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Obituary

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# THE BIRTHDAY OF THE REBBE RASHAB

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



## SHABBOS PARSHAS VA'YEIRA, CHAF MAR-CHESHVAN, 5750

1. On the previous Shabbosos, the importance of gathering together on every Shabbos to study Torah communally was mentioned. Similarly, it was suggested that one subject — the beginning or the conclusion of the weekly Torah portion — should be studied by all the communities. Accordingly, it is appropriate to focus on the first verse of the *parasha* and explain it in a manner which relates to the conclusion of the *parasha*.

Also, since this Shabbos falls on the 20th of MarCheshvan, it is associated with the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab, which also falls on this date. A birthday is a day when “the spiritual source of one’s soul shines powerfully.” Hence, this day is important to us, for the Rebbe Rashab was the predecessor of the *Nasi* of our generation, the Rebbe Rayatz, and he was the one who appointed him as the director of the Yeshiva Tomchei Tmimim.

This connection is brought out by the following story which was related by the Rebbe Rayatz: When the Rebbe Rashab was a young boy, he

went to his grandfather, the Tzemach Tzedek, to receive a blessing in connection with his birthday. When he entered his grandfather’s room, he began to cry. His grandfather asked him why he was crying, and he explained that in *cheider*, he had learned that G-d had revealed Himself to Avrohom and he was upset — why G-d did not reveal Himself to him?

This story can be understood in terms of Rashi’s commentary on the opening verse of the *parasha*, “And G-d revealed Himself to Avrohom.” Rashi states: “[G-d came] to visit the sick. Rabbi Chama bar Chanina said: It was the third day after his circumcision and the Holy One, blessed be He, came and enquired about his well-being.”

We must understand, why did the circumcision cause Avrohom to fall sick? As explained in the previous *farbrengen*, the great happiness and joy which Avrohom should have felt at meriting to fulfill G-d’s commandment should have prevented him from feeling any pain. We see a parallel to this in *halacha*: Though Shabbos is intended to be a day of pleasure, when a person has a disturbing dream, he is allowed to

fast on the Shabbos because his fasting will give him more satisfaction than eating. Though the fast is connected with discomfort, the person’s emotional state is such that undergoing this discomfort is what will bring him pleasure. Similarly, in the present instance, the happiness Avrohom felt at fulfilling G-d’s *mitzva* should have transformed his discomfort into pleasure.

It was explained that since G-d desired that the covenant established through the *mitzva* of circumcision permeate through the totality of our beings to the extent that it effects our actual flesh, it was necessary that Avrohom let himself experience the feelings that the circumcision naturally brings.

Nevertheless, the question still arises: The fulfillment of *mitzvos* is intended to develop perfection in every aspect of a person’s soul. That spiritual perfection should, in turn, be reflected in every aspect of one’s body. In particular, in regard to the *mitzva* of circumcision, G-d told Avrohom, “Proceed before Me and become perfect.” If so, why should a *mitzva* which is intended to bring out perfection within a person cause him to become sick, so sick that on the

third day, the sickness became stronger, and G-d Himself had to “visit the sick?”

To understand this concept, it is necessary to explain the concept of G-d’s visiting the sick: In *Or HaTorah*, the Tzemach Tzedek explains that the source of sickness is the soul’s being lovesick out of a desire to cling to G-d. [The Hebrew word for sick, “*choleh*,” is numerically equivalent to 49. There are 50 Gates of Understanding. Thus, when a person has acquired only 49, he becomes sick, yearning for the completion he lacks.] The remedy for this sickness is the revelation of G-dliness. This is intimated in the Ramban’s commentary on our *parasha*, which explains that G-d’s revelation to Avrohom healed him from the circumcision.

Based on the above, we can understand the connection between the revelation of G-dliness and visiting the sick. Through the circumcision, Avrohom reached a higher spiritual level, the 49th Gate of Understanding. This made him “sick,” “lovesick,” yearning for the 50th level.

To elaborate: The *mitzva* of circumcision came after Avrohom’s service of leaving “his land,” “his native country,” and “his father’s home,” i.e., after he completed the service of departing from his previous state (even when that state is itself a level of holiness), in order to proceed to “the land which I (G-d) will show you,” i.e., to become one with G-d’s will. The *mitzva* of circumcision demonstrates how this union with G-d is reflected in “a covenant in your flesh.” This brought Avrohom to the level of perfection.

This perfection, however, reflects only the perfection that can be accomplished by a creation, what a creation can achieve with its own efforts (which relates to the 49th Gate

of Understanding). Thus, the possibility of sickness exists, i.e., one yearns for the fiftieth level which cannot be reached by man’s own efforts.

On this basis, we can understand why the perfection Avrohom achieved through the circumcision brought sickness. It was the reaching of the 49th level, the highest level that could be achieved through man’s own efforts, which led Avrohom to the intense yearning for the 50th level. This yearning was so intense that he became “lovesick,” which, in turn, was reflected in sickness on a simple level. He was healed from this

***The source of  
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sickness by the revelation of G-dliness, i.e., the revelation of the 50th level.

The words the Torah uses to describe this revelation, “*Va’yeira eilav Havaya* — Hashem appeared to him,” are each significant.

The use of the word “*va’yeira*” (appeared), as opposed to “*machazeh*,” an Aramaic translation of the word, implies that the revelation was direct and manifest.

“*Eilav*” (to him) implies that the revelation permeated Avrohom’s entire being. That is, his existence

was not nullified by its power; rather, he was able to accept the revelation and make it part of his being.

“*Havaya*” is the most sublime of the names of G-d. The revelation to Avrohom came from the highest level of G-dliness.

Combining all three concepts suggests that the revelation of the highest levels of G-dliness was revealed in the most complete manner and permeated the totality of Avrohom’s being. Such a lofty and complete revelation is only possible because it emanates from the 50th level, the level that transcends all the *sfiros* and is totally beyond the frame of reference of a created being.

The 50th level is a simple point, totally above all dimensions, and yet including within it all the length, breadth, and depth that is found within all the creations in the spiritual realm. This point represents, in the Ramban’s words, “the truth of His being,” from which “came into being all existing entities.”

In the personal world associated with our service, this concept can be explained as follows: Although a person must prepare himself to receive the 50th level through *bittul* (self-nullification), the “lovesickness” described above, nevertheless the revelation of the 50th level, does not nullify a person’s individual existence. Rather, it permeates through the totality of his being. Since, “the Jewish people and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one,” G-d’s essence is reflected within the Jew.

2. The Torah relates that this revelation took place “in the plains of Mamre,” i.e., it also had an effect on the surrounding environment in which Avrohom lived.

The relation of one’s spiritual level to the world in which one lives is

reflected in the closing verses of the *parasha*, as well. After the Torah relates the great *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice) of the *Akeida* (the binding of Yitzchok), it lists the descendants of Nachor, concluding with the mention of Maacho. Our Sages relate that the latter name is an acronym for the phrase, “Who reigns over the entire world.”

This implies that the process in which the *bittul* and *mesirus nefesh* (symbolized by the circumcision) emanate from the essential point of the soul to become a fit vessel to receive the revelation of the 50th Gate of Understanding (G-d’s revelation to Avrohom) is not self-contained. Rather, since the 50th level is a point beyond all dimension — above the boundaries of above and below — it, therefore, includes everything, from the highest point until the lowest levels and brings about a unity between those two opposites.

This concept is also reflected in the opening verse of Parshas Chayei Sara, which we begin to read in the *Mincha* service. That verse states that Sara’s life lasted “one hundred years, twenty years, and seven years.” Each of these three numbers is significant: 100 refers to the supra-intellectual powers of will and pleasure; twenty, to our mental faculties, wisdom and understanding; and seven, to our seven emotional potentials — thus including every aspect of our personalities. In Sara’s case, the quality of *mesirus nefesh* was such that it permeated through each of these potentials.

Furthermore, Sara’s service had an effect on her portion of the world as implied by her change of name. Previously, she was called Sarai which means “My ruler.” Changing her name to Sara, “the ruler,” i.e., “the ruler of everyone,” emphasizes the influence she exerted on the world at

large. This shows how the quality of *mesirus nefesh* can permeate, not only through the totality of one’s own personality, but can be extended further and influence one’s surrounding environment.

In this context, we can see the connection between the three portions Lech Lecha, VaYeira, and Chayei Sara: Lech Lecha represents the service of *bittul* and *mesirus nefesh*, leaving one’s previous state. This leads to VaYeira, the revelation of the essential point of G-dliness. Chayei Sara alludes to the reflection of that essential G-dliness in every aspect of our personalities.

## ***On Shabbos VaYeira — particularly, when it falls on the 20th of Cheshvan — each one of us should think over the story of the Rebbe Rashab’s crying...***

3. The above concepts also share a connection to the present date, the 20th of Cheshvan, the birthday of the Rebbe Rashab and the story of his crying related above. The Rebbe Rashab told the Tzemach Tzedek why he was crying, “In *cheider*, I learned that ‘G-d revealed Himself to Avrohom.’ Why doesn’t G-d reveal Himself to me?”

This story implies that the “lovesickness” that possessed Avrohom after his circumcision also affected the Rebbe Rashab. Indeed, his desire was powerful enough to move him to tears. Since this story

occurred in his early childhood, it is self-understood that as the Rebbe Rashab matured and experienced various revelations of G-dliness, his thirst and desire grew to reach even higher levels until he reached the ultimate peak, the revelation of the 50th Gate of Understanding. This approach should serve as a lesson to all his followers, teaching them not to remain content with the spiritual level they have achieved, but rather to constantly strive to rise to higher peaks, going from strength to strength.

Although the Rebbe Rashab displayed this powerful thrust of yearning, utterly nullifying himself to G-d, his service also reflected the importance of drawing down influence into the totality of his personality and into the world at large. This is emphasized in his name, Sholom Dov Ber. Sholom (“Peace”) is one of G-d’s names, and reflects the essential point that includes the totality of existence, as our Sages declared, “Sholom is equivalent to everything.” Thus, it is also drawn down and reflected in the lowest levels, even in the flesh of our physical bodies. This is connected with the Rebbe Rashab’s second name Dov Ber, which combines the Hebrew and Yiddish equivalents of “bear.” Our Sages explained that a bear is “over-laden with meat,” i.e., it reflects the lowest levels.

The thrust on relating G-dliness to the world can also be seen in the Rebbe Rashab’s activities. The Rebbe Rashab placed a heavy emphasis on explaining Chassidic subjects in a manner that could be understood and comprehended by human intellect. Similarly, he was the one who founded the *yeshiva* Tomchei Tmimim, which is dedicated to studying Chassidus in a systematic and organized manner, just as one studies a subject in Nigla (the revealed, legal realm of Torah study).

The Rebbe Rashab placed an emphasis on extending the essential connection beyond the intellect, effecting a person's emotions and also his deeds and actions. This is also reflected in an effect on the world at large. Thus, the students of Yeshivas Tomchei Tmimim became "soldiers of the House of David," spreading the wellsprings of Chassidus outward. This was carried further by the Rebbe Rayatz, the successor to the Rebbe Rashab and the *Nasi* of our generation, until Chassidus has been spread throughout the world, revealing how G-d "reigns over the entire world in His glory," as alluded to in the name Maacho, as explained above.

The above provides each of us with a practical directive. On Shabbos VaYeira — particularly, when it falls on the 20th of Cheshvan —

each one of us should think over the story of the Rebbe Rashab's crying and realize that regardless of the level he has already reached, he must strive to reach an even higher rung. This can be accomplished by increasing his Torah study, both Nigla and Chassidus, in particular the Chassidus of the Rebbe Rashab, fulfilling *mitzvos b'hiddur*, and spreading the wellsprings of *Yiddishkeit* and Chassidus outward. This should be done by gathering together as a community with *ahavas Yisroel* as the Rebbe Rashab stressed in *Kuntres Heichaltzu*.

Added potential for such service is granted this year, 5750, *Shnas Nissim* (A Year of Miracles). The Hebrew for miracles, *neis*, also means "lift up." Thus, it relates to the efforts to rise above one's previous level mentioned above. It also shares a

connection to the revelation of the 50th level mentioned above for the letter *Nun* in *neis* stands for 50. This also is connected with the concept of Maacho, extending one's spiritual service to include one's environment, since the intent of "A Year of Miracles" is to infuse "the year," one's everyday routine, with miracles.

This will bring the most important miracle, the coming of Moshiach. His coming will be hastened by the service of *Heichaltzu* as performed by "the soldiers of the House of David" in their efforts to spread Chassidus. The shout of "*Ad masai?!*" (until when?!), which they will inspire, reflects the great yearning for G-dliness, a yearning that will only be satisfied by the revelations of the Messianic era. May it be now, immediately.

B"H

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# A LIVING THING DOES NOT WEAR OUT OR DECAY

BY RABBI LEVI YITZCHOK GINSBERG  
MASHPIA, YESHIVAS TOMCHEI T'MIMIM – LUBAVITCH, K FAR CHABAD  
TRANSLATED BY MICHOEL LEIB DOBRY



The *mashpia*, R. Mendel Futerfas, related the following:

“As is known, my father, of blessed memory, passed away before I was born and I was named after him [R. Menachem Mendel ben R. Menachem Mendel]. As a result, I was raised in the home of my grandfather, HaRav R. Chaim Futerfas, who was privileged to be a *chassid* of the Tzemach Tzedek. In addition to being a tremendous *chassid*, my grandfather was a great *yira Shamayim* and *lamdan*.”

At this point, R. Mendel would stop and emphasize again and again: “Everyone knows that the Rebbe *shlita* is very precise to write in his customary *bracha* to a *bar mitzva* boy that he should merit to be ‘a *chassid*, *yira Shamayim*, and *lamdan*.’ This teaches us what the most critically important point above all else is, despite the great importance of what comes afterwards. The most vitally important and relevant point before anything else is to be a *chassid*. Afterwards, it is very important to be a *yira Shamayim*, and only then, is there the importance of being a *lamdan*...”

“In addition to my grandfather’s *chassidishkeit* and great scholarship,

his family was also highly honored and respected among the *chassidim*. For this reason, meetings on issues of critical importance to the overall *chassidic* community were held in our home. I especially remember a meeting held after the *histalkus* of the Rebbe Rashab. It was decided by all the most respected and leading figures in the *chassidic* community in attendance to establish a connection with his only son, the Rebbe Rayatz, by sending a ‘*k’sav hiskashrus*’ to him in Rostov.

“As a ‘wealthy orphan,’ I had the opportunity to wear shoes, while my other classmates in ‘*cheider*’ walked around barefoot, because their parents could not afford such luxuries...”

“After a few months, as will be with all material items that wear out – even the sandals that I wore became useless, to the point that I had to buy new sandals. I approached my grandfather, and asked him in puzzlement, ‘I don’t understand. These sandals were hard and strong a few months ago, yet this didn’t prevent them from wearing out after a few months of usage. But my friends, who didn’t have shoes on their feet, went out to

play barefoot, and their feet remained in order. How is this possible?”

“My grandfather looked at me and said, ‘*Mendele, vahs redstu?! Dahs iz a lebedike zach! A lebedike zach vert nisht farfoilt!*’” (Mendele, what are you saying?! This is a living thing! A living thing does not decay or wear out!)

Many years later, when little Mendele grew up and became “R. Mendel” and everyone knew him as a great *chassid* and a *mashpia*, whose words and guidance must be heeded, R. Mendel would *farbreng* with the *bachurim* and *avreichim* and demand that they have a connection to the Rebbe Rayatz and afterwards, to the Rebbe *shlita*, to Beis Chayeinu, heart and soul, above and beyond all measure.

*Chassidim* asked him, “How can that be? How is it possible to be truly connected in our present situation, when the Rebbe has left Russia and there is almost no physical connection, and we know nothing about what is happening in Beis Chayeinu? How is it possible to connect and become stronger in the intolerable conditions of Communist Russia?”

R. Mendel would tell them, “If you really want to be connected, always look for vitality and enthusiasm. Know that where there is holiness, *kahcht zich, shturemt zich, un s’lebt* (i.e., there is enthusiasm, there is activity, and there is vitality), and where there is vitality and enthusiasm, there is holiness.”

The following episode adds to the understanding of this concept:

Once there was a debate on a particular community issue. The *askanim* were divided on the matter, each side claiming, as always, that its approach was G-d’s will.

There was a certain Jew among them, who was closer than most to R. Mendel. His friends also wanted to hear his position, however, he was in doubt whose position was correct and what was the Supernal desire. Eventually, he decided to turn to R. Mendel and ask his advice.

“Let this be a sign for you,” R. Mendel told him. “You should go where there is vitality and enthusiasm. The Torah is the Torah of Truth and the Torah of Life. Where there is truth, there is life, and where there is life, the vitality and enthusiasm of holiness, there is truth...”

It is not for naught that 770 – Beis Moshiach is also called Beis Chayeinu (as the Beis HaMikdash is called in the *brachos* recited after the Haftora) – the place that is filled with the true life, which flows to all places in all times. Truth is to be found in the Beis HaMikdash, in *Beis Rabbeinu Sh’B’Bavel* (“the Mikdash traveled and dwelled there”), and from there, the vitality and enthusiasm extends to the entire world.

Life is a limited and indivisible point, as represented by the difference between that which is alive and that which is not. There is no such thing as being partially

alive, a little bit alive and a little bit not. Divisions of this type can only be seen in the extension of the vitality, i.e., how much the vitality spreads forth and how much it is instilled and felt within reality. But in essence, there can be neither division in vitality nor any relevance to its change whatsoever. If something is alive, it is totally alive – 100%. However, if it is not alive, *ch”v*, then it is totally not alive *r”l* –

***“These sandals were hard and strong a few months ago, yet this didn’t prevent them from wearing out after a few months of usage. But my friends, who didn’t have shoes on their feet, went out to play barefoot, and their feet remained in order. How is this possible?”***

100%...

*Chassidim* say and know that to live is absolutely impossible without a Rebbe. Only the Rebbe lives in essence, and thus, only he can live and enliven, i.e., provide true life to all. As the saying goes, “*Rabi lo shana, chiya minayin?*” – if you haven’t been to the Rebbe for a year, where will you get the *chayos* (vitality)?”

True vitality can only come from the source of true life, from the *nasi*, who is the head and heart of the Jewish people, as “the *nasi* is everything” and the king, “whose heart is the heart of the entire community of Israel,” from which derives the point of vitality and from where life disseminates to the entire Jewish people, and subsequently, the whole world.

Essential vitality cannot be divided nor does it have any relevance to change. It cannot be in a state of “a little yes and a little no,” just as life itself can neither be divided nor change. Either it exists totally or not, *ch”v*, and thus, it doesn’t exist at all.

During Tishrei in 770, there is much vitality and enthusiasm, and anyone who was privileged to be there will testify to that. “*S’hat zich gekahcht, un geshturemt, un gelebt* (there was excitement, *shturemt*, and life there).” This essential vitality exists and is found there not just during the month of Tishrei, but also the whole year round, for the essence of vitality is always there equally in all its strength. True vitality and enthusiasm is totally irrelevant without a Rebbe, *ch”v*. The Rebbe MH”M *shlita* exists in the ultimate way, in all his strength and with full force, without even the slightest change or division.

However, by the same token, there is also the total lack of the Rebbe MH”M *shlita*’s physical *hisgalus*. Light can exist in either large or small quantity. However, essence cannot be divided, does not change, nor can it be truly revealed. Essence cannot be in terms of a little or a lot; either it totally exists as it is in all its strength and fortitude or it is totally lacking, completely unrevealed.

The truth of the matter is that these two possibilities are not mutually exclusive; both of them are

true. The essence is entirely here in its full force, with no change or division. However, together and united with this, there is a total lack of revelation of light.

The essence is above and beyond all measure and limitation, beyond the levels of both existence and non-existence, the limited and the unlimited, positive and the negative, above all relevance whatsoever to anything in any form. Yet, together with this, it has absolute relevance to everything, since it is everything, “and it exists as it is in a revealed state, in a manner of revelation of the very essence, which is higher than the level of revelation and the level of concealment,” as is written in the *maamer* “*Pesach Eliyahu*” 5652.

There are no words that can describe or express in any language what occurred in Beis Moshiach. We saw nothing, we heard nothing, we understood nothing, we had nothing – and yet, we lacked nothing. We had 100%, and we lacked 100%.

It was possible to feel tangibly the absolute and simple fact that the Rebbe was in 770 at every step in every corner – at the *t'fillos*, the *farbrenghens*, the dancing, *t'kias shofar*, *bentching lulav* and *esrog*, *Birchas HaT'mimim*, “Napoleon’s March,” *Simchas Beis HaShoeiva*, *T'hilim* on the night of *Hoshana Rabba*, and *Hakafos* on *Simchas Torah*. We felt the Rebbe every day, particularly at thrilling moments when the Rebbe *shlita*, together with the Rebbe *Rayatz*, was called up for *Chassan B'Reishis*. Even at a regular weekday *t'filla*, before and after each *t'filla*, the singing of “*Yechi Adoneinu*” burst forth with renewed and powerful vitality, as the chair, the *shtender*, the carpet, and even two lamps lit above the Rebbe MH”M *shlita*’s holy place were all in position while thousands of people stood and waited. Nothing could have been more natural than for the door to open and for the

Rebbe to enter, touch the *paroches*, go up to his place and *daven* with all of us in a manner than we could physically see and feel.

Yet, together with this, one could almost grasp literally at every moment the cry from the depths of our hearts that could not be silenced, “*Ad masai?*” It’s impossible for this to continue another moment! We want to see our King! We Want Moshiach Now! Now *mamash*, not in another minute, not in another second – NOW!

“*Mir anerkenen nisht in Galus!*” (We don’t recognize the exile!). It doesn’t exist. The exile is just a dream, and the true reality is only the true and complete Redemption!

We heard clearly from our king and Moshiach *shlita* (*sicha*, the 28<sup>th</sup> of Sivan, 5751, and elsewhere) that everything pertaining to the Redemption is simply ready in this world and waiting, as it were, for us (not just to agree, but) to cry out and proclaim it. All that is left is for us to open our eyes and see the ultimate and absolute truth, above and beyond all change or movement. In fact, we are truly crying out and proclaiming with all our strength and fortitude. However, the claim, the demand, and the fervent outcry continue to press forward: How can it be that our eyes see the opposite? How is it that this is not seen and felt to the point that even a blind person can perceive it? We are talking about an absolute truth that penetrates everywhere. How is it possible that it is not completely grasped?

These two opposites (which do not possess any common point between them) are united together, merging as one point beyond all measure and explanation. They burst forth and reveal themselves together as one point in an unceasing and unchanging melody of “*Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu V’Rabbeinu Melech*

*HaMoshiach Lolam Va’ed!*

“*A lebedike zach vert nisht farfoilt!*” (A living thing does not decay or wear out!) There is nothing to explain, as it is impossible to explain and is not subject to definition.

We must only say to those who, for a variety of reasons (many of which were true and justified), did not merit to go to the Rebbe MH”M, and remained in their hole, even during the month of Tishrei: you must travel to the Rebbe, to *Beis Moshiach*, to *Beis Chayeinu*, to the source of true life, and not just during Tishrei, but whenever the opportunity present itself.

Today, more than ever, we must truly feel and know (as the Rebbe *shlita* said on Rosh Hashanah 5752) that this is “the true home of every Jew.” Many *chassidim* were accustomed (I heard that HaRav R. Shmuel Dovid HaLevi Raichik, who was sent by the Rebbe *Rayatz* on *shlichus* to Los Angeles, did so) to say *T’fillas HaDerech* (without Hashem’s Name) every day they were not in *Beis Chayeinu*, even if the *shlichus* lasted for decades.

We must bring “to their tents,” home into our grey lives, the Rebbe the King, the Beis HaMikdash, and everything connected with them. “*Mach Da Eretz Yisroel*,” turn your entire home, every corner of it into *Beis Moshiach*, where the Rebbe MH”M *shlita* is found in a most revealed way that can be felt at every step. We must do our utmost that the call that unites the two opposing extremes will reach every possible location, to the point that even “a stone from the wall will cry out,” and this will bring the complete revelation of our king, our Moshiach, for all to see with the true and complete Redemption, immediately, *mamash*, NOW!

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



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# THE HOLY CUSTOMS OF THE REBBE MAHARASH AND REBBE RASHAB

PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BY N. SOFER

*In honor of Chaf MarCheshvan, birthday of the Rebbe Rashab, we present quotes from the Rebbe Rayatz which were said at the Shabbos meal of Parshas Noach 5703 (1943) about the Rebbe Maharash and the Rebbe Rashab. \* This was taken from the transcriptions of R' Avrohom Weingarten, a"h, l'ilui nishmas his son, R' Mattis, a"h*

## KIDDUSH AT NIGHT ON CHALLA

I heard (1) from my father (the Rebbe Rashab) that when there's no wine Friday night, *Kiddush* should be made on *challa* and not on *mashkeh*.

## R' LEVI YITZCHOK'S NIGGUN

The Rebbe Rayatz asked about *niggunim* of R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev (2). The people sitting there said that there are (about) three *niggunim* that are known in the world as R' Levi Yitzchok's, and they enumerated the *niggunim*.

The Rebbe said: In general, the

source of these *niggunim* is R' Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, but lately they were "fixed" [by the newcomers].

## HANHAGOS AND NIGGUNIM OF THE REBBE MAHARASH

The Rebbe Maharash did everything in a specific order. He had special *niggunim* for everything he did.(3)

## WEARING A SHTREIMEL ON SHABBOS

The Rebbe Maharash would generally wear a *shtreimel* on Shabbos, but sometimes he didn't [

i.e., perhaps because of his weak condition].

## HANGING UP THE CAP

When the Rebbe Rashab would go hang up his *kartoz* ("kasket") Erev Shabbos in order to put on his *shtreimel*, it was always done the same way and in the same place.

## THE REBBE RASHAB'S HANHAGOS

The Rebbe Rashab was orderly. For example, after an afternoon nap he would drink cool water from a well in the yard. He would always drink precisely half a cup, no less and no more.

## CHECKING HIS CLOTHES

The Rebbe Rashab would take pains to check his clothes Erev Shabbos. Once it was suggested that he wear clothing without pockets so he wouldn't have to bother to check his clothes Erev Shabbos, but he didn't want this. He wanted to be able to fulfill the *halacha* (5), "a person must check his clothes Erev Shabbos as it grows dark."

Every Erev Shabbos he would change all his garments for Shabbos clothes.

## A THOUGHT OF T'SHUVA FROM HEARING THE REBBE RASHAB'S BIRCHOS HA'SHACHAR

In this *sicha*, the Rebbe Rayatz tells about the Rebbe Rashab's emotional recital of "Elokai neshama." On another occasion, the Rebbe Rayatz related (*Seifer HaSichos* 5703 p. 103): "Whoever merited to hear how the Rebbe would say the Birchos HaShachar (the morning blessings), certainly had a *hirhur t'shuva* (thought of repentance), and that day was a completely different day for him.

"When the Rebbe Rashab said a *bracha*, not only did they hear the words of the *bracha*, which was said with all the vowels, and they perceived the meaning of the words, for it was the sort of recital that the saying itself led the listener to understand the meaning of the words, aside from this, they would also hear the point of the pauses, which would arouse the inner intent of the meaning of the words.

"The Rebbe would say "Elokai" as though it was written with a *zakeif gadol*, with a pause, [then he would continue] "neshama sh'nosata bi t'hora hi," pause, "Ata barasa," pause. And they clearly and specifically heard what is meant by saying "Elokai," what is meant by "t'hora," and what is meant by "Ata barasa."

### SAYING "ELOKAI NESHAMA" EMOTIONALLY

When the Rebbe Rashab would say the morning blessings and reached "Elokai neshama," he would say the word "Elokai" and then pause, and then he would continue with, "neshama sh'nasata bi."

His emotional state was apparent and audible when he said "Elokai." (6)

### THE FIRST STEP WITH MESIRUS NEFESH

My father-in-law [i.e., the father-in-law of the Rebbe Rayatz], R' Avrohom Schneersohn, a"h (7) of Kishinev would say about the Rebbe Rashab: For him, the first step from "Modeh Ani" is with *mesirus nefesh*! (8)

### THE "GREATNESS" IN THE AVODA OF THE REBBE RASHAB

In general, Shabbos for the Rebbe Rashab was permeated with *avoda*, and even though to say such a thing about the Rebbe is seemingly not positive [i.e., because for a Rebbe it's a "small matter"], still the *inyan* of *avoda* is great.

### SAYING SHNAYIM MIKRA AND ECHAD TARGUM

The Rebbe Rashab would read the Torah twice and the Targum once on Erev Shabbos, but on Shabbos morning he would read the last section (*Shvii*) again, as well as the Haftora. (9)

When there were two Haftoros, he would read the Haftora of the *sidra* on Erev Shabbos, and on Shabbos he would say the second Haftora, "*machar chodesh*" and the like.

### BEING MAAVIR SIDRA WITH TEARS

I once saw my father while he reviewed the *sidra*, which was Lech Lecha, and when he said the verse, "And Hashem said to Avrom, *lech lecha*," he cried (tears of joy) from the G-dly sweetness. (10)

#### Notes:

1) *Reb Shmuel Levitin added that the Rebbe Rayatz said my father, "Rabbeinu nishmaso Eden"*

2) *in Seifer HaNigunim, vol. 1, is the niggun Kaddish of R' Levi Yitzchok, niggun #26. And in vol. 3 is the niggun, "Ana Emtzaacha" of R' Levi Yitzchok, niggun #213 (see about this niggun in Seifer HaSichos Toras Sholom p.*

71).

3) *See also Seifer HaSichos 5701, p. 28 5702 p. 85*

4) *See also sicha Leil Noach 5707 – see box*

5) *Shabbos 12a*

6) *See also Seifer HaSichos 5703 p. 103 – see box*

7) *The son of Maharin (a son of the Tzemach Tzedek) – see about him in Seifer HaSichos 5680-87 p. 81, note 55*

8) *See also Seifer HaSichos there p. 103*

9) *This paragraph is also in the HaYom Yom for 4 Teives with slight changes. And in the sources (editions 5753) the Rebbe notes: Shabbos Parshas Noach 5703 Brooklyn – and that's from the sicha here, and see also Seifer HaSichos 5702 p. 27*

10) *See also Seifer HaSichos 5702 there p. 29. Sichas Motzaei Shabbos Parshas Chayei Sarah 5692 (which will be printed G-d willing in Seifer HaSichos 5692).*

### IMPOSSIBLE TO TOLERATE THE HASKALOS OF THE TAILOR

Regarding the Rebbe's Rashab checking his pockets every Erev Shabbos and how once there was the idea of his having clothing without pockets, which he didn't want, in the *sicha* it doesn't say who had this idea. Apparently what was meant was what was related in the *sicha* of Leil Parshas Noach 5707 at the meal (which will be publicized soon, G-d willing):

The Rebbe Rashab would check his pockets Erev Shabbos and once the tailor sewed and closed up the pocket, [seemingly because he wanted to save the Rebbe the bother of checking his pockets, as is apparent from the continuation of the *sicha*].

The Rebbe said: It's enough that we need to tolerate those who have *haskalos* in the revealed part of Torah and *haskalos* in *p'nimius ha'Torah*, must we also tolerate the *haskalos* of a tailor!

# THE CHASSID WHO FOUGHT TO BRING THE GEULA

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN LEVIN

*He epitomized “swimming against the current,” from early childhood to his ceaseless struggle to proclaim the Rebbe as Melech HaMoshiach – stories and remembrances from the colorful mosaic of the life of the chassid, Rabbi Avrohom Pariz, a”h. \* Part 2 of 3.*

*(Continued from last issue.)*

## HISKASHRUS, HEART AND SOUL, TO THE REBBE MH”M

The Rebbe MH”M arrived in the U.S. in 5701 (1941), and R’ Avrohom became strongly *mekushar* to him. R’ Avrohom, who had closely followed every move of the Rebbe Rayatz, immediately noticed the special relationship the Rebbe had with his father-in-law, and he tried incessantly to get close with him and to benefit from his counsel.

The ties that began to form in those days between R’ Avrohom and the Rebbe were very special and they remained mostly a secret. When R’ Avrohom was once asked what was the secret of his personal connection to the Rebbe while still in the lifetime of the

Rebbe Rayatz, he said that he worked for a few years in the Rebbe’s presence for a few hours a week in the same room, and this is how the ties that lasted many years after that were formed. This joint work was done on *maamarim* and *sichos* of the Rebbe Rayatz which R’ Avrohom duplicated and distributed.

“The Rebbe would often ask me to join him on the subway to Manhattan. These trips seemed routine, but during this time the Rebbe would speak to me about many important things, especially regarding *hiskashrus*.”

After the fact, it seems that working together in one room once a week and the conversations on the subway, contributed to the extraordinary *hiskashrus* that Reb Avrohom had for the Rebbe MH”M *nasi doreinu*. Today

we know that while working together, the Rebbe gave R’ Avrohom clear guidelines as to how to transcribe the *maamarim* and *sichos* of his father-in-law and how to publish them.

## UTTER BITTUL TO THE REBBE

R’ Hartman: “His *emuna* and *hiskashrus* were boundless. With the power of his *emuna* and with the power of his awesome *bittul* to the Rebbe he would travel around the country, despite his age and great weakness. I remember that every week he would travel to give a *shiur* in *chassidus* to teachers in the school in Moshav Brosh. He would travel with buses and it was a big schlep from Petach Tikva to this out-of-the-way *moshav* that wasn’t far from Netivot.

“In Cheshvan 5728, I traveled with him to Chevron. It was after a Tishrei that was packed with events when we got the *horaa* from the Rebbe to travel in groups to all the holy sites: the Kosel, Kever Rochel, the M’aras HaMachpella, and then to all the schools of Reshet Oholei Yosef Yitzchok.

“R’ Zushe Wilimovsky (the “Partisan”) organized all these trips and visits, and since I had spent Tishrei

with the Rebbe, I was able to participate in the fulfillment of this special *shlichus*.

“On Tes Kislev I went with Grandfather, R’ Avrohom, and R’ Chaim Kogan to the Chabad school in Tanach where we made a *farbrengen* with the staff and all the students. Despite his age and weakness, R’ Avrohom fulfilled all the Rebbe’s *horaos* with *simcha* and youthful enthusiasm. He served as an example to all our young people and T’mimim.

“I spent Tishrei with him at the Rebbe. He was a guest at the home of Rabbi Shimon Goldman, who was the son-in-law of the *gabbai* Rabbi Yochanan Gordon, a”h.

“At that time it was customary to have *yechidus* twice, during the Aseres Yemei T’shuva, and before leaving for home. R’ Avrohom didn’t go, and when I asked him why, he said simply and with his genuine *tznius*, ‘I don’t want to steal the Rebbe’s precious time.’”

Throughout the years, R’ Avrohom worked on being *mekasher* more and more Jews to the Rebbe. The personal connection, without intermediaries, of a *chassid* with the Rebbe, was according R’ Avrohom, the singular guarantee to *hiskashrus*. He begged and encouraged his family and friends to write to the Rebbe.

We can see this in the many letters he wrote to his friends and family in Eretz Yisroel while the Rebbe Rayatz was still Rebbe. Here’s one of them:

“Regarding what you wrote – that I should mention (before the Rebbe) ... may Hashem protect you from all *tzaros* – I cannot do this ... You should write a *pidyon* yourself and send it directly to our father *shlita*. In general, it is certain that he (the Rebbe) constantly thinks of you, yet you should still write, each of you on your own, because the main thing is that for

us, the Rebbe should be in our minds. And when you constantly think about him, then you feel it. Sometimes you need to say a chapter of T’hillim with tears and give an inner cry from the heart, “Rebbe! Rebbe, help me!” This is the best *segula* of all, whether in spiritual things or material things, and it will certainly help in all matters.

“I gave your letter to our friend ... I saw that you wrote to him about the many *shiurim* you give. You should



have written this to the Rebbe *shlita* and you would give him *nachas*. In general you ought to write to him more frequently, especially about learning *b’rabbim* or about your doing a favor for someone.

“It seems to me that you didn’t do as I wrote to you that you should write your great thanks to *k’vod k’dushas* our father *shlita* for everything ... I ask of you, Chaya, that you see to it that

Efraim write a letter to the Rebbe about everything. After all, he is our father and we must do everything together with the Rebbe, and he will carry us in everything.”

R’ Hartman: “Grandfather kept far away from honor. I don’t remember him sitting on any daises among the distinguished people. He always sat hidden in a corner, withdrawn, quiet, thinking. When they asked him to speak about the Rebbe he would rise up like a lion. His eyes would sparkle and flash and he would demand that the young people utterly devote themselves to the Rebbe without limits.

“I once went with him to Chevron, and when we got to the “seventh step,” he said, ‘Here, in this holy place, on the seventh step facing the M’aras HaMachpella, the Rebbe Rayatz *davened* in 5689 (1929) on his visit to Chevron. I had the *z’chus* of accompanying him throughout his holy and moving visit to the Holy Land.’ I could see a renewed *chayus*, as he though he was reliving the experience.”

He would always excitedly relate the details of what the Rebbe did in various places, and he told the following about his visit to the M’aras HaMachpella:

“The Rebbe entered the M’ara alone, and when he came out we *davened* Mincha on the seventh step in front of the entrance. I stood near him and listened to his *t’filla*, to the first *bracha* – Avos until “*Ata gibor*” – which the Rebbe *davened* at great length and with the Yomim Noraim tune. The rest of the *t’fillos* were as usual.”

## THE BATTLE FOR GEULA

R’ Avrohom began his *Geula*-related activities in 5701 (1941) when the Rebbe Rayatz began disseminating the publication *HaKria V’HaKedusha*, which contained the message of a call

to *t'shuva* and *Geula*. In those days Europe was aflame and Jewish blood flowed like water. The Nazis (may their name be erased) and their eager followers butchered Jews in the tens of thousands.

The Rebbe saw the Holocaust as the *chevlei Moshiach*. In order to lighten the *chevlei Moshiach*, even a little bit, and to bring about the coming of Moshiach one moment sooner, the Rebbe publicized a *Kol Korei* to all the Jewish people under the heading, "*L'Alter L'T'shuva, L'Alter L'Geula*" (immediate repentance, immediate redemption).

The Rebbe publicized four *Kol Korei's* under this heading in his *HaKria V'HaKedusha*, in the *Morgen Journal*, and in countless letters and proclamations, thus igniting the Jewish world.

In them, the Rebbe called upon all of the Jewish people to improve their ways and to come closer to our Father in heaven without shame. "*U'va l'Tziyon Goel*" (and the redeemer comes to Zion), said the Rebbe, depends on "*U'l'shavei pasha b'Yaakov*" (and to those sinners who repent in Yaakov). Without *t'shuva*, each person can, *chalila*, be harmed by the *chevlei Moshiach*, and there's no guarantee that the enemy won't come to the New World.

R' Avrohom, to whom the fulfillment of the Rebbe's wishes was his only desire, and whose worry about the fate of the Chabad communities in Europe and in Russia in particular, and the Jewish people as a whole, was motivated to go full speed ahead in disseminating the Rebbe's message to every possible place, primarily: to bring people to action.

Aside from hanging up announcements declaring, "*L'Alter L'T'shuva – L'Alter L'Geula*," in subway cars and other public places, R' Avrohom sent letters to friends and acquaintances demanding that they internalize the Rebbe's words and

spread the message to all groups.

R' Avrohom, who was *mekushar* with every fiber of his being to the Rebbe, and who was completely immersed in the Rebbe's words, in his *sichos*, and his *maamarim*, came to the conclusion, the more he delved into every letter of the Rebbe's *sichos*, his *maamarim*, *HaKria V'HaKedusha*, and the *Kol Korei's*, that "*L'Alter L'Geula*" led to one address: 770.

R' Avrohom was certain: Melech HaMoshich, the one who would redeem the Jewish people and take them to the complete *Geula*, was none other than the Moshe Rabbeinu of the generation, "the one who stands

***"R' Avrohom didn't go, and when I asked him why, he said simply and with his genuine tznius, 'I don't want to steal the Rebbe's precious time.'"***

between Hashem and you" – the Rebbe.

R' Avrohom didn't keep this conclusion to himself. He made sure that all his acquaintances knew about it by writing them letters, breathing new life into them. He called on them to be strong, for it wouldn't be long before the Rebbe would lead us to *Geula*.

In one of his letters he wrote, after quoting excerpts from *sichos* and letters of the Rebbe, as well as excerpts from the *Kol Korei's* and *HaKria V'HaKedusha*:

"My dear brothers, you aren't reading *HaKria V'HaKedusha* properly. As its name indicates, aside from what is written therein about the *chevlei Moshiach*, and aside from there being actual prophecy there, there are articles that express 'who it is,' who our holy father *shlita* is.

"My dear brothers, take note of all these things, and take note of who is saying these things (a man whose nature it is to say *brachos* and good things to every Jew, whoever he may be, especially good about Klal Yisroel, which is what he is all about. And now, it's close to four years that he's saying these harsh things, *zol er zain gezunt*) and these things are literally the *d'var Hashem*. The entire world can



R' Avrohom Pariz with heads of security, putting up a fence around Kfar Chabad following the massacre in the vocational school in Kfar Chabad in 5716



**R' Avrohom in the orchards  
in Lud with Rabbi Zislin**

try to avoid it but the word of Hashem will endure forever, and 'all of you stand today, etc.' – today, in the very near future ...

"When I look at all the events taking place in the world, and when I look at *HaKria V'HaKedusha*, and in general, at all of the *sichos* of our holy father the Rebbe *shlita*, I see how the thunder and lightning of Mattan Torah go out to the modern world. The world today is modern, and therefore, the thunder and lightning are in such a manner that a cry will go out of 'we will do and we will hear.'

"At that time 'He held the mountain over them like a barrel,'

either here or there, and the same will be today, too. This image is right before my eyes ... you must know that immediately, in another moment, a Jew will arise with G-dly abilities, and through him will be fulfilled the eradication of the seed of Amalek forever, and so will it be. May Hashem make it happen with *chesed* and *rachamim*."

In another letter R' Avrohom writes to a friend more sharply. Apparently he had written to R' Avrohom that he had sent a letter to the Rebbe Rayatz in which he related various activities, and in the answer he received from the Rebbe, the Rebbe thanked him for publicizing "*L'Alter L'Tshuva*," and the Rebbe didn't mention "*L'Alter L'Geula*."

The *chassid* thought that perhaps one could conclude from that, *ch"v*, that a change had taken place in the Rebbe's *horaos*, and so R' Avrohom responded sharply to this. This letter is

pertinent today too, and the words speak for themselves (see box).

Years later, at a *farbrengen* on Parshas B'Shalach 5724, the Rebbe MH"M *nasi doreinu* related:

"I once went to the Rebbe [Rayatz] and he told me a *vort* about himself [about where he stood in *avoda*], (and the Rebbe paused and then continued) which was difficult to listen to. At that time a letter arrived from Avrohom Pariz ... and I said to the Rebbe, Avrohom Pariz writes such and such. The Rebbe answered, 'If I thought of myself as Avrohom Pariz thinks of me, etc.' The Rebbe did not say that Avrohom Pariz shouldn't think that way about him, and there were probably others who thought so. It's just that he wrote it, that a spark of the soul of Moshiach is within each one of us, and a spark of each of us in the soul of Moshiach..."

(To be continued.)

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# KINGSTON HOTEL

# FROM THE JUNGLES OF SOUTH AMERICA TO THE HILLS OF TZFAS

BY NOSSON AVROHOM



*The fascinating story of Yotam Klein, a young Israeli who in his search for meaning traveled through many countries and divided his time between hair-raising adventures and arduous pursuit of the Truth. Then came the turning-point in his life and today he is learning in Yeshivas Chabad in Tzfas!*

You would find it hard to pick Yotam out from among his friends. He wears the standard hat and jacket, his regular uniform. The black beard that frames his face and his refined speech, give him the appearance of a long-time Tamim, but it was a lengthy and trying path he trod before he arrived at *yeshiva*.

Yotam was born and raised on Kibbutz Geshar in the north of the country. In the best *kibbutz* tradition, he was taught to hate religion and religious Jews. He blushes as he tells about how on Pesach the children of the *kibbutz* would go on a trip to the Old City of Yerushalayim, and each time a religious Jew passed by, he and his friends would show him the bread they had and would explain how

delicious it was, especially that day.

On Yom Kippur he would ride his bike for hours with his friends. He viewed Torah-observant Jews as a group of primitive and non-intellectual people who usually wear black and have strange beliefs.

By the age of fifteen he was beginning the search for spiritual meaning in life. He started with various forms of yoga and meditation. He would often spend hours reading books about foreign philosophies and religions.

Before being drafted into the army he studied the martial arts and read up on a certain religion that taught that man must ignore his mind and intellect and relate solely to his heart's desires.

Yotam started his army service in a regular police unit in the military police. Then he switched to another unit called Sachlav, which was a new unit founded by then Prime Minister Yitzchok Rabin in order to clear out residents of Yesha from the hills. After a little over a year, he was injured due to overexertion. His knee was almost completely shattered, the cartilage was pulverized and the inner cross ligament was torn. He spent a long time in the hospital until he completely recovered.

With his army service and convalescence behind him, he continued to read voraciously about various cults around the world. He especially liked reading a book published by a priest of some bizarre sect in India. He also took a course on healing that was given in Tiveria.

He worked at various jobs connected with orchards and vineyards, an area in which he had become an expert as a child growing up on a *kibbutz*. The job he held the longest was managing a vineyard at a *yishuv* in the south of the country, where he spent half a year.

He pursued his search for the Truth. He became engrossed in a number of books that he had gotten from a fellow employee, a series of



books called Kerion in which it says that the Jewish people are the Chosen People. At the end of the last volume the editor writes that there's a certain energy in the world which is the sole reason for the world's existence.

His strong desire to discover Truth strengthened his resolve to take action. He packed his bags, took a bit of money he had earned at his various jobs, and bought a one-way ticket to South America.

"I thought that maybe traveling around the world would, once and for all, help me get rid of the bizarre feeling of searching for meaning in life. I got to La Paz the capitol of Bolivia, a beautiful city 4000 meters above sea level. I was warned by the locals not to walk about much in the city because I wasn't used to the lower oxygen levels, and to get my lungs slowly accustomed to the atmosphere.

"Like a typical Israeli I decided not

*When I think of what I did at that time I shudder. I traveled through an area that was covered with swamps teeming with reptiles, snakes, and dangerous fish. It was definitely suicidal, but we called it excitement.*

to pay attention to their recommendations and to walk about the city. At night I returned to my hotel and as expected, my head began to spin. I found it hard to breathe and had coughing attacks for the next two days.

"After I felt better, I went out a little bit. I met other Israeli tourists and we went touring together. We tried doing the most adventuresome activities, which is why we went to the area called Death Road. It's an extremely narrow road carved into the side of a mountain, whose side is open to the abyss, upon which there runs two-way traffic! It was extremely dangerous. (In fact, the next day a fellow tourist plunged to his death.)

"One day we went to the Pampas, where we sailed in a wooden boat. The area had numerous attractions like catching anacondas, and hunting for the young crocodiles and piranhas that abound there. A normal person takes one look at their sharp teeth and doesn't come back there again. Today,



Yotam holding an anaconda he caught in the swamp in Bolivia

when I think of what I did at that time I shudder. I traveled through an area that was covered with swamps teeming with reptiles, snakes, and dangerous fish. It was definitely suicidal, but we called it excitement.

“On Sunday we fished for piranhas, and in the days that followed we had a long and exhausting chase after anacondas. We were successful, and we were the proud owners of a snake over 2 meters long.

“We were ready for our next adventure, catching crocodiles. That was easier, and after a few hours we had caught two crocodiles, each over two meters long. In the meantime, night had fallen and we – four tourists with two crocodiles – were drifting along in the swamp. Some minutes passed and then one of us yelled that we were going to collide with some thick vegetation. We all stood up into a defensive position (including the two of us holding crocodiles). The result was one big mess. The crocs got loose and began to thrash about. This was the first time in that period that I felt real fear. We fought with the crocs for a long time until we finally managed to toss them into the swamp. We emerged from the battle injured and exhausted and one of the guys is disfigured till this day as a result of a bite on his ear.”

Yotam continued traveling. He felt



Tamim Yotam Klein with some friends in the yeshiva in Tzfas

depressed, lacking clarity in his life. The feeling of emptiness didn't allow him peace of mind and he waited for something to happen that would change his life. When Yotam describes this period, he gets into the confused mindset he was in at that time. He sighs and continues:

“I found myself one day walking alone in search of temples and centers of various cults. I became acquainted with the lifestyles of people who dedicated their lives to strange beliefs. Today I know that some exhibits I saw in one of the temples I visited, a place called an Incan Temple, were based on Jewish concepts. I saw figures of the

four faces of the Chariot: the ox, lion, man, and eagle.

“I traveled for many months on a trip I called, ‘the Search for Light.’ The things I experienced repeated themselves regularly. I would hear about something new and unfamiliar and it managed to excite me for a while. I would imagine how my life would change as a result of the discovery, but would quickly become disillusioned and the familiar sense of emptiness would return stronger than ever.

“It was a few days before Pesach when I arrived in Lima, Peru. I had no plans to observe the holiday. The days of Pesach were no reason for me to do anything other than what I usually did. So even when some Lubavitcher *bachurim* came to the hotel and warmly invited us to join them for the *seider*, I was the only one of the many Israelis staying there who didn't plan on accepting their invitation. It was enough to see their outward appearance for me to refuse to have anything to do with them.

“The more time passed, the more my yearning for the Truth increased. Even when I managed to get myself into a positive state of mind, there was something inside me which gave me

### HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH CHABAD

The first time in his life that Yotam met Chabad was during vacation between 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. He and some friends went to the music festival in Arad and one day they saw a *mitzva* tank and some *bachurim* asking people to enter the tank and put on *t'fillin*.

“For me this was the first time I was encountering authentic Judaism.”

Yotam cannot recall whether he put on *t'fillin* or not, but one thing is for sure, this encounter left a positive impression, like a tiny island of understanding and awareness in a sea of opposition to religion.

“Today,” says Yotam with a grin, “I drive a *mitzva* tank!”

the feeling that this wasn't IT.

"In Peru I continued to visit different religious centers. I took part in an Incan festival, whose customs border on the insane. The behavior of the participants was a clear sign and warning about how far man could go if he simply did as he pleased.

"And then, a few days before returning to Eretz Yisroel, I experienced a few things that today I see as miracles that Hashem did for me in order that I discover my Judaism.

"Some friends and I went rafting in one of the most treacherous rivers in the world, replete with a strong current, tremendous drops, and lots of obstacles. The people who voluntarily float on this river are not the sanest people around.

"We were a few people in a boat and we began the route with another boat behind us with six Israelis in it. We maintained contact throughout and that's how we saw how their boat collided with a rock and turned over. They were under the water for a few seconds and we waited fearfully for

what would happen next. A guy with me yelled "Shma Yisroel..." but my ignorance was so great that I didn't even know what he was saying.

"The guys under water began reappearing, one by one, as they fought against drowning with all their might. We helped them and they managed to return to their boat and to get to the shore. Towards the end of the trip I also fell in and felt the pull of the powerful current. At a certain point I saw death before my eyes and at the last moment, against all odds, I had a miracle, and my friends managed to pull me out.

"From there I flew with some friends to the northern United States. We landed in Boston and began working selling accessories and Judaica on the street. After half a year, we returned to Eretz Yisroel and each of us went his own way. I began working with children on a *kibbutz*, giving classes on yoga that I had learned while in South America."

As we speak about this period, Yotam says that it was hardest time of his life. He was as confused as ever and his soul knew no peace. One day he decided to tour in Eretz Yisroel. He took a few essentials and went on his way.

"While I was hiking far from any settled area, I used up my water. I reached a point where if I didn't drink really soon, I would lose consciousness. At this terrible time when I swung between despair and hope, I forgot everything I believed at that time and for the first time in my life I called to the Creator for help.

"Help came quickly, and after a few minutes I found a spring and I slaked my thirst. I continued hiking.

At dawn there was a racket. I figured Israeli Arabs had started an Intifada and had shown their true colors. I was near Har Tavor where I could clearly see the Arab village Devoria. I heard a tremendous noise from there and my curiosity pushed me to go and see the source of the



commotion.

“As I approached the village I saw a massive and violent demonstration. Tractors driven by enraged kids knocked down electric poles, destroyed traffic lights, and uprooted trees. Those inciting the crowd shouted anti-Semitic slogans and called for the destruction of the Jews. For me, this was the absolute negation of everything I had been raised to believe. The fantasy that I had been indoctrinated with at the *kibbutz*, that the Arabs are human beings just like us, burst.

“I’m not fearful by nature, so I was not afraid to enter the village and walk around. As I walked near a school I was greeted by a rain of rocks. I began to grow afraid. I told myself that I wouldn’t get out alive. A moment before losing all hope, help came from unexpected source. The guard there went over to the group of stone-throwers and stopped them.”

\* \* \*

“One day I decided to drop everything and to fly to India. Despite my strong feelings for Eretz Yisroel, I felt that it was too small for my ambitions and that I had to go elsewhere. I’ll never forget how on the eve of my flight a friend said, ‘Yotam, if only we found the real Truth, the clean truth with no falsehood..’

“I took a few thousand dollars with me and boarded the plane. Upon my arrival in India I began walking around the streets of Delhi, waiting for something to happen. I befriended an Indian of Arab descent who suggested I travel to his father who was in Kashmir.

“I got on a bus, and 28 hours later I arrived in Kashmir. Despite the popularity of the area among tourists, it was virtually empty because this beautiful spot had become a battlefield for the Indian and Pakistani armies and staying there was dangerous.

“My friend’s house was built on water. You got to it by boat. I stayed

there for a few weeks, devoting hours every morning to meditation.

“Despite the scenic beauty and the calm atmosphere among the people, I planned on leaving and traveling to my next destination, but I left earlier than planned.

“One night I went for a walk on a mountain range near the place I was staying. From the distance I could see some military vehicles approaching the house I was living in. Armed soldiers surrounded it and I realized they were looking for me because my presence in the area aroused the suspicions of Indian Intelligence. Maybe I was spy!

I remained in the mountains until the soldiers left. It was obvious to me that I had to leave, and that’s what I did.

“It was an open miracle that they came while I was out of the house, and that I noticed them from the distance and was warned not to return to the house.

“When I returned to Eretz Yisroel, I began reading a book which explained Tibetan philosophy. This was attractive to me and I took a great interest in it. I studied it assiduously

for a few weeks and felt terrific. I felt I was achieving that spiritual perfection I had been yearning for. The address of the cult was written on the back cover. It was in Maine.

“I flew to the U.S. and after a few weeks of working at various jobs I went to the central bus terminal in Chicago in order to travel to a new job. As I waited for my bus, I asked myself, what do I want, employment or Truth? I decided it was Truth that I wanted and I decided to forget about work. I changed my ticket and arrived in Maine.

“I went to the address I remembered from the book and arrived in a town in the northern part of the state. It was a pretty spot with amazing scenery, and a fascinating collection of people. The people wore strange and colorful clothing and they all lived among plots of cedar trees and alongside flowing streams.

“When I got to the address I was looking for I found a house surrounded by fragrant trees. I sat down on the ground and was terribly disappointed because I had expected to find people studying the philosophy I had liked and all I saw



Yotam and friends, past and present



Tamim Yotam Klein with some friends in the yeshiva in Tzfas

were trees. I began crying out to G-d for help. I don't know exactly who I was crying out to, but the words came from my heart.

"Time went by and I found myself in a tiny town in the state of Washington where I met some Israelis and we rented an apartment together. My friends left for work in the morning and I stayed home alone. I preferred doing my meditation and yoga. Every morning I would get up early and see a guy in the other room putting on *t'fillin*, wearing a *tallis*, and reading the *Shma*. This was all new to me and I enjoyed hearing the words of his *t'fillos*.

"At that time I sent an e-mail to an Internet site whose operators believed in Tibetan philosophy. In the answer I got they wrote that I could come and meet them in Miami. I was thrilled, and whoever I met heard me excitedly exclaim that I was going to find the Truth. I found out that one of their group was an Israeli and this increased my hopes that I would be able to join them."

A few days later, Yotam was supposed to be in Miami immersed in a false philosophy (after he became a *baal t'shuva* he found out that it was actual idol worship). His travel plans were arranged.

***"For no logical reason, I decided to make a brief detour to my friend who lives in New Jersey. He was traditional and a mekurav of Chabad."***

"Despite that, for no logical reason, I decided to make a brief detour to my friend who lives in New Jersey. He was traditional and a *mekurav* of Chabad, and I met him when we traveled together in Peru. It was the beginning of Tishrei and on Yom Kippur everybody went to *shul*, even those whom I knew to be far from religious observance. I politely refused to join them. When they tried to pressure me I told them that a *beis kneset* is not the ideal place for me and there was nothing more to discuss.

"While they all *davened* Maariv in *shul* Yom Kippur night, I sat on the

couch at home, thinking about everything that had transpired in my life thus far. The present and past swirled through my mind and I felt I was at a crossroads as to the next stage in my life. I became agitated and I wanted to unburden my heart somehow, so I spontaneously decided that I would fast this Yom Kippur. This in no way meant, however, that I would join the *davening* in *shul*.

"I glanced around the room and noticed a *siddur* that was lying on a pile of CDs. After making sure nobody was home, I took the *siddur* and opened it to the first page. I read the first words that appeared there, '*Modeh ani lifanecha, Melech chai v'kayam ...*'"

"Although I had never seen these concepts before, I read the words easily and naturally. The very idea of '*Modeh ani,*' and '*Melech chai v'kayam,*' instantly revealed the point of faith that was hidden in me and flooded me with a powerful torrent of emotions of thanks to Hashem for the very fact that I was alive.

"I burst into uncontrollable tears, tears mixed with pain for the past and joy for the future. I felt as though Hashem took cognizance of my situation and was giving me a message: 'Despite everything you've done, I believe in you.' I felt that all the junk I had immersed myself in had instantly blown away.

"Every additional word that I read in the *siddur* only added another level in my burning *emuna* in Hashem which suddenly suffused me. When I got up to the part of the *Akeidas Yitzchok*, I couldn't go on. The intensity of my emotions completely paralyzed me. My eyes were swollen with tears.

"When my friends returned from *shul* they saw me sitting silently on the couch, in a turmoil. They noticed my state but didn't say a word. When I recovered my composure, I stood up and dropped a bomb to my friends. I said, 'I'm returning to Eretz Yisroel and entering a *yeshiva*.'

"If not for the signs of my recent tears, they would have thought I was making a bad joke. Just a few hours ago I had refused to go to *shul* on the holiest day of the year, and now I was taking the extreme opposite tack and announcing my intentions to enter a *yeshiva*!

"It took them time to digest what I had said and each one reacted differently. I stood firmly and didn't respond to the sarcastic remarks they exchanged among themselves about what had happened to me.

"I had made my decision and I followed through on it. The day after Yom Kippur I bought a ticket home and planned on attending *yeshiva* after the holidays.

"On Sukkos I visited Beit Shaan, which is near where I live, and as I walked down the main street I met

**"When I got up to the part of the Akeidas Yitzchok, I couldn't go on. The intensity of my emotions completely paralyzed me. My eyes were swollen with tears."**

Rabbi Yaakov Shmuelewitz, the *shliach* there. When I saw him I decided that this was the time to begin putting my plan into action. I asked him if I could get *mezuzos* through him. He said yes and he invited me to his *sukka*, where

some men were sitting. One of them was Rabbi Yisroel Ziden from Beitar Ilit.

"I told them my story in brief and when I finished, R' Ziden warmly invited me to spend the next Shabbos with him. That Shabbos was my first experiment with the Jewish way of life. It was authentic and it made a powerful and unforgettable

impression on me. I was amazed by the atmosphere at the Shabbos table and I thirstily drank in the *divrei Torah* and the various explanations that the family members related. It was in this house that I learned my first concepts in Judaism and *chassidus*. The *t'fillos* that I *davened* that Shabbos were characterized by the usual excitement and enthusiasm one has when experiencing something new, and were a relief to my weary soul."


\* \* \*

Yotam went to the Chabad *yeshiva* in Ramat Aviv and after a long period of intensive study he decided, with the recommendations of his *mashpiim* and friends, to transfer to the *yeshiva* in Tzfas.

As a true Chabad *chassid*, Yotam wasn't satisfied to work solely on himself, so he began to be *mekarev* his sister who also became a *baalas t'shuva* and a Lubavitcher. Now both of them seek a way of bringing the light to their friends at the *kibbutz* in which they were born and raised.

Most recently a breach was made in the wall of resistance and every few Shabbosos, T'mimim from the *yeshiva* in Tzfas go to the *kibbutz* and run Shabbos meals for the youth there as well as other activities.

Yotam's return to Judaism served as an impetus to other young people his age who experienced a similar life-story, to return to *Yiddishkeit*. Quite a few of them have promised to participate in various Jewish programs that will soon be available outside the *kibbutz*.



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# SHOCKED TO SEE LUBAVITCHERS AT A SECRET BASE

BY SHNEUR ZALMAN BERGER

*Upon an explicit order from the Rebbe, Lubavitcher chassidim dispersed to all the fronts during the Yom Kippur War, met thousands of soldiers, and brought them a message of faith and encouragement. \* Thirty years since the Yom Kippur War. \* Four chassidim describe their adventures under fire.*

## WAR BREAKS OUT – CHAOS!

It was a dire situation. The Egyptian and Syrian armies attacked Israel on Yom Kippur 5734 (1973). Two hundred Egyptian planes burst over the Israeli armed forces in Sinai and attacked them mercilessly. Simultaneously, commando forces began to cross the Suez Canal and put up bridges which additional units subsequently crossed.

One hundred thousand Egyptian soldiers and hundreds of tanks faced the Israeli soldiers, who were few in number. The reports of heavy losses of Israeli soldiers who were on the eastern side of the Canal, known as the Bar Lev Line, quickly streamed in.

The Syrian attack was no less

calamitous. The assessment that was made the day after Yom Kippur was terrible and frightening. The Syrian forces had begun a massive attack in the Golan while Syrian tanks were streaming through the foothills of the Golan towards the Kineret and surrounding *kibbutzim*.

It was no surprise then, that on the third day of fighting, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan appeared before a press conference and he described the catastrophe that “can lead to the destruction of the third temple,” as he put it. The reporters were shocked and some burst into tears.

Israelis were stunned and depressed. Their soldiers were sustaining huge losses and the existence of their land was in jeopardy.

At the height of this crisis, the Rebbe introduced a special campaign in which he asked that every soldier be reached and be brought a message of hope and faith. This instruction included distributing coins for *tz’daka* as well as putting *t’fillin* on with the soldiers, and cheering them up.

It was amazing to see the Rebbe now, when before the war he had screamed, time and again, about the looming danger and asked that children be gathered at holy sites to say T’hillim. As soon as the war began, the Rebbe made sure to raise the morale of the soldiers and to send them a message of encouragement.

The war, which began on Yom Kippur 5734, officially ended only on 10 Sivan 5734 (8 months!). Throughout all these months, Lubavitcher *chassidim* covered the land from Pa’id on the other side of the Suez Canal until the Golan Heights in the north.

We interviewed four men: Rabbi Asher Solomon, Rabbi Eliezer Lichtenstein, Rabbi Yosef Hartman, and Rabbi Avrohom Meizlich, who related their memories and personal impressions of this special campaign.

**R’ Lichtenstein of Yerushalayim:** As you know, already back in the summer





of 5733, the Rebbe said we should do special activities with children, repeating over and over the verse in T'hillim 8:3, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You founded strength, etc., to still the foe and avenger." Naturally, no one understood the reason for this. Everybody became smart *after* the war broke out. Then we realized that the work we did in the summer, in which I took part, was to prevent the war.

We went out already at the beginning of the war. There was a man by the name of Yochanan Cherwin, *a"h*, an American Jew who was not a Lubavitcher, but he was a friend of ours and he volunteered to transport me and other T'mimim from Toras Emes in Yerushalayim to the army camps in the Jordan valley and in the North. During Chol HaMoed we went to a number of hotspots. Wherever we went, we cheered up the soldiers and had them take the *arba minim*.

Every morning I filled the trunk of the car with cookies and bottles of *mashkeh*, and sets of *arba minim*, and we went to raise the spirits of the soldiers.

### THE COMMANDER WAS AMAZED

At the beginning of Cheshvan we got the order from the Rebbe to reach all soldiers on the frontlines, as well as those behind the lines, in order to encourage them. Lubavitchers from all over the country participated, and we distributed booklets with words of encouragement that the Rebbe said and wrote during the war. They also gave out coins for *tz'daka*, put *t'fillin* on with the soldiers, drank *l'chaim* with them, and replaced the despair that was so prevalent in those days, with *simcha*.

Indeed, the depression at that time was enormous. Reports of losses came one after the other. Even the Air Force, that had proven itself in the Six Day War, was unsuccessful in penetrating

the wall of Anti-aircraft missiles, and many pilots fell.

The Rebbe's *mivtza* was complicated. First of all, many of Anash were themselves called up to the frontlines. The national coordinators, Rabbi Meir Friedman and Rabbi Nachum Cohen, were called up. In addition to which, the entire *mivtza* was done under fire!

The offices of Tzach on Tzefania Street in Yerushalayim were the headquarters for this important campaign, under the direction of Rabbi Asher Solomon. Although he was called up to fight at the front in the early days of the war, he was released right after Sukkos, and that is when he volunteered to run the "Chabad front."

**Rabbi Asher Solomon:** Every day, groups of *chassidim* went out in military vehicles to visit army camps and bases that were scattered on distant fronts. We were responsible for the area of Yehuda and Shomron, and also operated in the Jordan Valley and in the South.

On Chanuka I was called up again, but this time I went as a chaplain and as assistant to the officer in charge of the staff that handled events and Judaism in the Rabbanut. In this position I could accomplish a great deal. I organized evenings on Judaism run by Lubavitchers from Yerushalayim and Kfar Chabad, and I coordinated things with commanders of bases and camps.

I was not able to remain in the office a lot, and sometimes I went with the others to the frontlines to boost morale.

Rabbi Yisroel Glitzenstein, then a young bachur, was one of the main workers in Yerushalayim who worked on this Yom Kippur War campaign. He would travel all the way down South, until Eilat.

One day he arrived at the room of a commander of an important camp and asked the secretary for permission

to put *t'fillin* on with the commander. The secretary refused, saying he was in the middle of an important meeting.

Glitzenstein, who was enthusiastic about this *mivtza*, opened the door without permission, went directly to the commander, and suggested he put on *t'fillin*. Everybody present rolled up their sleeves. Before Glitzenstein left, the commander laughed and said, "If you have such courage, why not start a *yeshiva* on the other side of the Suez Canal?"

**Rabbi Eliezer Lichtenstein:** We

*The army wasn't properly prepared, and the soldiers, who had fasted all day, hadn't had a chance to eat or drink anything after the fast went out. The drink we brought them was really hatzalas nefashos.*

traveled great distances to reach all the army camps. Wherever we went we brought encouragement with us. The spirit behind this campaign was "the Partisan," R' Zushe Wilimovsky, *a"h*. Every day he went to Yerushalayim in order to be with us. He always said, "With this *mivtza*, there's nothing like Yerushalayim." He didn't say it "just like that"; he said it because in Yerushalayim they worked extremely hard throughout that period of time.

There were times that the Rebbe

said that coins should be distributed to the soldiers. We got these instructions during broadcasts of *farbrengens*. That very morning, as soon as the banks were open, I went to a worker who was a friend of mine and within half an hour, I was stocked with new coins which we later distributed to the soldiers.

On the way to the larger encampments, we stopped at the makeshift camps that were scattered along the road. Apparently, during the course of the war, the senior command had planned for all sorts of serious eventualities, which is why they prepared temporary army camps all over the place.

There was also fear that Jordan would join the war as it did during the Six Day War. We learned about this when we traveled in the Valley, and kept encountering soldiers who were digging deep bunkers. The army mined the entire Valley road with explosives in the event of an unexpected attack.

As time went on, we visited the most distant and even secret camps. I remember that in one of the places we met the central commander, Mr. Rechavam Ze'evi (may Hashem avenge his blood), and he asked in amazement, "How did you get here?" We told him that when the Rebbe says to reach every soldier, we follow orders to the letter.

Throughout the war, we organized many Evenings with Chabad, and they were very successful. Many soldiers who had fought terrible battles and had seen horrifying scenes were constantly on call and were far from home, and suddenly *chassidim* came to bring *simcha* and dance with them. At a time like that, *neshamos* were more open than usual and the spiritual thirst was great.

## THE COMMANDER SALUTED THE SOLDIERS

**Rabbi Eliezer Lichtenstein:** For



Yud-Tes Kislev we organized a special program at which R' Tzvi Greenwald was going to speak. The surprise entertainment was a "wonder boy" who had recently left the Soviet Union, none other than R' Sholom Yaakov Chazan, who was a *talmid* in Toras Emes and is presently one of the editors of *Beis Moshiach*. He was going to sing for the soldiers.

A few hours before the event, we were told that R' Chaim Gutnick, *a"h* [see obituary about him in this issue], who was serving as a chaplain in the

Australian army, had come to Eretz Yisroel. We invited him to speak for the soldiers.

I arrived with a group of people along with R' Gutnick, R' Greenwald, and Yankel Chazan. The soldiers were greatly impressed by the Australian rabbi with epaulets signifying high rank on his shoulders.

It was perfectly silent when R' Gutnick prepared to address the men. He told them how he seeks out the Jewish soldiers in the Australian army and speaks to them about Judaism.

Towards the end of his speech he said that as a high officer, every day many soldiers saluted him. "Now I feel the need to salute you, since you are fighting for Eretz Yisroel and Am Yisroel."

The soldiers applauded and were taken aback by the Australian officer who saluted *them*, lowly soldiers.

When R' Gutnick was done, Yankel Chazan sang and then R' Greenwald gave a terrific talk. Throughout the evening, it was as if the soldiers were in a different world. They heard words

of *chizuk* and they sang and danced.

## HOT COFFEE BEFORE GOING OUT TO WAR

**Rabbi Hartman:** The work we did in the South left from Nachalat Har Chabad. We started it spontaneously. It was Motzaei Yom Kippur and my wife boiled a big urn of water and prepared hot drinks, which we brought to the nearby army camps. As you know, at the beginning of the war it was chaotic. Most of the soldiers had fasted on Yom Kippur and most of them were called up on Yom Kippur without being able to take provisions. The army wasn't properly prepared, and the soldiers, who had fasted all day, hadn't had a chance to eat or drink anything after the fast went out. The drink we brought them was really *hatzalas nefashos*.

The next day we distributed *sifrei T'hillim* and *T'fillas HaDerech*.

The things we saw were awful. The chaos was immense. The roads throughout the entire area were blocked by semi-trailers that carried armored tanks and other military equipment on their way to the front.

Everybody knew the war was the worst ever. The soldiers who had been called up and who had not yet reached the front, heard what was happening there, and naturally, they were terrified. We brought them strength and encouragement before they left for the front. Together with my two sons and some other residents of Nachalat Har Chabad, we put *t'fillin* on with the soldiers and cheered them all on.

During Sukkos we brought the *arba minim* to the soldiers and on Leil Simchas Torah we organized Hakafof in the hall of the local sports center for all the soldiers in the area.

Two months later, before Chanuka, I was called up and was sent to the Sinai as a lecturer, by the military Rabbanut. Our work was coordinated in the *yeshiva* that was set up on the other side of the Canal. The religious

soldiers learned there and from there we went to lectures throughout the area.

By that time there was a partial ceasefire and there were negotiations with the Egyptians about the future. I remember that at a certain point Intelligence information said that the Egyptians were getting ready to break the ceasefire by sending in chemical weapons. So all the soldiers prepared gas masks and were ordered to shave.

Based on the Rebbe's instructions at

that time, I did not consent to shave, but kept scissors in my pocket in order not to defy the commanding officers, and this was also per the Rebbe's instructions.

"While I was in the army I lectured throughout the area of the southern front about our rights to Eretz Yisroel and various topics that pertained to the laws of warfare."

## THE COOK WHO CHANGED HIS PERSPECTIVE

### PRINTING A TANYA IN PA'ID

In middle of the war, the Rebbe gave surprise instructions to Rabbi Shloimke Maidanchik, then director of Vaad of Kfar Chabad, to print a *Tanya* and a *siddur* in the Pa'id district. This area was packed with army camps and was on the other side of the Suez Canal.

"Rabbi Chadakov called me and told me to print the *Tanya* and *siddur* in Pa'id. I didn't ask why, and he didn't tell me."

R' Shloimke left Kfar Chabad with a group of *chassidim*, among them R' Nissan Mindel, the Rebbe's secretary who was staying in Eretz Yisroel at the time and wanted to join the group. Also R' Manny Wolf, and the man in charge of the technical details, R' Shmuel Rivkin.

"We traveled a long way until we got to the front. We passed many dead Egyptians on the sides of the roads, as well as abandoned, blackened tanks and military vehicles. In those days, it was chaos in the Sinai, and we traveled unhindered by the military.

"When we arrived at Pa'id, we met with Arik Sharon, who became famous for his bravery after he crossed the Canal. We explained to him that we had come to support him and the troops by printing the *Tanya*. He was very touched and happily gave his consent. I knew we didn't need any more approval to stay in the area and print once Arik had given us the okay."

The *Tanya* and *siddur* were printed at a supply base overseen by the *chassid* Rabbi Tzvi Lipsker, *a"h*, of Petach Tikva, who helped with the printing and technical support.



(From R. to L.) R. Nissan Mindel, secretary of the Rebbe MH"M, R. Tzvi Lipsker, and R. Shlomo Maidanchik



R' Yosef Hartman on Mivtza T'fillin in the Sinai Peninsula

When the war broke out R' Meizlich was a teacher of twelfth grade in the vocational school in Kfar Chabad. On Chanuka he went on *mivtzaim* in Sinai together with students from the school.

**Rabbi Meizlich:** We were on a high with holy energy. We went by public transportation to the Sinai. Some of the *talmidim* went to the various military positions on their own and gave out coins. They weren't ashamed of their young age. On the contrary, they entered large army camps and got permission to speak to the soldiers. They stood on boxes and talked about Chanuka and then gave out coins.

The trip was supposed to last a few days. The *talmidim* slept on a bench at the temporary parking lot that Egged had put up during the war. The next day they continued working as though they had slept soundly in their own beds.

For the second time I flew with a few students to the Refidim camp and from there we went in a command car

to army camps on the front. When we got to one of these camps, it was in the middle of lunch. We were taken to the officers' mess hall to eat.

When we were seated, they served us cooked food that wasn't under meticulous *kashrus* supervision. I sat and thought about what to do, when suddenly, the head chef invited me into the kitchen. "What can you eat? Cheese? Bread? You're from Chabad and I'll give you anything..."

In the meantime, the *talmidim* waited for me in the dining room. One of them heard what the cook said and he said to me, "Until today, when they asked me where I learn, I told them at ORT in Ramleh because I was ashamed of Chabad. Now I see that being a Chabadnik is a source of great pride."

#### HE PROPHESED AND KNEW WHAT HE PROPHESED!

During the Yom Kippur War the Rebbe spoke on many occasions about the war on various fronts. The Rebbe encouraged going out to put *t'fillin* on

with soldiers, and among other things the Rebbe said that the army must help those who come to put on *t'fillin* instead of sending entertainers and singers to the front.

In a *sicha* that was said on 13 Tishrei, the Rebbe explained in a most unusual way that there are times when a *navi* doesn't know what he is prophesying, and then the Rebbe said that the *hisorerus* of, "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You founded strength," which he had urged in the summer, was for the war! For the great *hisorerus* began at the sudden *farbrengen* on Erev Shavuos.

As a follow-up to the *farbrengen*, the Rebbe sent a number of "general letters" during the summer, in which he underscored the importance of having special programs with children

*Glitzenstein opened the door without permission, went directly to the commander, and suggested he put on t'fillin. Everybody present rolled up their sleeves. Before Glitzenstein left, the commander laughed and said, "If you have such courage, why not start a yeshiva on the other side of the Suez Canal?"*

(all the letters are printed in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 27).

Then the Rebbe *farbrenge*d on Yud-Beis Tammuz, a *farbrengen* that Zalman Shazar attended. At that *farbrengen*, the Rebbe spoke a great deal about the need “to still the foe and avenger.” At a *yechidus* with Shazar, immediately after the *farbrengen*, Shazar asked the Rebbe why he was speaking so much about “to still the foe and avenger” and the Rebbe didn’t answer but looked at Shazar somberly as tears fell from his eyes.

It should be noted that already back in the winter of 5733, the Rebbe had sent two special letters to the Israeli soldiers, which was unusual. The first letter was for Chanuka and the second letter was for Purim (the letters are printed in *Igros Kodesh* vol. 27, p. 262 and on, and p. 285 and on), in which the Rebbe spoke explicitly about war and the role of soldiers, etc.

At the Yud-Tes Kislev *farbrengen* of 5734, the Rebbe spoke about war. In one of the *sichos*, the Rebbe explained that in order to vanquish the enemy you need a secret weapon, but if the enemy discovers the secret weapon, then he can use it, too. Therefore, *t’fillin* must be put on with the soldiers, for this is a weapon the enemy doesn’t recognize and can’t use, because the enemy are *goyim*, and even if they put on *t’fillin*, they do not perform a *mitzva* thereby.

The secret weapon proved very effective. Chabad *chassidim* had tremendous success in the *mitzva* of the Yom Kippur War, which they waged according to the Rebbe’s instructions. The Israeli army sustained heavy losses, but in a miraculous way they managed to turn the tide and went from the position of underdog to victor. They crossed the Canal and conquered the Sinai while inflicting heavy losses on the Egyptians.

May all our enemies, Hashem’s enemies, be destroyed.



Mass *Mivtza T’fillin* with soldiers at outposts in the Sinai

### GENERAL SHARON SENDS A NOTE TO THE REBBE AND ASKS FOR MERCY

With the outbreak of the war, Ariel Sharon went right back to serve in the army. He had been a general in the reserves. Sharon was appointed a commander of an armored division, which operated in the Sinai Peninsula, the battle that proved to be the turning point of the war with the crossing of the Suez Canal.

In a meeting which took place between members of Aguch, led by R’ Shlomo Maidanchik, and the prime minister on the night of Shushan Purim 5763, it was discovered that in the first days of the war Sharon had sent a note to the Rebbe in which he asked for mercy in light of the terrible situation.

The Rebbe sent his blessings via a *shliach*, and the *shliach* himself, the mekubal Rabbi Yitzchok Ginsberg of Kfar Chabad, tells us what happened:

“I went to Ariel Sharon on a *shlichus* from the Rebbe. During the Yom Kippur War, I went right up to the frontlines in order to give a *bracha* to Sharon. The Rebbe’s *bracha* was, “*Ein lecha adam sh’ein lo shaa*” (there is no man whose time doesn’t come).

I arrived in the middle of a battle and I could see that Sharon hadn’t slept in days, yet he was in good spirits. I gave him the Rebbe’s *bracha* and the next day the turning point in the war began. It was Sukkos, when on the morning of victory, I gave him the *arba minim* and he said a *bracha* on them. Till this day, I have a picture of Sharon on that day of victory as he was on his tank, holding a *lulav* and *esrog*.”

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# MAYBE THEY'LL FINALLY CATCH ON

BY SHAI GEFEN

## HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO WORLD PRESSURE?

The headlines last weekend were about the press conference of President Bush on the topic of the “settlements.” He said, “I spoke with Sharon about this, and I expressed our government’s concern, because it is important to create the conditions that will enable the establishment of a Palestinian state – when the Palestinian people decide to choose a leadership that pursues peace.” This is what the president said, while threatening what would happen if he wasn’t heeded.

It’s amazing to see the Divine providence in that every time America pressures Israel, Bush gets into more trouble in Iraq. Things are only getting worse there. A helicopter was shot down, killing 16 Americans, with over 100 soldiers killed and wounded after the end of the second Gulf War.

It was interesting to hear Bush go on to announce at that press conference that America will not pull out American troops from Iraq. It’s “measure for measure,” and maybe they will finally catch on to what we’re going through here. The Americans are getting the same treatment that we suffer from daily.

Some ask what we can do in the face of American pressure. This week, 26 years ago, on Parshas Lech Lecha, the Rebbe dealt with precisely the situation that exists today, i.e.

American pressure against building in the territories. The Rebbe learns a clear lesson from our *sidra*:

From the *pasuk*, “I give this land to your children,” we learn that although there are nations who quarrel about certain portions of Eretz Yisroel and whether they belong to the Jewish people, and they even say, “you are robbers” – there is still no need to reckon with them. Furthermore, the existence of quarrelers is temporary and only for show, but inside they really know the truth that the entire Eretz Yisroel belongs to the Jewish people.

However, in order for this to be revealed, what is required is “get up and walk the length and breadth of the land” – to settle all parts of Eretz Yisroel, especially those areas that they quarrel about.

This settling needs to be done the way it was done by Avrohom Avinu. When he walked through the land he built an “altar to Hashem,” and so in all those places there needs to be built a *beis midrash* and a *mikva*.

By doing this, they will openly see that, “I have given this land to your children,” and the nations of the world will recognize this. And even if for a short time there will be a situation of “the *goyim* gather and the nations talk...,” you must know that the truth is (that they themselves know) that this is – as it says at the end of the *pasuk*,

“*rik*” (in vain). And the fact that they act in ways of “gathering” and “talking,” is only because they want to save face.

Obviously, in order not to bring on, *ch”v*, pressure from the nations of the world, you should not do strange things like settling only in certain places, because by doing this it shows that you reckon with their complaints! There is no logical or realistic reason to differentiate between settling these few points and settling the length of the border and the territories, for the very same “agitating” and “plotting” of the nations of the world exist regardless, no matter what you do.

When they will proudly proclaim the truth there will be no difficulties since, “I have given this land to your children” – “I have already given it.”

And since “action is the main thing,” therefore actual settlement is what counts. You don’t need to loudly proclaim it, and you should certainly not pride yourself in it that “my strength and the might of my arm, gave me this wealth.” On the contrary, in addition to this not being true, it is also liable to spoil things.

You must know that you do this on the *shlichus* and with the *ko’ach* of Hashem, for by doing so there is added strength to the settlement process. In the face of this *ko’ach*, there is no place for obstacles at all, *ch”v*.

When they do this, not only will





the nations of the world not complain – on the contrary, it will bring about, “praise Hashem all the *goyim*, laud him all the *umim*, for His kindness overcame us,” to the extent that even the “*goyim*” and “*umim*” say and openly praise that “His kindness overcame us, and that Hashem’s *chesed* overpowered us,” and they will assist the Jewish people.

As can be proven from the very fact that (despite the wonder in it that is mixed with great pain) till this day they haven’t settled all parts of Eretz Yisroel. This is the opposite of proper logic, because this causes constant pressure! Due to the doubled and redoubled darkness of *Galus*, they fear and submit to “the sound of a fluttering leaf” of a non-Jew, even though normal intelligence knows that it’s only “the sound of a fluttering leaf.”

It is specifically from all this that will lead to, “I will give peace in the land and you will lie down unafraid,” and all the *brachos* that are enumerated in Parshas B’Chukosai, until “and I will lead you upright.”

While still in the final days of *Galus*, may Hashem lead each Jew (those outside Eretz Yisroel and those in the Holy Land, may it be rebuilt) “upright” – “with upright posture.”

*(From an edited Sicha, Motzaei Shabbos, Parshas Lech Lecha, 5738 (1977)).*

When we read this, we sense the truth in the Rebbe’s words. The pressure and fear in Israel are not from the *goy* in Washington, but from the sound of the fluttering leaf of Beilin and Peres and the other miserable characters who are right here at home. It would be worth our while to learn this lesson well.

### THE VICTIMS OF OSLO ARE HUNGRY

In recent days the newspapers have been reporting the wave of big strikes in the industrial sector, about the economic situation and about the hundreds of thousands of children who are below the poverty line.

Families are falling apart under the economic burden. The country is clearly in economic shambles. Everybody tries to analyze the economic crisis and to blame everyone. What a pity that no one is willing to focus on the real root of the problem: Oslo and its ramifications.

Those hundreds of thousands of people who are buckling under the economic burden are part of those who are victims of Oslo. It’s not just the thousands of wounded and their families, not just the thousand murdered (may Hashem avenge their blood) that are suffering from the Oslo Accords, but the full collapse of the economy is the price we are all paying because of those miserable Accords.

Any intelligent person should examine the cost to the State of its armed battle, in the territories handed over to the P.A., to fight terrorism. How much has this terrible war exacted from the Jewish nation? This is a war that is going on for ten years. How have the Palestinians managed to break us within and without? Any thinking person must realize that the Oslo Accords are not just a security disaster but also an economic disaster, as the Rebbe warned at the time of Camp David – that the economic situation is directly linked with the security situation. This is one of the reasons that the Rebbe adamantly opposed giving up the oil wells in Sinai, since they are our natural resources.

If we take into account all the factors that have led to economic collapse, we see that they are all a direct result of Oslo. Tourism took a nosedive, war is costing us billions of shekel, there are payments made to the families of the wounded and dead, loss of work days, despair and depression on all levels, reparations – all these are the direct consequences of Oslo.

If you remember, Peres and Rabin, and the other Oslo architects, enticed Israelis to support the Accords with

*It was interesting to hear Bush go on to announce at that press conference that America will not pull out American troops from Iraq. It’s “measure for measure,” and maybe they will finally catch on to what we’re going through here. The Americans are getting the same treatment that we suffer from daily.*

promises of a better economy. We bought their lies and supported Oslo until it all blew up, literally, in our faces.

Our explanations today must include the economic angle. We must explain to the public that the economic collapse is a direct and immediate result of those agreements. It is not a heavenly decree. We, of our own free will, conceded our most strategic possessions, and now we're suffering for it. Peres and his henchmen traveled around the world for years in order to fundraise for the P.A. They explained that this would lead to peace and economic prosperity. So those who still want to continue with agreements shouldn't come with complaints about economic decrees, because they result directly from ongoing concessions and indecisiveness.

The time has come to call a spade a spade: those affected by the collapsed economy are also Oslo victims.

### THE JEWISH ENGINEER

On Sunday November 2<sup>nd</sup>, a criminal indictment was presented to the district court in Yerushalayim against the "Jewish engineer," Chanan Yadgarov. He is accused of attempted murder, attempting to aid the enemy in war, and in manufacturing illegal weapons. He actually operated a bomb factory in northern Yerushalayim, and sold explosives for money. He was arrested as he attempted to sell explosives to an Arab undercover agent. When the agent asked the suspect if the explosives could be used on a bus, he said yes.

In the court hearing that took place lately over extending his arrest, Yadgarov said that he didn't plan on blowing up a bus, and that he has relatives who work on a bus. Yadgarov claims that he didn't know that he was selling explosives to an Arab.

A few hours before that, a ceremony for the Oslo architects took place in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv. On the dais sat the Jewish engineers who

engineered far more terror. They didn't create any homemade bombs but knowingly and with malicious intent, gave our arch enemy and his band of criminals 50,000 weapons! Not only that, but they also trained them in how to murder, and gave them the best weapons with which to do so.

Those engineers and architects have not yet been brought to justice. I don't understand what the difference is between Chanan Yadgarov, whose financial situation (he has a wife and children) led him to support himself in this unfortunate way, and that group of

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abyss from where  
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criminals who don't even apologize for what they did.

The weapons and the billions of dollars they have given to the Arabs, have thus far killed a thousand Jews and have injured thousands. The damage is indisputable! The crime is obvious to all, yet they express no regret for what they have done.

The police shouldn't be searching in nooks and crannies for Jewish engineers of terror. We've got many of those and they're not hiding. They should be brought to stand trial as traitors, for aiding the enemy during

wartime. Chanan Yadgarov is accused of the following: "Attempted murder (while Peres, Beilin and Co. are accused of *actual murder*), attempting to aid the enemy in war (while Peres, Beilin and Co. *actually* aided the enemy), and manufacturing illegal weapons.

If that wasn't enough, instead of bringing them to justice, these Bolsheviks are filing charges against embittered citizens who merely spit at the statue in Rabin Square in Tel Aviv, and even fired a young man from his job because of it.

### PERES IS RIGHT

On Motzaei Shabbos, at the memorial in Rabin Square when Peres spoke, it was difficult not to agree with him as he analyzed what happened to the Israeli Right in recent years. Peres sat and smiled, as did all the media, while the hearts of those of us who are loyal to Eretz Yisroel were pained to see how right he was, in light of the hollow Right that has become nothing more than the tagalongs of the Oslo folk.

This is what Peres said in memory of Rabin: "Those who incited against you have adopted your way, though late, and in confused hesitancy. The Right in Israel is finally in favor of a Palestinian state."

Peres, you are so right. It's hard to believe and to see how much the Israeli Right, which only eight years ago was the one to fight Rabin and de-legitimize him, has become far worse than the Left suggested back then.

It would have been only right for Benny Alon and Evette Lieberman to go to Rabin Square, bow their heads, and ask forgiveness and join the peace songs. Rabin didn't dare to propose what Lieberman and Alon in Sharon's government are doing. They are willing to abandon the Gaza Strip, to give everything away. It's painful to hear Peres say it the way it is, so painful to see the hollowness of those on the Right, their spineless posturing,

literally carrying out the legacy of Rabin plus Beilin. It makes your hair stand on end.

Peres himself, in the 70's, fought mightily for the settlement of Yesha. Whoever is ready to make the slightest concession, even if he says he's talking merely about "tactical needs," will in the end slide down the slippery slope to the abyss from where there is no return.

It is amazing how we see that whoever did not base his position on Shulchan Aruch *siman* 329, but focused on nationalism and Zionism instead, in the end agreed to give it all up. Those who agreed to sign to autonomy at Camp David, or agreed when Ichud Leumi spoke about "kantonim" in the last elections, are ready to establish a Palestinian state. They are also prepared to destroy settlements. Perhaps they are still

embarrassed, but they are on the same path that others have traveled. As the Rebbe, *manhig ha'dor* and *navi ha'dor*, said clearly and concisely to Elyakim Rubinstein: when you start with concessions there is no knowing the point at which you'll stop conceding.

May Hashem help bring the *hisgalus* of Melech HaMoshiach immediately, when there will be true peace in the land.



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## RABBI SHNEUR CHAIM GUTNICK, A”H

Rabbi Gutnick, who was one of the first Chabad settlers in Australia, was *mekushar* heart and soul to the Rebbe MH”M. For many years he served as *rav* of a *k’hilla*, and as chief rabbi of the Australian army. Rabbi Gutnick was a major figure in Australia for over four decades and served not only the Jewish community in Victoria but also contributed substantially to the wider Australian community. Rabbi Gutnick’s dedication and personal qualities earned him the respect of many in the Australian community and particularly within the Australian Jewish community. *The Australian Jewish Times* in Australia wrote, “In many ways, Rabbi Gutnick was the unofficial chief rabbi of Australia.”

He enjoyed special signs of affection from the Rebbe and was very involved in *hafatzas ha’maayanos* and being *mekarev* Jews to their Father in heaven.

### WANDERING

Rabbi Shneur Chaim, a”h, was born in the year 5682 (1922) in the Soviet Union. His father was Rabbi Mordechai Zev Gutnick, who was a *talmid* of Yeshivas Tomchei T”mimim in Lubavitch, and a *shliach* of the Rebbe Rashab and Rebbe Rayatz to Tbilisi in Georgia.

Traveling around the world was part of R’ Chaim’s growing up. When he was a boy, his father miraculously received exit visas from the U.S.S.R. and the family moved to Eretz Yisroel and settled in Tel Aviv. In 5687 (1927), his father received an offer of a rabbinic position in England. He wrote to the Rebbe Rayatz about it and the Rebbe not only agreed to it, he did everything in his power to make sure he got the position. The Rebbe sent letters to *rabbanim* and

*chassidim* urging them to put the offer into action. The Rebbe’s efforts were successful and the Gutnick family left for England.

Young Chaim absorbed an authentic *chassidic* education at home, a *chinuch* of true *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe. His father helped supply *matzos* to the Jews who lived in the U.S.S.R.

R’ Mordechai’s *hiskashrus* was so

***“That ‘sign’ was not only for the blind girl; it was for you, too. You should know that your life’s work is opening the eyes of the sightless in ruchnius, in matters of the spirit... Drop everything else now and become a full-time rabbi.”***

strong that in the summer of 5689 (1929) he traveled to Riga in order to spend time with the Rebbe Rayatz after the latter had left Russia.

R’ Mordechai died at the age of 34 on Yud-Tes Kislev 5692 (1932). This tragedy was devastating for Chaim, who was only ten years old. His mother then entrusted his education to the Telz *rosh ha’yeshiva*, who was

visiting London at the time.

He was taken by the Telz *rosh ha’yeshiva* from London to Yeshivas Telz in Europe at the behest of the Dayan Yechezkel Abramsky, where he enjoyed what he described as “his own *Gan Eden* in this world.” In Telz, they were very concerned with the proper use of one’s time. He said that the concept of wasting time even extended to listening to a Torah lecture on a topic not currently learned in the *yeshiva*. That’s how much the *yeshiva* valued time.

Some years later, his mother was remarried to the *chassid* R’ Asher Abramson, a”h, who later became chief rabbi of Sydney.

R’ Gutnick’s wanderings weren’t over. With the outbreak of World War II, many Jews fled Europe. R’ Gutnick escaped the war by virtue of carrying a British passport in Lithuania. He made his way across Siberia to the Far East and then to distant Australia, where he settled in Sydney in 1941. In attempt to resurrect the Jewish spirit in those days of darkness, R’ Gutnick could be seen at Sydney Harbor in the 1940’s seeking out Jewish refugees who had survived the war.

R’ Gutnick related:

**The Australian Orthodox Jewish Community is a relatively new phenomenon. The majority of the community came here as a result of the war. In 1941, when I came to Australia, there were only a handful of families who were *shomer Shabbos*. I had come to Australia from Lithuania, where I studied in *yeshiva* and was drafted into the army soon after my arrival.**

**My first experiences with the Australian Rabbinate after my immigration made me aware of the**

stark contrast between the Torah world of Lithuania, where I studied, and the situation in this fledgling community.

My mother, who was then in London, contacted Rabbi Hertz, the chief rabbi of the British Empire, to ask him if he could have me transferred to the army chaplaincy, where I would stand less chance of being killed. Rabbi Hertz contacted the chaplaincy in Australia, and I was called to Sydney, where I was to be interviewed by the Chief Army Chaplain.

I was sure that I was going to be asked to present a *shtickel Torah* (Torah thought) at the interview, so I decided to prepare a *shtickel* on the

Rambam. It took me a long time to find a Rambam in Sydney. Eventually I located one at the home of one of the local *rabbanim*, who had a Rambam in his library, however the Rabbi told me that this Rambam was for display purposes only. Eventually I managed to locate a Rambam, and I prepared a Torah thought as I had done in *yeshiva*.

I came to the interview and was confronted by an imposing looking gentleman with a round collar. After preliminary formalities I launched into my *d'var Torah*. The chaplain just sat there looking at me the whole time. My brow was dripping sweat, I was sure that he was going to rip my *shtickel Torah* into shreds. After twenty minutes I finished. The

chaplain turned to me and said, "Young man, it is forty years since I delved into such matters and I am afraid that I was unable to follow your thoughts."

I replied to him, "So what did I come here for?"

He said, "Walk up and down the room, I want to see if you are officer material."

I walked up and down the room in my army shorts feeling very self-conscious. I did not get the job; I was not officer material.

Judaism has come a long way since then, and we now have a flourishing Orthodox community here in Australia.



## WANTING TO START A YESHIVA

A group of *yeshiva bachurim* who had also escaped from Europe arrived in Sydney and R' Gutnick befriended them. The group wanted to start a *yeshiva* in which they could learn as they had learned in Europe, but the Jews of Sydney, including *rabbanim*, rejected the idea because they were afraid it would intensify anti-Semitism in the city. The local *k'hilla* made sure the *yeshiva* wouldn't open.

When the *yeshiva bachurim* realized there was no way they could start a *yeshiva* in Australia, they left for the United States. R' Gutnick had had the privilege in 1938 to visit the Rebbe Rayatz in Otvotsk. Now from Australia he sought his advice as to whether he should remain or join the others in heading for the United States.

The answer came in a telegram which said, “*MeiHashem mitzadei gever konanu*’ (man’s footsteps are directed by G-d) and since Divine providence led you to Australia, it’s a sign that this is your place.” The rest of the telegram said that since the war would eventually end and thousands of Jews would arrive as refugees in Australia, things should be prepared for their coming so that it would be a *makom Torah*. “*Un m’zol kenen gefinen dem Oibershten*” (and they should be able to find G-d).

R' Gutnick remained in Sydney and since the group had already left, the opening of a *yeshiva* was postponed. The Rebbe continued to encourage him and promised that when the time came, he would send *shluchim* there.

Many years later, with the blessings of the Rebbe MH”M, a Chabad *yeshiva* was opened in Australia. It was Yud-Alef Shevat 5726 (1966) when the *yeshiva* in Melbourne was founded, and R' Chaim Gutnick was one of those who founded the *yeshiva*.

## VERY TALENTED

R' Gutnick married the daughter of the *chassid* R' Chaim Chester and lived in Sydney. After a few years he moved to Melbourne.

While still young, he became an *askan* who did a great deal for *hafatzas ha'maayanos* in Australia, even though there were very few Chabad *chassidim* there at the time. In Cheshvan 5708 (1948) the Rebbe Rayatz asked him to help Rabbi Yitzchok Dovid Groner, who had arrived a few months earlier in Melbourne as an emissary of Tomchei T'mimim:

**I request that you help my dear *talmid*, Rabbi Groner, in his holy work of establishing *shiurim*, particularly for the youth, and in**

***“If you want a rabbi for Yom Kippur, come here now, even in pajamas!” I said.***

**founding schools of proper *chinuch* and to associate them with the *mosad Merkas L'Inyonei Chinuch*, which I founded.**

The Rebbe asked him to ask his father-in-law, R' Chaim Chester to help R' Groner, too. Today R' Groner runs the *mosdos* of Melbourne.

He was a *chassid* and *mekushar*, and the Rebbe reciprocated this. In a letter to his step-father written on 1 Av 5708, the Rebbe wrote, “A double pleasure. I rejoiced to hear of the elevated situation of the son of his wife, the Rebbetzin, R' Shneur Chaim and his family.”

R' Gutnick was quite talented, regarding which the Rebbe wrote in that same letter that his *kishronos* were even greater than those of his father.

## SPECIAL SHLICHUS FROM THE REBBE MH”M

R' Gutnick related an awesome tale of a *shlichus* he had from the Rebbe:

“In the early years after I had moved to Sydney, when I taught a half-day and worked in my father-in-law’s business the other half, the heads of the Jewish community in Adelaide contacted me. The Yomim Tovim were coming up and they had no *rav* in their *shul*. The chief rabbi of Sydney referred me to them, but I couldn’t see myself leaving my wife and four little children alone for Yom Tov.

“The *shul* committee asked the chief rabbi what to do, and he said, ‘R' Gutnick is a Chabad *chassid*. Why don’t you write to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and tell him that you need a *rav* for the Yomim Tovim? If the Rebbe tells R' Gutnick to go, he’ll go.’

“I quickly received a special delivery letter from the Rebbe in which the Rebbe expressed his surprise at my refusal to go and advised me to go to Adelaide for Yom Tov. The Rebbe added a note in the margin of the letter: ‘While in Adelaide, take care of the needs of the Egyptian Jews who live there.’

“I arrived in Adelaide one day before Rosh HaShana and went to the *shul*. While I was looking around, a woman came in and asked me, ‘Where is the holiest part of the *shul*?’ Surprised by the question, I pointed at the *aron kodesh*.

“Before I could say a word, she rushed outside and returned with a fifteen-year-old blind girl. They went over to the *aron* and then she left. The girl kissed the *paroches* and burst into tears. She remained there for a few minutes until the woman came back and accompanied her outside.

“I described the odd scene to the secretary of the *shul*. ‘Just ignore it. She’s one of the Egyptian Jews and

they aren't integrated into our *k'hilla*. Her parents don't come here even on Rosh HaShana, and apparently she wanted to visit before Yom Tov.'

"I tried to ignore his disdainful tone. I could hear the Rebbe's words, 'take care of the needs of the Egyptian Jews.' I went out in order to find the girl, but she had disappeared.

"On Rosh HaShana I could strongly feel the barrier between the Jews of the local *k'hilla* and the Egyptian Jews. I tried to befriend some of them and I asked them about the blind girl. I didn't get a clear answer.

"After Yom Tov she tried to contact me. The phone in my room rang and she was on the line. 'Hello, I am Betty, the blind girl...', and the call was cut off. Someone was making sure the girl didn't talk to me.

"The night before Yom Kippur, I finally managed to get her address and phone number, but each time I called and introduced myself, the conversation was cut off. I didn't give up. Despite the late hour I called a taxi and went to her house. The family members were not thrilled to invite me in.

"Please, I came all this way and I want to talk to you.' The door opened and I was invited in. I slowly gained their trust. After some time the family left the room and I gently asked Betty to tell me what was bothering her. She told a sad story.

"My family arrived in Australia last year as we fled with other Jews from Nasser. I have been blind from birth. They sent me to the only school for the blind, which is a Catholic school. The people there are very nice and my parents were satisfied since they didn't have to pay tuition. After five months the school's priest began lecturing to me about Christianity. I ignored him until he told me that I had to convert. My parents received a letter from the school which said: Due to lack of space in our school, we are

being forced to turn away students of our own faith. We will agree to continue and pay for your daughter's education on condition that she converts.

"One day I heard my worried parents talking about it. They agreed amongst themselves that they had no choice and I must convert.

"Although I know hardly anything at all about my religion, I know I am Jewish. I know there's a G-d in heaven and I decided to pray to Him that He lead me in the right direction. I also knew that the Jewish holidays were approaching, and one day before Rosh



**Chaplain in the Australian army**

HaShana I told my mother I didn't feel well and I wasn't going to school.

"When I was alone at home, I knocked on the door of a gentile neighbor. 'Tomorrow is the Jewish New Year,' I told her, 'and my parents don't go to synagogue. I'd like to ask you a favor. Please take me to the synagogue today so that I can pray. I won't stay there for more than a few minutes.' She agreed. At the synagogue I cried and prayed to G-d for help.

"We had some guests for the holiday meal and one of them

laughed at me and said, 'Betty! What did you do? A rabbi came from Sydney and he keeps asking about you. Where do you know him from?'

"I realized this was the sign from heaven that G-d sent me. I tried to contact you but my mother forbade me. She was afraid you would convince me to leave the Christian school, but I knew you would help me.'

"It was at this point that Betty's parents came back into the room and in tears they said, 'We don't want her to convert but we have no choice. We are worried about her future.'

"I promised them that I would do my best to help them. As I thought about what I could do, the Rebbe's words echoed in my ears. I called the secretary of the Jewish community and told him the story. I asked him to come to the house immediately.

"Are you crazy? It's 12:30 at night!'

"If you want a rabbi for Yom Kippur, come here now, even in pajamas!" I said.

"He showed up in twenty minutes. I told him it was vital that the Jewish community pay for the girl's tuition so she wouldn't have to convert. He wasn't too excited, but he agreed.

"The girl corresponded with me over the years. She finished high school and went to Yerushalayim to study. She married and raised a beautiful Jewish family."

A few years later I went to the Rebbe for *yechidus*. Looking at me intently, with a faint trace of a smile, his words were:

"That 'sign' was not only for the blind girl; it was for you, too. You should know that your life's work is opening the eyes of the sightless in *ruchnius*, in matters of the spirit... Drop everything else now and become a full-time rabbi."

*(To be continued.)*

## RABBI ZALMAN YOEL LEBENHARTZ, A”H

On Hei Cheshvan, Erev Shabbos, the *chassid* R’ Zalman Yoel Lebenhartz of Yerushalayim passed away at the age of 76 after a prolonged illness. R’ Lebenhartz was born in Moscow on 25 Cheshvan 5687. His father, R’ Avrohom Shmuel, was a *chassid* and *baal mesirus nefesh*. The family lived in the shadow of K.G.B. headquarters, the dreaded Lubyanka. Despite the danger, their home was a meeting place for Chabad *chassidim*. Many *chassidim* were hosted there, including those whom the authorities were seeking to arrest.

R’ Zalman absorbed a *chinuch* for *mesirus nefesh* and he never attended a Russian school. He learned Torah underground with Rabbi Shneur Pinsky, a”h, and other *melamdim*.

He married Zissel Nechinsohn of the family of Rabbi Reuven Nechinsohn, the *gabbai* of the Machnovka Rebbe, z”l. They lived for a time in Chernowitz, Ukraine in a tiny apartment in which they regularly hosted members of the Vilenkin and Katzenelbogen families.

They moved from Chernowitz to Prunza in Khirgis. During those years when he lived under an oppressive government which persecuted religious Jews in general and Chabad *chassidim* in particular, R’ Zalman was in constant contact with the Rebbe MH”M. He asked about everything, even though every letter written abroad, especially to the Rebbe, was a source of danger to him and his family.

In those years, Russian citizens were required to work in government factories – even on Shabbos. But R’ Zalman was fearless; he never worked on Shabbos or Yomim Tovim. His family relates that when he worked as a technician in a weaving factory, he made an agreement with the foreman that he wouldn’t fix machines on Shabbos. Every Shabbos he went to work so that if

government inspectors showed up he would be present, but the foreman and other workers knew that “Zama” didn’t work on Shabbos.

One Friday an important weaving machine broke. R’ Zalman worked on it for a few hours but as the hour grew late, he announced that he would continue the job after Shabbos. The foreman was furious, but R’ Zalman left without saying another word. He refused to work on Shabbos and after Shabbos the foreman called him and said, “The truth is that I wanted to kill you, because the machine was idle for an entire day because of you, but when I see your smile I just can’t harm you!”

R’ Zalman was friendly towards everyone and his smile was contagious. Thanks to his *simcha*, which was second nature to him, his life was saved.

R’ Zalman had three daughters whom he wished to educate in countries where a Jewish *chinuch* was allowed. He tried to obtain exit visas, and in the end used all his money as a bribe for a senior official if she would agree to forge documents for him of Polish citizens.

In 5717 (1957) he, his wife, and three daughters, left for Poland, where they lived for a year. Since they had forged documents it was difficult for them to get visas to Eretz Yisroel, and in the meantime they lived in a tiny town near

Krakow. He was in close touch with the Rebbe. He wrote letters in which he described his unfortunate situation and he received letters in return as well as packages of kosher food, which they lacked.

The Rebbe’s concern for his family was unique. One day, Rabbi Dovid Hollander, the chairman of the Rabbinical Council of America, came to their home. R’ Hollander performed many missions for the Rebbe in Eastern Europe, and he inquired as to their welfare.





After a year of suffering, the family moved to Eretz Yisroel and settled in Kfar Chabad. After a brief time, as per the Rebbe's instructions, they moved to B'nei Brak. R' Zalman opened a grocery store on Rechov Rabbi Akiva on the corner of Rechov Rashi.

At the end of the 60's many Chabad *chassidim* arrived in Eretz Yisroel from Russia, and with the Rebbe's encouragement, some of the families founded a textile factory in Nachalat Har Chabad as a source of employment for the new *olim* who had settled in Nachalat Har Chabad.

R' Zalman wanted to participate, and at a *yechidus* he had at that time, he asked the Rebbe whether he should sell his store so he could give his share towards the factory. The Rebbe told him: The location of your store is central and the value of the store will go up.

R' Zalman publicized this among his friends. At that time the spot wasn't considered a prime location, but a few years later everybody realized that this was prophecy since the store is smack in the center of B'nei Brak. He didn't sell the store, but he rented it.

Even though he didn't sell the store he became an active partner in the textile factory, Golgotext, which was named for its founders: "Go" for Gorodetzky, Mordechai who is today the Chairman of the Board of Nachalat Har Chabad; "L" for Lebenhartz, Zalman and his brother Yona; "Go" for Goldschmidt, Moshe. And the ending is "text" for textiles.

R' Zalman's job was to attend to auctions between government offices, because the Ministry of Security and other ministries bought large quantities of textiles from the factory. The factory, which supported many residents of Nachalat Har Chabad, was very important to the Rebbe, who instructed R' Binyamin Klein a few times to use his contacts with high government officials to assure the success of the auctions. Anybody who served in the I.D.F. no doubt has seen blankets made by Golgotext.

Aside from the factory providing a livelihood for Chabad *chassidim*, the factory was run with a *chassidic* spirit. When there were broadcasts that lasted for hours,

which made the workers late for work, the foremen didn't object and certainly didn't reduce their salaries.

The broadcasts were extremely important to R' Zalman. When he lived in B'nei Brak, he would travel by taxi in the middle of the night to Kfar Chabad in order to hear them. It was only after much effort that he was able to arrange for regular broadcasts to B'nei Brak, too.

After a number of years, when he moved to the Sanhedria neighborhood of Yerushalayim, he arranged regular broadcasts there, as well.

R' Zalman did a lot of *mitzvaim* and made sure that many dozens of people had *shmura matzos* for Pesach. Each year, before the Lag B'Omer parades, he asked the organizers to include him in the activities. Each year he accompanied the parade, even when he was already elderly.

He was a great *yerei Shamayim* and *baal chesed*. With the Rebbe's blessings, he established a *gemach* that aided rich and poor alike, as the Rebbe instructed him in *yechidus*.

"Zalman" has the letters of "lizman" (time) as the Rebbe mentions in *sichos*, and R' Zalman greatly valued his time. He was always organized, and he used every minute of his life. He dedicated a great deal of time to *shiurim* in *nigleh* and *chassidus*, and over the years started many *shiurim*.

His family could see how organized and structured he was, until his final moments. He became sick this past year and in recent months, his illness worsened. In recent days he took a sharp turn for the worst and he lay weakened and with eyes closed, suffering in silence.

Wednesday evening he asked to see Rabbi Eliyahu Fishman, a *maggid shiur* whose *shiur* he had attended for the past ten years. R' Fishman, not a Lubavitcher, came and was shocked to see what terrible shape R' Zalman was in. R' Zalman told him: The main thing is that Moshiah should come imminently.

The *rav* asked: What else do you want to tell me?

R' Zalman said simply: That's all I wanted to tell you.

R' Zalman is survived by his wife, his three daughters, his three brothers, and his sister.

***He refused to work on Shabbos and after Shabbos the foreman called him and said, "The truth is that I wanted to kill you, because the machine was idle for an entire day because of you, but when I see your smile I just can't harm you!"***