me.

Since that time, I've gotten stronger and stronger and with the Rebbe's influence I began observing Shabbos even though it was really difficult with my job and entailed great self-sacrifice.

For a long period of time I would leave work on Friday, before Shabbos, and rush home in order to get there in time for candle-lighting. For this reason I moved from job to job, but I remained strong about Shabbos and now I have a good job, thank G-d.

My children participate in the programs Raizy does, and we are in close contact with them. We celebrate the holidays together and meet often.

In recent years, my brother has also returned to his roots. He married a second time and established a home based on Torah and *mitzvos*. It all started with one act – that of putting on *t'fillin*.

* * *

Yaakov Fellingner now living in Florida, is also a *mekurav* of the Taubenfliegels. "I am one of the lucky ones who is privileged to know them. Rabbi Taubenfliegel put *t'fillin* on me 30 years ago, and since then, I've put them on every day. My wife got in touch with Raizy and as a result, she began observing *taharas ha'mishpacha*.

I can proudly say, they are very special people and I am proud and happy to tell you about them and to say that I am privileged to be close with them.



Menora lighting



Children learn about *matza* for Pesach

many conversations. Today, that girl sends her son to camp Gan Israel.

Our work has developed a reputation and a year ago we were contacted by the gentile principal of one of the local schools (of German background). She invited my husband to lecture at her school. This was after the spiritual awakening America had

after September 11th.

My husband and Moshe Haber (who teaches in public school) of Crown Heights showed up together. The students asked many questions and they were very excited by the program. The questions were about world leadership, peace, the clothes *chassidim* wear and their customs, and ended with, "Rabbi, I saw a Moshiach sign on

your car. Who is our Messiah?"

The lecture was so successful that the school invited him for other lectures and this led to a number of encounters. This was really miraculous because others who wanted to speak weren't allowed to, with the excuse that the law says there has to be a separation between church and state.

The lectures really inspired the city. The seven thank you letters that we received afterwards, said it all.

How were you able to be *mechanech* your children in the Catskills?

Baruch Hashem, my children are grown. The youngest is 23. As the children got older they went to school in Crown Heights or in Morristown. In their younger years they learned here, in a school started by baalei t'shuva called Torah V'daas. I was a teacher there myself. They always got a *chinuch al taharas ha'kodesh* and they had *chassidische* friends.

Not only that, but the girls' friends helped us out with projects. When we organized *mishloach manos* for Purim, for example, they helped us.

What about kosher food?

It's much easier today; we can get most products. When we first came here 36 years ago, there was nothing! We bought a refrigerator with a large freezer and brought everything from Crown Heights. Till this day I make many things myself, like bread.

Since you mention *kashrus*, we try very hard to raise *kashrus* awareness here. In a place like this, when hundreds of kilometers separate Jews, we do something original: we set up a bar in the supermarket with kosher products, so people become familiar with kosher food and the *kashrus* signs. On the side we have *kashrus* brochures.

This has proven very successful and has acquainted many Jews with *kashrus*.

Is there a *mikva* in your area?

We have a *mikva*, but like the other things, when we first arrived here, the situation was pathetic. The local rabbi would even make weddings without a *mikva* since there was no *mikva* available. Once we arrived we got on the case and began getting a *mikva* built. At the same time we began the

work of explaining the importance of this *mitzva*.

Please tell us your plans for the future.

We have plans to build a large Chabad house. *Baruch Hashem*, our work is expanding and we need more space. We also want to buy a large *mitzva* tank for Mivtza T'fillin for my husband to use throughout the Catskills. Traveling around in a decorated tank will accomplish half the job right there on the roads. It will certainly make it easier for us to let all the Jews know we're here.

We also plan on building a new and modern *mikva* to increase observance of this *mitzva*.



Rabbi Taubenfliegel enabling others to fulfill the *mitzvos* of Sukkos

SHEVA MITZVOS B'NEI NOACH - "BARUCH HASHEM!"

The Taubenfliegels work with Jews but when they encounter non-Jews they tell them about the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach.

Mrs. Taubenfliegel: "We became acquainted with the editor of a certain newspaper and through him, we publicized the Sheva Mitzvos B'nei Noach. This editor lived in a faraway village where only *goyim* lived. One fine day he told us that he is actually Jewish! Naturally, we became very friendly with him and his family, and they are on their way towards greater observance of *Yiddishkeit*.

A certain farmer whom we went to for years to observe the milking for *chalav Yisroel*, suddenly got sick and was unconscious for some time. When he came out of it we asked how he felt and he loudly answered, "*Baruch Hashem!*"

* * *

At the end of the interview, Mrs.

Taubenfliegel asked me when the article would be printed. I told her it would be in the Chamisha-Asar B'Av (Hebrew)

issue. She was excited to hear this and said, "What great *hashgacha pratis!* We were married on Chamisha-Asar B'Av 36 years ago and we are celebrating 36 years of *shlichus* in the Catskills."

So in the name of all our readers: A double *mazal tov!*



Children at the Chabad house with their *menoros*

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A DIAMOND OF A CHASID: A TRIBUTE TO REB MORDECHAI STAIMAN, O.B.M.

BY ALEXANDER ZUSHE KOHN

“Mordechai the Jew... sought the good of his people and spoke for the welfare of all of his seed.” I can think of no more succinct description of Reb Mordechai Staiman o.b.m. (who passed away on 22 Tammuz, 5763 / July 22, 2003), than this verse from the Book of Esther. Like the legendary Mordechai of Shushan, Mordechai Staiman sought to inspire Jews with a love for their heritage and their people. That’s why he wrote *Niggun*, a book about the power of Jewish song, and that’s why he wrote *Diamonds of the Rebbe*, a book about famous Jewish personalities whom the Lubavitcher Rebbe inspired to greater spiritual achievement. *Waiting for the Messiah* tells the story of our people’s yearning for the Redemption, and *Secrets of the Rebbe* describes how Chabad’s *Mesirus Nefesh* activities on behalf of Russian Jewry led to the fall of the Soviet Empire. Mordechai’s latest masterpiece, which hit the stores just a few months ago, is called *His Name is Aaron*, and its amazing stories will warm even the iciest of hearts with the fire of Chassidism.

Mordechai saw himself as an emissary of the Lubavitcher Rebbe in every sense of the word. Instead of using his unique writing skills to create a *New York Times* bestseller — which he could have done on a Monday afternoon — he devoted himself to bringing the joy of Judaism and Chassidism to as many Jews as possible. In addition to his Jewish bestsellers, Mordechai sent numerous articles to many Jewish publications — including *Beis Moshiach Magazine* — copyedited all editions of the weekly *Living with Moshiach* digest (for the blind and visually impaired) for free, edited *Chassidic Stories Made In Heaven*, prepared a rough draft of a Moshiach encyclopedia, and, for a number of years, proofread *L’Chaim Weekly*.

Mordechai once related how on the night of *Yud-Tes Kislev*, 5753, when the Rebbe appeared on the balcony for six consecutive hours, he and his friend, Rabbi Yosef Y. Shagalov were laboring to prepare the first “blind” Chanukah issue for the printer the next morning. The temptation to go and bask in the Rebbe’s light was very powerful. But they didn’t go, because Mordechai maintained

the Rebbe would tell them to sacrifice their noble aspirations for the sake of another Jew — all the more so for the sake of many Jews, some of whom would be learning about Chanukah, and about Chassidism, and about Moshiach for the first time in their lives.

“Even the Gentiles liked him,” notes a close friend of the Staimans. “He would say nice things to people whom you and I would be afraid to talk to, and this generated an atmosphere of peace between the Jews on the block and their gentile neighbors.”

Mordechai was forever trying to make people smile. When I first met him, a decade ago, he cracked some good humored jokes with me, and for the next ten years he didn’t

stop. This was especially amazing considering that Mordechai suffered his own fair share of pain, and could easily justify being miserable. I remember visiting him at home after his heart surgery. The minute I saw him, I could tell that he was in a lot of pain. He whispered that he can’t really talk because he’s very weak. Then he said, “One minute, I’ll be right back.” He went into a back room and emerged with pad and paper in hand. He then proceeded to interview me — not without managing a few good-hearted wisecracks in-between questions — about a subject he was planning to write about in one of his upcoming books.

So, the next time you think of Reb Mordechai Staiman, go ahead and make a Jew smile; tell a Jew a Chassidic story; sing a Jew a *Niggun*. And if you don’t know how, let Mordechai himself do it for you. For though Mordechai will be sorely missed, “he has left us the writings,” (to paraphrase the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Sholom DovBer, at the time of his passing), which will continue to inspire Jews all over, until the last page of history has been written.

A web site has been established in the loving memory and also featuring the works of Reb Mordechai Staiman, o.b.m. You can find it at:

<http://www.torah4blind.org/staiman>

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DARKNESS IN THIS WOULDN'T KFAR CHABAD

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN
TRANSLATED BY M...



Chassidus shiur by the light of kerosene lamps in the early days of Kfar Chabad. From L to R: HaRav Shneur Zalman Gorelick, *rav* of Kfar Chabad; R. Gavriel Kagan; R. Avrohom Drazin; R. Moshe Zalman Kaminetzki; R. Zvi Lieberman; R. Zalman Sudekevitch.

60,000,000 people in the United States and Canada felt most uncomfortable at the end of last week, as a result of the great blackout. The Mayor of the City of New York, Mr. Michael Bloomberg, called upon the citizenry to remain calm, explaining that this is not a critical matter, rather, one of “discomfort.” It perhaps would have been appropriate to refer the residents of Greater New York to the early pioneers of Kfar Chabad in order

that they should hear how it was possible to live without electricity. Even without water.

These were the early days when Kfar Chabad was first established. Some seventy Russian immigrant families had come to populate and breathe new life into the abandoned area. Many of them arrived from large Russian cities that had provided home electricity and running water. Yet, in Eretz Yisroel, they were compelled to

endure a lower standard of living, going for years without such basic services.

Mrs. Chaya Chein, recalls from a mother’s point of view. “We were among the Kfar’s first founding families. The hardships were most uncommon. In all the cities I lived in the Soviet Union and then later in Europe, there was electricity in the homes and running water from the taps. But when we arrived here, we

IN AMERICA. IT HAPPEN IN HABAD!

ZALMAN BERGER
MICHAEL LEIB DOBRY

Tens of millions of American citizens left without electricity. Clearly, this type of thing would never happen in Kfar Chabad. This is due to the Rebbe's instructions to install generators there that would supply electricity to Kfar Chabad homes on Shabbos and Yom Tov. While America checks the damage caused by history's worst power failure, we looked back to Kfar Chabad's early years, when electrical power lines had not yet been installed, and the homes relied upon kerosene lamps for light. Each night, R. Yisroel Yitzchok Zalmanov, a"h, would go through the village streets to kindle the lamps. An interesting review on electricity in Kfar Chabad and the generator that was installed for usage on Shabbos and Yom Tov.

were forced to provide light with kerosene lamps, and draw water from wells. The water was not clear, but reddish in color. It was extremely difficult to manage without electricity and gas. We were a family with small children, and we didn't have a heater. The lighting in the house at night was very dim. We cooked on a small fire that we lit outside."

In contrast to Mrs. Chein, there were other residents who were familiar

with this type of lifestyle. Rabbi Shlomo Meidanchik, Chairman, Agudas Chassidei Chabad, who served for many years as the Kfar's Vaad Chairman, recalls that he was already used to this from Russia. "I was born in a small town in the Ukraine, where there was no electricity, water, or gas. This is how I lived until the age of seventeen. Later, I lived in other Russian cities that had electricity. But when I arrived in the Kfar, I got used

to the lifestyle with which I grew up very quickly. Of course, it's hard today to describe how we lived then in such difficult conditions, but that was the reality."

In those years, there were people who were appointed especially with the task of cleaning the kerosene lamps and lighting them anew each night. These lamps provided a dim source of light to the streets of the Kfar. One could see R. Yisroel

Yitzchok Zalmanov, of blessed memory, walking through the village streets to kindle the lamps, and R. Tzvi Lieberman, of blessed memory, who would make certain that they were cleaned the next day.

HaRav Yitzchok Mendel Liss, who served then as the Vaad secretary, recalls life without electricity:

“Electricity means light. Electricity also means a refrigerator. We had refrigerators of days gone by – boxes in which blocks of ice were placed. The ice seller would come to Kfar Chabad, stopping every so often to give a long blast with his horn, so we would know that the iceman had arrived... There were no stoves for home heating and baking in Kfar Chabad in those days. The Kfar had a bakery where bread was baked each day, and *challo*s for Shabbos and Yom Tov.

“This is how we lived, yet we could not reconcile ourselves to the situation. We spared no effort to obtain electrical power lines for Kfar Chabad via the national electric company. The main obstacle that confronted us was the huge amount of money that we had to pay the Israel Electric Company for the connection.

“When the well-known *askan*, HaRav Pinchas Althaus, heard about this, he decided to offer his assistance in the matter. He used his connections with the philanthropist, R. Shlomo Pelmar, a Lubavitcher *chassid* from Chicago who donated \$20,000 towards the project, “and there was light” in Kfar Chabad. First, the lighting was installed in the streets, and then, each resident made certain to connect his home to the electricity network...”

Back then, extra special efforts were made to finish the entire Kfar Chabad electricity installation before Chag HaGeula, Yud-Tes Kislev, which would be publicly celebrated with the participation of thousands of people arriving from all over the country for the event. The tremendous efforts bore

THANKS TO THE REBBE MH”M

Over the passage of time, the Rebbe’s expressed desire that Jews use electricity on Shabbos that is not manufactured by Jews has also spread to other communities throughout Eretz Yisroel. Here is a news quote from one of the country’s periodicals, printed in Kislev of last year:

“Residents in *chareidi* towns and neighborhoods are demanding the supply of generators, stating that it is their desire to cut themselves off from the Shabbos desecration of the Israel Electric Company.

“*Chareidi* community representatives are insisting that their weekend electricity be supplied through generators, in order to prevent the possibility of *chillul Shabbos* via “a company such as the Israel Electric Company that desecrates the Sabbath.

“Knesset Member Yaakov Litzman (United Torah Judaism), representative of Gerer *chassidim*, the largest *chassidic* faction within Agudat Yisrael, officially submitted an application on the matter to Mr. David Asus, chairman of the government sponsored Electric Public Service Authority. MK Litzman said that a special model must be manufactured to supply electricity to the *chareidi* community, which requests not to make use of Israel’s general electricity network. This network works on Shabbos as usual and provides regular service to the public out of Shabbos desecration. The *chareidim* are demanding the operation of a “Shabbos observant” generator mechanism, first in large communities in Yerushalayim and B’nei Brak, and afterwards, in other prominent *chareidi* locales, such as Kiryat Sefer and Betar Illit.”

So, the Rebbe’s holy desire is actually materializing these days. One newspaper recently reported: “Shabbos generator covers Betar: Many Betar residents have begun using electricity supplied by a Shabbos generator which operates in all communities on the settlement.”

fruit, and the central *shul* was bright with illumination for the great Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen*. This was a great achievement, as it was still in the first days after the founding of the state, and most villages and *moshavim* had yet to acquire the luxury of electrical power.

HaRav Yisroel Leibov, of blessed memory, writes about Kfar Chabad’s historic connection to the electrical network in one of the Chabad periodicals. “Due to the efforts of R. Pinchas Althaus, Kfar Chabad’s connection to the electrical power lines was completed in time for Chag HaGeula, Yud-Tes Kislev. Mr. Zalman Shazar also exerted much effort on the matter, and thanks to them, the electrical line to the Kfar was installed. The Israel Electric Company did

everything possible to complete the work by Yud-Tes Kislev.”

Shortly thereafter, the Rebbe MH”M wrote a letter of thanks to Mr. Shazar for his assistance: “**I was pleased to receive notification that the electrical lighting in Kfar Chabad has actually been arranged, and that a *farbrengen* has already been held to its light on the auspicious day of Yud-Tes Kislev. Since they have written to me that the matter has been settled, much thanks and appreciation to him and his strength and vigor.**” (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 8, 14 Teives 5714)

In 5716, R. Itche Mendel Liss, Kfar Chabad Vaad secretary, arrived at *Beis Chayeinu*. He carried with him a protocol from a recent meeting of the Vaad. Among the issues discussed at the meeting was the lighting on



General appearance of Kfar Chabad in the early years, with no electrical infrastructure



Electric light provides illumination to the thousands who come to the Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen*

certain Kfar Chabad streets that had not yet been arranged. During the *yechidus* with Rabbi Liss, the Rebbe took interest in great detail regarding the street lights. He even sent a letter to the Kfar Chabad Vaad, encouraging them to complete the installation of the street lights: **“It appears from the aforementioned protocol that the electric lights are not yet in place. It is my hope that they will hurry up as much as possible, as from the 15th of Av, the days get shorter.”**

Ten years later, in 5726, the Rebbe MH”M asked the residents of Kfar Chabad to install a generator that would be connected to the Kfar’s main

electricity network for usage on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Up until then, only a few Kfar Chabad families were stringent regarding the use of electricity on Shabbos. Some would connect to a small battery for Shabbos usage; others would eat their Shabbos meals by candlelight.

It would be appropriate here to preface any further discussion with the words of HaRav Eliezer Melamed of Yeshivas Beit E-I, in order to understand the *halachic* problem of using electricity manufactured on Shabbos:

“It is clear to all that electricity must be supplied throughout Eretz Yisroel every day of the week,

including Shabbos. Any damage to this electrical service involves an endangerment to life. Hospitals maintain medical equipment which run on electricity. Even in many private homes, there are sick people who are in need of certain medical equipment to save and protect their lives. Similarly, the defense establishment is aided by electrical machinery, which if unavailable, can prevent a proper response in an emergency situation. During the cold winter months, many homes are heated by electricity, and its interruption can endanger the health of infants and sick people. Even during the summer, similar endangerment of the ill who require proper air conditioning can come as a result. In addition, since we are accustomed today to store food over many days in refrigerators and freezers, a stoppage of electricity can create a spoilage of food. Furthermore, this can lead to cases of botulism, which can place lives seriously at risk.

“Therefore, the Israel Electric Company must make certain that the service continues unimpeded on Shabbos. In this light, if a power failure occurs in a particular place, everything must be done to restore the electricity supply, due to the fear that in that location, a life-or-death situation might otherwise result.

“However, most regrettably, it is a known fact that Israel Electric Company employees engage in work on Shabbos that is non-essential to the maintenance of electricity service for the purpose of cutting expenses. Furthermore, if there was greater awareness of Shabbos observance, it would be possible to activate the electricity manufacturing system automatically without human intervention. Then, it would only be necessary to retain manpower at electricity stations to monitor the network and tend to service breakdowns in emergency cases. However, the Israel Electric Company

does not actually make an effort to prevent these work activities on Shabbos. Therefore, several leading *rabbanim* have tended to rule stringently and forbid the use of electricity manufactured on Shabbos by the Israel Electric Company in order not to benefit from acts of Shabbos desecration or to be a partner in this *chillul Shabbos*.” (See rabbinical rulings at length, The Talmudic Encyclopedia, Vol. 18, Appendix.)

Even among those rabbinical authorities who show stringency on the use of electricity on Shabbos in Eretz HaKodesh there are those who are lenient in the event that the electricity was manufactured together by Jews and non-Jews, as in the Diaspora.

For this reason, the Rebbe MH”M, for whom *halachic* observance is the primary basis of his entire doctrine, wanted the residents of Kfar Chabad to be more stringent and use electricity on Shabbos that was manufactured by a generator, and not by Jews working on Shabbos Kodesh.

At first, the Rebbe did not express an explicit opinion on the matter. In 5717, HaRav Eliezer Karasik came to the Rebbe with a request that he awaken people to the subject of electricity manufactured on Shabbos in Eretz HaKodesh, similar to what the Rebbe did regarding Israeli ships that traveled on Shabbos. The Rebbe responded that the Israeli ships come to New York, and therefore, he got involved in the matter. Whereas, on the subject of electricity, **“This is a question for Eretz HaKodesh, and especially since the differing opinions among the *rabbanim* of Eretz HaKodesh with their reasons and arguments are well-known.”**

Two days later, the Rebbe wrote a letter to a certain Jew who asked a question about electricity on Shabbos, and the Rebbe responded again that the matter had already been debated in Eretz HaKodesh.

Only in later years did the Rebbe

urge the residents of Kfar Chabad again and again, foremost among them the *rav* and the *askanim*, to do everything possible to adopt a system of private electricity on Shabbos.

It is interesting to note that several Karlin-Stoliner *chassidim* from Yerushalayim wrote to the Rebbe on the subject and requested financial assistance to purchase a battery for their *beis midrash*. The Rebbe responded that there is no special fund for this purpose, and current funds are already overburdened. **“In any event, according to what is written, ‘I am a companion to all that fear You,’ a private check is enclosed as a symbolic participation in the aforementioned matter.”** (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 19, p. 8)

In 5724, HaRav Yitzchok Mendel

Liss went into *yechidus* again, where he urged the Rebbe about the need to install a generator in Kfar Chabad. The Rebbe instructed him to take money from his secretary, HaRav Chaim Mordechai Isaac Chodakov, of blessed memory, as his participation in the project’s expenses. “Immediately after the *yechidus*, I went to Rabbi Chodakov, and he told me that he has nothing to give me now due to lack of funds. I told this to the Rebbe, and he gave me an answer during the *farbrengen* on Shabbos. The Rebbe said that if the treasurer says that there is no money, he has to be replaced!

“Needless to say, immediately after Shabbos, I received a sum of money from Rabbi Chodakov...”

In 5726, the Rebbe wrote about this officially to the residents of Kfar

“THE POWER OF ELECTRICITY IS FROM THE HIDDEN POWERS”

In the Rebbe’s letter to Mr. Shazar that dealt in part with his expression of thanks for the latter’s assistance in arranging Kfar Chabad’s connection to the power lines, the Rebbe continues by cleverly explaining the power of electricity:

“The power of electricity is from nature’s hidden powers, because this power itself is not in the realm of one of the five senses, and its existence only becomes known through its operation and its effects. And light from this hidden power dispels darkness and illuminates the gloom of night. As it is materially, so too spiritually, for the hidden secrets of Torah are revealed through *chassidus* and a *chassidic* way of life, dispelling darkness and illuminating the gloom of night.”

DISCUSSIONS WITH THE ISRAEL ELECTRIC COMPANY

Numerous problems sprouted up in connection with the installment of the generators in Kfar Chabad. In general, the generators operated only on Shabbos and Yom Tov. However, sometimes even on weekdays, when a power outage occurred, the generators began running automatically.

The Israel Electric Company didn’t like the idea. They were concerned about a case of a pre-arranged power outage due to technical repairs, which might lead to the company technicians endangering their lives. After lengthy discussions on the matter, it was decided that in the event of a power failure, the generators would not be made operational without checking first with the Israel Electric Company, regarding whether it is possible to restore the current.”

Chabad. “I was very happy about the arousal by many residents of Kfar Chabad (may they increase in number) among all the residents of Kfar Chabad – *shlita* – to arrange a *gen5sal* from above” to carry out this important *takana*, so that Kfar Chabad will have kosher electricity, according to all opinions.

In this same letter, the Rebbe also informed the residents of Kfar Chabad that he would pay 10% of all expenses. “*Bli neder*, I will authorize the participation of the fund of our Rebbeim – the founder and administrator of Kfar Chabad – in a tenth of all expenses connected with this [project].”

Even in the very first letter, the Rebbe wrote with much urging and impetus that he is looking forward to good news on the matter: “May it be G-d’s will that they will do all this with the greatest possible speed, and better, one Shabbos earlier. May the merit of the many assist them and may the *bracha* of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, accompany them in all this and bring them success. Expecting and wishing for good news in this matter.” (*Igros Kodesh*, Vol. 24, p. 88).

A short while later, a special committee, aptly called the Generator Committee, was appointed by HaRav Shneur Zalman Gorelick, *rav* of Kfar Chabad, with HaRav Meir Tzvi Gruzman serving as chairman. Rabbi Gorelick himself customarily hooked the electricity flow in his home to the battery every Friday afternoon.

The following Elul, the Generator Committee members wrote to the Rebbe about what they had accomplished up until then and the obstacles that they had encountered. They asked if they should continue with their activities towards the purchase of the generator, despite all the obstacles. The Rebbe responded with the general letter of Chaf Av, where he personally jotted the following notation in the margins (boldface in the original): “I was most disappointed by the activities

regarding the generator. I had hoped that it would be as I wrote, to set it up ‘one Shabbos earlier,’ yet many, many months have passed since then! And finally, they come with a question whether [or not] to even buy the generator! Nevertheless (and very much so), I hereby write again (and may it be His will that at least now they will not be idle words) the answer to their question, according to Rashi’s commentary in Parshas Balak (22:7): if they will buy it at this time (immediately upon receipt of this letter), there is substance to it, and if, etc.”

“Rabbi Chodakov told me that he has nothing to give me now due to lack of funds. I told this to the Rebbe and the Rebbe said that if the treasurer says that there is no money, he has to be replaced!”

“They immediately collected money from Kfar Chabad residents and the long awaited generators were purchased,” Rabbi Shlomo Meidanchik recalled. “At first, there were two, and later, a third one. After the generators were installed, they had to be made operational. So, every family paid a monthly sum for maintenance expenses. HaRav Meir Gruzman worked diligently on this matter together with other Kfar Chabad residents – all with the continuous encouragement of the Rebbe.”

As is known, the Rebbe himself

participated in the purchase of the generators. In one of his letters, the Rebbe jotted in his own handwriting, “How much exactly do I owe on the generator?”

HaRav Elazar Gorelick, then-Kfar Chabad Vaad member who was vigorously active in the whole project, recalls the difficulties in connection with the generator. “The whole issue of providing electricity through a generator was a family affair. My grandfather, HaRav Shneur Zalman Gorelick, was always stringent about the use of a battery, as he would say, ‘As HaRav Yaakov Landa does.’ The running of the generator was accompanied by many problems, as it did not always meet the heavy demand of electricity. Sometimes, we were forced to place notices on Friday in the streets of the Kfar, requesting that people refrain from running heaters on Shabbos in the winter months, and later, air conditioners during the summer, so that the generator could stand up to the burden.

“Over the years, Kfar Chabad has expanded and grown in great measure, and the generators could not meet the demand, and there were constant problems in running it. As a result, for a variety of reasons, the generators have not been in operation for several years now, and that’s a pity, since this is the clear desire of the Rebbe.”

It is appropriate to note that shortly after the Kfar Chabad generators were installed in Adar Sheni 5727, the Rebbe said in a *yechidus* with HaRav Boruch Shimon Schneerson, of blessed memory, Rosh Yeshivas Tchebin, “You have no doubt received word about the building of a generator in Kfar Chabad that runs on Shabbos and Yom Tov. In my humble opinion, *iz dahs a gevaldiker inyan* (this is a tremendous thing). And most important, people should see and do, so that the matter should spread forth from Kfar Chabad to every place in Eretz Kodesh, may it be rebuilt and re-established.”

RETURN OF THE NIGHTMARE

BY SHAI GEFEN

WE DON'T LEARN

A bus was blown up last Tuesday in the heart of our country, in Yerushalayim. Dozens of people were killed and maimed, many of them children. What took place in the days preceding this attack?

"Representatives of the Right in the government are angry about transferring another four Israeli towns into Arab control," screamed the newspapers. If it wasn't sad it would be funny. Here you have these guys from the Right, people whose entire political agenda was about preventing a Palestinian state, releasing terrorists and evacuating strongholds, and they're "angry."

They forget that they too are to blame for mega-tragedies like the bombing last Tuesday. It is they who give the moral majority to Sharon's evil government. With their votes, the government does what it pleases, and what it pleases puts all of us in danger. They are active participants in all the government's decisions, after which they release a few disgruntled political announcements in order to show their constituents how much they care.

The public isn't stupid. The time will come when all the leaders on the Right who were partners to the establishment of an Arab state, will be gone with the wind. The electorate will punish them for the historic crime that has no rectification. The leaders of Mafdal and Ichud Leumi will not be

able to wash their hands clean of the disaster and say, "We didn't do it."

HOW DO YOU SAY "ROAD MAP" IN ARABIC?

If you want to know what's really going on with the agreements with the Arabs, you've got to ask the Arabs. Until now, they've been the best commentators about the agreements they've signed with Israel.

When Moshe Katzav explained to the Rebbe that autonomy does not mean a Palestinian state, the Rebbe told him, "**You understand Arabic, so ask the Arabs who live there, and you'll see that they'll tell you that what they mean about talks about autonomy in five years is giving away parts of Eretz Yisroel in order to establish a Palestinian state. And then it won't make any difference how Jews interpret it because the main thing will be how the goyim look at it.**"

Now too, if you want to know what the Road Map really means, listen closely to Navil Shaat, the one appointed to handle foreign affairs in the P.A. He says that "the Road Map guarantees the rights of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in the territories and in Israel. Whether someone wants to return to Chaifa or Sh'chem, his right is guaranteed. We don't see any other solution for the Palestinian refugees, especially those living in Lebanon, than the guaranteed return to their homes."

What he's saying is the refugees desire to return is not some farfetched dream, since the Road Map does not limit the desire to return to Israel proper.

I believe Navil Shaat and not the hollow and "angry" reactions of our leaders. From our bitter experience, it always pays to listen to the Palestinian spokesmen, especially when they speak in Arabic. They don't lie about these things.

IN THOSE DAYS, AT THIS TIME

Before Yom Kippur, the big Israeli newspapers generally prepare a series of articles about the Yom Kippur War. This year, two months before Yom Kippur, we've already been deluged with new revelations about that terrible war that exacted a toll of over three thousand dead. The public is rubbing its eyes in disbelief. Is Yom Kippur coming earlier this year? Why are we reading about the Yom Kippur War in Av?

As Jews and *chassidim*, we are believers, the children of believers, that everything is by Divine providence, especially regarding the incredible timing.

P.M. Sharon was the general in that war who was responsible for the fateful turning point in the war. He strongly opposed the politicians who enthusiastically supported the Bar-Lev Line. He was also against the



politicians who caved in to political pressure from the superpowers, and strongly maintained that they had to continue and push forward into Egypt and wipe it out completely. He even dared to disobey the orders of the politicians until they forced him to comply with their instructions.

Today, that general is the politician who is making the identical errors and wreaking havoc. Who knows what other consequences, *r"l*, he'll bring upon us with his political maneuvers after three years of war with thousands of dead and maimed, most of them civilians.

At this time, as reports about the Yom Kippur War are being publicized, the P.M. is giving Arab terrorists the ability to arm themselves in order to be better prepared for the next round of war. He's enabling them to improve their Kassam missiles so that they reach Gush Dan. And he, no less than us, knows the truth, and is well aware of the terrible danger and tragic consequences of those concessions.

Although he knows all about the massive arming of the terrorists, and despite the fact that people have been killed in the sham of a ceasefire, he had the gall to discuss handing over additional Israeli towns to our killers; he released terrorists wholesale, and he continued making more and more "gestures" which endanger our lives. It's impossible to understand how he could do all this while his Minister of Security informs him that Arafat has given the green light to terror.

The timing of those war diaries with all the shocking details is not coincidental. It's really important to remind Sharon where we are heading, *ch"v*, with all those concessions as he ignores our security experts.

Sharon himself, in an interview, spoke about the Rebbe's position in the period before the Yom Kippur War. He spoke about the first letter he got from the Rebbe which outlined the Rebbe's

view of the security situation. This is highly relevant to our times:

Mr. Sharon: "I think that the first letter was in 1969 following the big debate I had along with Yisroel Tal against the IDF head staff in connection with the defense strategy in Sinai. We were both opposed to the strategy of the Bar Lev Line, and claimed it was a recipe for disaster. At that time he wrote me a letter in which he compared the Bar Lev Line to the Maginot Line that the French built to preempt a German attack. He wrote that he was very worried and very concerned about the Canal, and that the Bar Lev Line would not be able to be effective in our times. He dissected the strategy of the Bar Lev Line and cited various reasons, not prophetic ones but strategic ones."

At that time, the Rebbe warned about what would happen to Israel as a consequence of the terrible complacency. The Rebbe screamed about the position of the politicians who did not allow the reserves to be called up because of fear of what the *goyim* would say. What a pity, that the celebrated general from the Yom Kippur War is repeating the same mistakes that were made then by not listening to those who head Security who warn him of a wave of attacks the likes of which Israel has not yet known (may it not happen).

In the *sicha* of Yud-Gimmel Tammuz 5739, the Rebbe referred to that terrible war and its consequences. From the perspective of the *navi ha'dor*, it was like what we read in the Haftora for Parshas Eikev, "why did I come and nobody's here; I called, and nobody answers?":

Now what happened then has already been publicized: A few days and weeks before the war, they got information that the other side had called up its soldiers, yet they still didn't give the go-ahead for the calling-up of those who defend Eretz Yisroel,

The political situation now is very similar to that on the eve of the Yom Kippur War. At that time there was supposedly a ceasefire between Israel and Egypt. The Egyptians used the ceasefire to arm itself and in preparing its army for war. Despite the fact that military leaders saw this and warned about it, the politicians didn't dare make the necessary decision to save the lives of thousands.

to the point that Erev Yom Kippur there was clear information that if they didn't mobilize the war would begin on Yom Kippur. They held a meeting on that holy day and there was testimony from experts in that matter who said explicitly that if they wanted to prevent a war and avert sacrifices the only way to do so was by immediate enlistment and informing the public, without taking into consideration those who "are fearful and faint of heart." And the conclusion of the meeting was not only *not* to call up the soldiers, but also to *announce* that they were not mobilizing them, so they'd have a good reputation.

At the time they figured: It will cost us heavily in sacrifices, for there is no war without sacrifices. But this figuring didn't help, and we know who voted in favor of not mobilizing, while at this very meeting they heard testimony from military men who said that due to the security situation, mobilization was a must if they wanted to prevent sacrifices.

They did the opposite of the *p'sak din* in *Shulchan Aruch* which says that in such a situation one must obey the security experts, and afterwards one can follow the politicians. This war exacted sacrifices – *more than the total of all the wars up until the Yom Kippur War!*

After this was publicized and printed, the situation is repeating itself (may it not happen) with security experts stating clearly that if they don't stand strongly and if they do not insist on not giving away land in one place and another place and in a third place, as well as the territory from which they take oil and the like – this endangers Jewish people!

They said it once and twice, and many times! ...

They saw this beforehand with Sinai and then with the oil, and then with the PLO and who knows how much more, *r"l*. And they continue using the same approach, even when

they see – as was said earlier, in order that the test be easier, from Above they show, on a small scale, where this will lead – they see that there is a rebellion against the government, the police and the army. In those very areas where they are apparently present in force, there's a rebellion ...

They are playing with lives! They want to use an approach which was tested already three times and more, and each time the results were retreat after retreat, and to be blunt, defeat after defeat. Yet they insist on continuing with this approach, and they convince themselves that this is the road to peace without seeing the only direction this road leads to.

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they convince themselves that this is the road to peace without seeing the only direction this road leads to.

And those who make the decisions, make the decisions the same way, without looking at the fact that they're doing the opposite of Torah. They listen to politicians rather than to those who say that *pikuach nefesh* overrides everything, even the fear of the *goy*, as it were, and the "goy within you," *pikuach nefesh* overrides that, too. Yet without looking at the fact that they did the opposite of His will, Hashem gave, in his mercy and kindness, a tremendous victory. And since that victory they head in one direction – for from time to time they concede another piece of land and another matter, [relinquishing] more dignity and more position among the seventy wolves, with all the painful proofs, though this is not the time to elaborate; the pain over the things already mentioned is enough, and everybody knows what was printed there – where did all the promises lead when they relied on the "chesed of the nations is sinful," which was connected with fulfilling the commandments of the Torah that in a situation of *pikuach nefesh*, it is clear that "*pikuach nefesh* pushes everything aside" – "don't start up" or "yes, start up" is the opposite of this.

Especially when this (i.e., pressure) is merely "the sound of a blowing leaf," since they need Eretz Yisroel and its inhabitants more than they need its enemies.

If only what prevailed until now was enough, and they achieve the "this is your wisdom and understanding in the eyes of the nations" – that they act according to the clear *p'sak din* in *Shulchan Aruch* that's it is forbidden to open the land before them, even when they say they only want to take "straw and hay," because this is on the border, and as was said many times before at length. This is the path towards, "I will give peace in the land

and you will sleep and not fear,” and they won’t need to resort to all these things, and to all the things that are the opposite of logic, as was said, and one shouldn’t go on at length over something painful.

The political situation now is very similar to that on the eve of the Yom Kippur War. At that time there was supposedly a ceasefire between Israel and Egypt. The Egyptians used the ceasefire to arm itself and in preparing its army for war. Despite the fact that military leaders saw this and warned about it, the politicians didn’t dare make the necessary decision to save the lives of thousands.

That’s the situation now. The Hudna was (past tense) nothing but a mirage. The terrorists are arming and re-supplying. Everybody knows it. The politicians (who were once generals) are afraid to take a tough stand

because they want to appear respectable to the Americans.

No wonder the journalists have written articles about the Yom Kippur War now. It’s in order to warn us!

A CLASSIC EXAMPLE

We spoke about the impossible to understand approach that our politicians take in which they ignore the advice of the security experts. Back then, too, during the Yom Kippur War, someone thought it would all work out. The situation was very similar to that of today. Here’s one of the many news items that was published lately. It speaks for itself.

“The steps taken by the political sector oppose the recommendations of the “ShaBaK” (Mosad), which sees the Palestinian prime minister and his Defense Minister as people unprepared, and apparently – unable – to take on the extreme Palestinian

organizations, because of their weak position on the Palestinian street. This is especially true regarding Dachlan, who was unsuccessful in asserting his authority, neither in Yehuda-Shomron or in the Gaza Strip, even though he prides himself on being very influential in the Strip. Remember that removing the siege on Arafat was said to be in the works even though just one week prior, Defense Minister Mofaz said he wouldn’t be surprised if Arafat was behind the attacks in Ariel and Rosh HaAyin.”

The political sector decides to continue giving away towns and land. Mofaz says the concessions are retractable, and they can always be taken back. This might be true but not for the families who lost (and will lose, may it not happen) their sons and daughters. For them, their world came crashing down, and that’s forever.

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TZFAS COMMEMORATES THE FIRST YAHRTZEIT OF HA'RAV HA'GAON R. LEVI BISTRITZKY, A"H

This past Sunday, the 19th of Menachem Av, the citizens of the Holy City of Tzfas took part in a series of commemorative events in honor of the first *yahrzeit* of HaRav HaGaon HaChassid R. Levi Bistritzky, of blessed memory. Rabbi Bistritzky was sent to Tzfas by the Rebbe MH"M and served at his instructions as the *rav* of the Chabad community of Tzfas, and afterwards, as the Chief Rabbi of Tzfas and the Upper Galilee.

At eleven o'clock in the morning, a large crowd gathered to recite chapters of *T'hillim* at the gravesite, including the city's mayor, police commander, the chief rabbi, the late *rav's* eldest son and successor, other family members, friends, and fellow citizens.

The crowd was addressed by the late *rav's* father-in-law, HaRav Chaim Menachem Teichtel (may he be blessed with long and healthy years), Tzfas Chief Rabbi HaRav Shmuel Eliyahu, and HaRav Yeshayahu Hertzal, Chief Rabbi of Natrat Illit.

Events then moved to a ceremony dedicating a new wing of the Chabad community *mikva* – "*Taharas Levi*," named in memory of the late *rav*, and built in the merit of the generous contribution of the *rav's* brother, R. Avrohom Yisroel Bistritzky.

The highlight of the day's events was the completion of two *sifrei Torah* written in the *rav's* memory. The first was donated by the Chabad

community and the citizens of Tzfas in recognition of their appreciation for his work as Chief Rabbi, and the second by his father (may he be blessed with long and healthy years), HaRav R. Yehuda Leib Bistritzky, and the members of his family.

The completion ceremony for the community's *seifer Torah* was held in the central square of Kiryat Chabad. The former Chief Rabbi of Israel, HaRav Yisroel Meir Lau, wrote the final letter, and the late *rav's* eldest son and successor as the *rav* of the Chabad community of Tzfas and head of the



Kashrut Department of the Tzfas Chief Rabbinate, HaRav Mordechai Bistritzky, placed the crown upon the *seifer*. The second *seifer Torah's* completion ceremony was held privately in the Bistritzky family home.

After the *sifrei Torah* had been completed, a glorious traditional torchlight parade led by the *Tzivos Hashem* drum corps under the directorship of Rabbi Yehoshua Shimoni, escorted them with great honor to the Heichal Levi Yitzchok Central Synagogue, Kiryat Chabad, as

the centerpiece of the contents of its *Aron Kodesh*. Thousands participated in the parade through the city's streets, including fellow *rabbanim* and *shluchim* of HaRav Bistritzky, *a"h*. Within the *shul* itself, the traditional *Hakafos*, in accordance with Chabad custom, were held with joyous dancing and music.

The entire ceremonies and *Hakafos* celebration were organized by the *gabbaim* of the "Heichal Levi Yitzchok" Central Synagogue: Rabbi Aharon Shiffman, Rabbi Shneur Zalman Gruzman, Rabbi Yoram Meuda, and Rabbi Ronen Nechemia-Cohen.

After the conclusion of the *Hakafos*, the participants then proceeded to the Palatine Hall, where a festive *seudas mitzva* was held in honor of the day's events. Those in attendance were addressed by Tzfas Chief Rabbi HaRav Shmuel Eliyahu, HaRav Eliezer Schlesinger, *rav* of Yerushalayim's Gilo neighborhood, Haifa Chief Rabbi HaRav Sha'ar

Yishuv Cohen, HaRav Mordechai Bistritzky, HaRav Eliezer Reich, *rav* of the city's Kiryat Sanz community, HaRav Menachem Mendel Gluckowsky, *rav* of the Chabad community of Rehovot and deputy secretary of the Chabad Rabbinical Court in Eretz HaKodesh, and HaRav Yosef Yitzchok Wilschanski, Rosh Yeshivas Chassidei Chabad – Tzfas and *shlichus* colleague of HaRav Bistritzky, *a"h*. HaRav Naftali HaCohen Roth served as master of ceremonies.