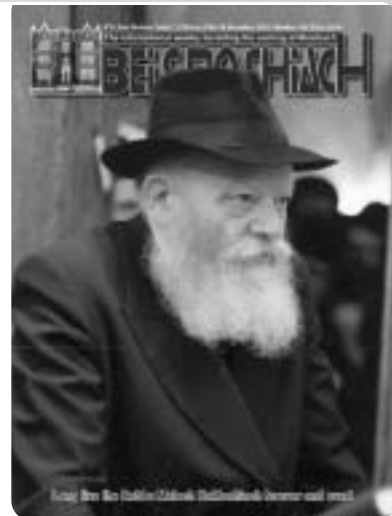


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TO ELEVATE THE WORLD

SICHOS IN ENGLISH



SHABBOS PARSHAS TOLDOS; THE 4TH DAY OF KISLEV, 5750

1. The *parsha* begins: “And these are the *toldos* [offspring] of Yitzchok.” In his commentary, Rashi explains: “*Toldos* – [This refers to] Yaakov and Eisav who are mentioned [later on] in the *parsha*.”

To explain: There are two possible meanings for the word “*toldos*”: a) offspring, and b) chronicles, i.e., what a person wrought in his lifetime. Even though the births of Yaakov and Eisav are not mentioned until a number of verses later, Rashi chooses to explain the word “*toldos*” in the context of “offspring” and thus, referring to them.

On the surface, however, the alternative interpretation appears more appropriate. The *parsha* relates some of the major events of Yitzchok’s life and then recounts his siring of Yaakov and Eisav.

The difficulty in Rashi’s interpretation is reinforced by a further point. The portion begins, “And these are” (*v’eileh*). Our Sages explain: “Whenever the Torah uses the expression, ‘And these are...’ it serves as a continuation of the previous narrative. Whenever it uses the expression, ‘These are’ (*eileh*), it negates [any connection with] the previous narrative.

According to the interpretation of “*toldos*” as chronicles, the connection between the “chronicles” of Yitzchok and the subject matter of the previous portion is clear. The previous portion describes the period of Yitzchok’s life when he lived together with his father, Avrohom, and the present portion continues, describing those events which happened to Yitzchok after he set up his own home.

In contrast, according to the interpretation of *toldos* as “offspring,” the connection between our portion and the previous *parsha* is problematic. The previous *parsha* concludes with the description of Yishmoel’s progeny. How are Yitzchok’s children including Yaakov, the righteous, a continuation of the narrative that deals with Yishmoel’s offspring, who were all wicked?

The *Midrash* explains that there is, in fact, a connection between the two narratives: Just as Yishmoel’s descendants were wicked, Yitzchok’s descendants – Eisav’s offspring – were wicked. To emphasize that there is no reference to Yaakov, the word “*toldos*” is written in a short form, without a *Vav*. Rashi, however, does not share the *Midrash*’s perspective, for it is impossible – according to the simple interpretation of the Torah – to say that

Yitzchok’s “offspring” refers primarily to Eisav. Indeed, Rashi states the opposite – “Yaakov and Eisav who are mentioned...” Therefore, the question remains: Why does Rashi choose to interpret “*toldos*” as offspring rather than chronicles?

The above difficulties can be resolved as follows: Since “And these are” refers to a continuation of the previous subject matter, and the previous *parsha* concludes with a description of Yishmoel’s descendants, it follows that the *toldos* mentioned here would refer to children. Although Yitzchok’s descendants (in particular, Yaakov) were different in nature than Yishmoel’s, they do share a common element: they are both the descendants of Avrohom – “These are the *toldos* of Yitzchok the son of Avrohom...” Thus, the narrative describing Yitzchok’s offspring is a “continuation” of the description of Yishmoel’s descendants.

In particular, the two narratives represent the fulfillment of the prophecies Avrohom was given. G-d told Avrohom that he would be “a father of many nations” (B’Reishis 17:5-6) (this prophecy does not concern Yishmoel for he had already been born) and that Sara would give birth to a son and that she will be “a mother of nations” (17:16, 19).

Afterwards, Avrohom prayed, “May Yishmoel live before You.” (17:18) G-d then assured Avrohom that Yishmoel would also become a great nation (17:20), but Sara’s child would be the one who would perpetuate his tradition. (21:12)

Thus, after the Torah recounts how G-d’s promise to Yishmoel was fulfilled, describing his many descendants, it mentions the *toldos*, offspring, of Yitzchok – Yaakov and Eisav – through whom the promise that Avrohom would become “a father of nations” – Yisroel and Edom – would be fulfilled.

Rashi’s commentary contains “the wine of the Torah,” i.e., it alludes to mystic insights. In *Or HaTorah*, the Tzemach Tzedek states that the words “And these are,” representing a continuation of the previous narrative, allude to the ability of holiness to refine and elevate the realm of *klippa*, adding them to *kedusha*. Thus, it also implies that Yaakov can elevate Eisav and lift up the sparks of holiness contained within his soul. Similarly, there is also the refinement of Yishmoel.

Based on the above, we can draw a connection between the two interpretations of the word “*toldos*” mentioned above. The most important chronicles of Yitzchok’s life began with the birth of his children. That is, although Yitzchok had already undergone the challenge of the *Akeida*, and then spent three years in Gan Eden, the essential aspect of his Divine service began with the birth of his children.

The purpose of our lives in this world is not to sacrifice ourselves to G-d or to rise up to Gan Eden, but rather, to elevate the world, to make it fit to serve as a dwelling for G-d. This is connected with the command: “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill up the world and conquer it.” This was accomplished through Yitzchok’s giving birth to Yaakov and Eisav. In particular, it was realized through Yaakov’s efforts to elevate Eisav and also through the

mission with which he was charged at the end of the portion, and in Parshas VaYeitzei, refining Lavan and Charan. This represents the ultimate purpose of a Jew’s existence – the refinement of the world, preparing it for the era when “sovereignty will be the L-rd’s,” with the coming of Moshiach.

Additionally, Yitzchok was 40 years old when he married Rivka, and 60 years old when he begot Yaakov and Eisav. The age of forty is significant, as our Sages stated, “At forty, one attains understanding,” and “After forty years, a person reaches an understanding of his teacher’s knowledge.” Similarly, the Torah associates the age of forty with “a knowing heart, eyes that see, and

We have a unique responsibility of teaching the gentile nations to observe the seven universal laws commanded to Noach and his descendants.

ears that hear.”

The Tzemach Tzedek also associates the age of sixty with the quality of understanding. The interrelation of forty and sixty can also be seen in our Sages’ statement that the final *Mem* (numerically equal to forty) and the *Samech* (numerically equal to sixty) in the *Aseres HaDibros* stood in the tablets through a miracle. Thus, forty and sixty refer to a miraculous leap forward in service. In Yitzchok’s case, this was reflected in his marriage (at forty) and his siring of children (at sixty), which reflected a leap forward in his service of refining the world, adding happiness and joy (“Yitzchok”) to the world and preparing the world

for the ultimate miracle, the coming of Moshiach.

2. The refinement of the world, as reflected in Yaakov’s refinement of Eisav, is of primary importance in the present age. Ours is the last generation of Exile and the first generation of Redemption. Therefore, we have a unique responsibility to spread good, righteousness, and justice throughout the world at large, teaching the gentile nations to observe the seven universal laws commanded to Noach and his descendants. This will serve as a preparation for the era when, “I will make the nations pure of speech and they will all call on the name of the L-rd,” and, “The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know G-d...as it is written, ‘For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover up the ocean bed.’”

This concept is related to the service of the *Nasi* of our generation, the Rebbe Rayatz, whose second name was also Yitzchok. He spread Yiddishkeit and Chassidus throughout the entire world – even in America, the lower half of the world. Also, he initiated the efforts to translate Chassidic thought into the seventy languages of the world.

[It appears that the latter efforts were motivated by a twofold intent. Primarily, the goal was to reach Jews who could not understand the texts in the Hebrew original. In addition, this translation made it possible for the gentiles to learn about the oneness of G-d, Divine providence, and subjects of the like.]

There is a special emphasis on the above this year, the fortieth anniversary of the Rebbe Rayatz’s passing, since, as explained above, forty is connected with attaining “understanding of one’s teacher’s knowledge.” Thus, this year grants us the potential for a miraculous leap forward in this direction.

These efforts can be related to the International Conference of Shluchim which was held during the previous week. The *shluchim* came from countries all over the world as

emissaries of the Jews (and in an extended sense, even of the gentiles) of those countries. In truth, they are emissaries of G-d, making the world a dwelling place for Him through influencing Jews to perform their 613 *mitzvos* and gentiles to perform the seven *mitzvos* with which they are charged.

In that sense, every Jew – and gentile for that matter – is a *shliach* of G-d. By many, however, this *shlichus* is not consciously felt. Thus, the task of those who were appointed to serve as *shluchim* is to motivate all the Jews (and gentiles) throughout the entire world to fulfill the *shlichus* with which they were charged by G-d.

In this context, the International Conference of Shluchim involved a gathering together of the representatives of the entire world for a single intent to increase and intensify the service of transforming the world into a dwelling for G-d. To reinforce the influence of this conference, it is worthy to organize regional conferences for the *shluchim* throughout the world. Each of these conferences should publish a record of the gathering, including words of Torah spoken there, as suggested previously in regard to the International Conference of Shluchim.

In this context, we can see the connection to Parshas Toldos, which centers on the “chronicles” of Yitzchok’s “offspring,” Yaakov and Eisav. Through the activities of the Jews (Yaakov) in refining the world at large (Eisav) – this being the intent of the International Conference of Shluchim – happiness and joy, the contribution of Yitzchok, will be revealed throughout the world.

3. The effects of our service in refining the world and preparing it for the Messianic Redemption is openly visible throughout the world.

There are those who protest against the suggestion that we are nearing the close of the Exile and approaching the coming of Moshiach. They maintain that the world is proceeding according

to the natural order without disruption.

Such a perspective represents a lack of sensitivity and awareness to the upheaval that is taking place throughout the world. Political regimes are falling and power is changing hands in a drastic, almost inconceivable manner. Furthermore, this is being done without war or bloodshed, without even disturbing the commercial activities of the world.

First and foremost, we see a change in Russia, the country in which the Rebbe Rayatz and his students had their roots. After more than seventy years of rule by a powerful regime, which cast fear into the heart of every citizen of the country, there has been radical change. In a very short time,

Everything that transpires in the world is a result of the service of the Jewish people.

sweeping reforms have been put into effect by the leaders of the country and they have spread to the other countries who follow their ideological thrust.

Similarly, other countries – including China, India, and Japan, countries whose combined populations number in the billions – are in the midst of radical political change. The most miraculous aspect of this process of transition is that it is being carried out peacefully, without bloodshed, something that has never before happened in the history of man. In previous generations, whenever there was a revolution, destruction and bloodshed came in its wake. Indeed, we do not have to look past the Second World War, to see the devastation that can accompany

political change. In contrast, today the change is coming in a more complete fashion and yet, in a peaceful manner.

[The upheaval in the world today is reflected even in the physical being of the world. We see many more earthquakes have occurred now than in the previous years. Here, too, G-d’s kindness and mercies are evident since the damage wrought by these earthquakes, is comparatively less than in the past.]

One may ask: Of what relevance are these events to the Jews? A Jew’s mission is to study Torah and fulfill *mitzvos* and the events that transpire regarding the gentiles have little relevance for him. Nevertheless, these events are significant in two contexts:

a) They reveal the greatness of G-d and His kindness and mercy. This miraculous turn of events is obviously a sign of the greatness of G-d and the lack of bloodshed a revelation of Divine mercy and kindness. We must acknowledge and give thanks for such Divine providence.

Everything that transpires in the world is a result of the service of the Jewish people, as alluded to in the Torah’s statement, “He established the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the children of Yisroel.” Thus, our efforts in Torah and *mitzvos* – including our efforts to spread the observance of the seven commandments given to Noach and his descendants – will have a direct effect on spreading peace and stability throughout the world. In this light, the International Conference of Shluchim, which involved representatives from countries all over the world, takes on a new significance. Their efforts in spreading G-d’s truth throughout the world will contribute to the positive changes that are occurring throughout the world and prepare the world for the ultimate change, the coming of Moshiach, when “the sovereignty will be the L-rd’s” and “the world will be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover up the ocean bed.”

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KISLEV: THE CHASSIDISHE CHODESH

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



The common denominator of all the joyous events that occurred during this month is the great pain and anguish that preceded the victory and redemption, something that according to Torah and justice should not have happened. In each instance, only at the end, after all the toil and effort, the pain and anguish, “the fasts and their outcries,” justice was finally served and the truth was revealed. The Rebbe became healthy, the s’farim were returned to their rightful place, the Alter Rebbe and the Mitteler Rebbe were released, the outspread of chassidus was approved, and the Maccabees entered the Beis HaMikdash and purified it.

We are now in the month of Kislev, the month of Redemption, “*der chassidische chodesh*,” filled with holidays that commemorate our redemption and the deliverance of our soul, celebrating the salvation and redemption of our holy Rebbeim (and

their *s’farim* and other holy writings) from exile and imprisonment.

It is especially important to emphasize “our” holidays, those connected with the Rebbe MH”M *shlita*, “the seventh generation.” We begin with the day of Rosh Chodesh

Kislev, when the Rebbe (in 5738) returned home for the first time since Shmini Atzeres of that year. This is immediately followed by Beis Kislev, when (in 5748) the *s’farim* and writings of the Rebbeim returned to their rightful home, the library of Beis Moshiach – 770, and then by Yud-Daled Kislev, “the day that connects me with you, and you with me.” This is besides the auspicious days of Tes and Yud Kislev, the birthday, *yahrtzeit*, and redemption of the Mitteler Rebbe, *Chag HaGeula*; Yud-Tes-Chaf Kislev; and the holiday of Chanuka (which includes the “third light” and the “fifth light” of Chanuka).

During these days, it is appropriate to emphasize again and again the essential point to all those who have learned, heard, and read the *maamarim*, *sichos*, and letters of our Rebbeim. On the other hand, there is also the world, “*di balabatische velt*,” which has yet to merit the experience of the light of Torah, to see things in the holy light of the teachings of our Rebbeim, and for whom everything is simply and clearly the opposite, *ch”v*.

Our task and *shlichus* is to “make for Him a dwelling place in the lower worlds,” to tell that world, which perceives and examines everything

only on the basis of what it sees with its simple physical eyes, how to look upon things, how to instill within it the perception of matters as they are illuminated in *chassidic* teachings, particularly the teachings of the Rebbe MH" M *shlita*.

However, before explaining this point, let's begin with a story from the *mashpia*, R. Mendel Futerfas, of blessed memory:

We are all familiar with the Rebbe MH" M *shlita*'s sharp *sicha* from the 13th of Tishrei, 5743 (*Hisvaaduyos* 5743, Vol. 1, pgs. 144-149), in which he says, "The order of business here is that when we gather together for *t'filla*, instead of *davening* in a *siddur* and thinking about G-d, 'm'kukt oif a basar v'dam!' (everyone looks at flesh and blood), 'b'akshanus' (stubbornly) and without interruption!"

The Rebbe spoke at length about the *halacha* in *Shulchan Aruch* that during *t'filla*, a Jew must stand "as a servant before his master," yet we "stubbornly" look upon "flesh and blood" in the middle of *davening*. The Rebbe added that it makes no difference who the flesh and blood is, as according to *Shulchan Aruch* one must at this time only be thinking about G-d.

Among the other things that the Rebbe expressed during this *sicha* was that he could go into his room and *daven* privately, as many Torah giants have been accustomed to do, but "I choose not to accept the 'advice' to *daven b'yechidus*, as it is my desire to *daven b'tzibbur!*" and "why are they trying to deprive me of something so precious as *t'filla b'tzibbur?*"

After that *sicha*, R. Mendel sat down to *farbreng* with the *avreichim* and *bachurim*. During the *farbrengen*, only one issue was discussed: "m'kukt oif a basar v'dam!"

"First and foremost, there can be no question," R. Mendel said, "we must obey the Rebbe's instructions

according to their most simple interpretation, i.e., look in the *siddur* with concentration and think only about G-d during *davening*, etc. However, together with this, there is also a much deeper and inner meaning, albeit by allusion, to the words 'm'kukt oif a basar v'dam!'

The Rebbe established that if the Rebbe would "be stubborn" that the Redemption should come now, he could certainly bring this about. The fact that he does not do so is the greatest, deepest, and most inner display of self-sacrifice he could possibly make, because it is G-d's will to leave the Jewish people just a little longer in exile. Nevertheless, the question is aroused, "Ad Masai?!"

"One of our biggest problems," R. Mendel continued, "is what *chassidim* call 'balabatishe hanachos.' We look at the Rebbe and think that he's one of us... Of course, he is truly a wise man, a tremendous Torah scholar, a great *tzaddik*, a *yira-Shamayim*, one who serves G-d with all his might,

does great miracles, totally devoted with complete self-sacrifice for every Jew, etc., etc. But after all, sometimes we perceive the Rebbe to be just flesh and blood as we are, a human being, confined to natural and worldly limitations, and thus, 'm'kukt oif a basar v'dam!'"

Naturally, the Rebbe's body is flesh and blood. However, this is only because of G-d's clear desire for a dwelling place in the lower worlds. As is explained throughout *chassidus*, the main purpose behind a "dwelling place" is that G-d Alm-ghty chose "to live and dwell among the souls of the Jewish people." Therefore, the essential soul of every Jew is bound and united with His Blessed Essence, to the point that "The Jewish people and the Holy One, Blessed Be He, are completely one." Furthermore, as the Rebbe said in a *sicha* from Shabbos Parshas Yisro 5752, the unity must be so complete that it is impossible to separate the "dwelling" from the "dweller" – i.e., to suggest that they are two separate entities – as they "are completely one."

Therefore, the Rebbe, who is the general soul and essence of the souls of the Jewish people, is totally nullified to and united with G-d Alm-ghty. Just as He need not be limited in any fashion, physically or spiritually, similarly we find in connection with the Rebbe. As is known from the saying of the Rebbe Rashab, when he sat in his room, "it's not 'if I know him, I am him,' but literally 'I know him; I am him.'" Thus, it is quite clear and apparent that even when the Rebbe is en clothed in a physical body, he is neither limited nor defined in any way, and it is within his ability to do everything and be everything, without any defined or descriptive limitations whatsoever.

Similarly, the Rebbe *shlita* said in a *sicha* from Chaf Menachem Av, 5710, that anyone who doesn't believe that the Rebbe "knows all and is all"

essentially lacks also “*Anochi*” and “*V’lo Yihyeh Lecha*” [the first two commandments of *Aseres HaDibros*]! Nevertheless, even such a person must be involved in the Rebbe’s teachings. The numerical value of the word “Torah” is 611, which teaches us that even someone who lacks the *two mitzvos* of “*Anochi*” and “*V’Lo Yihyeh Lecha*” must study the Rebbe’s teachings. Then, the Rebbe will take him out and place even him “*oifon vahgen*” (on the wagon).

“When we look at the Rebbe this way,” R. Mendel concluded, “then it becomes abundantly clear that it is totally irrelevant to suggest that one can hide something from the Rebbe, *ch”v* (as is written, “If a man will secretly hide himself, will I not see him?” says Hashem”). We know that the Rebbe is found literally with each one of us at every moment of our actions and our conduct. Thus, our personal conduct in thought, speech, and action must be fitting. Then, we will be connected to the Rebbe not just at a particular moment, a particular time and place, but without limitation – 365 days a year, thirty days a month, twenty-four hours a day, sixty minutes an hour, sixty seconds a minute, etc.

The common denominator of all the joyous events mentioned above that occurred during this month is the great pain and anguish that preceded the victory and redemption, something that according to Torah and justice should not have happened. If we consider event after event, we see things as follows:

In the period preceding Rosh Chodesh 5738, we saw with our own eyes how the Rebbe suffered, as if he were ill, under medical treatment, and limited to the orders of his doctors and the practices of medicine.

Before the victory that was finalized on Beis Kislev 5748, we heard with our own ears how the Rebbe cried out from the depths of

his heart that things that should be so simple and clear – were not. The *s’farim* and writings of our holy Rebbeim were taken to court, where a harsh and penetrating trial, filled with pain, anguish, and disgrace, took place to determine their rightful ownership.

Prior to the redemption of Yud Kislev 5587, everyone saw for themselves how the Mittlerer Rebbe was taken to Vitebsk under heavy guard, by “order of the sovereign,” while the despised slanderer watched the downcast spirit of the *chassidim* with glee.

Before the redemption of Yud-Tes-Chaf Kislev 5559, people watched as the Alter Rebbe was taken to Petersburg in the black wagon set aside for those accused of rebellion against the czar. They subjected him to harsh imprisonment and inhuman conditions, threatened him with a possible death sentence, and tried to forbid the teaching of *chassidus* forever.

Prior to the great victory of the Chashmonaim, everyone saw how the Beis HaMikdash had been defiled and the name of Israel was subjected to humiliation and dishonor.

In each instance, only at the end, after all the toil and effort, the pain and anguish, “the fasts and their outcries,” justice was finally served and the truth was revealed. The Rebbe became healthy, the *s’farim* were returned to their rightful place, the Alter Rebbe and the Mittlerer Rebbe were released, the outspread of *chassidus* was approved, and the Maccabees entered the Beis HaMikdash and purified it.

“*M’kukt oif a basar v’dam.*” It appears to us (and ‘*olam*’ (world) has the same root as ‘*helem*’ (concealment); *nebech*, but that’s the simple truth) that the Rebbe was in a state of limitation, *ch”v*. The teachings of *chassidus* were in danger, *ch”v*. No one knew what would be, what would

happen, or if everything would collapse, *ch”v*. Only at the end, after the redemption and release, the recovery and the “*pidyon shvu’im*,” we gave thanks to G-d Who “redeemed us and redeemed our fathers.”

Let’s see what the Rebbe Rayatz writes about this in *Likkutei Dibburim* (Vol. 1, from p. 53):

The entire issue of the imprisonment was with the Alter Rebbe’s consent. Not only the Alter Rebbe, but also every *tzaddik* has control over physical matters. The Torah possesses influence over the world, and all worldly matters are subservient to Torah. Thus, anything that happens to a *tzaddik* is only with the *tzaddik*’s consent. Thus, it is understood that the imprisonment was with the Alter Rebbe’s consent.

If the Rebbe had not agreed, they would not have imprisoned him. The proof for this comes from the trip to Petersburg, when the black wagon stopped on a Friday, and the four horses were of no help in pulling the wagon. It didn’t budge from its place because the Rebbe didn’t want it to. The story of the trip to Petersburg gives us a concrete example of what we said, i.e., everything that happens to a *tzaddik* in general, and particularly to a *nasi*, is only with the *tzaddik*’s consent. When the Rebbe didn’t want [to continue on the journey], the carriage stood still, stopping how and when the Rebbe wanted.

Therefore, it is sufficiently clear to all that “the one who says” and the one with influence over the material world, such as the Rebbe, possesses the ability not to go to prison altogether, without the need to hide himself for even a moment. So if he went into prison, it is obviously due to its inner meaning in *avodas Hashem*.

Avrohom Avinu opened the path to self-sacrifice for *kiddush Hashem*, and the Rebbe opened the path to

self-sacrifice for *avodas Hashem* with the teachings of *chassidus*.

We understand from all this that the imprisonment was purely an “expression of the will,” in order that it should not take a path higher than nature.

Elsewhere (*Likkutei Dibburim* Vol. 5, from p. 1094), the Rebbe Rayatz writes:

It is well known to all that every matter of dispute is spiritual in nature. Divine providence chose the Alter Rebbe to be a commander in the teachings of our master, the Baal Shem Tov, *nishmaso Eden*. The Alter Rebbe founded the pillars of Chabad, and set up a lamp in the public thoroughfare to illuminate everyday life.

The Midrash says: Before Avrohom, the world conducted itself in darkness; with the advent of Avrohom the illumination began. The world had existed for two thousand years, and during those generations there were great *tzaddikim*, teachers and counselors, *chassidim* and servants of G-d, heads of *battei dinim* and *yeshivos*, yet “the world conducted itself in darkness” – until Avrohom came and the illumination began.

And what happened to Avrohom? Avrohom began to learn under the fear of death, in exile, in the underground, pursued by a powerful king, sorcerers, astrologers, and great ministers. They held him in prison, cast him into the furnace – and he did his part, arousing the world to the service of the Creator.

Everything that happened to the Rebbe – all the difficult experiences, betrayals, slanders, pursuits, and even malicious things that transpired between him and many students of the Maggid, *nishmaso Eden* – was arranged according to the order of the revelation of the light. When the sun is about to rise, there are clouds that

obscure its appearance. This is in addition to the sun’s sheath, without which there could be no light at all. But even when the sun is encompassed by its shield and sheath and there can be light, when the sun begins to reveal itself there are wispy clouds that conceal it.

The Rebbe revealed the illumination of *chassidus*, and in order for that light to come out there was a need for a preventive shield, formed by the actions of man.

Prior to *Mattan Torah*, in order for the light of Torah to illuminate the world, there was the need for the exile, the bondage, and the

The entire issue of the imprisonment was with the Alter Rebbe’s consent. Not only the Alter Rebbe, but also every tzaddik has control over physical matters.

Redemption from Egypt. Similarly, before the essential light of *chassidus* could be revealed, there had to be the imprisonment of the Alter Rebbe. We see that when a seed is planted in the ground, there is a process a decaying, and then the growth begins. While the Rebbe’s suffering and afflictions, the pursuits and his very harsh imprisonment came due to man’s shameful actions, the result was a revelation of light.

We, *chassidim*, must be satisfied with the revelation of light that we have merited. True, it came through great suffering and self-sacrifice, but

thank G-d, the light was revealed.

Why the light’s revelation had to come in such a fashion is one of the wonders of He Who is perfect in knowledge. We see only that Divine providence brought this most bitter time only after the Rebbe had been involved in revealing to others for decades...

* * *

The Rebbe MH”M *shlita* says (*Seifer HaMaamarim – Meluket*, Vol. 5, p. 324): “In relation to the *n’siim*, it is not relevant to say that their imprisonments were a matter of darkness for them (as is understood also from the well-known *sicha* of the *baal ha’Geula* in connection with the imprisonment of the Alter Rebbe – that it was with his consent; the hiding and concealment of the imprisonment was only superficial).”

It was to such an extent that the Rebbe asked in wonderment, “What is the special quality associated with Yud-Tes Kislev, Yud-Beis Tammuz, etc.? In relation to the *n’siim* there was no semblance of darkness, so how can there be ‘the advantage of light’? This entire explanation is only ‘since the main aspect of the *n’siim* is that they are the shepherds of the Jewish people and the leaders of the Jewish people, therefore, the hiding and concealment of the imprisonment that was relevant to the Jewish people was also a hiding and concealment in relation to the *n’siim*. Thus, with the redemption from the imprisonment, when the darkness was turned into light this resulted in ‘the advantage of light.’ However, from the point of view of the *n’siim* themselves, there was never any darkness or concealment to begin with!”

Similarly, we find, both in general and in particular, with regard to the Redemption. The Rebbe established (Shabbos Parshas Pinchas 5744) that if the Rebbe would “be stubborn” that the Redemption should come now, he could certainly bring this about. The

fact that he does not do so is the greatest, deepest, and most inner display of self-sacrifice he could possibly make, because it is G-d's will to leave the Jewish people just a little longer in exile. Nevertheless, the question is aroused, "Ad masai?!"

From the Rebbe's point of view, there is nothing lacking and there is no darkness. The Rebbe was not (and never can be) sick, in its simplest interpretation. Rather, due to G-d's desire that this is how the light must be revealed, he appeared as if he were sick and imprisoned and on trial, etc. (Similarly, G-d is referred to as being sick, as it were, "the *Sh'china* is suffering in the Exile" (*Igeres HaKodesh* 31), and anyone with any common sense understands that G-d

is neither sick nor suffering.)

It is clear and obvious that His will and desire will be fulfilled completely, and nothing in the world can "spoil His plans," *ch"v, ch"v*. "*S'iz a zichere zach, az der Oibershter vet oisfirm un der rebbe vet oisfirm*" (It's a certainty that G-d will fulfill His will and desire completely, and the Rebbe will fulfill completely his will and desire). It is utter nonsense to say that since

G-d established that a certain thing should be according to "our actions and our service," therefore, it is seemingly possible to "spoil His plans," *ch"v, ch"v*.

The exact same concept applies in relation to our Rebbeim in general, and particularly to the Rebbe MH"M

shlita, whose whole purpose is to bring all these matters downward and draw forth the

Sh'china "down to the world." Despite the fact that we were given the privilege and the obligation to "do everything in our power," and it is demanded from us to carry out "the only thing that remains in the service of *shlichus* – to greet Moshiach in actual deed," all this is only in order to fulfill the Divine will that these things must be achieved in a manner that will pass through the entire *seider hishtalshlus* and even break through the lowest of all possible levels.

However, all this considered, it is an absolute certainty without the slightest doubt "*az der Oibershter vet oisfirm un der rebbe vet oisfirm*," the Divine plan will be carried out to the fullest, to the point that the matter will break through and penetrate the entire world, which will accept the sovereignty of the Rebbe MH"M *shlita* with the proclamation that will bring the Redemption for all to see, immediately, *mamash*, now: *Yechi Adoneinu Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Melech HaMoshiach l'olam va'ed!*




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“WE HAD NEVER HEARD IT LIKE THIS BEFORE”

BY MENACHEM ZIEGELBOIM

Presented in honor of Tes Kislev, birthday of the Mittlerer Rebbe, and Yud Kislev, the day the Mittlerer Rebbe was released from jail.

PART I

The Mittlerer Rebbe did not travel often. He generally stayed in Lubavitch, and from there, his *chassidim* spread forth and taught *chassidus* to thousands of Jews throughout White Russia. On this occasion, the Rebbe was setting forth on a journey that would last many days. His family joined him, as did *mekuravim* to *Beis Rebbe* and distinguished *chassidim*. They watched the Rebbe and saw that despite the rigors of the trip he did not stop teaching Torah. He would publicly discourse on *chassidus* at every opportunity, and as was his custom, he did so at great length.

The wheels of the wagons turned and the horses trotted along proudly, as though they sensed that they had the privilege of carrying the Rebbe. Towards evening, the Rebbe and his entourage arrived in the city of Kislava, where some of his *chassidim* lived. The wagons stopped in the yard of the *chassid* R' Yeshaya'le, or as he was known in Lubavitch, “R' Yeshaya'le Kislaver,” after his hometown.

R' Yeshaya'le merited this great honor not only because of his outstanding *chassidic* conduct, but because he was an outstanding host. Attached to his house, there stood a building set aside for guests. Many of

the passersby knew that comfortable lodging awaited them at R' Yeshaya'le's house; there they would get a hot meal and a comfortable bed.

R' Yeshaya'le did not take money from Jews for hosting them, but he did take money from gentiles, though the fee wasn't particularly high, especially considering the good treatment they received from their hosts.

On that festive day when the Rebbe arrived in Kislava unannounced, R' Yeshaya'le wasn't at home; he was in his wagon far from home, and so he remained unaware of the great *z'chus* that had befallen him.

Word that the Rebbe had come to town spread quickly, and the *chassidim* came running to R' Yeshaya'le's house. Throughout the year, they heard *chassidus* only from *shluchim* who came on foot from Lubavitch, but this time they knew they would be able to listen directly to the Rebbe himself.

After Maariv, the Rebbe sat at the head of the table and began saying *chassidus*. The *chassidus* flowed copiously. He began with a topic that branched off in many directions, touching on many other subjects, and he explained everything comprehensively. The *chassidim* were ecstatic.

The Rebbe spoke for many hours.

Fraida, R' Yeshaya'le's wife, waited and waited, and just past midnight her eyes closed against her will and she went to sleep, though not before telling Leibel, the Rebbe's servant, about the food she had prepared and the various pots she had set aside in honor of the Rebbe and his entourage. Leib listened as best as he could given the excitement, then he quickly left the kitchen and returned to the large room where the Rebbe was sitting.

The Rebbe finished speaking late at night. After the *chassidim* had gone home, Leibel rushed to the kitchen to bring the Rebbe's meal. He prepared it and served it to the Rebbe, who hadn't eaten that day but had only drunk two hot drinks. Leibel knew that the Rebbe needed to eat to refresh himself from the arduous journey.

PART II

R' Yaakov, a great scholar, one of the distinguished *chassidim* who accompanied the Rebbe, was up early in the morning, and he walked about on the porch and smoked, deep in thought. That's when he heard a cry from the kitchen.

He raced over to the kitchen, where he found Fraida white as a ghost and trembling, almost breathless. She finally collapsed into a nearby chair and cried out, “Oy vei! Oy that I

caused this to the holy Rebbe.”

It took quite some time before R' Yaakov could manage to calm her down and get her to tell him what had happened.

“Last night I prepared food for the *tzaddik* who came to stay with us. In his honor, I prepared a tasty dish that was seasoned seven times more than usual. Aside from this food for the Rebbe, there was also a pot of *treife* soup that was made for some gentiles who are staying here.

“Before going to sleep I forgot to warn the Rebbe’s servant that he shouldn’t touch the *treife* pot. Now, when I got up early, I was devastated when I saw that the pots had been mixed up and he had served the Rebbe the *treife* food. The kosher food,” she said pointed towards the big pot, “is still there. Oy that Hashem gave me the privilege of hosting the Rebbe and I fed him *treife* food!”

Now it was R' Yaakov’s turn to get upset. Despite his being an intellectual, he got quite emotional. Was this a minor thing, to feed Jews *treife* food? A tremor went through his body.

With heavy steps, he headed towards Leibel and stammered out the story to him. Leibel listened closely, and the more he heard the bigger his smile grew, until he finally burst into laughter: “Ai, Yankel! Don’t you know about the outstanding holiness of our Rebbe? Don’t you believe with perfect faith that Hashem does not trip up *tzaddikim*, and such evil does not befall them?”

R' Yaakov gazed at Leibel in astonishment, waiting for an explanation, but Leibel pulled on his sleeve and brought him to the Rebbe’s room, where he showed him the full pot of *treife* food. It was obvious that nobody had eaten from it.

“You see!” said Leibel triumphantly. “Nobody touched it.”

“Perhaps the Rebbe tasted it?” persisted R' Yaakov.

“Sit down Yankel, and I’ll tell you what happened and what the Rebbe did. After the *chassidim* left, the Rebbe sat down to rest while I quickly served the food. The Rebbe washed and said *HaMotzi* and then I served a plate of soup. The Rebbe took a spoon and nearly put it to his mouth but then he simply held the spoon suspended in the air while he gazed and stared into space. He sat there like that for a while, lost in thought. Then he looked at the spoonful of soup, thought some more, and then after looking at the spoon again he put it down and pushed the plate away.

“The scene certainly seemed strange to me. I knew that the Rebbe was weak after the day he had had, and I suggested that he at least taste the meat, but the Rebbe smiled and said he wouldn’t eat the meat either, and he



warned me that neither should I. I took the plate of soup and poured it back into the pot, and that was the end of the Rebbe's meal.

"You see, Yankel, no evil befalls a *tzaddik*. Our Rebbe certainly saw what he saw and knew that the food was *treife*, which is why he refrained from eating it and also warned me not to touch it."

The servant got up, clapped Yankel in a friendly manner on the shoulder and went back to his work.

Word of the miracle got out and at the first opportunity, the *chassidim* dared to ask the Rebbe about it. The Rebbe said smilingly, "No doubt you think this was a miracle, but it was not. I was taught that thoughts don't simply pop into a man's mind. Rather, every thought has a purpose and explanation. When I took the spoon of soup, I suddenly thought of a *halachic pilpul* regarding *treifus* that I had learned long ago. I wondered what made me think of this *halachic* topic at that moment, and I looked at the spoon in my hand and realized something was amiss. This is why I told the servant not to touch the soup, fearing it was *treif*."

The *chassidim* looked at one another and realized that this was always the Rebbe's way, to conceal his miracles in the seemingly natural, and to give them a logical explanation, all in order to be modest.

PART III

For various reasons the Rebbe remained another night at R' Yeshaye'le's home. "That night I merited to see even greater wonders from our Rebbe," testified R' Yaakov in his memoirs.

That evening, the *chassidim* of Kislava were able to slake their thirst from the pure waters of *chassidus* that issued forth directly from the source. After Maariv, the Rebbe sat down once again, as he had done the night before, and began teaching *chassidus*. Within a

few minutes, clever *chassidim* realized that something was different. Although whenever the Rebbe spoke it was "*divrei Elokim chaim*," and the "*Sh'china* speaking from his throat," this time they clearly saw that something special was taking place.

The Rebbe began expounding on deep esoteric concepts, preempting any questions that might have arisen in the minds of his audience. For hours, the Rebbe climbed the rungs of the worlds of Atzilus and Kesser, reaching the highest levels of the Infinite.

"From the day we merited to hear *chassidus* from the Rebbe, we had never

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heard it like this before," said R' Yaakov, still emotional months later. "Even the outstanding elder *chassidim* said they hadn't heard this from him, and not even from his father, the Alter Rebbe, did we hear this."

After the Rebbe completed his teaching, he went to his room and the *chassidim* reviewed what they had just heard, as they always did, in order to understand it properly and to engrave it in their souls. This time, unlike all other times, the *chazara* was difficult. The concepts were lofty and deep. The *chassidim* went home with the feeling

that they hadn't grasped it well enough and that they had to try again and again until they got it.

The Rebbe's small group that had accompanied him on this trip also went to an adjoining room. They ate, said *Shma*, and went to sleep. That is, all except R' Yaakov. He remained awake, wound up by the day's events. He lit his pipe and paced the porch.

Suddenly he felt someone pulling his sleeve. It was Leibel again. "Come with me," he whispered. R' Yankel looked at him in surprise, but Leibel said, "If you want to see the Rebbe's face, now's the time to do so."

R' Yankele knew what Leibel was referring to even if he didn't explain. For some time now, the *chassidim* who were "insiders" whispered amongst themselves about how sometimes the Rebbe became so enraptured that he reached a state called "*hispashtus ha'gashmius*" (divestiture of the corporeal). They said that at a time like this, the Rebbe was and was not in this world at the same time. In other words, although he was in his physical body, his *ruach* and *nefesh* soared through the heavenly realms.

Most *chassidim* were unaware of this phenomenon, and those who were in the know didn't speak about it publicly. There were singular individuals who said that they had seen the Rebbe in such a state, but this too was kept under wraps.

Without thinking twice, R' Yankel rejected Leibel's offer. He knew that the Rebbe was particular about his modest ways and that it wasn't right to go and gawk. He shook his head firmly and refused. However, his refusal only lasted half a minute, for a *chassid's* inner desire to see the Rebbe on such a rare occasion overcame every other consideration.

Leib could see that R' Yaakov was waging a war within himself and he knew how the inner struggle would end. Although the servant wasn't

particularly bright he knew the soul of *chassidim*.

Without another word, the two of them went to the Rebbe's room. Leibel opened the door and R' Yaakov saw an incredible sight. "I could see our Rebbe standing in the middle of the room, motionless, his face shining and his eyes open" – this is how R' Yaakov described it in his memoirs, and the G-dly fear that descended upon him at that time comes through in the words.

R' Yaakov instinctively recoiled and hid behind the door. He saw the Rebbe's open eyes staring at him, and he feared lest the Rebbe see him during this "*chassidische g'neiva*" (*chassidic* "theft"). The servant laughed and pulled his sleeve again. "Don't be afraid," he said loudly without fearing that the Rebbe would hear him. "The Rebbe doesn't see or hear now, even though you see his body here in this world."

R' Yaakov looked in wonder at Leibel who made his astonishing statement so confidently. "Do you have any idea whatsoever concerning the heavenly matters of our Rebbe?"

The servant, who was tired of the *chassid's* queries, motioned with his hand dismissively and said, "I don't understand a thing; I simply know this from experience. I've seen the Rebbe like this on more than one occasion, and even though I've stood close to him and his eyes were open, he neither heard nor saw me, and this is because all his physical senses are not functioning now."

R' Yaakov went on to relate what

had happened next. "I stood in the doorway and watched the Rebbe carefully. Perhaps I would see some signs of life, but his eyes remained open and his face burned, and I stood there from ten until three o'clock. The household servants came and went and our Rebbe stood there like a firebrand, motionlessly."

When the clock chimed three a.m., the servant came in again with food for the Rebbe. He spread a white tablecloth and set the food down. "Our Rebbe didn't eat anything all day," he explained to R' Yaakov, who was still standing in the doorway.

He stood in front of the Rebbe with a cup and bowl so the Rebbe could wash his hands, but the Rebbe stood rooted to his spot, neither seeing nor hearing. The servant realized that if he didn't do something, the Rebbe would not have eaten in two days. He dared to pull gently on the Rebbe's sleeve and he loudly said, "Please wash for the meal."

Despite the tug on his sleeve and Leibel's loud voice, the Rebbe didn't respond. He just took two large steps and moved from the center of the room to the corner, where he continued to stand as he had the previous hours, with his face aflame in holy fire.

PART IV

The Rebbe finally came out of his *d'veikus* state at four in the morning, when he began looking around him. Leibel went over and humbly suggested that the Rebbe wash for the

meal. The Rebbe did so. His face shone, radiating great joy. It was obvious that the Rebbe was tremendously happy. From moment to moment, his joy increased.

Leibel couldn't help remarking, "Perhaps the Rebbe can say what the reason is for his great *simcha*, for I never saw the Rebbe so happy since I've had the privilege of serving him."

The Rebbe laughed and he gazed benevolently upon his tired and naive servant. "Indeed, I have not experienced such joy since I achieved the level of knowledge," the Rebbe testified about himself. "Whenever I say *chassidus* publicly, my father, the Alter Rebbe, comes to me halfway through, but in the lecture I gave last night he was there from the start, and in the middle I saw the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid.

"When I finished speaking they left, and only my father remained. He told me that the Baal Shem Tov and the Maggid, *nishmasam Eden*, highly praised my lecture and asked that from now on that I teach like this. The reason I stood in the middle of the room like that was because I was reviewing the lecture for my father, *nishmaso Eden*, and as I did so, he revealed wondrous secrets to me. The *chiddushim* I heard from him were truly above man's intellectual capacity, and this is why my joy is so great."

(From the book L'Sapper M'B'reishis vol. 2; taken from Sippurim Noraim of the chassid R' Yaakov Cadaner; Otzar Sippurei Chabad vol. 16 p. 37-)



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FARBRENGEN OF MASHPIIM

BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ
PICTURES BY SHMULIK GEWIRTZ

*Hundreds of farbrengens took place throughout Crown Heights during Tishrei. One of the most interesting of these farbrengens, a farbrengen of Mashpiim, took place in the sukka of R' Sholom Dovber Drizin. * Part 1*

THE TMIMIM – A COMBINATION OF CLEVERNESS AND EMUNA

Rabbi Eliezer Kenig: The Baal Shem Tov would send his *talmidim* to simple people to learn from them about simple faith and *t'mimus* (sincerity, earnestness). The more you learn in a way of “*chochma, bina, and daas*,” the more likely you are to lose the *nekuda* (point), the *emuna p'shuta* (simple faith). This means that with the *talmidim* of the Baal Shem Tov, as great as they were in Torah they could have still been lacking in *t'mimus*.

In our generation we see something amazing. The *T'mimim*, the boys learning in Lubavitcher *yeshivos*, combine both qualities. On the one hand, they are outstanding in their *pikchus* (cleverness), their learning, and their outreach. On the other hand, they have *emuna p'shuta*, which is derived from pure *t'mimus*.

Typically the person who has *t'mimus* is not successful in outreach. But today we see *T'mimim* who are actually *t'mimim* in the literal sense of the word – i.e., they have *emuna* in what the Rebbe said – and at the same time, they are *pikchim* and far more active than the greatest *pikchim* of the previous generation.

Things that were the province of great *askanim*, have recently become par for every *Tamim*. Each one has become a leader in his environment, *mamash* “*neiros l'ha'ir*” (candles that illuminate). I am here for Tishrei, and *bachurim* come and ask me to *farbreng* for their *mekuravim*. In the short amount of time that they devote to outreach on Fridays, they manage to lead a group of *mekuravim*. They provide them with *shiurim*, bring them to visit 770, etc. A miniature Beis Chabad!

The combination that the Baal Shem Tov demanded of his *talmidim*

– to grasp *G-dliness* without losing the pure *emuna* – can be seen today in the *T'mimim*. This combination is so powerful that *mashpiim* need to learn from the *T'mimim* how to hold on to their *emuna* despite the *pikchus* and ability to grasp *Elokus*.

Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Ginsberg: In the *Seifer HaToldos* there's a very sharp line from the Baal Shem Tov, quoted by the Rebbe Rayatz: Why must we love a Jew? Naturally, we love the simple Jew because he's a Jew, but why should we love a scholar? The Baal Shem Tov explains that since, “whoever is greater than his fellow, his *yetzer* is greater,” thus the *lamdan* (Torah scholar) has a very great *yetzer ha'ra*, and if he succeeds in overcoming it and remaining a Jew, you need to love him.

R' Drizin: In connection with the *pikchus* which is demanded of the *bachurim*, I recently saw a letter of my father's (R' Avrohom Maiyor) in which he writes that when he went to Lubavitch, thirty *bachurim* came to be tested and only three or four were accepted. He writes that in most cases, those who were rejected knew how to learn but they were “*tipshim*” (fools).

One time, two *bachurim* came – one was a *lamdan* but a *tipesh*, and

the other was less learned but a *pikciach*. The *pikciach* was accepted and the *tipesch* rejected. *Chassidim* would jokingly say that *tipeschus* is an *aveira d'Oraisa* (a Biblical prohibition).

Rabbi Kenig: The unique combination that the *bachurim* have is expressed in yet another way. In earlier generations there were *ovdim* and *maskilim*. The Rebbe brought about a tremendous *chiddush* in our generation in that the *bachurim* can dance and rejoice all night of Simchas Beis HaShoeiva, yet the next day they sit and learn. These are two opposites, because dancing comes from *mara levana* and sitting and learning from *mara sh'chora*, and now we see them combined.



(From right to left) R' Hendel, R' Halperin, R' Wilschansky, R' Kesselman, R' Raynitz

“More than the miracle of the answer he opened to, what amazed me was the nerve of the young bachur who faced a number of adults and without being fazed by their mockery he tried to gently convince them to connect with the Rebbe MH”M.”

--Rabbi Kenig



(From right to left) R' Orenstein, R' Ginsberg, Avrohom Raynitz, R' Kenig

INNER WILL

Rabbi Y.Y. Wilschansky: One year, at a Sukkos meal with the Rebbe, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Yaakov Katz and asked him to say something about Sukkos. R' Katz said that once he was with the Rebbe Rayatz, and he took out a Machzor (for the Shalosh Regalim) to say the *nusach* for the *Ushpizin*.

The Rebbe Rayatz said that [in addition to the *Ushpizin* – Avrohom, etc.] we have our own *Ushpizin*, and he pointed to the chairs and said: The Baal Shem Tov sits here, and the Maggid sits here, and so on.

Then R' Katz asked the Rebbe how one could merit to see the *Ushpizin*. The Rebbe said that the Baal Shem Tov said that where a person's *ratzon* (will, desire) is that's where he can be found. Therefore, if you want it, you'll see it.

R' Katz said: Apparently you need a strong *ratzon* for that, and the Rebbe asked him why he limited the Baal Shem Tov in that way.

When R' Katz insisted that apparently you have to want it with a *p'nimius*, the Rebbe said that according to the *p'sak din* of the Rambam, every Jew wants, with a *p'nimius*, to be connected with *Elokus*.

SORROW?! SIMCHA!

R' Drizin: In the *Shiva* following the passing of Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, a^h, I went to the Rebbe to be *menachem avel*. Even though I generally didn't say anything to the Rebbe, I thought it was appropriate for me to do so this time.

I said: we are all friends of the Rebbe, and your *tzaar* (pain) is our *tzaar*. The Rebbe looked at me with a smile and with a joyous and broad motion of his hand he said: *Tzaar? Simcha!*

THE REAL MIRACLE

Rabbi Wilschansky: On my way here from Eretz Yisroel I took a taxi to the airport in Lud. The driver was a very high-strung type, and he told me that he worked at night to avoid having to deal with traffic. Since we were encountering traffic, he lost it... When he heard that I was going to the Rebbe, however, his expression changed, and he said emotionally: "Thirteen years ago I was in the U.S. I was very sick and couldn't get out of bed. One of my friends mentioned my name to the Rebbe and within 24 hours I was out of bed. It's all in the *z'chus* of the Rebbe!"

The fact that a Jew, a non-Lubavitcher, believes that his cure came about in the *z'chus* of his name being mentioned to the Rebbe, and he lives with this thirteen years later, is a big miracle.

R' Drizin: I saw a Jew in line for dollars who used crutches, and the Rebbe told him to throw away the crutches and to walk. The man did so and he walked fine!

THE STRENGTH OF THE TMIMIM

Rabbi Kenig: Last night, in the middle of the Simchas Beis HaShoeiva, I was in 770 where I saw a cluster of Polish *chassidim* surrounding a 13-year-old Lubavitcher *bachur* who spoke excitedly about the Rebbe's miracles



"In the Future the Avos will sit with Moshe Rabbeinu, etc., and the Satan will sit among them... Apparently, he'll be dressed as a chassid and only Hashem will be able to identify him!"

--Rabbi Wilschansky

through the *Igros Kodesh*. They were laughing at him, and then one of them said: let's check it out. I want to be a *chassan* and I want a *bracha* from the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*.

The young *bachur* wasn't fazed. He took a volume of *Igros Kodesh* from the shelf and asked the Polish *chassid* to put his letter in it. The fellow wrote his letter and put it in the volume, and then opened the volume at random, not to the place where he had put his letter. He was dumbfounded when he read the letter on the page he had opened to in which the Rebbe said that not touching (trimming) his beard is a *segula* for a *shidduch*. "Okay, so I'll be a Lubavitcher *chassid*," he said, half jokingly and half seriously.

He decided to open the *Igros Kodesh* to the place where he had put his letter, and he began reading a letter from the Rebbe to someone who

wanted to learn more about Chabad *chassidus*!

Everybody standing around was in shock.

More than the miracle of the answer he opened to, what amazed me was the nerve of the young *bachur* who faced a number of adults and without being fazed by their mockery he tried to gently convince them to connect with the Rebbe MH"M. This is one soldier in the mighty army the Rebbe built up, an army of *maaminim* (believers) who are unfazed by the world, and with terrific *pikchus* they remove the concealment of the world and reveal Moshiach.

These soldiers know that they derive their *chayus* from here, from Beis Chayeinu, and they live the entire year from this trip to the Rebbe. They participate in various contests and save

up their money so they can afford a ticket.

R' Drizin: Every year I'm amazed by the *mesirus nefesh* of the *bachurim*. They set everything aside, the main thing being to come to the Rebbe. In past years they didn't all come here. There were the limitations set by the *mashpia* R' Shlomo Chaim Kesselman (which recently, after the publicizing of *Igros Kodesh* of those years, were seen to be limitations set by the Rebbe), and only the "tzaddikim" came here.

Today though, hundreds, even thousands of *bachurim* come. They all

come. I asked someone how many *bachurim* from Tzfas had come for Tishrei, and the amazing answer was that all of them had come.

Rabbi Kenig: Even children come, without their parents. *Eshel-Hachmasas Orchim* takes care of everything, It's a pleasure to see them *daven* and *farbreng*, even to see the lineup that they make twice a day in front of 770. *Mamash* like soldiers.

R' Drizin: You can see how Chabad is growing from year to year. You see it here in the guests who come to 770, but you see it the most in the number

of Chabad *mosdos* around the world. Before Gimmel Tammuz the claim they made was 2000 *mosdos*. Today they talk about at least double that number. And every *mosad* is a world unto itself.

I hear from *shluchim* in Russia about their work there. It's *mamash* a revolution. They take a city that had no *Yiddishkeit* for 70 years and they turn it into a Jewish city with a *talmud Torah*, a school for boys, for girls, a high school, *yeshivos*.

You see an abundance of *brachos*. Naturally the Satan tries to spoil things, but with the Rebbe's *kochos* they overcome all obstacles.

In general, wherever *brachos* are given, the Satan comes to spoil things. When Yaakov Avinu had to receive the *brachos*, he had to finagle to get them...

Rabbi Wilschansky: The only difference is that Yaakov had to dress up in Eisav's clothing, but today the Satan wears Yaakov's clothing, silk garments...

R' Drizin: It's brought in the Midrash P'sikta Rabasi that in the Future the Avos will sit with Moshe Rabbeinu, etc., and the Satan will sit among them. He will be so well disguised that nobody will realize who he is, not even the Avos and Moshe Rabbeinu! Then Hashem, whose seal is Truth, will come and identify Satan and remove him. Apparently, he'll be dressed as a *chassid* and only Hashem will be able to identify him!

(To be continued.)



"The pikeiach was accepted and the tipesh rejected. Chassidim would jokingly say that tipshus is a Biblical prohibition."

--R' Drizin

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CHASDEI BRACHA: SPREADING JOY

BY AVROHOM RAYNITZ

*In its brief existence of not even two years, Chasdei Bracha has helped hundreds of people in Flatbush to get on their feet. * Rabbi Yisroel Chein has spearheaded this initiative and he tells us all about it.*



A two-story house in Flatbush. On the second floor sits a Jewish woman, crying about her lot. Two years had passed since that awful day when her husband informed her that he had decided to convert and leave the family. He left, was living with a Catholic woman, and he had a destructive relationship with his eleven-year-old son.

Two years of father-son meetings in which they discussed heresy had left their mark. In another two weeks he was supposed to celebrate his *bar mitzva*, but he had already announced that he didn't want to live as a Jew and so there was no point in making a *bar mitzva*.

She tried to convince him, to argue with him, to plead with him, but nothing helped. Even *rabbanim* and acquaintances whose help she had tried to enlist, had failed to move him. The boy was completely closed to them and refused to cooperate. Now he was sitting in a nearby room behind the closed door, refusing to listen to anything.

There was knocking at the door. The mother who was immersed in her troubles didn't hear it. Her son didn't hear it either. The man knocked louder. The anonymous



Weekly food packages for those in need

caller who had spoken to him a few hours before had told him about this unfortunate family. So there he was, to personally check out the situation, and the fact that nobody was answering the door only increased his apprehensions that something serious was going on.

After some more minutes went by with no response he turned the doorknob and discovered that the door was open. The house looked pathetic, suffering from weeks of neglect. Before he had fully digested the scene he could hear the sound of footsteps on the stairs.

She had heard the door open and rushed to see who had entered the house uninvited. At first she was frightened to see a stranger, but on second glance she noticed his kind eyes and bearded face and relaxed.

“Who are you? What do you want? Who are you looking for?” she asked suspiciously.

“First of all, please excuse me,” said the stranger. “My name is Yisroel Chein and I run an organization called Chasdei Bracha. I heard you had a serious family problem, and I’d like to help you. I’d be grateful if you shared your problem with me and allowed me to try to help you find a solution.”

When it’s a health problem, it definitely makes life difficult, but at least nobody feels guilty. Most people realize that health comes from Above. On the other hand, when finances are a problem, there’s a feeling of personal failure mixed in.

She didn’t believe anyone could help her but after exchanging a few words with R’ Chein, she realized that he was something special with proven abilities to resolve difficult situations, and the main thing was that he really wanted to help. She decided to tell him the whole story. Maybe he would be the one to save the family from disaster.

She told him what had been going

on and after a few moments of silence he asked to speak to the boy. “It’s a waste of your time,” said the woman sadly. “He’s an introverted child and lately he’s not interested in speaking to anyone. He sits all day in his room and plays computer games.”

“Let me try,” requested R’ Chein, and he went up to the second floor. He knocked on the boy’s door and the boy responded with an angry growl. With a soft and patient voice, and with repeated importuning, R’ Chein convinced him to open the door, though not before promising that the conversation wouldn’t take more than a few minutes.

R’ Chein hesitantly entered the room for he really didn’t know what to say. He relied on *siyata d’Shmaya* (Heavenly assistance), and decided to begin with something unexpected: a discussion about computer games.

The boy wasn’t expecting this and he slowly opened up and talked without noticing the passage of time. Nor did he notice the topics they were discussing, and he got drawn into a fascinating discussion about the meaning of a Jewish life and the importance of continuing the Jewish tradition.

After two hours had gone by, the two came to an agreement. R’ Yisroel would organize a *bar mitzva* for the boy that he could be proud of and the boy would come the next day to his house to learn the laws of *t’fillin* and other things a *bar mitzva* boy needs to know.

R’ Yisroel threw himself into this project and within two weeks had managed to arrange a lovely *bar mitzva* in a hall with music and a photographer. He carefully prepared the boy for his *bar mitzva*, both spiritually and materially. He invited about a hundred of his (R’ Yisroel’s) friends to get everybody into the spirit of a *Yiddishe simcha* and the event lasted until one in the morning.

Among the guests was a non-Jew who, at the end of the *bar mitzva*, approached R' Yisroel with tears in his eyes and thanked him for everything he had done for the boy. "You have no idea what a deep impression this evening has made on me. I never imagined that a rabbi could take a stranger and organize such a nice celebration for him. Please allow me to participate the next time you make a *bar mitzva* like this. I will pay for a pair of *t'fillin*."

* * *

There are dozens of moving and

painful stories such as this one that come to the doorstep of Chasdei Bracha. The organization was founded 2 Shvat 5762, and has already acquired a reputation for being there with quality, professional yet personable assistance. Jewish sections of Brooklyn know who to turn to for help for families in distress: Chasdei Bracha, the organization that rehabilitates broken families, provides material assistance, patches up relationships, and thus illuminates an entire house with Jewish light and *chassidic* warmth.

The secret of the organization's success is the special personality of the director, R' Yisroel Chein. He personally takes care of every referral, visits the family, speaks with parents and children, and conveys sincerity and credibility. He enjoys full cooperation, and while having a heartwarming talk with someone he is able to discern the root causes of the family crisis.

After a visit, he delegates tasks among professionals so that each one can contribute his expertise and restore the family unit.

A LITTLE STORY ABOUT A GREAT CHESED

One of the most moving stories I've taken part in this past year is the following story:

It began with a call from someone I know who told me about a boy who was in difficult circumstances whom I had to save. I contacted the boy and we arranged to meet at a restaurant in Manhattan. After we ate I asked him to tell me what was troubling him.

The story I heard was shocking. He had come from Russia. His grandfather had prevailed over communism and had been an observant Jew despite the tremendous difficulties this entailed. His parents were not religious, but when this boy was younger, he had visited his grandfather who had given him a Jewish *chinuch*.

At the age of 16, his parents divorced and each married gentiles. Each of his parents asked him to join their new family on condition that he sever his relationship with his grandfather and drop Judaism.

He decided to refuse the offers of both his parents. The price for this was steep, as both his mother and father shunned him and refused to relate to him as their son.

Shortly thereafter, he became very sick. His father couldn't ignore his medical condition and flew him to one of the best hospitals in America. He paid for his care but did nothing about his social situation, thinking that isolation would break his resistance to leaving Judaism and joining his gentile family.

That miserable period in the hospital did not break his iron spirit and he remained true to Judaism. Just a few days earlier he had been released from the hospital and now he didn't know where to go and to

whom to turn.

I saw before me a boy with tremendous strength yet at the same time broken by his troubles and mostly by his not knowing what he would do the next day. I began to inquire about his family, about his grandfather, in order to verify the details of his story. I asked him to describe the atmosphere in his grandfather's house, to tell me what he had seen and heard.

When I asked him which *z'miros* his grandfather sang on Shabbos, he began to hum a familiar Chabad *niggun*.

I was overcome with emotion and felt I had found a lost soul. On the spot I said to him: From this moment on you have a home and four brothers. You can relax. You won't lack anything – not materially and not spiritually!

At first he didn't believe me, and when he realized I truly meant it, he burst into heartrending tears. It was a scene I'll never forget. The restaurant was packed, and he called out: "Rabbi, I'll never forget this special moment!"

The next day he came to my house where I introduced him to my wife and children and he became like a member of the family. It was like a dream for him, to enter a warm and loving home and to feel like an equal. I arranged for him to be in *yeshiva* half a day and at work half a day.

After a few months, at a routine checkup, we got terrible news. I got an emergency call from him to come home because he needed to see me immediately. When I arrived home, he was waiting for me on the

R' Yisroel started the organization in memory of his daughter, Bracha Yafit, a”h, who passed away 2 Shvat 5749 after a year of illness. “She was a special *neshama*. She became sick 2 Shvat 5748 and just one year later, she passed away. During that year, we were in close touch with the Rebbe, and all the medical steps we took were with his guidance. The Rebbe encouraged us, yet we did not receive an unequivocal *bracha*. We added the name Bracha at the Rebbe’s request.

“After she passed away, the Rimnitzer Rebbetzin sat at her

bedside and said T’hillim, as is customary. When she got up to chapter 45, *pasuk* 3, she noticed both of the girl’s names as well as her last name, in that *pasuk*, “**Yafyafisa mibnei adam, hutzak chein b’sifsosecha, al kein beirachecha Elokim l’olam,**” which talks about the greatness of Moshiach. We were very moved by this and with the Rebbe’s consent, we put this *pasuk* on our daughter’s gravestone.

“When the *Shiva* was over we began to think about an eternal memorial to our daughter. As parents,

we had a strong desire to memorialize her with an original project that would reflect on her special nature. Over the years I tried to get involved with various organizations, but I was always left with the feeling that I wasn’t sufficiently memorializing her.

“Throughout all those years I had Chabad activities going on in my house in Flatbush like *farbrengens* on Shabbasos and Motzaei Shabbos. When I moved to Flatbush 17 years ago, there were no *shluchim* there yet and neighbors and acquaintances who wanted a taste of the Chabad

doorstep, and when he saw me he fell upon me in tears and said the doctor said he had only six months left to live.

I tried to calm him, to encourage him, but it was difficult, because I myself was shaken. I told him that a doctor has permission to heal, not to decide how much time a person has to live, and I added confidently that things would certainly be good.

After a few minutes, he calmed down and said with *bitachon*, “I certainly must continue to live, for I haven’t learned enough Torah!”

I was amazed by his reaction and saw, how despite the awful news, what bothered him was that he hadn’t learned enough Torah. I told him that when he would recover I promised to take care of two things: to enable him to continue learning Torah and to find him a good *shidduch* so he could establish a Jewish family. He asked me why I thought he would recover and I told him that if he had such *mesirus nefesh* and such a strong desire to learn Torah, I was certain that Hashem would help him get better.

The next weeks were really trying. He was flown to another state where he underwent the replacement of all his blood and bone marrow. It was frightening, especially in light of the doctors’ gloomy prognosis. I was in constant contact with him and I encouraged him as much as I could. We asked the Rebbe for a *bracha*, and we went together to the Ohel and *davened*

for his recovery. We tried to strengthen our *bitachon*. Before his trip, I taught him two songs about *emuna* and *bitachon*: “*Kavei el Hashem, chazak v’yametz libecha v’kavei el Hashem,*” and “*Mitzva gedola lihiyos b’simcha tamid.*” Whenever we spoke on the phone, we sang these songs together and *farbrenged*.

After four months of successful treatment, he came home healthy, *baruch Hashem*. I told him I wanted to fulfill my promise and I recommended a number of *yeshivos* so that he could pick what he wanted. He knew that the *yeshiva* he would learn in would shape his path in the future. He finally decided to pick a Chabad *yeshiva* for *baalei t’shuva*, where he learns Torah and to keep *mitzvos b’hiddur* with faith in the coming of Moshiach.

Baruch Hashem, he’s making great strides in his learning. Every Friday he goes on *mitzvaim* with his friends, and together they are *mezakeh* others with *mitzvos* and spread the *besuras ha’Geula*.

* * *

At the end of the interview with R’ Chein, his phone rang and this *bachur* was on the line. “Abba,” he said, “we have a *bachur* in *yeshiva* who is getting married soon and he wants his *kalla* to wear a *sheitel*, but they don’t have enough money for it.”

“No problem,” said R’ Chein, “tell him to buy a nice *sheitel* and Chasdei Bracha will pay for it.”

One *mitzva* leads to another...

I was amazed by his reaction, and saw how despite the awful news, what bothered him was that he hadn’t learned enough Torah.

light and warmth would come to these *farbrengens* I made.

“After our daughter’s death we added a *chassidus shiur* for women. The spirit behind the *shiur* is the wife of the local *shliach*, Mrs. Chana Liberow, and aside from her, we also have guest lecturers from Crown Heights.

“Five years ago we opened a Chabad *shul* to accommodate *Anash* who lived around here. I opened a *shul* in the building next door to my home. Most of the people are not Lubavitchers, but they love the atmosphere. They learn the Rebbe’s *sichos* and browse through copies of *Beis Moshiach* that are lying around and which contribute a special *chayus* for *inyanei Geula* and *Moshiach*.

“It was through the *minyán* that I began to get involved in various *chesed* activities. It began two years ago when I got a phone call from someone who had heard about the *minyán* and asked whether I agreed to have a *bar mitzva* in my *shul* for a boy whose family wanted a small ceremony. I said okay and went to meet the family.

“It was a single-parent Russian family whose financial situation did not enable them to make a proper celebration and the mother wanted to make a simple *Kiddush* in *shul*. I felt the boy’s pain and decided to make a real celebration. I bought him *t’fillin* and arranged a full event from A to Z. The impact of the event was tremendous and the boy left public school and transferred to a religious *Talmud Torah*. Till this day we are close with the entire family, and from time to time they are guests of ours for Shabbos.

“One *mitzva* leads to another,’ and within a short time I found myself involved in more and more acts of *chesed*, not just material *chesed* but spiritual *chesed*, too. Take for example, the American who began visiting the *shul*. He was clueless

about Judaism but he wanted to learn. He learned a lot in *shul* and always wanted to hear more.

“One day he told me that at his place of work there was a woman whose husband wasn’t Jewish who had given birth to a son. She hadn’t wanted to make a *bris* because she didn’t want to anger her husband, but he managed to convince her to make a *bris* anyway. I thanked Hashem for the *z’chus* to see the chain reaction.

“Through these little acts of *chesed* I began to realize what I was capable of and I decided to start an organization named for my daughter, Chasdei Bracha, which would help families and children in need. *Baruch Hashem*, since we started the organization less than two years ago, it has become a byword in Jewish communities in New York as an organization with a listening ear for whoever contacts us.”

There are many *chesed* organizations. What makes Chasdei Bracha stand out?

Most *chesed* organizations help families in distress. Some focus on material help, some on spiritual help. Some make *bar mitzvos* and some make weddings. Our uniqueness is in that we rehabilitate the family. That means that we worry about both the spiritual end of things as well as the material, both for the parents as well as the children, and our goal is to get the family to the point where they no longer need us anymore.

This is very hard work because in order to rehabilitate a family, you have to shoulder the burden down to the smallest details, and you need to be in touch with every member of the family. This is why we have enlisted the help of professionals, who are experts in material, spiritual, and emotional rehabilitation.

When you started the organization, did you know what you were getting yourself into?

Yes, I did. I did research on the sociological state of Jewish neighborhoods in New York and I

A CAMP FOR MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN

There was a sequel to the story of the boy whose father tried to convince him to leave Judaism for whom we made a *bar mitzva*:

As it says in the article, at the end of the *bar mitzva* a non-Jew offered to pay for the *t’fillin* of the next *bar mitzva* he would make. R’ Chein kept in touch with him and even managed to influence his Jewish wife to begin keeping certain *mitzvos*:

One day I was invited to their home in the mountains. After seeing that they had a very large estate with room for sports and a pool, I told them about my plans to arrange a summer camp for children with whom we are in touch all year. They were excited about the idea and agreed to give Chasdei Bracha their place for two months.

About fifty children enjoyed the camp and had many *chassidic* experiences. Since this was day camp and we took the children each day to the mountains, we used the trip itself for special programs, all of them full of Jewish-*chassidic* spirit. The atmosphere in camp was very special.

On Sundays we had a special program for mothers. Our goal was to give them peace of mind, and *baruch Hashem* we succeeded. After years of difficulties, they were finally able to leave their pressured life behind once a week and to enjoy the beautiful world Hashem created in the clean mountain air.



Preparing a boy for his *bar mitzva*

knew I was getting into something tough and complicated. I also discovered that in order to really help you have to *rehabilitate* the family, not just help them, and the rehabilitation has to deal with three areas: the material, the spiritual, and the emotional. As long as one of the three factors is not working properly, the rehabilitation won't be complete and the family will continue to need help.

Take for example the single-parent Russian family with the depressed mother who can barely earn enough for their minimal needs, and the boy who was in public school and who was about to become *bar mitzva*. A home like this provides a prescription for trouble. As long as all the problems aren't addressed, this family will not be a happy one. And this is what we want to do: to enable every Jewish family to be happy.

Since we started the organization, we've managed to get dozens of children out of public school and into Jewish schools, but in order to get to the point where a child wants to listen to us, and we're usually talking about children who are not interested in cooperating, you have to

create an atmosphere of cooperation, sincerity, and credibility. The child has to feel that you want what is good for him, and this is truly the most difficult part: changing the atmosphere in the home. When we succeed in creating a positive atmosphere, we see it impact on the child's schoolwork and behavior, especially in his readiness to open up and cooperate.

How do you create a positive atmosphere in a broken home?

The negative atmosphere is usually a consequence of material want. There is no greater shame, for both the parents and the children. In the parlor meetings that I run, I explain the difference between a family suffering from a member's health problem and a family suffering from financial woes. When it's a health problem, it definitely makes life difficult, but at least nobody feels guilty. Most people realize that health comes from Above. On the other hand, when finances are a problem, even though Jews are believers and we know financial success come from Above, there's still a feeling of personal failure mixed in. It starts

with the main breadwinner and is felt by the children, too.

Therefore, the first thing we do to fix up a negative atmosphere is to promise regular weekly support. As of now, we regularly support dozens of families who receive a food package once a week. It should never happen that a child opens the refrigerator to discover that it's empty. Before Yomim Tovim, we send out special food packages with all sorts of goodies.

Aside from this, last year we distributed clothing and shoes to hundreds of families for weekdays and Shabbos. Hundreds of children enjoyed new clothes and could hold their heads up high among their peers.

One of the most successful ideas is the mobile *chesed* boxes. These are nicely decorated boxes in the shape of a house, some of which are mobile while others are stationary and placed near large supermarkets. People are asked to donate boxes and cans of food, especially baby products – which can withstand the vagaries of the weather – and once a week we empty the boxes and include the food items in our weekly food packages.

It's a great way to do *chesed* because everybody, on their own, is able to buy food products to give to needy families. *Baruch Hashem* this idea has caught on and the food we collect in this way covers a large part of the food we distribute each week.

We help families that need to make a *simcha* like a *bris*, *bar mitzva*, or wedding, and do not have the means to do so, starting with clothing for every member of the family, a nice hall, and a photographer. Then we bring friends to make things *lebedig*. Last year we made four weddings and eleven *bar mitzvos*.

In addition to the financial help, we get tutors and homework help for those who need it. We're planning on opening a club for crafts



R' Chein being *mesader kiddushin* at a wedding he arranged

and music for children whose parents can't afford extracurricular activities.

The parents receive support from a special team of advisors and guidance counselors, and we also provide babysitters and help for special needs children. We have an emergency hotline at our office for kids in distress, which helped dozens of them resolve difficult problems last year.

Above all else, we try to bring real *simcha* to these families. On Purim and Chanuka, Yomim Tovim that are not celebrated much in broken homes, they come to the *chagigos* we make. Every child gets a new item of clothing and they all sit down to a meal fit for a king. The *simcha* is tremendous and everybody leaves after learning about the significance of the Yom Tov.

Another original idea is based on *Mivtza Yom Huledes*. We keep track of the birthdays of all the children we work with, and on their birthdays I show up at their house with a gift and a birthday cake and I make a surprise birthday party. I tell them a *sicha* about the importance of birthdays and the kids are absolutely thrilled.

One family that we helped, arrived in the U.S. without anything. Someone told me about their situation and I met with them. They were in despair, hungry; it was a real tragedy.

We took it upon ourselves to rehabilitate this family. We got them furniture, clothing, and food. I helped the husband find a job, and *baruch Hashem*, today he is able to support his family. We ended up becoming very close. The wife asked me a few times how she could thank me. I told her that thanks weren't necessary, but she felt the need to thank me, and one day she called to say that as a sign of her appreciation for everything I did for them, they decided to become *shomer Shabbos*. I was extremely touched by this unexpected gesture. I realized they were ready for more and today, *baruch Hashem*, they run a beautiful Jewish home.

What is your greatest satisfaction and pleasure in this work?

To go shopping with a *bar mitzva* boy. The boy's excitement makes me

realize what a great *chesed* this is that I am *zocheh* to perform, and it gives me the strength and energy to go on with this difficult – but satisfying – work.

There are many special moments. Actually, every moment is special, but there are some that stand out. When a widow whose husband had died a few months before, approached me because she didn't have the means to make her son a *bar mitzva*, we made a *bar mitzva* for them. At the end of the evening she said to me, "Rabbi Chein, today you restored my life to me."



R' Chein with a *bar mitzva* boy at his *aliya l'Torah*

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A FORTUITOUS ERROR

BY NOSSON AVROHOM

I heard the following story from shliach to Tzfas, Rabbi Yitzchok Lifsh, who told it at a *farbrengen* in 770:

A week ago, on a Sunday night, I was standing near the *bima* where the Rebbe *farbrengs* when a *bachur* approached me and said that two Israeli girls were standing near the subway station opposite 770 and were asking to speak to a *rav* urgently. I looked around, and when I didn't see any *rav mora horaa* I decided to see whether I could help in some way.

When I met the girls they were crying and could barely speak. As they blubbered their way through the details, I could make out a very bizarre story. According to what they told me, their father, who lived in Manhattan, had suddenly decided that evil spirits and witches were chasing after him and wanting to harm him. As a result, he was staying indoors and barely eating, and his condition deteriorated daily.

"We are afraid that he'll commit suicide," they concluded sadly.

I was shaken by their story, and suggested they write to the Rebbe and put the letter in a volume of *Igros Kodesh*. At first, they refused, saying that any minute their father could harm himself, and they wanted me to accompany them to see him as soon as possible.

"Maybe it's too late already," they said in a new torrent of tears.

After explaining the benefit in writing to the Rebbe they finally agreed. They went up to the *ezras nashim* and spent a long time writing their story. I went into 770 and

brought them volume 16 of the *Igros Kodesh*.

When they had finished writing, they put their letter into the volume at a random spot. Then they opened it to page 164. You have to see it to believe it:

"In response to your letter of 15 Kislev in which you write the main points of what you have experienced and you mention witches and magic,

"In response to your letter of 15 Kislev in which you write the main points of what you have experienced and you mention witches and magic, etc., you should put this completely out of your mind..."

etc., you should put this completely out of your mind, and strengthen your trust in Hashem, Who supervises every single person with Divine providence. You need to check your *t'fillin* and the *mezuzos* of your home, and on every weekday before davening in the morning you should give some coins to *tz'daka*. And after the morning davening, also on Shabbos and Yom Tov, you should

say the monthly portion of T'hillim as it is divided over the days of the month."

That is just the first paragraph of the letter. As the story unfolds I'll quote more of the letter which shows that despite the years that have passed since the letter was originally written, it seemed as though the letter had been written the day we opened the volume in direct response to the girls.

When I read the letter to them, they were dumbstruck. They stood there motionlessly. Then they asked me to accompany them to their father's house so I could show him the letter. "He won't listen to us," they kept repeating.

I went back into 770 and when I saw my brother Uri, I asked him to come along with me. The girls insisted that we go by taxi, and not on the train, since time was of the essence. The four of us went to the taxi stand, but there were no taxis available. Then a Lubavitcher saw me and offered us a ride to Manhattan where he was heading.

During the trip, I discovered an astonishing fact. The girls had first planned on going to Flatbush, for they had heard there were many rabbis there. They had gotten on the #3 train instead of the #2 train by mistake, and when the train stopped in front of 770 and they saw many *bachurim-chareidim* getting off, they got off too. This was the first time in their lives that they had come to Crown Heights.

Another amazing fact – during their subway ride the younger sister had called out to Hashem, asking

Him to lead them to the biggest rabbi in the world.

We arrived at the house, which was an old five-storey building. The girls were afraid, and the closer we got to the fifth floor where their father lived, the more frightened they became.

When the door opened, it revealed a pathetic scene. In order to chase away the evil spirits, the father had poured salt, sugar, flour and other items all over the place. The apartment was terribly stifling and in utter chaos.

When he saw us he yelled at his daughters, "Who did you bring here and who asked you?"

I looked him in the eye and answered back, "The Lubavitcher Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach wrote to you that nobody is chasing after you, not spirits nor witches." He continued to threaten me for some time and I simply responded by quoting what the Rebbe said in the letter.

A half an hour went by when

suddenly he turned to his daughters and asked them for money, saying he was hungry and wanted to buy food in the nearby grocery store. Then he opened the window, which he had kept closed for days because of his fear of spirits. That made it much easier to breathe in the choking atmosphere. When he left the house, I asked the girls to clean up so that when their father would return he would find it neat and clean.

They told me he had been divorced a few years before and since then he went around with gentle women. I was amazed that the Rebbe referred to this in the letter, too:

"About what you write regarding a *tikkun*, first of all you must energetically work on a *shidduch* with an *isha k'sheira*" (i.e., an appropriate woman).

About his not eating, the Rebbe wrote:

"It's absolutely out of the question to fast from eating and drinking, for this is the opposite of the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, *chassidus*..."

At the end of the letter, the Rebbe wrote:

"You certainly participate in the *chassidic farbrengens* that take place from time to time, and what I mean by participation is obviously not just physical attendance, but *listening* to the inspiring words that are said at *farbrengens*..."

Because of this last paragraph of the letter, we asked the girls to sit and talk *divrei hisorerus* (inspiring words) with their father. Since they didn't know that much themselves, I told them to tell him every detail of what had happened *b'hashgacha pratit* that day.

Today, concluded R' Lifsh, even though the father has vastly improved, he needed therapy. A few days later, he went to his local Chabad house. Hatzala took him to the nearest hospital, and I was told he's doing much better. As time goes by he's forgetting his delusions and thoughts of magic, and he's planning a trip to Eretz Yisroel in the near future.



SHLICHUS IN MADRID

BY C. NUSSBAUM



*Rabbi Yitzchok and Shifra Goldstein arrived in Madrid 26 years ago, where they've raised a family and spread Yiddishkeit and chassidus despite the enormous challenges life in Spain entails. * An interview with Mrs. Goldstein.*

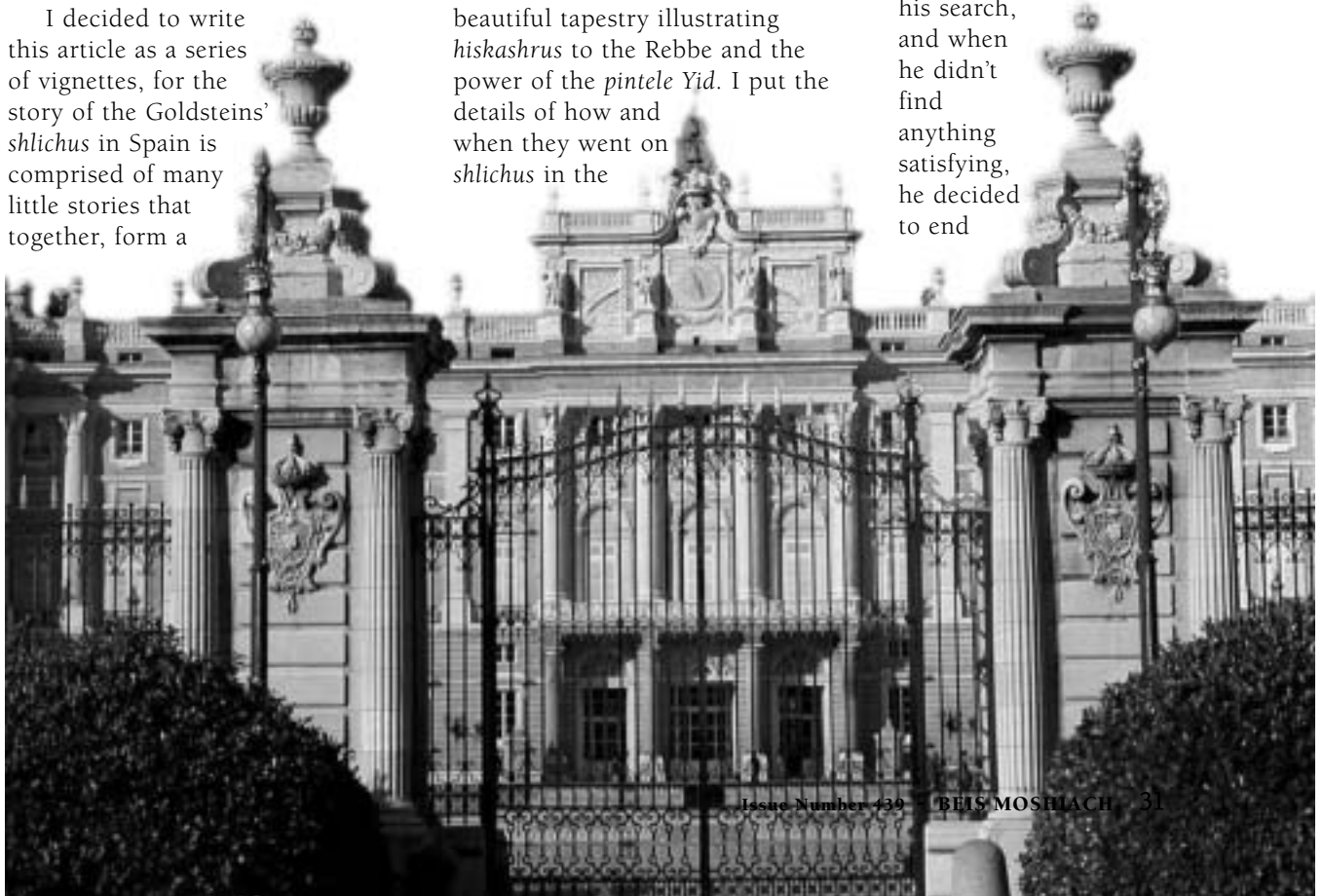
I decided to write this article as a series of vignettes, for the story of the Goldsteins' shlichus in Spain is comprised of many little stories that together, form a

beautiful tapestry illustrating *hiskashrus* to the Rebbe and the power of the *pintele Yid*. I put the details of how and when they went on *shlichus* in the

sidebars.

BECAUSE OF HOSPITALITY

An American, who had tried out different religions and was not happy with any of them, came to Spain. Since Madrid is on the border of Europe and Africa, there are those who think this is the end of the world. He came to Madrid on his search, and when he didn't find anything satisfying, he decided to end



THE GOLDSTEIN FAMILY IN MADRID

The *shluchim*: The Goldstein family with their more than a *minyan* of children, are *shluchim* in Madrid for over 26 years. Shifra was born in Eretz Yisroel and then moved with her family to the U.S. Later on, she returned to Eretz Yisroel and studied in Beis Rivka for seven years.

The location: Spain is a country in Western Europe on the border of Africa

Jewish Spain: There is no trace of the original Jewish Spain. It was completely eradicated. Most descendents of *anusim* (forced converts) are gentiles. It is estimated that in Madrid live 3000-4000 Jews, but it's difficult to know the precise number since the assimilation rate is so high. The descendents of *anusim* who are listed in the *k'hilla* are mostly non-Jews, while Jews who came to Madrid in recent years are Jews who fled the Jewish world and are not listed anywhere.

Shifra says that sometimes her husband is stopped on the street and is asked for the meaning of the names "Yisroel" and "Leah," etc. People give these names to their children but they don't know anything about them. Still, most of them are *goyim*.

The Jewish Spain that exists today is mostly comprised of Jews who came from nearby northern Morocco. They have a warm feeling for *Yiddishkeit* but observe it in a traditional way. Shifra works with the girls and since most of them never learned about *Yiddishkeit*, they accept everything more matter-of-factly. Those who make progress are sent to Eretz Yisroel.

Of the ancient Jewish communities in Spain, there remains barely a trace. Even the *shul* was brought by Moroccan Jews. Most Jewish artifacts were sent to museums in Eretz Yisroel.

There are a few Ashkenazim, who came to Madrid after fleeing the Nazis.

The Goldsteins work among the Jews of the city, as well as among the Jewish American students who come to study in Spain. There are also Israeli tourists, members of embassies, and Israelis who work for Israeli companies.

Jewish ignorance among the Jews of Spain is prevalent. There is also not much interest. Those who show an interest in Judaism are often gentiles.

How did you come here on *shlichus*?

I gave birth to my oldest daughter, *a"h*, on Hoshana Rabba in the U.S. On Simchas Torah my husband went to 770 where Rabbi Glick, *a"h*, of London met him and said: You're going to Madrid!

We asked the Rebbe who approved the idea, and that's how we came here. At first, my husband worked as a *mashgiach* at one of the hotels here. When that job concluded, we taught the children of a Jewish family here. When they left Madrid, they were sure we would leave, too. We explained to them that we still had a *shlichus* in Madrid.

The Rebbe didn't stop encouraging us on our *shlichus* here, both *b'ruchnius* and *b'gashmius*, although we went through some rough times.

his life. Before doing so, he said to himself: This Shabbos I'll go to *shul* in order to say goodbye to G-d.

This person met my husband, who invited him to the Shabbos meal. In the middle of the meal he said: You've saved me! Indeed, this man and his wife became *baalei t'shuva*. We recently went to the U.S. to celebrate the *bar mitzva* of his son. He told us that he was making sure his friend didn't marry a gentile. With a smile, he added: A thief makes the best watchman, no?

Another story: Some years ago, a large group of Jews came to Madrid who joined us for Kiddush. The image of a quiet girl with sandals remained etched in my mind. Some years later, a woman wearing a hat and a long skirt came to our home, and when I looked at her, I realized that she was the girl I had remembered.

"Weren't you here once before with a group?" I asked her.

She smiled and said, "Yes, that was me. After the Kiddush in your home I decided to do *t'shuva*. I figured if it's possible to be Jewish in far-off Madrid, then I can certainly be religious in America amongst thousands of Jews!"

Another story: An Israeli girl came to Madrid. Like all the rest of them, she came here to run away from life over there. She ended up being our Shabbos guest. To our surprise, she said that this was the first time she was sitting at a Shabbos table. She said she had decided to come to us since Spain is such a *goyishe* country and she felt she needed a Jewish atmosphere.

The "Peace Talks" took place here in Madrid twelve years ago (which resulted in disaster, as the Rebbe MH"M predicted and warned), but the real peace talks took place in our home. I'll never forget that Shabbos when we had

Israelis here from all walks of life. About two hours after the meal began, each one introduced himself, and that's when we realized that sitting side-by-side were people from the Right, along with people from Kol Yisroel, along with a man

That's when we realized that sitting side-by-side were people from the Right, along with people from Kol Yisroel, along with a man from Neturei Karta who came to support the PLO. This most unusual Shabbos meal was publicized in newspapers around the world. Who but Chabad shluchim could have pulled this off?



Rabbi Goldstein giving a matza to a child

from Neturei Karta who came to support the PLO. This most unusual Shabbos meal was publicized in newspapers around the world. Who but Chabad *shluchim* could have pulled this off?

The name Shlomo Ben-Ami is familiar to many Israelis, but not too many remember that he used to be the Israeli ambassador to Madrid during the Gulf War twelve years ago. He was staying here at the time, and like many others, he was terrified. My husband calmed him down by telling him that the Rebbe promised that nothing would happen to the Jews in Eretz Yisroel.

At the height of the war, he said to my husband: For the meantime, the Rebbe is right.

He became a *mushpa* of ours and since then, he puts *t'fillin* on every day. He recently asked my husband: Why do you say that the Rebbe is Moshiach? My husband answered him in a typically Jewish fashion, with another question: Is there anybody else who deserves to be Moshiach in our generation?

WRITING TO THE REBBE

A woman from the community here began becoming more religious. She started going to the *mikva* regularly, where she met me (since I run the *mikva*), and she poured out her heart to me. She had been married for a number of years and still didn't have any children. I advised her to write to the Rebbe (I keep a volume of *Igros Kodesh* right there). She opened to an answer in which the Rebbe gave her a *bracha*. Some times passed



Children making *shofars* and rolling *matza* dough



and nothing happened.

She was advised to adopt children from Russia, but it didn't work out. Suddenly, in the midst of it all, a *shlucha* from a city in Russia called me and told me that she had a girl who was waiting to be adopted. Did I know of a Jewish family for her, because it would be a shame if she was given to gentiles. I made the *shidduch* between them and it worked out nicely.

A year later, the woman gave birth to her own child. If that wasn't enough, an adoption agency in Madrid told about a girl available for adoption. Today the woman is raising three children, a boy (her biological child) and two girls. This story made a great *kiddush Hashem* in town!

There was a woman in a tough financial situation. She cried to me, and I suggested that she write to the Rebbe through the *Igros Kodesh*. She opened to a letter about giving *maaser* from her money for this is a *segula* for *parnasa*!

JEWISH LIFE IN MADRID

The Shul: The Goldsteins did not start their own *shul* since Rabbi Goldstein was told to continue *davening* in the local *shul*.

Chabad house: For the most part, it's our house. Since we work with the *k'hilla*, things are low-key. Lately we've been giving *shiurim* in a corner of the *shul* along with the *rav* and *rebbetzin*. We prepare the classes together (the *Rebbetzin* and I). We always finish with *inyanei Moshiach*.

Kosher food: There is no *chalav Yisroel* in Madrid and we supervise the milking. Our children, who have grown and left the country, bring us meat every few months when they visit. By the way, I learned from your magazine (the women's section *Ateres Chaya*) to freeze *lebens* so they don't spoil. There are no baked goods to be bought here; we make everything ourselves.

Chinuch: Our children remain here until *bar* or *bas mitzva*. I home-school them (there was a brief period when I sent them to the local Jewish school, but I stopped with that). Then we generally send them to nearby France. After that, depending on the child's personality, etc., they continue elsewhere. My children are around the world!

When we went on *shlichus* we received an answer from the *Rebbe* for *hatzlacha* and *bracha* in *shlichus*, including the innermost point – the *Rebbe* added – *chinuch* of the children.

Baruch Hashem, we see this *bracha* in the *chinuch* of our children despite the circumstances under which they are raised.

Aside from the home-schooling I do in the morning, I have recently started private classes twice a week for other children their age. This is good for my kids, because every child needs peers. It was funny when one of my children prided herself at home

on the fact that her teacher had asked a question on the *parsha* and she was the only one who knew the answer, because the teacher was me!

Daily routine: In the morning, I home-school. Last year I started a babysitting service in my home. We wanted to open a nursery but it would make trouble in the community and we don't want that. That's why we started babysitting because nobody's threatened by it. Naturally, we instill Jewish ideas in the babysitting service. Recently one of the parents said: *Shifra*, my son barely speaks yet he says "*Shma Yisroel!*"! How did you do that?

In the afternoon, I give classes to women along with the *Rebbetzin*. The topics are usually on parenting and psychology, but I bring in *chassidus*. The classes are presented as secular classes in order not to scare the people off. They're given in Spanish in which I am fluent.

There's a lot of work before *Yomim Tovim*. Before *Chanuka* for example, we brought an olive press and showed the children how olive oil always separates and floats on water. We told them that this is how Jews and gentiles are, always separate and different. The point is to impress on them the dangers of assimilation.

On *Erev Rosh HaShana* we were invited by the local school to make *shofars* with the children (a miracle in itself). Many children brought their *shofars* to *shul*.

We opened a library in collaboration with the *k'hilla*. I have hours for ladies. We have Jewish books we ordered from Argentina which are written in Spanish.

Sunday School: Every Sunday morning we have a class for children who attend public school all week. My children join it too, and enjoy it a lot.

She gave *maaser* and went home. As she walked in the door, the phone rang with a job offer, which paid ten percent more than the *maaser* she had given. It was a *bracha* that was fulfilled instantly!

MORE STORIES

A few years ago there were archaeological digs going on in Toledo, which is near Madrid. One day we got a call from a member of the community who excitedly told us they had found skeletons there. My husband said: That's very nice that you're worrying about skeletons, but what about the live ones – your own children? Send them to us so they'll know what their Judaism is all about!

There is a strengthening of *Yiddishkeit* in the local community, but anybody who gets more interested in *Yiddishkeit* leaves the country! A family who has become more *frum* is about to leave for Gibraltar. There's a girl who went to learn at *Neve Yerushalayim*...

During our 26 years here, the entire community has grown stronger, and the best example of this is, when we came here and our children wore *yarmulkes* in the street, people told them to take them off. Today you can see even more *yarmulkes* on the streets of Madrid.

I remember that when we came here, "a child and a half" was considered a lot for the average Jewish family here. Today you can find Jewish families with three or four children. I can certainly take credit for that! (*Shifra* has over a *minyán* of her own, *bli ayin ha'ra.*)

Over the years, some "*shtiblech*" have opened in Madrid, since the Jews don't want to travel on *Shabbos*, preferring instead to *daven* near their homes.

DESCENDENTS OF ANUSIM

There are many descendents of *anusim* (forced converts) from the times of the Inquisition. The *anusim* lived double lives in which they observed Judaism in secret while publicly living as Christians.

The Goldsteins don't get too excited when a Spaniard approaches them and tells them about Jewish family practices. "They might be descendents of *anusim*, but they're probably gentiles."

A woman told them that before she died, her grandmother told her: You should know that you are Jewish. Shifra says this doesn't prove she's Jewish because she might be a descendent of *anusim* on her father's side. These things can't be proven or checked since Judaism in Spain was obliterated.

Some years ago, a boy told us that his grandmother taught him the Alef-Beis, but every Sunday she went to church. We told him that this doesn't prove his Jewishness, and if he wanted to live as a Jew he had to go through the conversion process.

We do not handle conversions. We generally send those who are interested to Eretz Yisroel, where *rabbanim* handle it over there.

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

The Rebbe has supported us in this *shlichus b'gashmius* and *b'ruchnius*. Even when things were impossible, we got instructions not to leave. We received the Rebbe's

constant support. For example, in the period following Chaf-Zayin Adar we discovered a problem with one of our children. We asked the Rebbe whether to leave Madrid. The question was asked along with other

MENUCHA ROCHEL, A"H

I was pregnant with Menucha Rochel when it was decided that we were going on *shlichus* to Madrid. When she was born, we got a letter from the Rebbe in which he added the acronym for "she should live for good, long days, amen."

When she was five, she needed an eye operation. Our friends advised us not to do the operation in Madrid. We asked the Rebbe, and the Rebbe wrote that we should find out whether the medical care was really not good in Madrid.

After a thorough investigation, we discovered that medicine in Madrid is quite advanced. We did the operation in Madrid. When they took her to the operating room, I was very fearful. I kept on repeating her chapter of T'hilim, chapter six. It was only when she was brought back out that I relaxed, and then in my heart I said to the Rebbe: Rebbe, forgive me for my lack of *bitachon*.

We received the Rebbe's *brachos* for her over the years. Each time we took her to N.Y. the Rebbe *farbrenge*d. When I went to the *Kinus HaShluchos* in 5753, the Rebbe came out on the porch.

Last year Menucha Rochel passed away. I feel that she belongs completely to the Rebbe, and I don't have the right to think about why this happened.

questions. The Rebbe answered "yes" to the other questions, but shook his head "no" to this fifth and last question. R' Groner continued asking: What about *parnasa*. The Rebbe motioned with his hand – here! In other words, we were to remain in Madrid. Of course, we listened, even though we only saw the fulfillment of the *bracha* much later.

* * *

When I asked Shifra about the most difficult moment in their *shlichus*, she said: There is no difficult moment!

How typical of Shifra – that despite all the hardships she's endured, she focuses on the positive.

When I ask her how she manages, she says that she remembers certain moments in her life. "The most moving moment was when we were going through a very difficult period and we passed by the Rebbe, and the Rebbe smiled at me. I'll never forget it. It's what keeps me going."

Another memorable moment Shifra recalls: We were visiting 770 and one of my children was asked to say one of the 12 P'sukim in the Rebbe's presence. I was so excited I thought I would faint. Suddenly the Rebbe turned towards me and looked at me with such a soft and encouraging look. These are images in my mind that keep me going on *shlichus*.

When we came on *shlichus*, we dropped two words from our vocabularies: complaining and worrying. There's nothing to complain about because we are here with the *kochos* of the *meshaleiach*, and there's nothing to worry about because tomorrow everything will change for the better.

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

ONLY THE LIKUD CAN DISMANTLE SETTLEMENTS!

BY SHAI GEFEN

THE LESSON FROM TURKEY

The attacks in Turkey need to ignite red lights for us and we need to wonder why terror is spreading throughout the world. A day before the attack on Shabbos, there was a news item in Israel that security forces and the Israeli police had arrested a group of four Israeli Arab students from the Galil who were drafted for terrorist activities by Hamas during their course of studies in Jordan. The students are suspected of having being enlisted while making a trip to Mecca in Saudi Arabia. They are accused of contact with foreign agents, conspiring to aid the enemy in war, and supporting a terrorist organization. The students are suspected of meeting with Hamas operatives in Saudi Arabia where they underwent intelligence and weapons training and received directions based on which they were to gather intelligence which would later be used to carry out attacks, information such as bus timetables, where security guards are placed in malls, when the changing of the guards takes place, etc.

According to the news, Al Qaeda also enlisted other Israeli Arabs to terror activities within Israel. Terror doesn't differentiate between blood or between nations, but we need to remember the root of terror. Worldwide terror spread and became a central player on the international arena, precisely when the U.S. and Israel put a terrorist on the White House lawn ten years ago and gave him the honor accorded a head of

state. That's when terrorist leaders were sent the message that their work pays off, and if Arafat who was on the run for thirty years as a terrorist was so honored, they too would ultimately be recognized and would achieve their goals.

The world has experienced terror this past decade as it has never known it before. The attack on the Twin Towers (and the attempts that preceded it), the taking of hundreds of hostages in Moscow, high alerts in London and Paris and other capitols around the world, and now Turkey, all have a common denominator. The problem is that we're trying to ignore it. When the world realizes that the problem isn't Israel and that submitting to Palestinian terror automatically endangers not only peace in Israel but worldwide peace, the better off we'll be.

This was stated clearly by the leader and prophet of the generation, the Rebbe MH"M fourteen years ago (Chol HaMoed Pesach 5750), that even talks about concessions and withdrawals from parts of Eretz Yisroel naturally result in Jews being attacked everywhere, even outside Eretz Yisroel. It seems as though today everybody understands this. Now we have to do something about it.

There's no good terror or bad terror. The entire free world is in the same boat and Jews everywhere around the world need to know that their highest priority must be not to hurt the vital interests of those who live in Eretz Yisroel, because if they

do we all pay the price.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN EUROPE & THE GENEVA ACCORDS

Anti-Semitism in Europe is way up there. Polls in Italy and other places show scary results about how Europeans view Israel. Some of them say Israel must go off the map. This is all in addition to negative statements about Jews by prominent people. This is happening while a group of people has been sitting in Europe for months, working on the Geneva Accords.

There's more than a correlation between the two. The naiveté and abasement of those who wrote the Geneva Accords, who claim that "only by making concessions to Arabs will peace be achieved with Israel and the entire world will salute us, etc.," is thrown back in their faces time and again. It's just like the Jews in Germany who were sure that the more they resembled the goy, the more the goy would like them. We know what happened there.

It's just the opposite, for the more Israel concedes, the more the hatred grows. When we exhibited strength, our enemies cowered. As we "progressed" towards concessions, thus projecting our weakness, the world sensed it and anti-Semitism reared its head in Europe and among Arabs around the world, and their goal is to wipe us out, *r"l*.

Those distinguished Israelis and Palestinians ask: what alternative is there after the failure of Oslo? And



we ask: Isn't Oslo and what resulted from Oslo proof that concessions only serve to intensify terror and hatred for Jews?

There's a proposed law in the Knesset against those who initiated the Geneva Accords which may include fines and imprisonment for those who work on agreements outside the government framework. The question is what will they do after those very same people become the new government and sign to that agreement?

The Oslo Accords were signed by a "legitimate" government, and brought us to the abyss. Sharon contemplates agreements that are no less dangerous. It would be far better, if they proposed a law that no government or entity can concede on key positions, and if they prohibited the dismantling of settlements no matter what the agreement. Don't hold your breath though.

NEXT PLAYER UP: ABU ELA

P.M. Sharon is supposed to be meeting with the new P.M. Abu Ela for political talks. After the failure of Abu Mazan, the politicians found themselves a new P.M. to deal with.

Before even meeting, the two of them have highly praised one another and expressed hope of arriving at an agreement. Even Hamas is ready for a ceasefire, though check out the quote from the Hamas leader which was said at that time. In an interview given to the Saudi paper *El-Waten*, Yaasin explained what he meant by a ceasefire. He emphasized that it should not be understood to mean a change in the position of the movement regarding the establishment of a Palestinian state across the area of '48: "We will not concede on the Palestine of '48. We agree to a *hudna* which is based on a Palestinian state in Gaza and the West Bank, within the '67 lines,

while retaining our historic right to Palestine of '48."

Yassin said that Hamas' position has been and will continue to be that "Palestine" is from the river until the sea and from the sea until the river, from Rosh HaNikra in the north until Rafiach in the South: "Our political platform is absolutely clear. We agree, at this time, to a Palestinian state that will be established on the Palestinian land of '67. This is in exchange for removal of the conquering forces and the giving of freedom and independence to the Palestinian people, as a stage in the freeing of other Palestinian land... We have no problem with it taking part in stages ... but this does not mean we recognize the enemy."

These are the people with whom they're signing ceasefire agreements. We all know where Abu Ela is heading. Sharon himself knows there's no real chance to achieve a true peace with them. They're simply trying, once again, to play with human life despite their knowing that it will cost us in human life. Nobody wants to get up and say the emperor has no clothes.

Could we try something that was never tried before? The approach of strength. No concessions at all. No compromises. There's no question that the results will be different than the ones we're used to. Different and better.

ONLY THE LIKUD CAN DO IT

How painful it was to hear the former head of the Shin-Bet, Ami Eilon, an ardent Leftist, say that we need to ensure that the Left doesn't rise to power now, because only the Likud and the Right can best carry out the peace agreement and the dismantling of settlements.

To our sorrow and embarrassment, Ami Eilon is right. When the Likud and those on the

Precisely when the U.S. and Israel put a terrorist on the White House lawn ten years ago and gave him the honor accorded a head of state. That's when terrorist leaders were sent the message that their work pays off, and if Arafat who was on the run for thirty years as a terrorist was so honored, they too would ultimately be recognized and would achieve their goals.

Right who became collaborators with criminals, are ready to accept any agreement no matter the price, in most cases in a Leftist manner, they really don't need the original Oslo architects. Beilin is doing just fine outside of the government when he sees how every initiative of his, no matter how crazy, gets the government of the Right to follow docilely behind like a poodle. From Eilon's perspective, he is absolutely right when he said what he said.

The Rebbe once said in a *sicha* that our real problem is with those who sit on the fence. It's difficult to get them to change and do *t'shuva*. This fence-sitting which has been going on since Sharon rose to power nearly three years ago, has brought us to the awful situation we find ourselves in today.

At the beginning of the Oslo war, public opinion was against all political agreements. Everybody realized that Oslo and other stupidities brought a tragedy upon us. Instead of taking advantage of the situation to make fundamental changes, they continued walking the treadmill and in this vacuum Beilin and his partners managed to get what they wanted.

This is what happens when you sit on the fence. They didn't want to take a stand from the very start and they allow Jews to wallow in their blood.

HOW SHOULD WE CONDUCT OURSELVES VIS-À-VIS THE GOY?

The Shabbos of Parshas Chayei Sara is when we read about the purchase of the M'aras HaMachpella. The Rebbe learns a lesson from this purchase about how we ought to behave towards the goy. It's most relevant to us these days:

"In our *parsha* it tells of the transferring of ownership of the

M'aras HaMachpella from the B'nei Cheis to Avrohom Avinu. From this story, we can learn a clear directive for something that pertains to our times, as follows.

"Since the *goyim* want the M'aras HaMachpella to be theirs, there's a directive to try and accomplish, at first, through peaceful means, that it remain ours. If the peaceful means are unsuccessful, then we need to fight for it, and this is how we'll be the owners of the M'aras HaMachpella.

"We learn this from our *parsha* [i.e., Chayei Sara], which tells the story as follows:

"At first, when Avrohom came to bury Sara in the M'aras HaMachpella, the B'nei Cheis

"We must not bow down before the goy in order to get the M'aras HaMachpella."

agreed that she should be buried there, but they said that ownership of the place would remain theirs.

"The *parsha* goes on to describe a series of actions that Avrohom took by means of which he became the owner of the M'aras HaMachpella and its environs, as the *pasuk* says, 'the field and the cave in it, and every tree in the field.'

"The first thing Avrohom did was, 'and he bowed to the people of the land to the B'nei Cheis.' The Midrash explains that this wasn't a good move. The Midrash doesn't tell us this (negative thing) in order for us to know Avrohom's flaws, *ch"v*, but the purpose of the story is so that we derive a lesson from it

which is: we can't do things this way! We must not bow down before the goy in order to get the M'aras HaMachpella.

"However, the actions that Avrohom took after that, in order to gain ownership of the M'ara, are not censured by the Midrash, and from this we understand that the Torah is telling us about these actions so that we, the descendents of Avrohom, know how to conduct ourselves.

"After bowing down, Avrohom says, '*Ger v'toshav anochi imachem*' (I am a temporary resident or permanent resident with you), and Rashi explains, 'If you want, I'm a *ger* (temporary resident); and if not, I'll be a *toshav* (permanent resident), and take it by lawful right, for Hashem said to me, I will give this land to your children.' And after saying this, Efron sold the M'ara to Avrohom.

"The lesson for us is, when the goy hears a tone like this, he immediately agrees.

"One might ask, why do we need to do things this way? It would be better if we explained things nicely – that since Adam and Chava, Avrohom and Sara, Yitzchok and Rivka, and Yaakov and Leah are buried there, then it belongs to their children, and not to the B'nei Cheis! But the Torah explains that this doesn't work! Avrohom didn't say this since he knew that explanations, as nice as they are, don't work with the goy.

"The only way to affect the goy is to say to him unequivocally: 'And if not ... I'll take it by lawful right.'" When the goy hears that we plan on taking it from him against his will, and we rely on Hashem, Who gave it to the Jews, then he is impressed and he's ready to take four hundred silver shekel, and he gives the Jews the M'aras HaMachpella."

(Sicha Chayei Sara 5729)

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SHABBOS BY THE SHORE

BY YEHOShUA MERENFELD

When I first met the Chabad *shliach* of my local area, I was overwhelmed by the completely genuine concern that he had for me. Something I had not experienced with anyone outside of my close family. Why or how could he feel so compelled to invest his time and energy with someone, simply because that person is Jewish?

The first time I visited Yeshiva Tiferes Menachem of Sea Gate, I immediately recognized the same type of atmosphere and attitude. However, not only was this the way in which the faculty conducted themselves, but also the students, ranging in age from eighteen to sixty, each one an enthusiastic and warm person. They made me feel so at home, I decided to *make it* my home. Now when someone comes to visit our *yeshiva* I feel like I have an obligation to repay the kindness that was given to me.

Last weekend, Shabbos Parshas VaYeira, the *yeshiva* had a Shabbaton, inviting guests from college universities, and the like, to spend a “Shabbos by the Sea.” Some old, familiar faces eager to spend more time in the *yeshiva* arrived, along with some fresh faces looking to find out what is really going on with “all this talk about Torah.”

With Shabbos coming in at under 4:30 there was just enough time for standard introductions before we made our last preparations for Shabbos. Soon everyone arrived to *daven* Mincha in the main room of the *yeshiva*, and you could really feel the energy in the air. After Mincha, everyone split up into groups of three, finding seats and diving into lofty spiritual concepts as well as practical Jewish law. The room was soon buzzing with the sound of learning.



Faces were lit up with excitement as we all went deeper into the sacred texts. As one of the college boys said, “it’s like finding a treasure that your great-grandfather left for you and you didn’t know it even existed.”

Rabbi Greenberg, one of the instructors of the *yeshiva*, joined us for Shabbos, and as we all sat down to the Friday evening meal, he explained the significance of the twentieth of Cheshvan, the birthday of the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, the Rebbe Rashab. We passed around salads, exchanged names, spoke words of Torah, and sang *chassidic* melodies. With Rabbi Greenberg’s sharp sense of humor, together with the delicious Shabbos meal set out before us, everyone felt relaxed and open, to the extent that several of the guests introduced themselves, and told stories. As the evening went on, we found ourselves discussing a wide-range of topics, including the importance of the immediate revelation of the Rebbe Melech HaMoshiach.

Even after we finally concluded the meal, the studying and the provocative conversation continued. Of course, Jewish life is based not just on profound

thinking, but also on practical living, so that some of the young men in the course of the evening were introduced to the practice of saying “*Modeh Ani*” and the washing of the hands immediately upon awakening.

By the following morning, the effect the Shabbaton was having on all of us was positive to say the least, as well as openly apparent. Our guests brought great excitement with them, as well as many different and interesting perspectives. We all gained new insights into life, our Jewish heritage and the importance of Torah study.

With the conclusion of the morning service, we proceeded on to a delicious afternoon Shabbos meal and a further open discussion with Rabbi Greenberg, who told us some memorable stories related to the Rebbe Rashab and the Torah reading for that Shabbos. Then came the afternoon service, after which we gathered together to sing more melodies that touch the heart and stir the emotions. We felt lifted almost to another plane of existence as we opened up to each other and shared personal stories and the like. Some of



us talked about how we found our way to Judaism or to the *yeshiva*, while others shared stories about wrapping *t'fillin* with Russian Jews on Brighton Beach.

When Shabbos finally concluded, we *davened* the evening service and said Havdala. Everyone was in high spirits, and being that we had some capable musicians in our midst, we gathered in the *yeshiva's* makeshift music room for a short jam session. With guitars and drumsticks in hand and the amplifiers turned up, we played for just under an hour. Chabad melodies with a dash of college rock and roll, made the whole experience a little more tangible, friendly and familiar for all. It was enjoyed by those playing and those listening and only further strengthened the bond between us all. We finished off the session and moved on to Melaveh Malka.

Rabbi Sholom Baras joined us for the evening and started off by saying that “the Melaveh Malka takes Shabbos and everything learned in it and condenses it into an easy to swallow sugar-coated pill.” That is exactly what he did, examining the past Shabbos, and bringing a potent, yet sweet Torah perspective to all those gathered around him. With our minds and stomachs filled to capacity, the Melaveh Malka came to a close and we made a conclusion to the evening.

As much as the Shabbos by the Shore in Sea Gate ended as a great experience for all those who attended, its success won't be measured by numbers or a pie chart, but by the



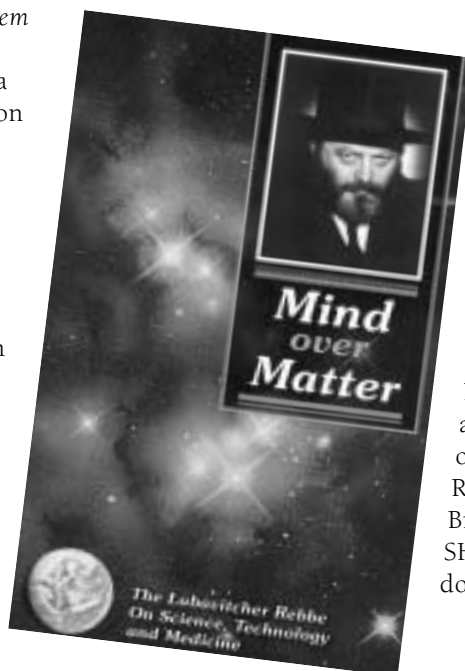
broadening of perspectives, the sharing of ideas, the making of new friends, and a greater commitment to Jewish life. As a student at Yeshiva Tiferes Menachem, I look forward to seeing the many more faces, new and old alike, that will come to share with us a beautiful Shabbos by the Shore.

MIND OVER MATTER: THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, & MEDICINE

The book *Ma Rabu Maasecha Hashem* was recently published in English translation as *Mind Over Matter*. It is a compilation of the Rebbe's teachings on science and technology, divided into sixteen chapters.

The book begins with an introduction and overview about the relationship of Torah and science, about seeming contradictions or truths, and the Rebbe's perspective on these issues, especially relating to philosophical questions and the scientific method. The book has chapters on the Existence of G-d, Theories of Evolution, Issues in Torah and Science, Apologetics, and much more.

There are sections of the book that address the meaning of



various statements of *Chazal*, the Rambam, and the commentaries, which clarify the Jewish perspective in light of *chassidic* teachings.

There is also a series of letters that the Rebbe wrote to the scientist Professor Velvel Greene, and appendices by Professor Herman Branover.

The book is recommended to all Lubavitchers, especially for scientists and those who teach science. The original Hebrew edition was edited by Rabbi Yosef Ginsberg and Prof. Branover and was published by SHAMIR. The English translation was done by Dr. Aryeh Gotfryd.